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Owning local marketing

Five tips to help your agency thrive

As a local agent, your strongest marketing strategy is finding ways you can **compete and win with digital tactics** instead of trying to replicate the work of more well-funded direct carriers or bigger national competitors. Competitors may outspend you, but **there's no substitute for your local presence and authentic connections** to the community.

Use these five tips to play to your strengths as a local agent and
find ways to win in the marketplace:

- 1** Recognize that this business is about relationships, relationships, relationships.
- 2** Excel with social selling.
- 3** Build a center of influence to enhance your network.
- 4** Be easy to find online.
- 5** Grow your brand by giving back.



“We align our brand with community programs that are genuinely meaningful to our staff and organization. We find that relationships tend to develop naturally as a result of the common ground we share as neighbors and locals.”

Bennie Sheally, Agency President, CEO | Sheally Insurance Group

1 Recognize that this business is about relationships, relationships, relationships.

Organic business is often free, and it's usually the best type of growth. Make sure you're maximizing relationships with existing customers by checking in and ensuring that their coverage is still right for them.

*Our Agent Authority Survey reveals that there are **gaps between agents and customers** when it comes to **perception of service levels**.*



94% of agents reported that they're regularly checking in with customers to make sure their policies fit their needs.

Only 69% of customers reported sufficient check-ins from their agent.

How we can help

Our cross-selling program for Elite Agents uses data to identify customer needs for auto, home, umbrella and powersports, and uses co-branded email and direct mail marketing programs that direct back to your agency.

>> Tips



Set up workflows to check in with your top commercial lines clients **every six months** and personal lines customers at least **once a year**. Your Agency Management System may have a way to automate these reminders.



When your customers have a claim event, make sure you or someone from your agency reaches out **within 48 hours**. This is the personalized touch that differentiates a local agent, and they'll remember it when their policy is up for renewal or they have a life event that broadens their protection needs.

2 Excel with social selling.

Social selling is the process of connecting and networking with prospects and customers on social media networks, especially LinkedIn. It allows you to build credibility and increase relationships by sharing content and interacting with posts. This engagement doesn't need to be time-consuming or painstaking, but it's critical for local agents to be engaged.

Tools such as LinkedIn Navigator allow you to leverage useful features, including custom messaging and expanded search capabilities, and can help you find prospects aligned to the type of insurance you're trying to sell.



According to a LinkedIn study,¹ sales professionals who use social selling achieve:

16% gain in year-over-year revenue.

How we can help

Nationwide's social media support includes a social selling webinar and social media content that complements your agency's own posts.

>> Tips

Optimize your profile

A complete profile improves your visibility on LinkedIn, helps you stand out from your competition and will make you more relatable to connections.

- Upload an up-to-date professional profile photo
- Use a background image to make your profile stand out
- Make sure your contact information is up to date
- Add a great summary — it's one of the first things LinkedIn users look at
- Fill out the experience and education sections completely
- Create a custom LinkedIn URL

Publish with a purpose

Posting valuable content on LinkedIn positions you as an authority.

- Engaging status updates increase awareness of you and your company, which in turn grows your personal connections on LinkedIn.

A single status update reaches about 20% of your connections.²



Posting an average of 20 times a month will extend that reach to 60%.²



Grow your network

Thinking holistically about your customer base and network can help increase your connections and build a quality network.

- Tap into your existing customer base by inviting them to connect with you on LinkedIn
- Browse through your clients' connections for individuals who may benefit from your services
- Promote your custom LinkedIn URL across your website, email signature and marketing materials

Engage your followers

Here are some ways to highlight your agency's place in the community and engage your followers.

- Hold social media contests
- Feature an associate going the extra mile
- Highlight community events
- Explain common coverage gaps (e.g., umbrella)
- Hype your local business customers
- Congratulate customers on life events — birthdays, moves and job changes

3 Build a center of influence to enhance your network.

Building a local center of influence allows you to extend your reach to new customer bases through warm leads provided by referral sources in a mutually beneficial way.

Done properly, centers of influence can be a sustainable way to attract business from customers who are shopping (or are likely to shop soon) for insurance.

>> Tips



Make a list of mortgage brokers, real estate agents and car dealers you know or who could make introductions.



Local business networking chapters could be a good opportunity to jump-start relationships.



Getting started often takes demonstrating value and trust, which may require you to share a few good leads first before you get some in return.



Be patient: You're playing the long game and leads may not come right away. The relationship is reciprocal, so consider identifying the types of customers they're looking for and ways you can help.



Remember to check in. Many relationships fall apart after a good first meeting because there isn't ongoing communication.

How we can help

With Nationwide Express®, you can share get-a-quote links with referral sources that they can use with customers.

4 Be easy to find online.

Search engines such as Google use listings to help rank your agency in search results; if these aren't accurate, they impact your ability to be found online.

When there are more than **30 fields completed in Google My Business** it leads to:



vs. not completing this information.⁵

>> Tip



Check out our **search engine optimization (SEO) white paper** for more insights and ideas.

How we can help

As an Elite Agency, we will manage more than 100 business listings on your behalf at no cost (vendors can charge \$1,000 or more for this service).

The Nationwide Agent Locator increases your website's search ranking and drives leads to your agency.

5 Grow your brand by giving back.

Carrying your agency brand message into the community is an important part of your agency branding efforts.

People want to do business with companies that make them feel good and share their values. Your community connections can create new local relationships and a “brand halo” when you associate your agency’s name with nonprofit organizations. The investments you make by getting involved in your local community can have long-lasting positive effects on your business.

How we can help

The Nationwide co-op program allows you to get a **50% reimbursement on community events and sponsorships.**

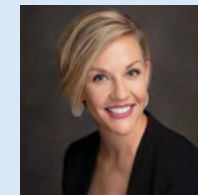


Need more information?

Contact your *Regional Marketing Leader* for more on how we can support your agency’s efforts.

“Having a presence in the local communities we serve is more than just a name and reputation. It’s having passion to make a difference and devoted purpose behind your actions. People want to see that businesses are genuinely invested in the things they financially support — that we care about what we say we do in a meaningful way. It’s a beautiful new era of doing business, and if done correctly, can make a huge impact on the success and reach of your business.”

Emily Gerber Poe
Owner
Gerber Insurance & Financial Services



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¹ “The How-To Guide to Social Selling,” <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/social-selling/how-to-guide-to-social-selling-ebook>.

² 5 Free (and 3 Paid) Ways to Build Your Employer Brand on LinkedIn, <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/linkedin-product-tips/2017/5-free-and-3-paid-ways-to-build-your-employer-brand-on-linkedin> (April 11, 2017).

³ “Helping Your Business Through COVID-19,” BrandMuscle (March 26, 2020).