

The Ultimate Guide to Winning Customers and Influencing People



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We love to talk about the things we love.

Whether it's our favorite sports team or the new burger place we tried last night, we can't seem to help ourselves when things delight us. And it's totally natural. Almost effortless. It's not an advertisement—we're just helping our fellow travelers navigate this confusing world.

Anyone with a local business knows instinctively that they live and die by word-of-mouth. A recent study found that 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family more than advertising. And 74% of consumers identify word of mouth as a key influencer in their purchasing decisions.

While we live in a digital age and can easily start to think about word-of-mouth in digital terms, such as social or reviews, the reality is that a lot of word-of-mouth is still very much analog.



Andy Sernovitz, who wrote the book on word-of-mouth called “Word-of-Mouth Marketing,” says that 80% of word-of-mouth is still happening face-to-face and only 20% is online. As much time as we spend interacting with others digitally, it still pales in comparison to our live interactions.

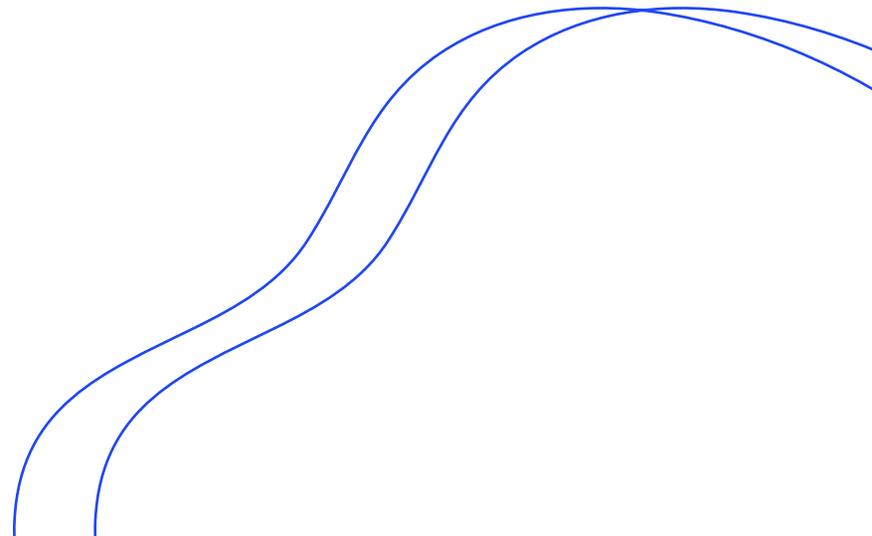
Did you know that the average working adult has 27 conversations per day lasting about 10 minutes each amounting to 5,000-7,000 words? It is within the thick and thin of these interactions that word-of-mouth weaves itself, almost imperceptibly, into a tapestry that shapes the way we engage with the world.

In short: word-of-mouth is how we get customers.

It’s easy to forget that the referrals we see on our digital dashboards are the result of word-of-mouth. Before they messaged you, your would-be customer asked someone they know and trust who they know and trust.

You may have a dashboard attributing the referral to X, Y, or Z, but that’s not always the source. Those are just the channels the customer used to contact you.

Before that, your potential customer most likely heard about you from someone close to them. Even though word-of-mouth was the source, the conversation probably happened spontaneously. How do you get people to talk spontaneously about your business like this? The answer is simple, yet profound—**be remarkable.**

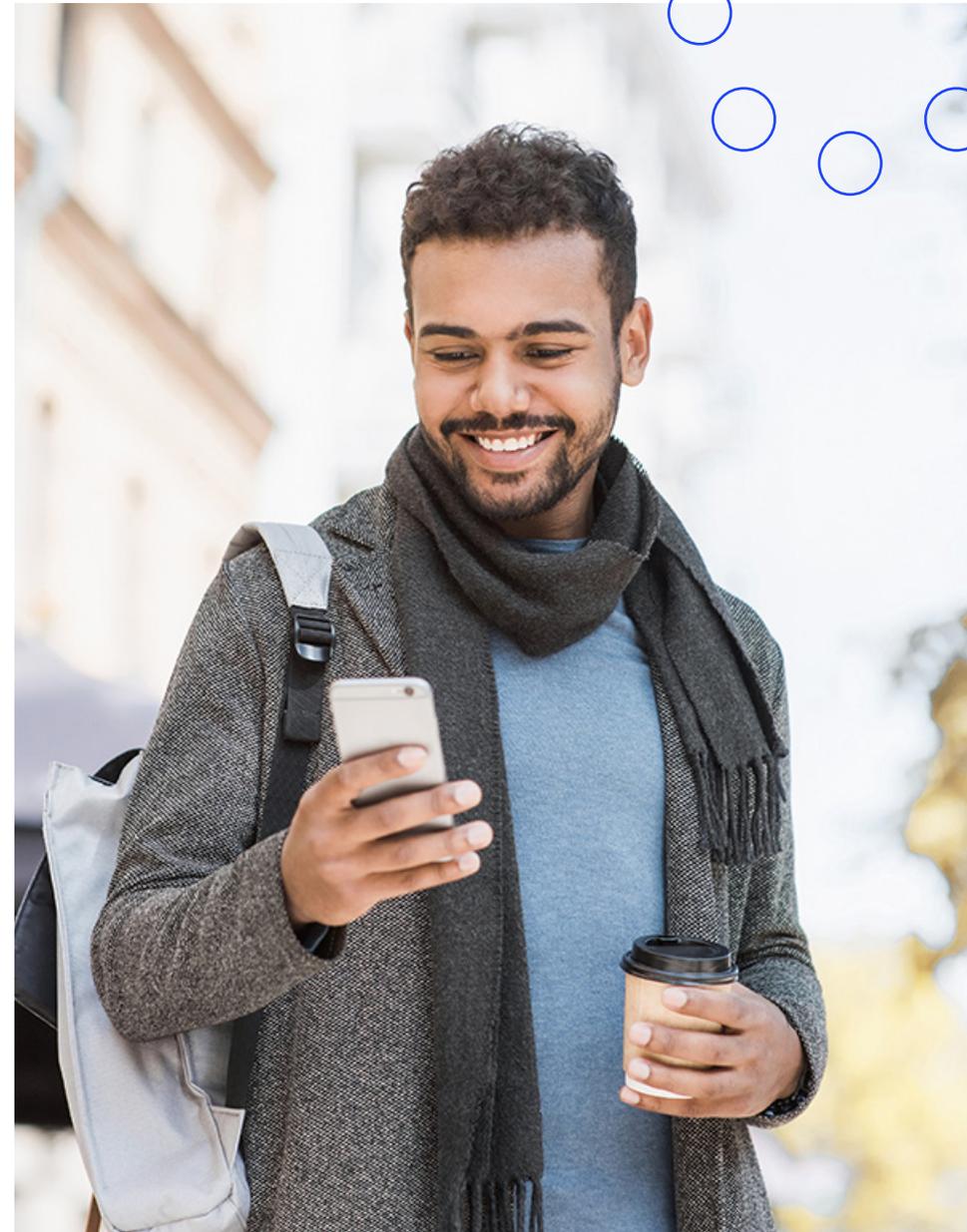


Be Remarkable

It was Seth Godin who popularized the notion of being remarkable as a brand. Godin, a business guru and author, says that in order to be remarkable you need to be a purple cow. But what does that even mean? Well, it means that in order to get people talking, you have to stand out from the sea of *unremarkable*, brown cows.

By definition, being “remarkable” means that what you are doing is worthy of remark, or worth talking about. Let that sink in. Read it again. Seriously, that idea alone can change your business.

We are efficient beings. And we sort of have to expect that everyone is going to do their job and do it well enough—especially if you’re making a sandwich or fixing fences or extracting a tooth. There is no reason to remark on things that are executed as expected.



No one boasts:

- ⦿ “That sandwich tasted exactly like I expected and always does.”
- ⦿ “The bank teller was able to withdraw money from my account and hand it to me.”
- ⦿ “They have this phone system that lets me listen to a menu of options to choose from.”

In fact, people are twice as likely to talk about a bad customer experience as they are to talk about a good one. And only when something is truly, remarkably good do we go out of our way to say something.

There are many ways your business could be remarkable—product quality, design, speed of delivery, personality, humor, cost, etc. But we’re going to focus on one thing that has the greatest impact—customer experience.

- Customer Experience
- Product Quality
- Design
- Speed of Delivery
- Personality
- Humor
- Cost

**Advertising is the cost
of being boring.**

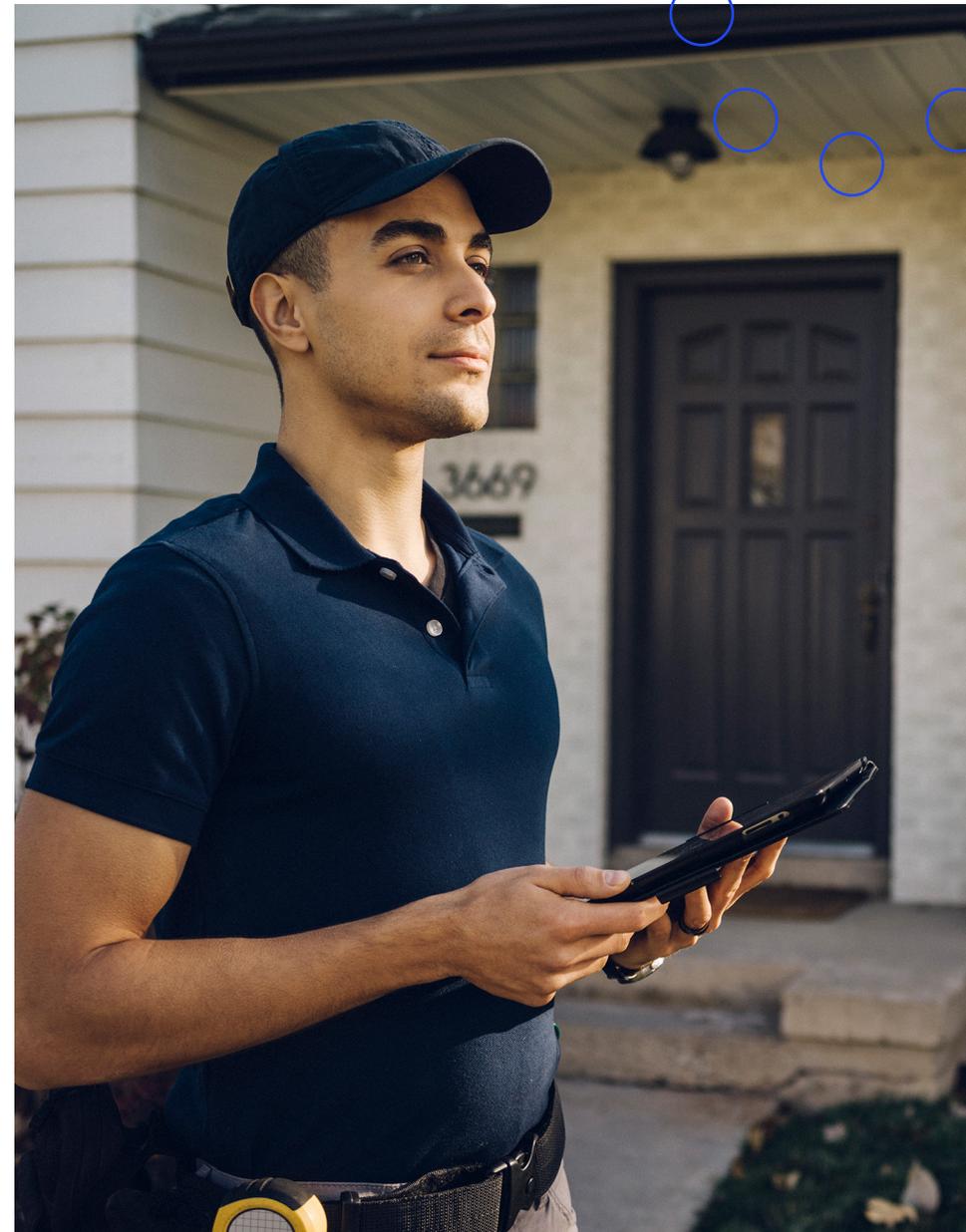
- Andy Sernovitz

The Remarkable Customer Experience

We've all had them—a remarkable customer experience. They seem to come out of the blue. Taken by surprise, we wake from the doldrums of daily routine to the possibility of joy and delight.

Remember the first time someone at a restaurant remembered your name? And then they asked if you wanted the usual? How many times have you gone back?

How about that time you called an e-commerce retailer expecting to get a pre-recorded message and someone picked up and asked “how can I help you?” and then they helped!





Did you tell your friends? Did you write a review? How many people do you think this influenced? The answer is: probably more than you know.

Having a positive experience with your employees is the [leading motivation](#) for a customer to leave a positive review. It tops the quality of your offering, service speed, cleanliness, price, communication, and convenience.

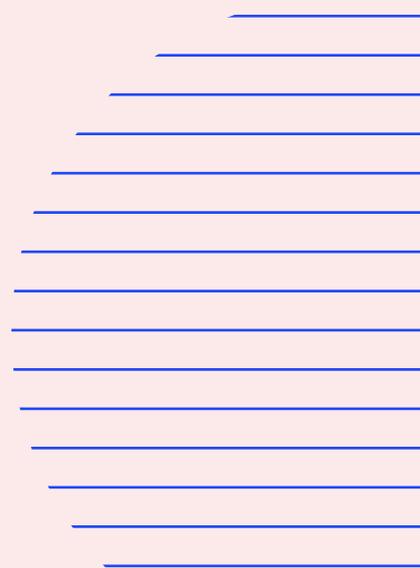
Alongside this, [85% of consumers](#) also say that employee attitude is the most likely motivation for a consumer to leave a one-star review.

What Remarkable Isn't.

Before we take a deeper look into what remarkable is, it's helpful to know what remarkable is not.

Wearing a pink cowboy hat when you've only ever worn a brown one might be noticed by the people who know you but probably won't cause strangers to remark. Why? They've already seen a pink cowboy hat. And there's a lot competing for their attention.

Being remarkable isn't just attention-grabbing. It's being what no one else is—the one and only real purple cow—or doing something in a way that your competitors aren't.

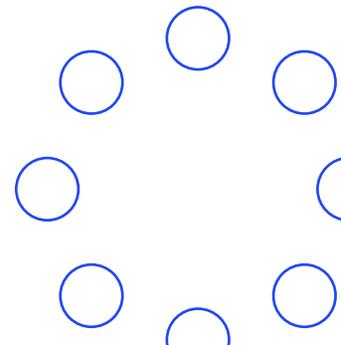




5 Ways to Be Remarkable

Sure, we're all willing to give a recommendation to a friend when asked, but that's not the type of word-of-mouth we're talking about. While those recommendations are good, and only happen when you're doing something right, they don't have the revenue-expanding force of people talking about your business just because it's remarkable. We're talking about spontaneous glee. That's the type of word of mouth that changes the game.

Let's leave theory behind for now and get into the practice of being remarkable. In the sections following, we'll review some of the common plays in the 'be remarkable' playbook. In each section, we'll expand on the mechanics and psychology of each play and give concrete examples from businesses of various sizes across several industries.





Listen Closely

Consider this—you're probably already doing something remarkable and don't know it.

Before setting up major brainstorming and strategy sessions, you might want to stop and listen closely to what your customers are already saying about you. Chances are your customers are pointing it out.

Reviews are an obvious place to look. Read through all the reviews of your company and start to note patterns.

- What are people taking pictures of?
- What is the most commonly used word to describe your business?
- Pay close attention to new customers, especially if your business relies on referrals—what were customers promised, and how did you deliver?

Responding to positive reviews

Review:



Loved my experience at Austin's Auto! Super-friendly staff—the guy even came out and changed my headlight for me. Excellent service. Definitely coming back.

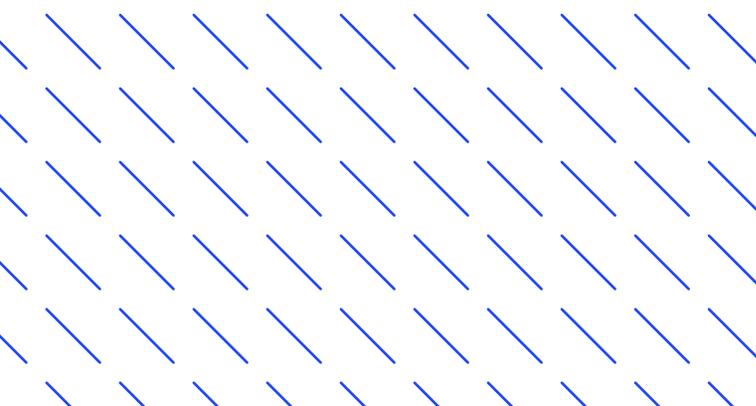
Response:

We're so glad to hear you enjoyed your visit. Your recommendation means the world to us. We hope to see you again soon!



Look Beyond the Obvious

What is remarkable about you may not have anything to do with your core product or offering. In fact, often it's easier to make *how* the product is delivered remarkable than it is to make *what* is actually being delivered remarkable.



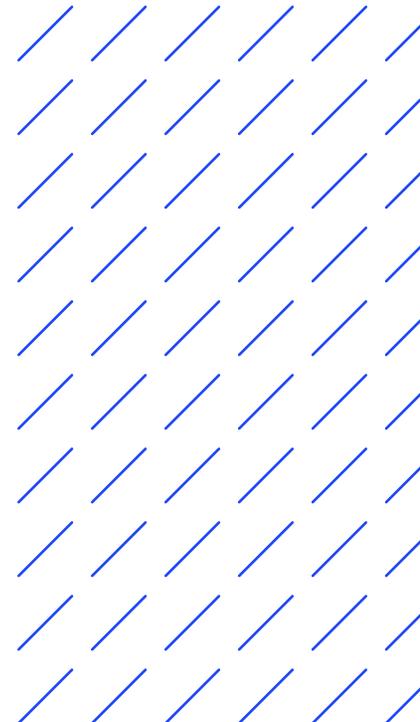


Crutchfield

How could a mail-order electronics company—that started in a time before the internet—be successful while charging higher prices with limited inventory and average shipping times? They delivered their product with unparalleled expertise and personalization.

In 1974, when Bill Crutchfield wasn't able to find anyone to upgrade the car stereo in his Porsche 356 coupe, he realized there was an opportunity to sell car stereo electronics to a DIY market. If you've ever purchased electronics or speakers for your car, you've probably heard of Crutchfield. Is it because Crutchfield has the best prices? Nope. In fact, their prices have historically been higher than most. Is it because they have the best selection? Not really. While they have a great selection, they don't carry every brand.

Bill Crutchfield decided to do what his competition couldn't. He knew that Radio Shack, Best Buy, Walmart, and Circuit City could certainly put the same products on their shelves, but they could never offer as much expertise about specific applications as he could. Crutchfield began blueprinting every vehicle that had ever been made and created a database of vehicle-specific application data that could be referenced by customer service agents.



These agents were not your average customer service staff. They were hobbyists and technicians with a passion for car stereo equipment (think Apple Store genius for car stereo). If you called Crutchfield in the 80's (and still today) you would get someone who could talk your ear off about your car and the exact setup you should have.

Crutchfield took it a step further because certain cars require special equipment (brackets, plates, screws, etc) to properly install equipment like the pros. He made these extra pieces (which cost them a few cents) and threw them in free.

Because Bill Crutchfield understood his customer so well, he also knew that most people trying to install their own car stereo equipment knew very little about how to do it. With this in mind, Crutchfield would also send along well designed blueprint-like instructions on how to install specific products in specific cars. The confidence that Crutchfield gave to the novice was part of what enabled the car stereo craze starting in the 80's and is part of the legacy that remains today.



MasterSheet

Complete Car Audio
Installation Instructions

CRUTCHFIELD

IMPORTANT
Before starting, compare items on your invoice with items received.
Carefully check through packaging materials. If any items are missing,
please call Crutchfield Technical Support at 1-800-992-9999.

Although reasonable attempts are made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, it is presented without
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2011-
Jeep Wrangler

SAMPLE

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Factory Radio Removal	✓						
Receiver Installation				✓			
Dash Trimers	✓						
Dash Washer (Front/Back)			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dash Washer (Front/Back)	✓						
Sound Bar Speakers						✓	
Wire Splicing Guide							✓

Tools Required

Panel Tool	Utility Knife	Trim Rem. (Trim)	T15	T20	Wire Stripper & Crimp Clips
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Socket, Flatbit & Extension		Tors Driver	

CRUTCHFIELD
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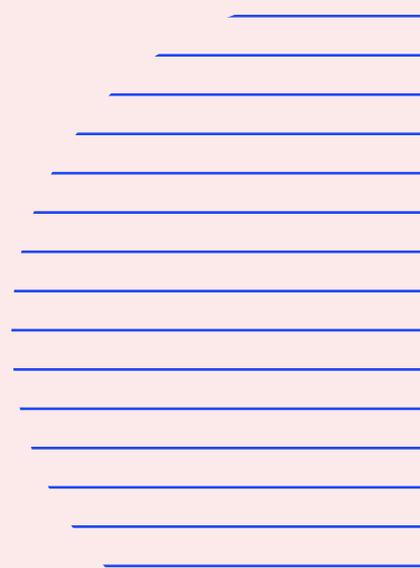


Beaver Valley Chevron

What could a gas station do to shatter expectations? Let the Beaver Valley Chevron off of exit 109 on I-15 in Beaver, Utah be an example. The good folks at Beaver Valley Chevron decided to turn the clock back to the '50s and become a full-service gas station. When you pull up to the station, a nice guy with a name tag meets you and says, "I'll pump it for you. How much do you want?"

It's so simple, yet kind of shocking, because it's completely out of the ordinary, and it's such a nice service you probably didn't even know you wanted.

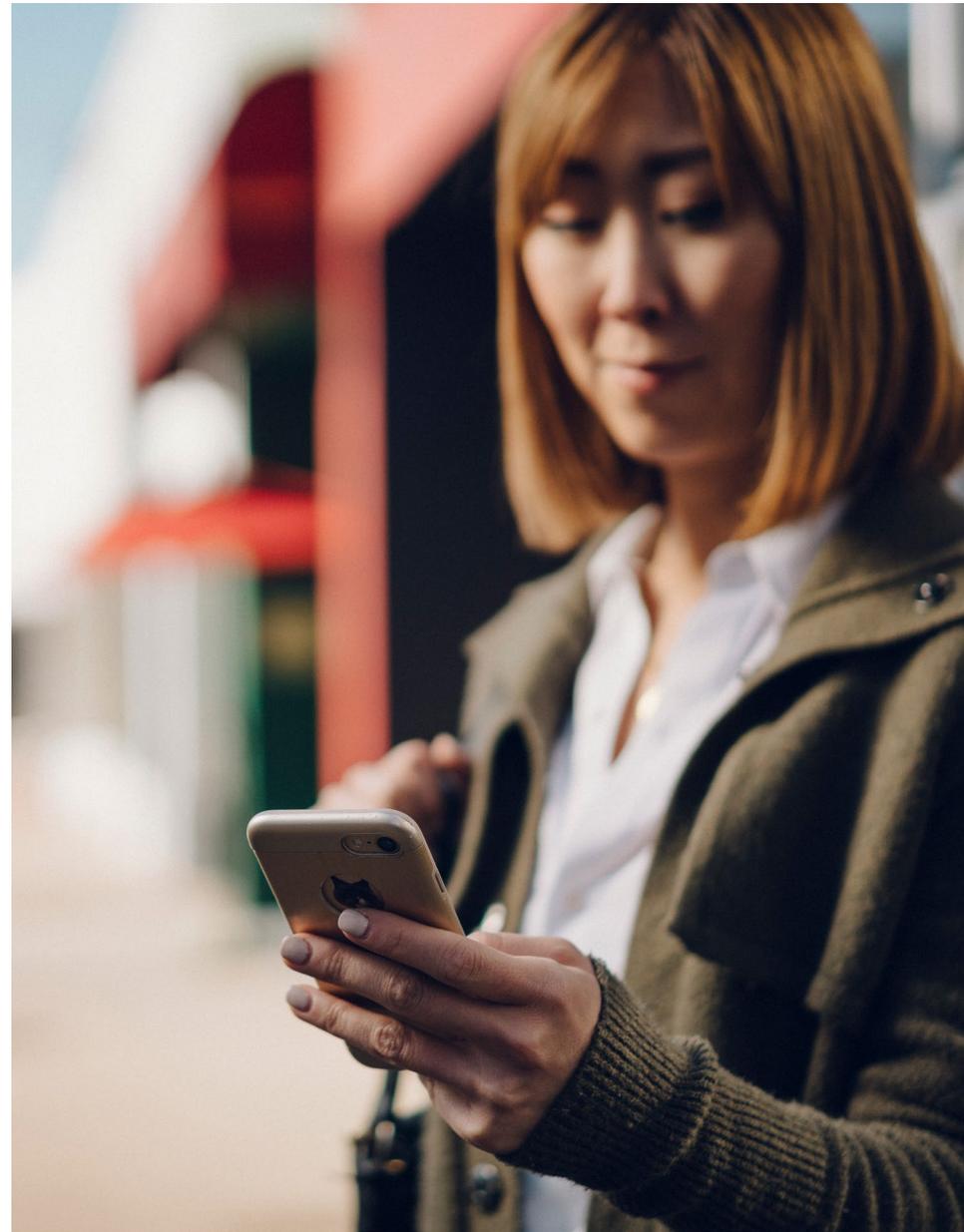
And their 439 4.5-star reviews (for a gas station) say it's working, especially when you compare them to the 44 reviews of the station across the street.



Adapt to New Expectations

There's been a shift in the way we live our lives. Smartphones and apps have been around for years now, but recently we reached a tipping point in our expectations as consumers. Now we live our lives "in between." We order from Amazon in between meetings at work, we make an appointment to have the chip in the car windshield repaired in between the gym and picking the kids up.

Savvy companies recognize the shift. They know we don't want to get chased down by a salesperson. We don't even want to visit the showroom. We want the showroom to come to us, to engage when we're ready to engage, and from our own living room. Businesses that adapt have the opportunity to be remarkable.



Van Horn Automotive Group

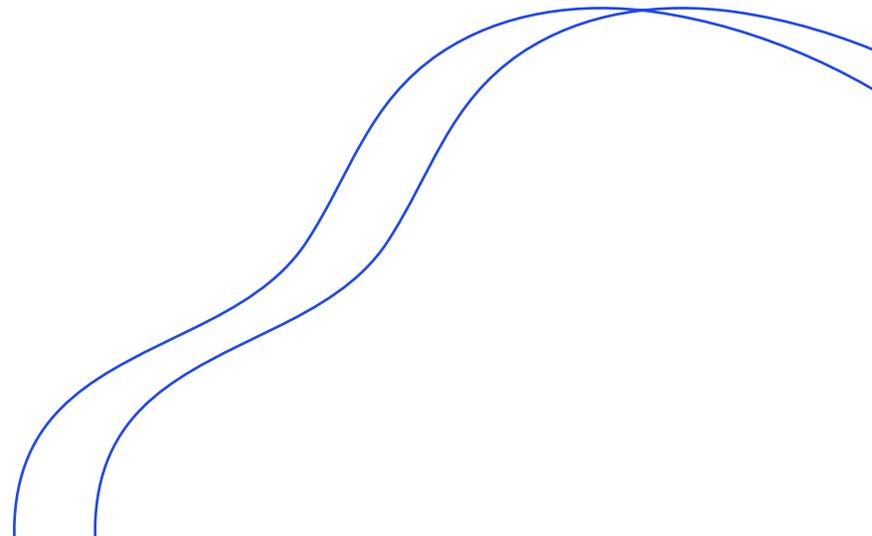
Over the last 50 years, Van Horn Automotive Group has successfully grown from one car dealership in Plymouth, Wisconsin to 15 dealerships across Wisconsin and Iowa with another one on the way. And five new dealerships have opened in just the last two years.

In charge of managing the communication challenges that come with Van Horn's exponential growth is Tina Tasche: "We're trying to make sure that all of our customers have the same experience regardless of what dealership they're dealing with."

As customer's needs have shifted and shopping behaviors have changed, Van Horn has had to innovate how it interacts with customers. "There's been a huge change, even over the last 12 months or so with customer desire to text and chat instead of being on the phone or emailing.

One thing that's been huge for us is that we've made all of our landline phone numbers textable in our dealerships," says Tasche. "And it was just crazy after we did that—the amount of messages we didn't realize that we weren't getting from our customers."

Van Horn Automotive Group has not only been able to provide a consistent experience across all stores, but has also been able to respond to new leads from any source in a remarkable 15 minutes or less.



The Cleveland Clinic

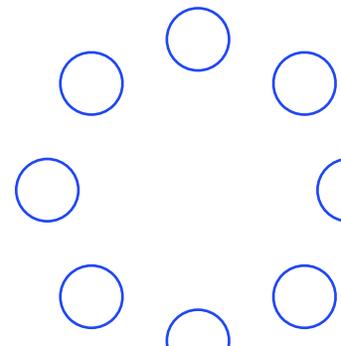
The Cleveland Clinic is a healthcare system in Cleveland, Ohio. They have some of the top doctors in the world and attract patients from all 50 states and 180 countries. The 165-acre main campus is like a city unto itself with 42 buildings. Their 52,000 employees treat over 7 million patients each year.

That's not what's remarkable about the Cleveland Clinic. Here's what is. When you call their main number, a person answers the phone and says, "Thank you for calling the Cleveland Clinic, can I make an appointment for you today?"

Most people don't know what to think. Today, really?

They can do this because they've optimized their entire system around same-day appointments. If you need lab work or scans: same day. And if you sit down with a doctor to go over results, also same day.

Now, this means that if you try to set an appointment for the following week, depending on the specialty, they will likely tell you they're booked several months out. By optimizing for day-of appointments, they've set themselves apart. The best part? A hospital system like this doesn't need to work hard to find new patients. They could probably rest on their laurels if they wanted to. But they don't.

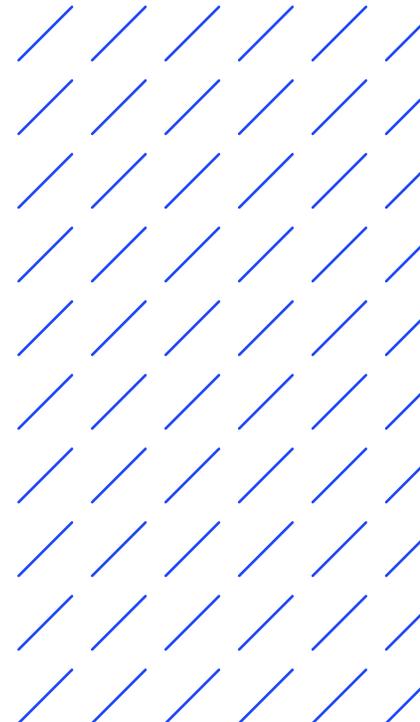


Jack Williams Tire

For most people, getting new tires is a painful experience. For the same cost of a new, high-end smartphone, we have to sit in worn-out chairs, listening to news blaring from a small TV set as the smell of burnt coffee combats the odor of new rubber. And, we get to do this on a workday.

Jack Williams Tire is a 90-year-old tire shop with 36 retail locations in Pennsylvania. For a small fee (around 10 bucks) you can avoid the showroom— the coffee, the small TV—and get a set of new rubber wherever you happen to be, and in the time it usually takes to hand your keys to a technician.

“Not everyone out there loves shelling out money for tires, but it’s a necessity in order to stay safe and not have a blowout on the road,” says Anthony Lucci, Marketing Director of Jack Williams Tire. “People are always short on time now. We just want to try to make it easier for the customer to get the things done that need to be done.”



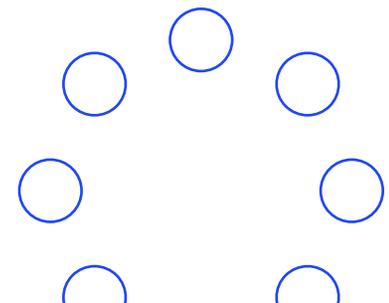


Focus on Retainment

Too many businesses take a foolish fisherman's approach to losing customers. They believe that if they lose a customer it's no big deal because there are plenty of fish in the sea. But just like fish, customers talk and over time they wise up.

Approximately [91% of customers](#) unhappy with a visit to a business won't return. And according to the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, those customers will typically tell 9 to 15 people.

How would your business fare if these stats held true? Most businesses can't afford this type of negative headwind.



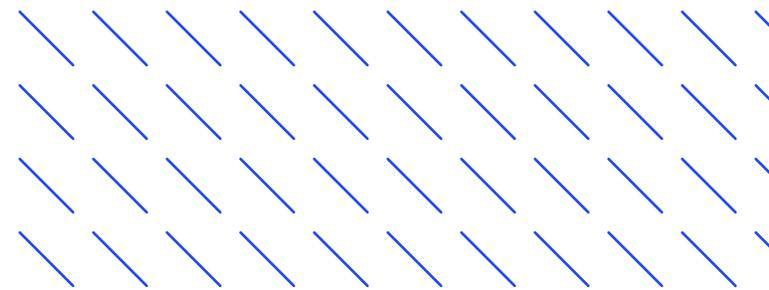
Dental Depot

If you're from central Oklahoma, you've probably heard of Dental Depot. They have 17 locations across Oklahoma, Texas, and Arizona. They provide— you guessed it—full service dentistry as well as orthodontics, oral surgery, and dental implants.

Up until a few years ago, it was disappointing when they got negative results; but no one knew what to do and there was no one in charge of reacting, either. That is until Shelby Wyatt came on board. With a strong belief in the power of reviews, she decided to take on the task of addressing the bad ones. "People look to reviews as much as word-of-mouth," she said.

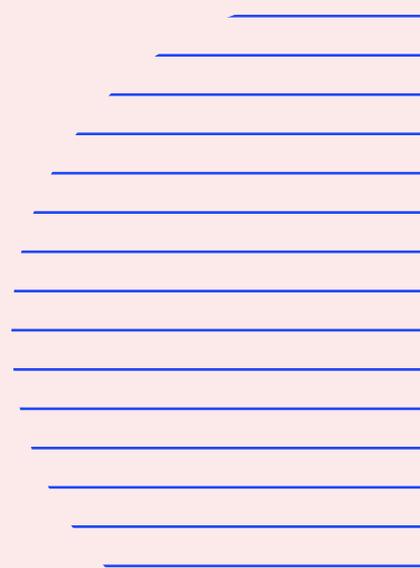
Managing the dozens of reviews the company receives, however, was a complicated task.

She turned Podium for help. Now, all the reviews she receives from disparate sources filter to one dashboard. When she gets a message, she can almost instantly respond with: "Hi, my name is Shelby, I handle patient feedback. Let me know what's going on."



Sometimes, just the fact that Shelby's a real person answering the message changes the conversation entirely. What's more, because she's a relatively neutral observer—she doesn't witness whatever it is that upsets the customer and so doesn't feel as personally attached to the outcome as a technician or manager might—She's able to deescalate the situation. "As soon as patients realize that I am there to advocate for them, it not only makes them happier, but we're typically able to find a solution that will work."

Without realizing it, by empowering a position like Wyatt's, Dental Depot has created a system that promotes both customer satisfaction and company growth as it gets to learn from and react to customer feedback.



Create a VIP Option

We all get annoyed by the friend who says, “It’s OK, they know me here.” But secretly we’re all kinda jealous, right?



Nah, I’ll pass on the VIP treatment”

- No One Ever

Many businesses are missing a huge opportunity by not creating a VIP program. And guess what? VIP can mean a lot of things.

National Car Rental

Sometimes remarkable doing something simple. In the early 2000s, National Car Rental did just that. They did something simple—they made a VIP program that let you pick the kind of car you rented.

They called it the Emerald Aisle. The deal was, if you rented and paid for a mid-size car, you could pick anything on the Emerald Aisle.

How much did this cost National? Almost nothing. And what did they gain? Insanely loyal customers.

Do What Amazon, Nordstrom, and Walmart Can't

Big box stores can do many amazing things with their revenue, infrastructure, and technology, but there are several things they'll never be able to do that you can. And these are the reasons you'll be able to be remarkable in comparison.

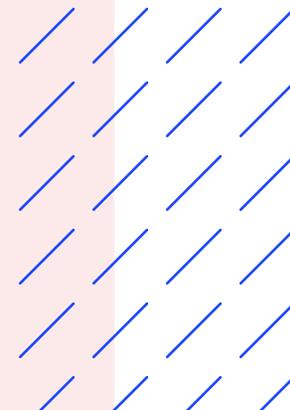
Local businesses are also uniquely positioned to reach their consumers' text message inboxes more

often than major chains and ecommerce players. Did you know that consumers are [21% more likely](#) to opt-in to local businesses' SMS marketing lists than major chain or big box businesses and [45% more likely](#) than online or ecommerce businesses?

And local businesses are also positioned to receive more loyalty. [41% of consumers](#) say they're more compelled to patronize local businesses since COVID. The personalization and trust local businesses can establish is much more valuable than what can be established by bigger stores, and it pays off. Big time.

Quiz question: What can you do that Amazon can't?

01. Answer your phone.
02. Shoot a quick text in answer to a question.
03. Hand curate the best products in a category.
04. Be a human with a personality.
05. Develop a real relationship with your customers.



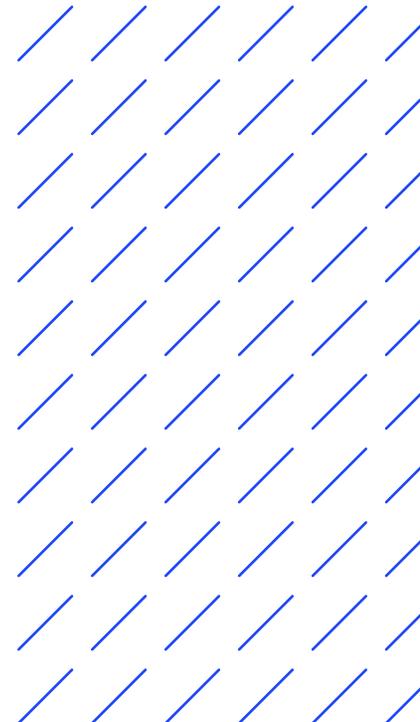
McGee & Company

McGee & Company is a fast-growing home furnishings retailer and interior design company founded by Syd and Shea McGee in 2014. Their Costa Mesa, California destination storefront and e-commerce site has seen an 80% year-over-year growth rate. The largest growth has been on their e-commerce site where all items are hand-curated by Shea who is the Creative Director and co-founder of the company.

And nothing on the McGee site ships in less than 3 weeks. But customers are willing to wait.

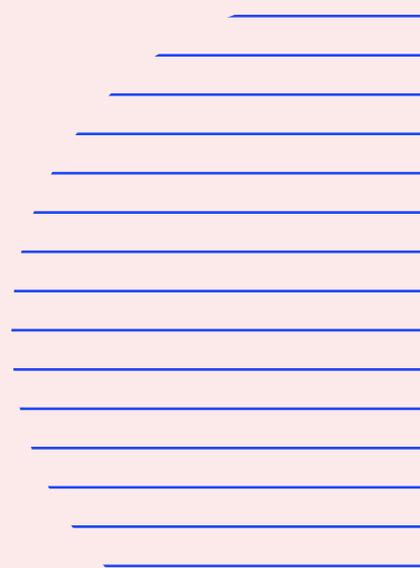
Why? Because as Teresa Keck (Director of Customer Experience) says, all pieces are “high-end and long-lasting,” and because they offer remarkable customer service.

As much of their following developed on social media, customers now ask questions on all platforms—Instagram and Facebook, as well as email and phone. Consequently, McGee has used Podium to help funnel all communications to text.



“Our goal is to respond to our customers in 4 to 7 minutes,” Teresa says about their communication strategy. “We want to make sure that we’re always available to our customers.

When you reach out via social media because you have a question about something you’ve seen on a post and the company answers back within a couple of minutes, you’re like, ‘OK, whoa. These are real people’ or ‘This is a real brand and they really do want to be in touch with me’.”



Get Started

Being remarkable centers around doing things in a way no one else is doing them. And that starts with the right tools.

Podium empowers 100,000+ local businesses of all sizes to find and convert leads by allowing them to:

- Collect and manage thousands of reviews
- Drive and engage with leads online
- Provide a modern customer journey

All through the power of text. See how Podium can help you offer an unparalleled customer experience by watching this [demo](#).

