

1. STRATEGY & FOCUS

Before tactics, tools, or content, clarity matters most.

- ✓ I can clearly describe my ideal customer
- ✓ I understand the primary problem my business solves
- ✓ My marketing goals support real business outcomes (not just visibility)
- ✓ I know what success looks like for marketing in 2026
- ✓ Our marketing efforts are aligned with business priorities

If fewer than 3 are checked:

Lack of focus may be limiting results more than lack of effort.

2. MESSAGING & DIFFERENTIATION

Strong marketing starts with clear, consistent messaging.

- ✓ Our value proposition is easy to understand
- ✓ Our website clearly explains why someone should choose us
- ✓ Our messaging is consistent across channels
- ✓ We talk about outcomes, not just services
- ✓ Prospects understand what makes us different

If this feels unclear:

Messaging may be creating friction in sales and marketing.

THE 2026 SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING REALITY CHECK

A PRACTICAL CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY GAPS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEXT STEPS

This checklist is designed to help you quickly assess where your marketing stands today and where the biggest opportunities lie for 2026. This is not a task list. It's a clarity tool.

Answer honestly. Notice where you feel confident... and where you don't.

3. CONTENT & VISIBILITY

Content should support trust and decision-making.

- ✓ Content answers real customer questions
- ✓ Publishing is consistent (even if limited)
- ✓ Content supports the sales process
- ✓ We know what content performs best
- ✓ Content feels intentional, not reactive

If consistency is an issue:

A smaller, sustainable plan is often more effective.

4. CHANNELS & EFFORT

Focus beats presence everywhere.

- ✓ We know which channels drive leads
- ✓ Platforms align with our audience
- ✓ Effort is focused, not scattered
- ✓ Decisions are based on performance
- ✓ Channel management feels manageable

If this feels scattered:

Reducing channels may improve results faster than adding more.



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5. SYSTEMS & FOLLOW-UP

Marketing impact depends on what happens next.

- ✓ Lead sources are tracked
- ✓ Follow-up is timely and consistent
- ✓ Systems support marketing and sales
- ✓ Nothing critical slips through
- ✓ Tools are used effectively

If gaps exist:

Even small system improvements can significantly increase ROI.

6. TIME, BUDGET & SUPPORT

Effective marketing must be realistic.

- ✓ Time availability is clearly defined
- ✓ Marketing isn't constantly deprioritized
- ✓ Budget supports stated goals
- ✓ Expert guidance is available when needed
- ✓ The plan feels sustainable

If marketing feels overwhelming:

The strategy may need simplification — not more effort.

READY TO SHINE?

Let's Talk...