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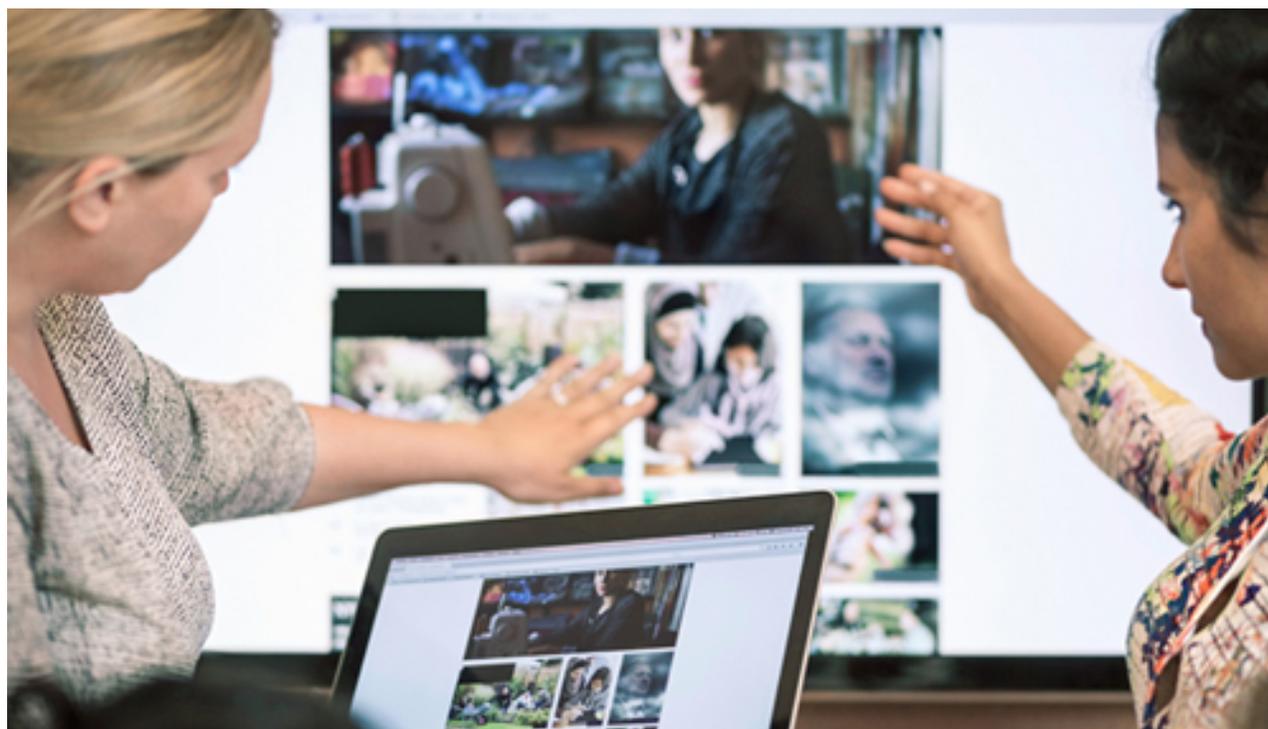
Connecting Your Business to Emerging Opportunities

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## Entrepreneur Insight

### The Latest Must-have Digital Tools for Small Business

By [Beth Braverman](#)



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#### The ultimate list of new digital tools to help entrepreneurs stay on top of their game.

A digital strategy must be an essential part of the business plan for any entrepreneur in 2016. But for small businesses with a startup budget and a skeleton staff, it can be tough to figure out how to maximize the investment of both time and money.

While it may make sense to outsource some of your digital strategy, it's also important to make sure that you remain abreast of the latest digital trends and are fluent in the ways that your customers are communicating. Sign up for a course or ask some of your tech-savvy employees to show you the ropes. "It's OK to have someone help you, but a lot of people don't use social because they're afraid of it," says small business coach Melinda Emerson. "You really need to just dive in. Once you start using it you might really start digging it."

Luckily, there are some great new tools out there designed to help small businesses. We caught up with digital marketing expert Nick Venezia, managing director of creative agency [Social Outlier](#). He tries out hundreds of tools to figure out which will work best for his clients. Read on for a list of his current faves:

## For analytics

**SumAll** – SumAll.com provides data analytics that let you view all social media, email and traffic data on one easy-to-use dashboard. It allows you to analyze your Twitter following by criteria like time zone, following and size of network, so you can better tailor your ads and messages specifically to each audience. Cost: Free basic version; \$99/month for premium.

**Quill Engage** – “If you don’t really know Google Analytics, it can be tough to make sense of the reports,” Venezia says. This tool breaks the findings down into more easily understandable insights. Cost: Free basic version; two paid levels at \$19.99/month and \$49.99/month.

## For Web site review

**WooRank** – This site provides feedback on how to improve your Web site rankings, as well as pointing out weaknesses like dead links. The company boasts that it reviews more than 75,000 sites per month. “It has more than 70 metrics and lets you do competitive research as well,” Venezia says. Cost: Free for two weeks; three paid levels range from \$49/month to \$249/month.

## For keyword research

**UberSuggest** – This tool suggests the best keywords to use for both your site and for advertising campaigns. Cost: Free.

**HitTail** – Rather than suggesting keywords based on terms that you select, HitTail.com analyzes your existing site traffic to generate specific keywords that are relevant to your audience. It specializes in “long tail keywords,” phrases that contain three words or more. Cost: There are four plan levels, which range from \$9.95/month to \$79.95/month.

## For collecting e-mail addresses

**HelloBar** – Venezia recommends this tool for collecting subscriber data from those who visit your site, but it can also direct visitors to a specific page on your site, help promote content on social sites, and set up A/B tests on messages to figure out which work best. Cost: Limited free version; four paid levels range from \$4.95/month to \$49.95/month.

## For scheduling posts

**Buffer** - There’s no shortage of tools out there for scheduling social posts, but Venezia recommends Buffer, which allows you to write posts ahead of time and then schedule them to go out on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest. “You can sit down and spend an hour a week generating content and then it will run it for you,” Venezia says. Cost: Limited free version; paid posts range from \$10/month to \$399/month.

## For content writing

**Grammarly** - Nothing screams “amateur” like typos and grammar mistakes. Avoid them with this tool, which promises to find and correct up to 10 times as many mistakes as your word processor. The paid version can also screen content for plagiarism, which is useful if you’re hiring others to create content for you. Cost: Free basic version; \$11.66/month for premium.

**Hemingway** - This tool takes your writing to a new level by looking for ways to improve your writing that go beyond simply correcting grammar. It will highlight areas where you could use a shorter word or replace overused adverbs. One time cost: \$9.99.

## For meeting prep

**Charlie** – Rather than wasting your time Googling potential clients or vendors, plug a name into Charlieapp.com and get a one-sheet dossier on the person with recent news mentions, social activity and any shared interests you might have. The site syncs up with your calendar and automatically sends you updates on people an hour before a scheduled meeting. Cost: Free.

## For reaching out to contacts

**Crystal** – When establishing a new connection, Crystalknows.com analyzes a person’s personality based on the way they use social media, Gmail and LinkedIn, and suggests the best way to tailor your communication style to theirs. Cost: Free basic service; paid levels range from \$19/month to \$49/month.

## For staying informed

**Hubspot** – Although this popular inbound marketing platform may not be the right tool for all businesses, Venezia says all entrepreneurs should be reading Hubspot.com’s blogs to keep up to date on the latest sales and marketing trends.

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