



News Release

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Google and SBA Launch “Tools for Online Success” Partnership to Boost Small Businesses

- See Below for Success Stories and Helpful Tips for Small Businesses -

WASHINGTON, DC – Today the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Google announced a new partnership and unveiled “[Tools for Online Success.](http://www.google.com/help/sba)” an array of online resources and training designed to help small business owners harness technology to grow their businesses. The “Tools for Online Success” site (<http://www.google.com/help/sba>) features tutorials, video testimonials, and tips from savvy small business people who have leveraged the web to become more efficient, more cost-effective, and more successful.

“The SBA is pleased to partner with Google to put these important tools in the hands of small businesses across the country,” said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. “As the web evolves and consumers adapt accordingly, we know that more customers are finding traditional ‘Main Street’ businesses online. With these tools for online success, we can ensure these small businesses reach new markets and customers so they can continue to create jobs.”

“One fifth of searches on Google are related to location, which shows that people are looking to the Internet to make decisions about where to go and what to do in their daily lives,” said John Hanke, Vice President of Product Management, Google. “We want to connect our users with the businesses that provide the goods and services they need, but the first step is for those businesses to have an online presence. We’re excited to team up with the SBA to make that process easier for business owners across the country.”

Google and the SBA unveiled the partnership during a forum held today at the SBA’s national headquarters in Washington, D.C., and broadcast live online to press and small business owners across the country. Susan Holt, Principal and Owner of CulinAerie, a recreational cooking school in downtown D.C., shared her experiences working with the SBA and explained how she has used online tools like Google Places and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to attract more aspiring cooks.

Holt is just one of the many small business owners from across the country who are sharing how they’ve used online tools to reach new customers. Many are featured in the video testimonials found at the “[Tools for Online Success](http://www.google.com/help/sba)” site. Each video documents the unique success stories that these small businesses have created using online technology:

- **Masha Hleap-Herskovitz**, Owner of **Fuego Mundo** in **Sandy Springs, Georgia**, uses social media to request feedback from restaurant customers for improvement. Ms. Hleap-Herskovitz even used social media to name her restaurant. “We bounced back and forth with a potential name for months, and we were kind of bottle-necked,” she says. “We put it out there [on social media], and it came back 70 percent ‘Fuego Mundo.’” Visit <http://www.fuegomundo.com>.
- **Sean Vahey**, Owner of **Humphry Slocombe Ice Cream** in **San Francisco** launches new menu items and cultivates a worldwide following for his company’s unique ice cream flavors using social media and Google Places. “I don’t have a lot of time do marketing,” Mr. Vahey says. “I don’t have a lot of time to sit down and reach out to people. I’m able to get on the computer and two minutes later, I’ve gotten the word out...Our Google Places page is important, because it’s got all of our information in one spot - our website, our phone number, you can see where we are on a map, and you can even get directions.” Visit <http://www.humphryslocombe.com>.
- **Sumul Shah**, Owner of **Lumus Construction** in **Woburn, Massachusetts**, uses its website and online maps to research projects all over the United States and show potential customers examples of its past work. According to Mr. Shah, “Customers can see and visualize the types of projects and the complexity of the work we do...In the future, our website will not only talk about how much renewable energy we’re building, but we’ll actually quantify it. We’ll be able to take live data coming from all the wind turbines and solar panels that we’ve installed, simulate it, and be able to report not only how much energy we’re producing, but also what the environmental benefits are.” Visit <http://www.lumusinc.com>.
- **Aliyyah Baylor**, Owner of **Make My Cake** in **Harlem, New York City**, redesigned her website to display vivid imagery of its baked goods. Make My Cake is family-owned and operated, and Ms. Baylor says, “Our website is an extension of our business when it’s too busy for someone to answer the phone. It’s our virtual salesperson, and that is very key.” Visit <http://www.makemycake.com>.
- **Mandy Scott**, Owner of **Mandy Scott Flowers** in **San Francisco** uses highly targeted online advertising to help her premium flower boutique compete with national brands on a small marketing budget. She says, “We are tiny compared to the big players. I can’t hope to compete with them on any kind of national scale, but I feel locally we do very well. Showing up in both natural and paid search results is important for us because we want to be on a level playing field with the big guns.” Visit <http://www.mandyscottflowers.com>.
- **Jessica Soler**, Owner of **Salon Red** in **Decatur, Georgia**, uses a website and local online listings to help her customers find salon locations and book appointments. She says, “A great example of how the web helps Salon Red is we were nominated with one of the local papers to be a ‘Best Of’ salon in Atlanta, and tons of people went online to vote for all of our locations. We just were flooded with business, and it all came from online.” Visit <http://www.salonred.com>.
- **Christopher Bartlett**, Owner of **Skaters Landing** in **West Hartford, Connecticut**, uses online videos to teach customers from all over the world how to properly shop for and use ice skating products. “We really were able to reach out to new markets,” says Mr.

Bartlett. “I don’t look at [our online efforts] as a place to go to and hard sell, but to really talk with people and answer some of the questions that people might have.” Visit <http://www.skaterslanding.com>.

- **Louis Rossetto**, CEO of **TCHO** in **San Francisco** brings a start-up mentality to his company’s premium chocolate production. TCHO uses web analytics to constantly improve its website’s layout, ensuring consumers are engaging with its products in the most effective way possible. “You can’t be a modern company without using modern tools, and online is just fundamental to being in business today,” says Rossetto. “Our website represents our direct link to our customers. We use it to explain who we are, engage our community, and it’s certainly a storefront for us. You’re inviting the whole world into your store if you do that online.” Visit <http://www.tcho.com>.

Continued success stories like these are the goal of the Google/SBA partnership. Visit the [“Tools for Online Success” website](#) for a full run-down, but here are a **few easy tips** all small business owners should be using:

- **Establish your online presence.** One out of five searches on Google are related to location. Most local online listings such as Google Places are free, and if your business doesn’t have a website, there are ready-made site templates and free hosting services that make establishing an online presence easy.
- **Use free marketing to reach customers.** You can build a fan base with free services like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter that keep your customers in-the-know about new products or specials and aware of promotions. These services are great "word of mouth" platforms - where a customer following you might tell their friends about your business.
- **Know your customers.** Easy to use web analytics tools can tell you a lot about your customers by analyzing what search term brought them to your website or what they look at while they are there. This information can help you make smart decisions about what you feature and what search terms you should run search ads on.
- **Keep an eye on the latest trends.** The growing popularity of smartphones means that more and more customers are searching for local information on the go. This makes it all the more important that a business’s online presence be accurate and up-to-date. You can link to your menu, give users driving directions, and even post digital coupons.

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