TOP 15 FREE RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

BY

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DESIGN AND SOCIAL

1 // CANVA

I just recently got on board with Canva and I'm telling you, it's a new favorite! It allows me to create fun graphics for social media. And when I get tired of the font options from Instagram stories, I can always count on Canva to come through for me! It takes a little bit to catch onto it, but there are some great tutorial videos out there to help you (just Google Canva).

2 // WORD SWAG

This phone app allows you to turn quotes into fun images for social media. It has lots of different design and font options to choose from, and it will pair those together in different ways so you have several formats to choose from.

3 // OVER

More than just a creative app for social media images, Over basically allows you to be a graphic designer on your phone and it's super easy to use. If I'm in need of a quick graphic or logo mock-up and am away from my computer, I can create something real quick on my phone using Over. And if you really want to go all out, you can subscribe to the paid version for even more design options (but it is a little expensive, IMO).

4 // CREATIVE MARKET

If you use design templates, you're probably already familiar with Creative Market. But I would encourage everyone to sign up for their email list because every Monday they'll send you free graphic, font, and image downloads - it's awesome! I can't tell you how many times I've used these freebies.

5 // IMOVIE

I mostly use this to edit videos for social media. One of my favorite things to do with iMovie is to put the videos from my Instagram stories into a longer video format so I can share on Facebook. Or, if I have a video saved to my phone that I want to edit down for Instagram stories, I can do that here as well. Different social media platforms like different deliveries of content, so this allows me to edit videos and be flexible in that way.

6 // LOOM

Loom is my new go-to online recording resource. It's great for anything from recording video to creating courses to screen capture. It also records straight to the cloud, integrates into Gmail, and makes your video available immediately (no having to wait on the dreaded color wheel, if you know what I mean).

<u>FACEBOOK GROUPS AND EVENT PAGES</u>

If you're looking to connect on a more personal level with your Facebook audience, groups and event pages are your new best friend.

Groups allow people to opt in for more information, and they send out notifications when people post in the group. A good example of this is <u>The Box Truck Boutique</u>.

Events work similarly, except they are centered around a specific event. A good example of this is the <u>Vintage Pickin' Barn Sale</u>.

Both groups and events can be set up as public, closed, or private.

CREATIVE ORGANIZATION

8 // EVERNOTE

While I'm not a big Evernote user, I know people who absolutely LOVE this app! It's the place where they brainstorm and draft all their creative ideas. They like it because they can put their links, images, and notes all in one place - basically like a digital inspiration board. I would encourage you to check it out and see if it's a good fit for you!

9 // PINTEREST

I use private Pinterest boards to help me develop an idea for a campaign or a brand. Here I can start pinning images that help me get my head around a certain look or feel. Some people use Evernote for this same purpose, but Pinterest is my go-to for this type of thing. One extra tip: add the Pinterest browser button so when you are online and come across an idea or image you want to save, you can easily pin it. I hesitated to add this at first, but now it's one of my favorites!

BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

10 // GOOGLE DRIVE

This one I use pretty much every day and I love it. It's basically the online version of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. And the best part is you can share documents and folders with friends, edit in real time, and access from any computer or device.

11 // ZAPIER

This app is very new to me, but I like what I see so far. It basically automates your business tasks, like uploading client files to a Dropbox folder, making information available across multiple apps, or gathering feedback from a social media account. It's another great way to help you stay organized and have easy access to what you need to run your business.

12 // SURVEYMONKEY

I think we would all agree that feedback is key to helping our businesses succeed. After all, we want to provide what our customers want, right? So it's good to send out an occasional survey and hear gather that information. SurveyMonkey is very user friendly for both you and your customers. It only takes a few minutes for you to set up a survey, and it will only take a few minutes (or less) for your customers to respond to the survey. It's a win-win for everyone!

13 // TOGGL

I just got introduced to this great way to keep track of time for your billable clients. You can sort by both activity and project. And if you have it downloaded as a desktop app and you're working and not tracking time, it will send you a notification. It can also provide reports for you and is a great way to help you stay organized!

14 // WUNDERLIST

I've learned that I don't have a great memory and lists are key to me succeeding in life - mostly so I don't forget something important! (Anyone?) Wunderlist allows me to create lists for myself or lists I can share with other people. I can check items off once they're done, and I can set deadlines for specific items and Wunderlist will send me a reminder. It's a great way to help me make sure I meet all my commitments, because that's something that's very important to me. It's also great on those days where you feel like you hardly got anything done to look back and realize, ok I really did do something!

15 // MAILCHIMP

This is a great resource for automated email marketing. You can link it to your website and online store, send scheduled and triggered emails, and get analytics - all the good stuff. And it's free for lists up to 2000 people. It also gives recipients the option to opt-out if they choose, which is super important in making sure your email marketing is legal and complies with CAN-SPAM requirements.

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