

**Business Improvement District
(BID) Member
Marketing Handbook
For Your Success**



DOWNTOWN
CORAL GABLES
MIRACLE MILE
Business Improvement District

Table of Contents

Using This Guide	3
Your Online Presence	3
Social Media	5
Digital Marketing	6
Print Advertising	6
E-Marketing	7
Client Relationship Marketing	7
Referral Programs	8
Media Exposure	8
Events	9

Using This Guide

The goal of this handbook is to provide guidance and strategies to assist in the success of your business located in Downtown Coral Gables. In each category, there will be information about what the Coral Gables BID does to supplement your marketing efforts. There will also be recommendations for effective and proven strategies that you should use on your own. Your specific business goals, target audience, budget, and preferred channels of communication will dictate your plan of action.

We hope you find this toolkit useful.

Your Online Presence

Having a solid online presence is critical for most businesses. If potential clients cannot find you online, or your online presence is dated, they may look elsewhere for products and services. It is a good idea to search online via various search engines (Google, Bing, YouTube, etc) for your own business on a periodic basis. We recommend searching your business name as well as several key words or phrases other may use to find your business. This exercise will give you an idea of how the public sees your business.

Your Website

Not every company needs a website with a lot of bells and whistles. In today's business environment, consumers expect to find at least a basic site. Here are some considerations:

- A mobile-friendly (responsive) site is a must. Most consumers browse on their cell phones; they need to be able to navigate your website on their smaller device.
- Keep it Simple. Minimize the amount of navigation necessary to get important information. Your address, phone number, and hours of operation should be easy to find.
- Use quality images that are clean and appealing.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Matters. Use keywords in your metadata so the search engines choose to index your site. If you do not understand SEO, hire an expert.
- Keep your site current. Customers who find an outdated website might think you are out of business.
- Security. If you sell goods or services online (e-commerce), your site should be secured via an SSL certificate (<https://>).
- Add the BID logo to your website, email signature, and promotional signage.

Google Analytics

Aside from your website, Google has a public listing of your business information. Once you claim your business on Google, you can customize it to include details such as address, phone

number, hours of operation, link your Google reviews, add images, link website, etc. Your Google listing is the source for your business listing on the digital billboards throughout Downtown Coral Gables. Therefore, it is recommended that you double check the main business category and edit your offered products and services.

Online Reviews

There are an increasing number of online review sites (Yelp, Google, Facebook, Tripadvisor, etc) for consumers to either offer praise or criticism. Many buyers make decisions based upon reading reviews before they even (if ever) step foot in your storefront. These sites can be a challenge for businesses since they are somewhat out of your control. **Claiming your business** on these sites will allow you to address any issues, and get notifications of new positive reviews.

Best Practices for Review Sites:

1. Ask your supporters to post positive reviews. *Remember, it is unethical to reward clients with free or discounted products or services if they leave a review.*
2. Respond to all reviews, both positive and negative. If the review is negative, do not be defensive – state facts, and show an honest effort to resolve the situation. Your potential customers will see that you’ve handled the situation well and may look at you more favorably.

Blogging

Writing blog posts can be a great way to add value for your website visitors or current clientele. They are a good option for businesses with a longer sales cycle where the buyer does more research. An added bonus is that this assists with search engine optimization as well.

Best Practices for Blogging:

1. Make a list of the questions you hear most frequently about your products or services. These questions can become post topics. Your answers will feed the client’s desire for knowledge and add value to your brand.
2. Get influencers to post your articles on their sites. Include links back to your original posting for added search engine optimization.
3. Repost related content from other writers to show connections within your industry.
4. Repurpose your blog posts by linking them in an e-blast or social media post.
5. If you hand out printed information, put the articles in an attractive template with your logo and business information.
6. Use this content with prospects and clients. Print and mail out articles with a personalized sticky note to let your customer know you were thinking about them. This keeps your business top of mind.

Social Media

In today's culture, your business needs to be active on social media sites. These free platforms include: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, TikTok, Reddit, Tumblr, Viber, Snapchat, & Pinterest. Don't be scared away by all of the options; maintaining an active presence on 1-2 platforms is much better than being stretched too thin on all of them. Your best option is to find out where your specific client demographic spends their time, and be present on those tools.

The more posting activity and engagement your account had, the more likely it will be seen. You can ask customers to "follow" you on these platforms, for an increased chance of your posts being seen. You can also pay to have a post "sponsored" to reach a wider audience.

Facebook

Facebook (abbreviated FB) is the most popular social media site to date. If you do not have a Facebook business page, you should claim/create one. The demographic for this platform is generally over 25 years of age.

Your Business Page Should Include:

- A Clear Cover Photo
- Business Contact Information
- Consistent Posts – Posts can include photos, website links, articles, coupons, etc.

You can also sell products, plan events, create client offers, & post job openings on your Facebook site. As a general rule, try to keep less than 50% of your posts sales focused, with the majority sharing helpful information.

Most of these services are free of charge, but you can also boost posts or create paid ads. When creating a Facebook ad, test out a variety of "Call to Action" options, to test the best engagement for your target audience.

Instagram

This app is image based, and very popular with the under 40 age group. Your business account should revolve around a chosen color scheme or brand culture, and posts photographs within those parameters. Luckily, Instagram (abbreviated IG) is integrated with Facebook for easy posting to both platforms with only one click. If you are already selling products via the Facebook platform, you can tag those products in your Instagram posts for direct selling online.

For all the above social media platforms, remember to tag us at @shopcoralgables and use #shopcoralgables for more exposure.

YouTube

Next to Google, YouTube is the largest search engine in the world. It can also be an effective tool for business. Creating "How To" videos is very popular. Think about the products and services your business provides, and what videos you can create to position yourself as a local

expert in your field. Once posted, repurpose the videos by embedding them on your website, linking them to newsletters, and other social media channels.

Chat Based Marketing

The growth of these platforms is outpacing traditional style social media. Chat based marketing apps include FB Messenger, Google Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat. These tools allow you to respond immediately to client inquiries 24/7, as customers demand faster responses in today's consumer culture.

Digital Advertising

Businesses used to spend a majority of their advertising dollars on print media. Now, digital ads are the norm. Digital ad placement options are idea for the following reasons:

- You can target based upon demographic data including location, gender, age, income level, education, relationship status, etc.
- You can target based upon behaviors such as visitors to a certain website.
- You can use re-targeted ads that follow a person who previously visited your site.
- Most pricing is purchased based upon a cost per thousand (CPM) or the cost to reach 1,000 of whomever you are targeting.
- You can try A/B testing, and focus on the better performing ad.
- Reporting allows you to optimize your campaign to get the most for your investment.

Paid Search

Search-based marketing such as Google Ad Words or Bing ads is an option to consider. This type of marketing is aimed at people doing an online search for a product or service you offer. They may not know your business name, but can find you based upon location and keywords searched. They are usually doing research to find who offers what they need. These ads are displayed when specific search terms you define are entered. With paid marketing, known as pay per click (PPC), you determine the daily or monthly budget, and the amount you are willing to pay per click. This type of work is detailed, and ever-changing; you may want to hire a proven SEO/PPC professional for optimized use of your funds.

Print Advertising

While print media has declined over the past few years, it can still be an effective tool depending on your target audience. Print encompasses newspapers, magazines, trade journals, directories, postcards, brochures, etc.

Print Tips:

- If you choose print marketing, consider a series instead of a one-time ad. A minimum of 3 touches is recommended in each medium.
- For direct mail, be conscious of the cost of postage; it can get expensive. The US Post Office offers the EDDM program to assist small businesses with bulk mailings.
- Consider setting up a separate landing page on your website just for the ad you plan to run. You'll be able to measure the direct success of the ad by the number of visitors to that site. (This page should not be listed on your page navigation.)
- Add your company's logo and contact information to all print marketing, along with a call to action.

E-Marketing

Email marketing is an effective tool with a low cost. It is highly effective if directed towards your current client list. You can even segment your clients into groups and send them different messaging and offers. There are a variety of software providers including Constant Contact & Mailchimp. These applications allow you to organize client contact information and design easy-to-fill templates for consistent use. The frequency of your e-mails is dictated by your business; keep in mind that too many emails will result in a high unsubscribe rate.

Best Practices Include:

- Signing up your clients one by one, rather than purchasing an email list.
- Acting in accordance with current SPAM laws, allowing for an opt-out link in each email.
- Designing mobile friendly emails.
- Keep text to a minimum. Utilize images and links to a web page with expanded information. You can track how many people click each link to better measure engagement.
- Your subject line should be short and catchy to improve open rates.
- Include your logo (with a hyperlink to your website) and contact information in the email.
- Include the BID logo in your email footer.
- Include links to your review sites, and encourage your clients to leave you reviews.

Client Relationship Marketing

Acquiring new clients is 3-8 times more expensive than retaining existing clients. Cross-selling and up-selling to your current client base should always be a high priority on your marketing "to-do" list. After all, happy current clients are more likely to refer others to you.

Client relationship marketing (CRM) is simply keeping your brand top of mind to existing and recent past clients, and prospects who have opted in to receive communications from you.

Best Practices:

- Rewards Programs – reward repeat clients with a free gift or discount
- Recognize birthdays, anniversaries, or other important events
- Offer current clients advance notice of upcoming sales or events
- Send handwritten thank you notes
- Mail out holiday cards
- Create a monthly or quarterly newsletter

Referral Programs

Rewarding current clients who refer you new business can pay handsomely. Often times, referrals of your current clients generate the best prospects...and it doesn't cost much either. You can structure a formal program with software, or simply keep it informal. Nothing will ever replace word of mouth advertising and personal recommendations when you complete a cost/benefit analysis.

Best Practices:

- Ask your clients for referrals, both in person, and via a periodic email.
- Always personally thank a client for the referral via phone or handwritten letter.
- Show appreciation with a small personalized gift.
- If you are able, reward both the new client and the existing client. For example, the new clients get 10% off their first purchase, or a free dessert with their meal; the existing client gets \$25 store credit or a gift.
- If you set up a formal program, publish the details on your website and promote it in your CRM.
- Consider the type of business the referring party is in before you send a token. Many companies (including government agencies) do not allow their employees to accept any items of value

Media Exposure

Getting your story picked up by the media can be a huge benefit with little to no cost. There can be a lot of competition in the Miami-Dade County region, so every story will not get picked up by the local media. Try to build a reputation with the media as the “go to” expert in your field, so that they reach out to you with a related story.

Best Practices:

- Use a press release template to get your story out.
- Follow and get to know your local media contacts, especially those who focus on your industry.
- If you are promoting an event, you can submit information online to TV, radio, and print calendars for free inclusion.

- Find out the best contact at each media company, and direct your email to them personally. Google will reveal the names of specific reporters at each media partner. If you repeatedly blast generic reporters, they will ignore your submissions.
- Consider whether a paid release makes sense. PR Web and PR Newswire are two companies that will distribute your press release regionally, nationally, or internationally, depending on your needs.
- Register as a source on www.helpareporter.com. This site matches journalists and sources. You get a daily email with requests for sources and can choose to respond to specific media requests.
- Keep in mind that every story is not newsworthy! Your story should be important, timely, and relevant.
- Use any media exposure on your website, social media, and your newsletters.

Events

Events are an excellent way to promote your business whether you are hosting, participating, or just getting benefit from the event being in town. Think about your goals in hosting, attending, or sponsoring an event. There are several options to consider, that depend on your staffing levels, capacity restrictions, and your budget.

Hosting an Event

Planning your own event can be rewarding, especially if it generates more business than normal. Consider your capacity to do the planning work before you begin; coordinating an event can be time consuming. You may want to consider hiring an event coordinator to do the work.

Best Practices:

- Partner with another organization, business, or charity. This reduces workload and increases the potential number of attendees.
- Begin marketing the event early and often.
- Use community calendars on TV, radio, and print to get more coverage.
- Ask partners to share the event as well.
- Notify the media (if it is newsworthy) via a press release.
- Use tools like Eventbrite or Facebook Events to handle registrations and payment (if applicable)
- Find non-competitive event sponsors who can provide food, drink, or gifts to your attendees.
- Leave yourself enough time to speak with attendees, and get to know them better.
- Take photos of your guests having a good time, and share the photo album online after the event.
- Have a post-event follow up plan to handle any specific inquiries, and thank those who attended.

Participating in Others' Events

Events hosted by other organizations are a great way to gain brand exposure to new prospects. You may find festivals, trade shows, or temporary outdoor markets valuable to your business. Plan ahead to make the most of your appearance or sponsorship.

Best Practices:

- Let everyone know you are involved in supporting the event ahead of time by marketing it on social media, in eblasts, and on your website.
- Order banner stands, signage, posters, flyers, brochures, business cards, and giveaways early.
- At the event, make your participation interactive and engaging.
- Don't put a table between you and your prospects.
- Consider having a video or moving slideshow presentation.
- Consider buying logo shirts for team members to wear.
- Hold a prize drawing to capture contact information or business cards, then follow up with attendees within a few days of the event.
- Distribute prizes, samples, or information.
- Reach out to each prospect 3-7 times to convert them to sales.
- Request attendee contact list from event organizer.

We hope that you find this toolkit helpful. Please keep it as a reference for all future marketing endeavors. The BID of Coral Gables is here to assist in your marketing efforts. Reach out to us for further assistance.

Business Improvement District of Coral Gables

220 Miracle Mile, Ste. 234

Coral Gables, FL 33134

info@shopcoralgables.com

305-569-0311



DOWNTOWN
CORAL GABLES

MIRACLE MILE
Business Improvement District