



8 epic growth hacks for your business

Want to take your business to the next level – fast?
These growth-hack strategies will do the trick.



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Say hello to growth-hacking strategies

Growth hacks are clever shortcuts to rapid growth – smart ploys that give you a grip on the market before your competitors can overtake you. In today’s digital world, first prize goes to the player who makes the best moves in their online playbook.

A hack lets you try out a tactic in a low-stakes way. Start small, check the results, then persevere or pivot to something else. Your customers will quickly tell you what works for them, and thus for you.

Some of the hacks in this guide are tried-and-true techniques transferred to the online economy. Old-fashioned word of mouth, for example, gets turbo-charged when the conversation takes off on social media. Then there are entirely new technologies, such as website chatbots and mobile payments, that are transforming the way we do business.

Which approaches will work for you? The only way to know is to try them out. Get acquainted with the ideas here, and get hacking!



1. Improve your ranking on Google search

Ranking high on Google is the most effective way to be found online. Search results are seen as 'real'. What's more, they are free, unlike the Google Ads that appear on the same search engine results page (SERP). But getting to the top of these pages doesn't happen by accident. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is a highly sophisticated art.

The good news is that SEO can be learnt. Google itself wants you to understand how it works, and their courses on [Google Digital Garage](#) are a frank explanation of how to use the system. If you want more, consider [Moz](#), an SEO-training organisation based in Seattle, the home of Amazon, PayScale and Starbucks.

You can also find out for yourself what it takes to be discovered. Ask people what terms they would use to search for a business like yours. Search for your own offering and see which of your competitors rank high, then work out what might be driving their results. Try integrating these keywords into your own web copy.



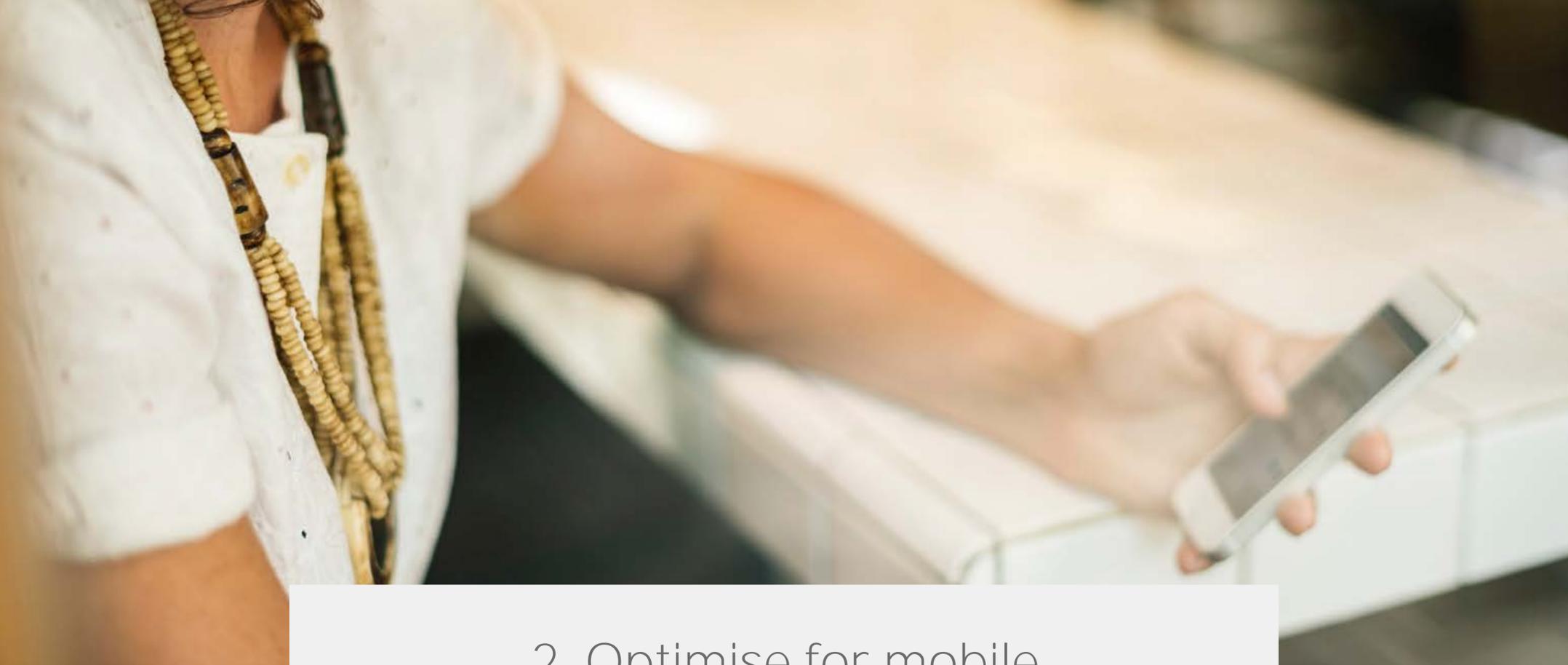
TIP: Listen to how people use voice search. Not only do they speak in full sentences, but they often use different keywords. This is how they'll be searching for your business, so use keywords that have a big impact.

Learn how to make the most of your website's content management system (CMS) and write effective titles for the <H1> slot inclusive of keywords related to your business. This is the HTML tag that defines the heading on a page, making it appear in the largest, boldest typeface. Use the analytics function in your CMS (or Google Analytics) to find out when people visit your site, how long they stay and what sort of content they respond to.

Talk to businesses that complement yours and ask them to create hyperlinks from their sites back to yours, then return the favour. For instance, if you showcase a particular brand of coffee at your café, link to the roaster's site and ask for a backlink in return. The more backlinks your site has, the more credible it will appear to the Google algorithm and the more Google will promote it.



Begin your SEO training with online resources from [Google Digital Garage](#) and [Moz](#)!



2. Optimise for mobile

It's a mobile-first world. Nearly [half of all Australians](#) aged 18 to 35 make purchases on their tablets and 32% shop on their smartphones. Large numbers do research on their mobile device before they buy and a quarter use mobile-payment solutions.

This means your website has to be optimised for mobile. Around [61% of mobile users](#) are unlikely to return to a site if they have trouble accessing it, with 40% of them moving to a competitor instead.

Ensure your site is mobile friendly:

1. **Optimise for speed:** Your website should load on mobile devices in less than 2 seconds, increasing conversions and reducing your bounce rate. You can help improve the load time of your website on mobile by optimising image size, reducing redirects and removing all unnecessary characters from source code without changing its functionality.
2. **Provide a good user experience (UX) on mobile devices:** The layout of your website should be adaptable for mobile and easy for people 'scrolling with the thumb' to use. Keep it uncluttered and streamlined.
3. **Avoid Flash:** Apple iPhones do not support Flash, and with an estimated 8.6 million Australians using iPhones, many users won't be able to access your mobile site with Flash enabled.



Did you know: 25% of your audience are likely to leave if your webpage takes more than 5 seconds to load?

Even better is a mobile app developed just for you. A custom app gives you a direct channel to your customers. Apps can work faster than websites and can be personalised. They allow you to send push notifications and instant updates, collect customer data and rapidly generate reports and charts. Device functions like cameras and GPS let users scan QR codes and connect to maps – all the better to find you and buy.

A custom app will quickly pay for itself, but the investment needs to be funded somehow. A cash flow loan could be one way to find short-term funding for a one-off project like this.



3. Make the most of social media

Social media capitalises on the power of community – family, friends, neighbours and others who know and trust each other. When you tap into a network that’s interested in you, their online word of mouth will do your marketing for you.

First, identify the social media channels that your customers are using. Are they friending on Facebook, following on Instagram, tweeting on Twitter or networking on LinkedIn? Then make your presence felt by setting up your own pages that speak to the look and feel of your business. Begin posting regularly and engaging with other users’ content. Include relevant hashtags that are already trending to capitalise on these conversations and ensure your content gets found.

While the content you post will depend on your objectives, here’s a good place to start:

- Behind the scenes posts: Show off the human side of your business with images and video of staff events and awards nights.
- Quotes: Memorable statements by influencers and experts show you are connected with the wider industry.
- News and updates: Let your customers in on new product or service launches to excite them about changes to your business.

Identify people who act as social media influencers in the market you’re targeting and invite them to become your partners, perhaps offering freebies in exchange for reviews or content.



Did you know? About **84% of people** polled say they trust online reviews and testimonials. It's time to capitalise on the power of referrals!

Retarget customers who looked at your site but didn't follow through. You can set up a Facebook pixel on the landing page of your website that tracks users who come to your website via Facebook. By 'pixelling' these users, you can then retarget them with Facebook ads.



4. Get listed on Google My Business

The quickest way to get yourself discovered in the 'Googleverse' is to create or claim a listing on Google My Business. This free service creates a Google listing for your business, complete with your location on Google maps and the ability to link to your own website. You can list your hours and your offering, such as your menu. Google adds in customer reviews, as well as ratings by sites such as Facebook, Zomato and True Local.

Simple tutorials on the Google My Business [YouTube channel](#) make it easy to get started.



TIP: You might want to buy extra website names and make them redirect to your real site, so check out the range on online domain registration sites. For instance, you could buy [mybusiness.com](#) and make it redirect to [mybusiness.com.au](#).



5. Create a dialogue with customers

Your customers know what they want, so how can you get them to tell you? Just ask – then make sure you listen. Launch an online survey on a free platform such as [SurveyMonkey](#). Surveys are a great way to better understand what's working for your customers and what you can improve about your business. This puts the spotlight on one of your key assets: your existing customer base.

Some survey types include:

- Post-purchase surveys to measure satisfaction with the product or service.
- Product or service development surveys. These surveys will help you understand your customers' desires for future innovations.

If you are launching a new product or service, invite a selection of customers to test your new products or services and use their feedback to improve your offering. Be open, honest and responsive.

The essential part of creating a dialogue with your customers is developing and implementing a strong community management strategy, particularly for your social media channels. The key to a successful community management strategy is to acknowledge all feedback, both positive and negative. While your initial response may be to ignore or delete negative comments or reviews, the best approach is to acknowledge them first.

Treat all compliments or complaints equally by:

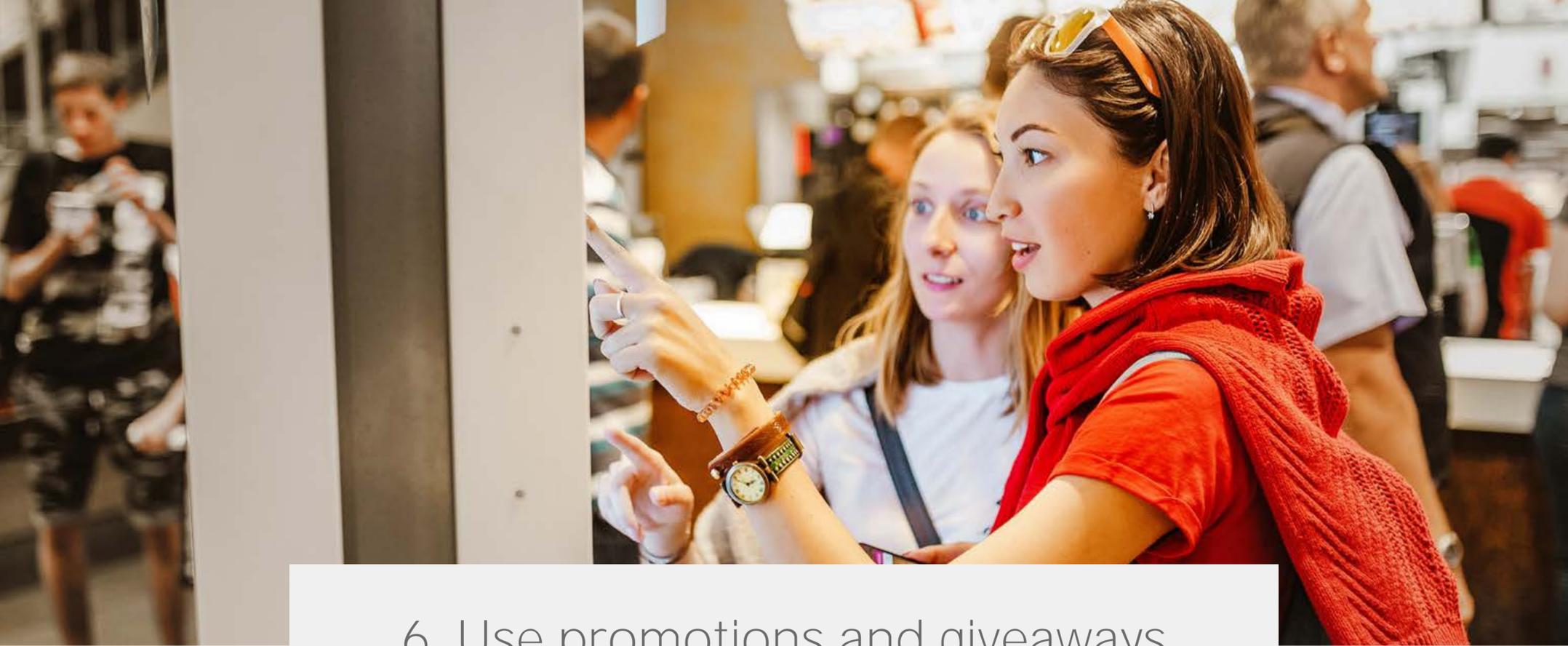
- Responding quickly.
- Thanking customers for leaving their feedback.
- Making your reply personal, and using your name as a sign-off.



TIP: Here's an example of a template you could use for your responses to negative customer comments:

Hi *<insert customer name>*, I'm so sorry you had a bad experience, but thanks for letting us know about it. Please *<call/email/chat>* us on *<contact details>* so we can help rectify the issue. Thanks, *<your name>*.

The benefit of replying to all comments, especially negative ones, is that it gives you the opportunity to take control of negative situations and turn your critics into fans.



6. Use promotions and giveaways

‘Something for nothing’ has universal appeal. The web has taken it to a new level, making it possible for you to offer tokens that customers can redeem in the digital or the physical world. Try attracting customers with a coupon code on your website that translates into a promotional discount or bonus offer. Capture their email address and mobile number in your CMS and you have a database of warm prospects. Now, mine that data to boost sales.



How can you use your database to better engage your customers?

- Establish a customer VIP loyalty program.
- Create more tailored campaigns through segmentation.
- Create a [Custom Facebook Audience](#) to better target advertising campaigns and drive engagement on your business’s Facebook page.

But don’t neglect your old customers. It costs at least **six times** as much to acquire a new customer as it does to retain an old one. Look after your established customers with a loyalty program, vouchers and special offers.

If you need extra working capital to fund the promotion, consider a cash flow loan. With smaller cash flow loans, the health of your business is used to assess your creditworthiness so you won’t have to put up your assets as security.



7. Encourage referrals

One of the most reliable ways to recruit new prospects is to reward your customers for referring their friends to you. Their recommendation gives your business an invaluable seal of approval. So offer customers a discount on their next purchase when they refer a contact to you.



What are the benefits of referral marketing?

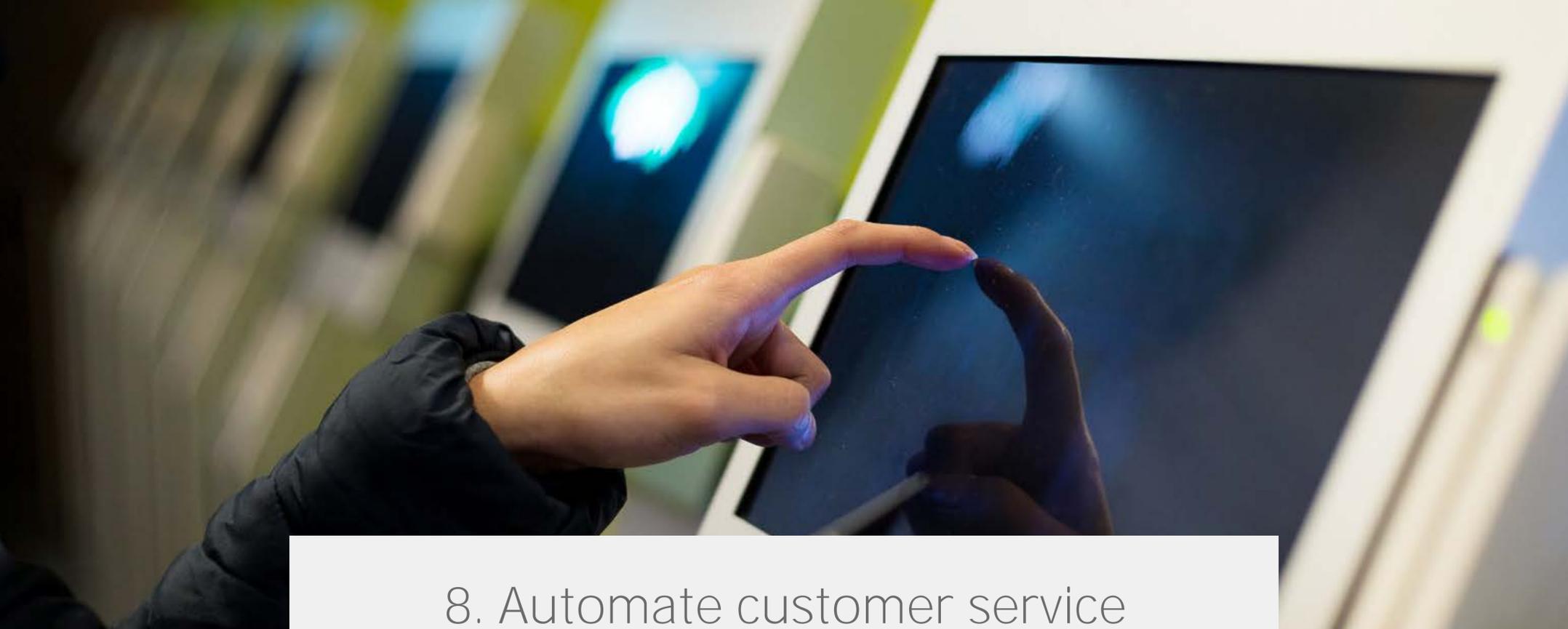
- It's more targeted. Generally people trust their friends and social networks enough to take action.
- It improves your reach and allows your brand message to spread.
- People are more likely to trust referrals than sales messages.

You can also set up an internal referral program, offering your staff a reward when they refer customers or new business. Remember, your employees are also brand ambassadors in the heart of your community. Make sure what they're saying reflects well on both you and your business.

An affiliate program, where you pay financial incentives to professional marketers, can give you broad exposure. The marketers don't personally know the customers they refer to you, but they can use channels such as a blog or email list to turn up prospects who would otherwise remain beyond your reach.



TIP: Document your brand mission, values and guidelines so staff can access them at any time. This will ensure their voice is consistent with your brand's.



8. Automate customer service and marketing

Be there 24/7 for every customer so you never miss a prospect. A simple FAQ on your website conveys key information and transmits vital messages. An automated enquiry form collects customer details that provide a lead for you and your sales team to follow up.

A chatbot can be an effective solution, and with artificial intelligence and machine learning you can make your chatbot as intuitive as you need. You can buy a ready-made solution, use a self-service platform to create a bot within a framework, or pay a software developer to build you one from scratch. You can even set up your chatbot to organise data so that it feeds directly into your customer management system, essentially updating your customer database.



TIP: Chatbots don't have to be expensive – start with a simple Facebook Messenger bot to automatically answer common customer enquiries and free up your team's time! For larger investments, consider a cash flow loan to finance the development.

You can also automate your outbound communications. Send out electronic direct mail with recommendations for customers. Push the button on mass text messages to alert customers to new releases, sale nights and special events. Make sure you target these at the right people by tagging the customer records in your database or spreadsheet and segmenting them by age, gender, interests and buying behaviour.



Where do you start?

Choose

You can take the intuitive approach and pick whichever growth hack you feel comfortable with. Or you can be systematic and pinpoint the hack that is most likely to deliver. You could run a SWOT analysis of your options – work out the hack’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Test

Trial the hack with A/B testing. Run two versions of the same hack simultaneously and carefully track which version performs the best. You could post the same content on Facebook and Instagram, and watch which platform gets the best results. Only alter a single element at a time so you can tell which variation made the difference.

Learn

It’s crucial to monitor the impact of your hacks and adjust your marketing, customer service, product development and other business processes in light of the results.

Repeat

Create a feedback loop where you continuously learn from your experiments and improve your offering.



Next Step

If your hack reveals an opportunity for growth, small business finance from Reckon Loans powered by Prospa could help you build momentum. There’s no security required to access up to \$100,000, and funding is possible in 24 hours.

Enquire now: reckon.com/au/business-loans

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