

SelfInformed

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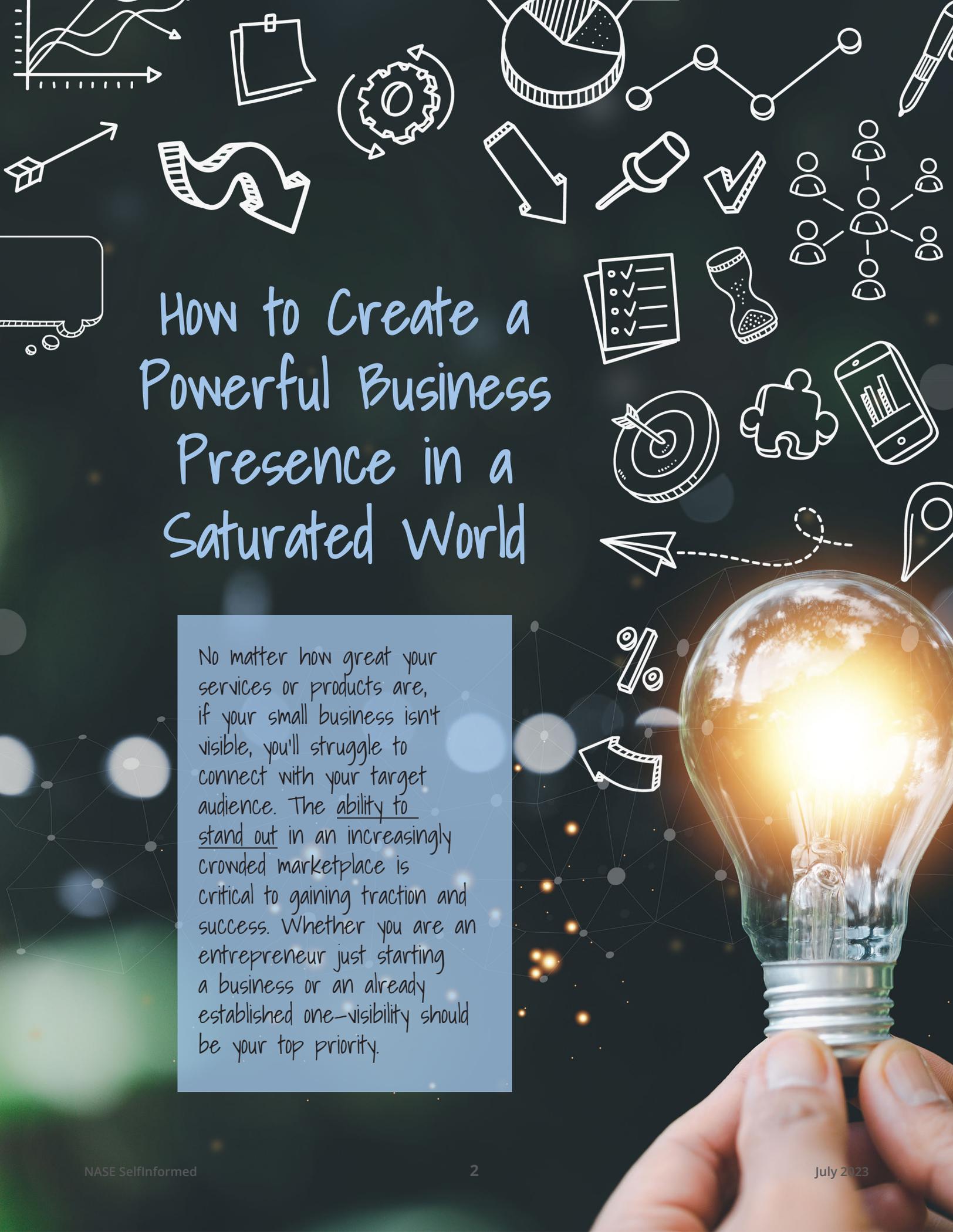
July 2023

Member Spotlight

Rasheda Kamaria Williams

Empowered Flower Girl





How to Create a Powerful Business Presence in a Saturated World

No matter how great your services or products are, if your small business isn't visible, you'll struggle to connect with your target audience. The ability to stand out in an increasingly crowded marketplace is critical to gaining traction and success. Whether you are an entrepreneur just starting a business or an already established one—visibility should be your top priority.



Fortunately, there are many effective solutions business owners can use to create a robust presence that resonates with their consumers. To rise above the rest, try one of these strategies to build a highly visible business with the power to communicate, connect and convert.

Define Your Business with Brand Strategy

Creating a brand strategy when growing a business is an excellent way to communicate across numerous touchpoints why your business is unique and why consumers should trust you. Ultimately, trust fuels authority and credibility, enhancing your business's value and visibility, which leads to high ROI rates and increased profits.

A crucial part of brand strategy is developing a **Unique Value Proposition** (UVP) for your small business. Through this process, you differentiate yourself from your competitors and hone in on your strengths. Defining what you bring to the table and what needs you meet for your customers is a powerful way to build valuable business assets such as trust, repeat purchases, and recognition.

Develop a Professional Website

Developing a professional website is an excellent way to cultivate your online presence. Websites are your online business card and serve many purposes besides being a helpful communication tool. A website is a platform to promote your business, create and build authority, and generate traffic, leads, and sales.

Website development has come a long way since the early days of the Internet. If you are overwhelmed by the thought of adding another project to your plate, there are many innovative website design tools that can simplify the process and save you time, money, and frustration. If you have limited skills and a limited budget, here are some **excellent recommendations** to get you started.

Position Your Small Business as an Authority

Your expertise and knowledge are valuable assets that anchor you within your community, in your industry, and with your followers. Any organization, whether you are a sole proprietor, a micro business,



or a small business, benefits significantly from being seen as an expert in their niche.

Actionable ways to build authority are to create and share expertise. The **easiest way to start is to write** industry guides and how-tos; consider starting a blog or guest-writing blogs for established peers. More time-consuming but valuable are to plan in-house workshops or seminars to showcase your knowledge.

Connect with Your Customers

The primary goal of most businesses is to make a profit. To make this happen, you need customers, so your goal is to create happy customers. Knowing this makes your customers the ultimate asset for your business. You need to reach out and engage with them—not just because they made a purchase—but to show you care.

There are **many ways to connect** with your target audience, and one excellent way to begin is to have direct conversations with your customers about their experiences with you. When you know their likes, wants, and dislikes, you can better tailor their journey with you, and you create a connection that shows that you care.



Growing a Business with Social Media

Social media provides small businesses with many options to build awareness, authority, and trust. Most **social media** sites are free and, with minimal effort, can be an excellent way to remain relevant in a crowded marketplace. You can engage with your current audience and create a buzz for future clients.

You can post on different social media sites to meet various goals. FB is great for building awareness and sharing informative or entertaining information. LinkedIn doesn't see itself as a social media site, but it is an excellent way to nurture your professional image and network with peers. Instagram is a great way to get noticed with little input; many businesses and brands make a big impression by posting creative images with minimal content.

Make Time for Networking

Networking is essential; it's an excellent way to put your business on the map to establish yourself professionally online and in your community. Engaging with other entrepreneurs creates lasting relationships that help your business grow and spark creative thinking and collaboration. Showing up for local events and lending a hand demonstrates your commitment to the community. Expressing your interest in your peers and community is a fantastic way to build meaningful connections that can benefit your business in the long run.



Be Transparent with Your Business

The adage that honesty is the best policy is even more important in an era where businesses and consumers have complete access to each other through websites and social media. There's no doubt that this instant access has some fantastic benefits: however, it puts additional responsibility on all parties, especially when things go wrong, and when they do, customers want transparency.

What is **transparency in business**? It's all about trust and honesty. Not only is it important when things aren't right, but customers also want to understand what an organization is doing to make the world a better place now. Do they support diversity in hiring? Are they using sustainable practices? Is their advertising supporting diversity?

Embrace a Forward Thinking Philosophy

One area of focus that deserves attention is embracing a future-focused mindset. When you have the foresight to research new technologies, business processes, products, services, and marketing opportunities, you can get a leg up on

the competition. Developing new strategies to differentiate your business can immediately boost your visibility, consumer retention, and sales.

Change can be challenging for you and your customers, but being innovative and able to pivot as the world changes has advantages and benefits. For inspiration, read these **case studies** of businesses that weathered the Covid 19 pandemic because they regrouped during this challenging time.

So, Where To Start?



These are just a few activities you can do to increase your business's visibility. You may be overwhelmed by all the options. Where do you begin? An excellent approach is to access what resources (including your time) you have at your disposal and then develop a manageable plan. Start with what you can handle and make progress towards being front and center in your consumers' minds.

It may also benefit you to look at other articles in the NASE blog, **Self Made**. Our site shares valuable information with small business owners about current trends, relevant topics, and helpful advice from individuals who are in your shoes.

See the Latest Press Releases from NASE



As the Number of New Small Business Start-Ups Surge, NASE Gives Voice and Advocates for a Growing Community

Jul 20, 2023

With a record-breaking surge of over 10 million new small business applications the last few years, NASE applauds the American small business community

[READ FULL STORY →](#)



National Association Awards \$28K in Growth Grants

Jul 10, 2023

NASE announced \$28,000 in Growth Grants to seven local small businesses for the first quarter of 2023. Today's announcement also includes three Growth Grant awards sponsored by AARP, and one by DELL Small Business.

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New!



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



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Prospecting vs. Selling

Why prospecting is not the same as selling and why it needs a different approach.

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You'll receive savings of up to 75% on the Best Value List of preferred products with free next-business-day delivery* or in-store and curbside pickup.** To continue to receive your member discounts, you'll need to re-enroll or register for an account through our dedicated ODP site.



SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH GRANTS are Sponsored by Dell Technologies

To View the Dell Sponsored Growth Grants

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To access these benefits, visit www.Dell.com/NASE or call **(855) 900-5548** to speak with a Small Business Advisor. For any additional questions around your Dell benefits email NASE's Account Executive at Kelsey_Sewalson@Dell.com

Member Spotlight



Empowering Self Employment

Rasheda Kamaria Williams is a mentor turned social entrepreneur with a passion for helping youth and young adults realize their power. She is the author of “Be EmPOWERed: How to Live Above & Beyond Life’s Drama” as well as the founder and chief empowering officer for Empowered Flower Girl, a social enterprise on a mission to transform the way young people relate to one another and themselves.

Rasheda has nearly 20 years’ experience in the education, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors having worked with and advised several national and global organizations in the areas of community outreach and engagement and public relations.

When and why did you join the NASE?

I joined NASE in 2021 for the support it offers to self-employed individuals as well as opportunities to network with others who operate in this unique space.

What inspired you to enter the field you are in?

I have always been inspired to help others. As a child and teen, I found opportunities to volunteer and give back – whether assisting other students as a tutor or helping out at fundraising events in my

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community. As I transitioned from college to career, this resonated with me and I became a mentor. My experience as a mentor led me to start Empowered Flower Girl and use my platform to advocate for mentors for youth as well as offer support to those who work to uplift and empower young people.

When and why did you start your business?

I started my business in the summer of 2010 to help young people realize their potential and live above drama they may be facing in and out of the classroom.

How do you market your business?

I utilize earned media to market my business as well as social media. I believe that storytelling is powerful and there's a certain credibility when your story is published by a third party. I also rely on referrals. That is an important marketing tool in my business.

What challenges have you faced in your business?

As a solopreneur who works with vendors/contractors, it can be a challenge to focus on every aspect of your business. I work as a communications consultant in addition to the work I do with Empowered Flower Girl, so having reliable systems is a must.

Do you have any employees?

I currently do not have full time employees. I work with a few contractors, volunteers and interns for special projects. My goal in the next 5 years is to launch a spin off business – a consulting company for individuals inspired to make a difference as social entrepreneurs.

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

In real life, there is no typical day for me! I wake up and give gratitude and work to set intentions for the day. I do often spend time conducting research and reviewing my company's and my clients' strategic and tactical documents.



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

The best thing about being self-employed is the freedom. It isn't easy to be your own boss, but it is definitely rewarding. I have the opportunity to live for a living.

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

The biggest, most heart-warming and inspiring compliments I have received are from the amazing women who've completed our Girl World Peace Academy course. One participant in particular mentioned me as her mentor and inspiration during an event we were attending. I was touched and moved by her words.

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

I would advise anyone looking to start a business to speak with as many entrepreneurs, self-employed

individuals and freelancers as possible before launching. It is vital to have a network of folks who understand your passion, struggles and aspirations. We all need a good vibe tribe.

Which NASE member benefit is most important to you?

There are several benefits that are important and useful. But I definitely utilize the expert advice resources and recommend that other members take advantage!

Any other information you would like to share?

I appreciate the opportunity to share about my business and passion and I am grateful for NASE's support.



NASE Supports Efforts to Eliminate Barriers for Entrepreneurs



As touted over the last few months, the NASE is encouraged and excited to see the number of new business starts, however, we know that a number of people who end up as business owners (i.e self-employed) often start their business journey through side gigs or “hustles”. In fact, according to a new [LinkedIn report](#), the number of Americans with a side gig is now estimated at 50%. However, a new tax law change could stop this growing trend and jeopardize the ability of people to earn extra income or chase their dreams of becoming an entrepreneur.

The change involves the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1099-K which ensures that business income is reported accurately. The form is used to report payments and transactions from online platforms, apps, or payment card processors, including those received as a gig worker, freelancer, or an independent contractor. Initially, the threshold for reporting income was \$20,000 in aggregate payments and 200 transactions annually. Congressional lawmakers significantly decreased that reporting threshold in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

The new threshold is reached with only \$600 in payments and there are no minimum transactions.

The NASE strongly opposed this change as we have continued to advocate and support efforts to simplify and streamline tax filings, especially for the self-employed, micro business owner.

We know, filing taxes is already a complex and confusing process for many taxpayers. With many people unaware of the decreased threshold for 1099-K reporting, many entrepreneurs will receive this new tax form and be further confused as to how this could impact their tax liability.

Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate to address the new reporting threshold. In the House, the [Cut Red Tape for Online Sales Act](#) would raise the threshold to \$5,000 while another introduced in the Senate—the [Red Tape Reduction Act](#)—would raise it to \$10,000. **The NASE strongly supports these important pieces of legislation.**

Whatever direction Congress decides to take, it must start on the path now. The reprieve given by the IRS delaying implementation for a year, is quickly approaching its end. Action is needed soon; otherwise, we might just miss the next great entrepreneur.

Katie Vlietstra is NASE's Vice President for Government Relations and Public Affairs; You can contact her at kvlietstra@nase.org.