

## Getting Your Business Found

If no one knows about your business, the odds are it won't be successful.

"Getting visible today is harder than ever before," says Glenn Muske, the North Dakota State University Extension Service's rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist. "The traditional marketing tools are still used, plus now online tools just add to the clutter that prevents your business from being noticed."

"This is certainly true for new businesses, but even existing businesses need to work to remain visible," he continued. "Consumer research has found that people forget most of the marketing they see within two weeks unless it was something spectacular."

How much advertising does the consumer actually see?

The amount is unclear and, depending on the definition, varies, but estimates are that the average person sees 117 to more than 600 traditional media ads each day.

"To defend ourselves, our brains have developed habits whereby we only recognize a small percentage of those ads," says (Insert name and title) of (Insert county). "One study suggests that only 76 ads were noticed from the 560 that study suggested we see each day."

"This natural tendency becomes one of the barriers of trying to be visible," (Insert last name) added.

Much of the research of advertising exposure was done prior to the surge of online marketing.

"Thus, when those numbers are added in, it is amazing that any small business can ever be found in this jumble," (Insert last name) says. "Yet new and existing businesses can and are effectively finding their audience every day. Probably one of the key tactics is developing and using networks."

Other steps business owners can take include:

- Having an attention-grabbing message that encourages the potential customer to take action
- Telling the benefits their business offers and how the business can solve the consumer's problem
- Being focused on the target audience
- Marketing their product at the right time (when customers need a product or service most)
- Offering testimonials
- Being consistently in front of their targeted market
- Using the marketing tools where the audience is most likely to find them

“As you can tell, getting found requires that the owner do market research,” says Muske. “Then that research must be put together into a plan defining what tool is going to show what message when.”

Being visible is possible even with the growing numbers of marketing messages that bombard consumers each day. Having a business in smaller communities certainly offers an advantage when doing business locally. However, this only takes the business so far because doing business anyplace, anytime, is becoming easier and easier.

The bottom line is: Don’t take your market for granted. You need to be working constantly to ensure that your business is visible.

For more help, check with your local Extension Service office at [insert phone number and email address]. Also visit NDSU’s small-business support website at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness) and sign up for the monthly newsletter. More information can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz](https://www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz) and Twitter at @gmuske. Another resource is [www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship](http://www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship).

Joining groups such as your local chamber of commerce can be helpful, too. The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives, also can be valuable resources.

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