

# SelfInformed

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Member Spotlight

## Steve and Dawn Woodburn

Marvelous Moosey Adventures LLC





# Top Ways to Get New Customers

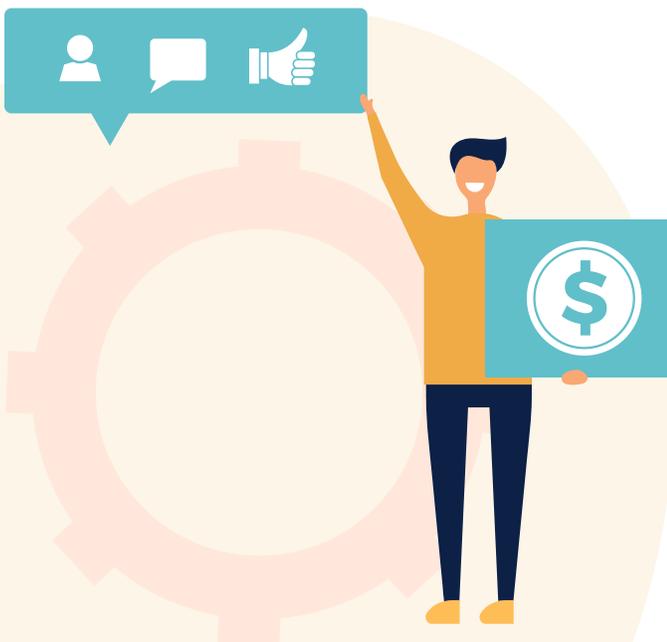
Owning and operating a small business is no easy task, and maintaining your quality of service or production while trying to drum up a new business may seem intimidating. However, there are several tried and true ways to attract new customers, and by following these top suggestions, a successful boost in customer relations is undoubtedly on the horizon.

## New Customer Discounts and Promotions

It is no secret that everyone loves a discount or deal, but this sales tactic can also prove very valuable when it comes to attracting new customers for your business. Whether it is a “buy two get one free” or a “free gift with purchase,” offering introductory promotions and discounts on your products and services is a viable way to drum up new business opportunities. If someone was on the fence about trying out your business, a new promotion could very well be the tipping point for them to say ‘yes’ to your company’s services and products. Promotional incentives are often linked to evolving shopping habits among consumers who may be tired of where they usually shop.

Furthermore, monitor your own products’ popularity; offering discounts on your most purchased items will likely draw your business some much-needed attention while keeping your current customers loyal to your brand.

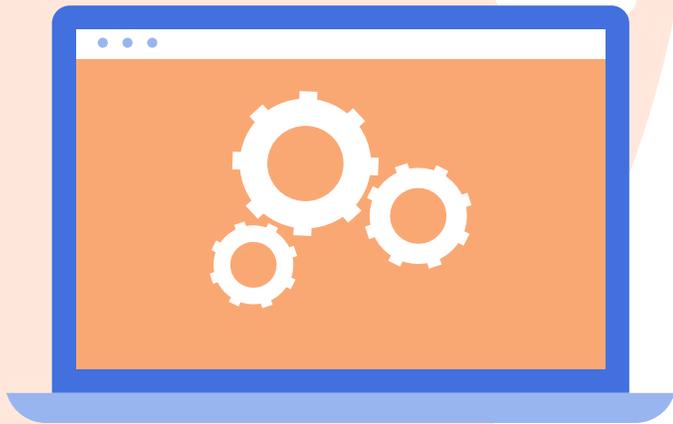
You may want to consider installing a loyalty program for your long-time customers. Loyalty programs allow your customers to be rewarded for continuing to use your business. They can earn points towards discounts or be offered exclusive sale prices that are not available to customers outside of the loyalty program.



## Requesting Referrals

If a customer has been with your company for an extended period of time, or if they have expressed their satisfaction with your company, it may be time to request a referral. A loyal customer is more likely to spread the word about your company, especially if you choose to throw in an incentive. Incentives for business referrals can range from discounts for both the current customer and the new customer or a special promotion for the current customer.

If you know that you have happy customers, do not allow yourself to become passive and hope that they choose to spread the word about your company to family and friends. Instead, create a systematic approach to actively pursue referrals from current customers, such as follow-up email inquiries about their customer satisfaction and then additional emails requesting referrals.



## Updating Your Website

It is no secret that online shopping is quickly becoming the primary way to make purchases. The service industry also relies heavily on online promotion for its customer base. Your business' online presence can be directly connected to the number of customers you reach.

People search for services they need online, and they compare the pricing of their purchases from different sources. If your business has a lackluster or outdated website, it is not a stretch to assume that your poor-quality page is hurting your company prospects.

Your website is meant to do the heavy lifting when generating online leads. Review your search engine optimization and marketing and ensure that your tactics are up to date. If you are unfamiliar with SEO marketing, it would be wise to contact a professional who could guide you through a successful SEO campaign.

Your website's design must be user-friendly and easy to scroll through. If your website has large graphics, it may take longer to load, driving potential clients elsewhere. It is also crucial that your website be mobile-friendly. Millions of people browse the internet from their cellphones, and if your business' website does not transfer to a mobile user, you could be missing out on many sale opportunities.

## Networking Your Business

One of the best ways to generate new customer leads is networking. While networking is nothing new, it produces results and has for many years. Spreading word of mouth and introducing yourself to people within your business' industry is a crucial part of attracting fresh consumers. Seek out and participate in local networking events that pertain to your company. Making your presence in the marketplace known can make all the difference when it comes to business opportunities.

While networking, be sure to present yourself as a service that can help others instead of appearing to only be at the event for yourself. Customers and business owners alike are attracted to feelings of community and are more likely to use your business and refer others.

Being an active community member is a powerful way to promote your business ventures. If you are looking for places to meet people within your industry but are unsure where to start, look into joining a trade association, attending networking events, signing up for expos pertaining to your business. Also, be on the lookout for local events within your community, such as PTA meetings, fundraisers, auctions, or fairs.



## Use Online Rating Sites to Your Advantages

As shopping for products and services has evolved into the online market, so have company reviewers. It is a commonplace now for people to research businesses via online rating sites. It is recommended that business owners monitor these third-party sites for any concerns or complaints about their company that they may quickly address.

However, you can also use these websites to your advantage when you receive positive reviews. Linking these reviews directly to your website will show potential clients that others have had a positive experience doing business with your company. The reviews posted on an unbiased forum will also bring more validity to their positive comments.

## Reach Out to Past Customers

If you have a list of lapsed customers, it would be viable to revisit those contacts in hopes of reviving their interest in your business. You can contact past customers via email, phone, standard mail, or text with a message offering some form of promotion if they choose to do business with you again. This will rejuvenate interest and help you win back some customers that fizzled out previously.

Please make it a regular occurrence to reach out to past clients (every six to twelve months). This will help maintain customer growth throughout the year.

## Partnering with Complimentary Businesses

Teaming up with complementary companies is a fast way to receive cross-over attention for both parties. Similar customer bases will allow both your company and theirs to reach new consumers without spending a lot of money. However, avoid competitive businesses that offer the same service or product.

You will want to partner with businesses that can help you grab a stronger hold on the marketplace. For example, an ideal partnership might be for someone who installs tile to partner with someone who paints houses.



## Showcase Your Expertise

If you are an expert in your industry, let those around you see it. By promoting your expertise, you create interest in your business and generate new clients who are already familiar with your work. Volunteer to speak at industry panels, expos, or other events that can get your name and expertise noticed. You can also host webinars and online workshops for your target market.

Most of the time, people like supporting local businesses over large corporations, so being a well-known member of the community is good for business. Your community will take more notice of you and your business if you participate in local charity events, sponsor local sporting events, organize community donations, or donate to your community's schools. This will get your name and company out in plain sight of your neighbors and allow you to give back to your own community.

## Getting Listed on Local Directories

An upside to using the internet to market your business in local directories. Small businesses within a local area can be listed free via online directories. When you register your small business with the local directory, it becomes easy to find with a quick search.

Map views and contact information are instantly available and can be found by anyone in the world. Some of these local directories include Google Places, Bing Places, and Yahoo Local.

## Social Media

Social media continues to change online marketing for businesses, especially now that you can promote yourself via paid advertising through these platforms. While having a website and prioritizing an SEO strategy is vital, holding a social media presence on a platform frequented by potential clients is always a good idea.

By joining platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, you can bring your business' latest updates to a broad audience. Paid ad campaigns can help your promotions be seen by millions of people who may not have seen them otherwise.



## Final Thoughts

There are many ways to attract and maintain customers for your small business. Some will be more successful than others, and the measure of their success will depend on your business and your target market.

If you offer a service rather than a product, marketing on Instagram (a platform of photos) may not be the best choice for you. Take the time to consider who you are marketing your business to and build your promotional strategies from there.

To learn more about the top ways to get new customers for your small business, contact the experts at [NASE](#). Our licensed professionals will be happy to answer any questions you have.



# Member Benefits

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## Great News! Free Online Course Offer for NASE Members from MindEdge Learning!

During the month of April, 2022, **NASE members who purchase any of the MindEdge self-paced online courses** that are offered through the **NASE website (<https://catalog.mindedge.com/nase>)**, will also receive the following MindEdge online course for **Free!**

### ▪ Course: "Personal Branding"

**Course Description:** A brand is no longer just a certain type of car, shoe, or soda. We all have a personal brand that expresses our values, experiences, personalities, and ultimately everything that makes each of us unique people who stand apart from the crowd. "Personal Branding" focuses on teaching you how to cultivate your professional brand. You will learn the value of personal branding, how to craft your personal brand both online and offline, and the best methods for communicating your personal brand to clients, employers, and other industry professionals.

- ✓ Normally \$49 / **now Free after purchase of any other MindEdge course** from the **NASE website**
- ✓ The course can be completed in 3 hours, but with 90-days access you can work at your own pace
- ✓ This is an excellent value, as you will be getting **two courses for the price of one**

If you have any questions about this promotion, contact John Sikora from MindEdge

**John Sikora**  
jsikora@mindedge.com  
(630) 327-3710



## SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH GRANTS Sponsored by Dell Technologies

### April 2022 NASE Growth Grant.

No matter where your work takes you, Dell Technologies is here with seamless solutions to keep your productivity at its peak. NASE members can access work from home solutions at additional savings with stackable coupon. Visit [www.Dell.com/NASE](http://www.Dell.com/NASE) to access these savings. For any questions around the best remote solution for you and your business, call our **Small Business Advisors at 800-757-8442**.

Apply for the Dell business development grant from the NASE worth up to \$4,000! Designed to help address a specific business need. **Apply Now!**

You could receive up to \$4,000 for your small business, sponsored by Dell. The NASE has already awarded more than \$600,000 in Growth Grants to NASE Members just like you.

Grants can be used for Dell office equipment, marketing, advertising, hiring employees, expanding facilities and other specific business needs. You could be the next grant recipient. To be eligible for an NASE grant, you must:

- ✓ Be an NASE Member in good standing.
- ✓ Demonstrate a business need that could be fulfilled by the grant.
- ✓ Provide a detailed explanation of how you will use the grant proceeds.
- ✓ Show how the grant will improve your business growth and success.
- ✓ Offer supporting documentation such as a résumé and business plan.

*Growth Grants are awarded at the sole discretion of the NASE. Unfortunately, not everyone who applies will receive a grant. Decisions of the selection committee are final and are not subject to appeal. No application feedback will be given. [Click Here](#) for recent grant recipients.*

New!



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Visit [NASE.org](https://www.nase.org) to learn more about the following benefits!

## crowdspring

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## Member Spotlight



# Marvelously Self-Employed

Steve and Dawn Woodburn are the Chief Adventurer (Steve) and Amusement Director (Dawn) for Marvelous Moosey Adventures LLC located in Lilburn, Georgia. They created Marvelous Moosey, a soft plush moose with blue hooves to be unique and marvelous and they wrote a children's book to tell his backstory. This is Steve's third career having worked on-air in radio for 20 years as a disc jockey, news anchor and traffic reporter. He spent the next 30 years in the branding and promotional products business and finally started Marvelous Moosey Adventures with his wife Dawn in 2018. Dawn has worked as an Executive Assistant for the last 35 years with the same company and continues to be employed full-time while Steve spends the majority of his time running MMA.

### **When and why did you join the NASE**

When we started our company in 2018 we had only a vague idea in regard to all that being an entrepreneur involves. We joined NASE in 2019 to help us navigate through all the tasks involved in running a small business and have used the forums and other benefits to help us get up and running.

### **What inspired you to enter the field you are in?**

Steve has always worked in creative endeavors and Dawn is also creative and very organized (Steve calls her the "Spreadsheet Queen"). Given the inspiration they had, it only made sense that the toy and book industry was where they would end up. Steve used his knowledge of getting products created and produced and Dawn used her organizational skills to move into the field they're now ensconced in.

### **When and why did you start your business?**

We started the business in October of 2018. Dawn says Steve blows his nose like a moose and he was also born on Dr. Seuss's birthday (March 2). In 2017

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she bought him a Seuss moose and book as a joke, thinking they would play with it for a few weeks and give it away. They both started posing him around the house so when the other one would come home, there he'd be. One time he was at the stove cooking, another time painting his hooves with nail polish or swinging from the ceiling fan. They'd post the pics on Facebook and people loved them. Who knows where inspiration comes from, but one day they decided to create their own plush moose and give him blue hooves to be different from all the other moose. We found someone to create a prototype, we wrote the book and developed the packaging and then found a company that could get it all manufactured for us, a one-stop shop.

## How do you market your business?

We sell through our website and use social media and e-blasts to drive traffic there. In the fall of 2021, we discovered the festival circuit and found Moosey does very well at festivals. The reason is families attend and they can touch Moosey and hear our story and it drives sales. In 2022 we want to move into retail, slowly, and have a large chain of restaurants with a gift store as our first target. We've also applied to Shark Tank and will continue to look for other ways to get our products to the people we know will love him.

## What challenges have you faced in your business?

The first challenge was finding someone to create a prototype plush, which Steve found online through research. Then we had to find a manufacturer and were fortunate to locate a company that could produce the plush, our book, along with an illustrator, and our packaging. A one-stop shop. The manufacturer though was very slow and we ended up not having the product in time for our launch so we had to tell customers it would be a month or two before we could ship. Then we were told our books (900 out of 1,100) had literally been lost at sea and so it took another few months to reprint and ship those to us. Finally, our manufacturer filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, however we were very fortunate to get all of our products literally just

in time. They left many other customers without product they'd already paid for and a bunch of lawsuits. Steve has found an alternate source for products, a reputable company that manufactures products for other well-known brands and we'll be using them going forward. It's a balancing act to find the right price point for products especially given rising costs and shipping delays, but we'll navigate as needed to ensure we can continue to grow our business and make a profit.

## Do you have any employees?

Currently Steve is the only full-time employee and there are no plans in the near future to add any. We will subcontract the services we need for now, but when the time comes we will add employees as needed to continue our growth. Employees add a layer of responsibility and cost that we'd like to avoid for now.

## What's your schedule like, what's a typical day for you?

Being the sole employee, Steve spends his time changing hats depending on what's needed on any particular day. It could be updating or adding to the website, posting on social media, shipping our orders, researching festivals and retail locations we can get Moosey into, watching training videos on different aspects of business, going over financials and ensuring expenses stay under control. He's no different from any other entrepreneur who has to do it all, but it's been a great opportunity to learn and stay up-to-date on what works and what doesn't to help our business grow.

## What's the best thing about being self-employed?

That we can create our own schedules and work on our passion. And that our efforts and hard work benefits us directly and doesn't go into the pockets of some corporation. And that our products are making a difference in the lives of those who purchase them. Seeing the looks of joy on children's faces as they hug their Moosey or read our book makes all of the hard work and challenges we face everyday well worth it.

# Member Spotlight



## What's the best compliment you've ever received from a client?

For us, the best compliments we receive are the pictures people send of their adventures with Moosey. We have pictures from all over the U.S. as well as the U.K., Canada and even Hong Kong. Seeing the smiles on children's faces melts our hearts and is the reason we created Marvelous Moosey in the first place.

## What's the most important piece of advice you would give to someone starting their own business?

If you have an idea for a business or a passion you want to pursue, don't delay. Use your spare time to lay the groundwork, develop the concept and put all the pieces together. How many times have you heard friends or family say they wish they'd committed to starting their own business, but just never got around to it. It won't happen unless you make it happen and if it means working nights and weekends, then do it otherwise you might also hear yourself sharing your regrets with others down the road. "If only..."

## Which NASE member benefit is most important to you?

There really isn't just one, here are a few of my favorites: I listen to almost all of the weekly NASE Minutes. They're a quick way to learn about topical issues and then I can dig deeper if needed. Ask the Experts: I've used this on several occasions to help answer questions I have. When we set up our website I had no idea how to handle local taxes and learned much by asking questions of these experts. And I browse through the NASE publications on a regular basis to see what's trending and how it might affect our business.

## Any other information you would like to share?

Don't let fear stop you from pursuing your dreams. The fear of failure is as old as humanity, but those who overcome their fears will find the grass can be greener on the other side. I truly believe there is no success without failure, perhaps multiple failures. Use the lessons of failure to try different approaches to your business knowing you'll find the right formula for success eventually.

# MIDTERM ELECTION CYCLE IS HEATING UP!



Following the 2020 election year, no one predicted or could have imagined a crazier election year, and yet, 2022 is shaping up to a wild and crazy election.

If recent polling is a prediction, the trifecta enjoyed by the Democratic party will end following the 2022 mid-term elections. **President Biden's favorability is hovering around 40%**, and while statistically the US job market is booming, the pressure of increasing inflation is very much dampening the mood of **record breaking low unemployment**. Republicans are seemingly well positioned to at a minimum secure the **majority in the House of Representatives** and a growing body of polling that shows a path for Republicans to also secure the majority in the US Senate. Given the potential significant change in the balance of power in Washington, we wanted to examine the impact it would have the self-employed.

- 1) **Changes to Leadership.** A switch in political power results in shifting powers over key committees, including the House Small Business Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, two important committees that address issues of importance to the self-employed community.
- 2) **Political Payback.** House Republicans (and Senate Republicans) are eager to take up their oversight responsibilities should they secure

the majority. The most likely targets will be the response to Covid, including the Paycheck Protection Program and the Emergency Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, the exist from Afghanistan, and most likely some investigations into the consulting agreements that Hunter Biden, the President's son, held during the Obama-Biden Administration.

- 3) **Shift in Legislative Priorities.** The current House Republican leadership has been clear that they will tackle Big Tech related issues: censorship, anti-competition, and unfair business practices. This area is complicated for the self-employed and small business community, given the explosion and expansion of the use of digital tools to support businesses during the pandemic. This is an area where we believe the NASE has an important role in ensuring legislation doesn't curb the innovation and access to these tools.

Given the longevity and reputation of the NASE, we have a lot of experience navigating the political swings of Washington, D.C., always staying laser focused on advocating for the self-employed and micro-business community. We look forward to doing the same in 2023.

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