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As our digital worlds have expanded, it has become increasingly popular for small businesses with an ecommerce store or online services to market themselves nationally.

The problem is that many of these businesses are giving up their local marketing efforts in favor of a national approach, believing it to be a superior option. They've been led to believe that focusing locally limits their potential base while national marketing opens the door to a large number of possible consumers. While this is technically correct, the logic ignores the level of scale required to convert customers nationally and the conversion benefits of local marketing.

Local marketing is less expensive than national campaigns

It's a commonly known fact that it takes many touches for an individual to become a customer. We need to reach one potential buyer at least half a dozen times to get them to convert (or become a paying customer). This requires both financial resources and time investment.

To do this using digital methods generally means using several mediums to attract and educate those potential customers to choose you. Common strategies incorporate social media, digital ads, SEO, PR and email marketing to name a few. Stretching these marketing methods nationally is a major undertaking that often doesn't yield the results business owners expect.

Related: [A Beginner's Guide to Building a Profitable Ecommerce Business](#)

Converting digital traffic works differently

A business owner with a storefront in a major city recently described her decision to build out an ecommerce platform on Shopify and begin promoting nationally. She spent about ten months using this method on a \$3,000 monthly budget and found her sales did not increase. Her storefront revenue was between \$32,000-\$43,000 per month while her online shop made only \$3,000-\$7,000 on average.

With \$30,000 spent and hundreds of team hours dedicated to building and managing the online store, she felt defeated. She wondered why she wasn't converting customers and was making significantly less than her local storefront revenue when traffic to her store was much lower than that on the site.

An audit of her site revealed a number of issues including poor photographic visuals, product pages with little to no description and no customer retargeting built into her site. This meant her shop was not only giving a poor impression, but was also not building a long-term connection with people who had visited in the past.

By contrast, her in-person shop was located on a busy neighborhood avenue, which meant passersby

could get exposure to her brand subconsciously as part of their daily routines. Once they were in her system, she sent them coupons to return and commonly held special events to entice local customers to come in. That's an entirely different customer experience, which is why her brick-and-mortar store was many times more successful than her online endeavor.

Location is a differentiator

In addition to simply being a cheaper marketing strategy, location is also a differentiating factor that can assist in the decision-making process for customers.

For example, someone seeking a freelance writer may get excited to find that his or her potential support person is located in the same city. It means you have something in common and potentially reduces a trust barrier by creating proximity.

In some industries, location can be an especially relevant benefit as it means your company may also be connected with other local resources to support a major project. For example, an event planner may technically be able to work anywhere, but a local focus means having a list of vetted and quality local vendors and resources that can save time and ensure a quality event experience.

Related: [Lessons All Entrepreneurs Can Learn From the Shop Local Movement](#)

Out-of-market local targeting

In some cases, your local market may actually be too small or not have enough need for your product or service. In this case, a great way to expand without going fully national would be to create a regional campaign or select specific cities or states to target. This allows you to expand your market without stretching your budget too thin.

Doing this well requires solid market research to make sure you're choosing the best possible markets that both need your services and aren't already saturated with providers.

Local growth can boost national results

Ultimately, starting local and working your way outwards is a great way to maximize your advertising budgets and can build a foundation for future national campaigns.

For example, a virtual accounting pro that conducted a local SEO campaign to boost her brand locally also found that her national rankings grew simultaneously. In a few months, she will be expanding her budget nationally while maintaining her local lead long-term.

Going national later allows you to have a smaller test market to experiment with and maximize conversions before going to a broader market where there may be less wiggle room in budget for

testing ideas.

No matter your industry, local marketing is a highly valuable platform for growing your business and an essential component of a successful digital-marketing campaign.

Related: [6 Benefits for You and Your Community From Supporting Local Entrepreneurs](#)

Source: [Why Local Marketing Still Matters in the Digital Age](#)