



FROM SHOPFRONT TO SCREENS

Taking Your First Steps Online

A Practical Toolkit for
Tourism, Hospitality &
Boutique Business
Owners



- KRISTA BROWN -
NEXTWAVE MARKETING

BE DIGITALLY SAVVY, EMOTIONALLY CONNECTED



WELCOME

Taking Your First Steps Online

You've built something real. Something people come back for — the welcoming boutique, the relaxing guesthouse, the expertly crafted spirit or locally brewed beer.

But the way people discover and interact with businesses like yours is changing. Customers are searching, planning, and booking online — often long before they walk through your doors.

This toolkit was created to help you extend the magic of your offline experience into the digital space. No tech jargon, no overwhelm — just real, helpful tools and ideas to get you started.

Whether you're running a microbrewery, boutique retail store, small hotel, or visitor experience — this guide is here to help you build confidence, connection, and visibility online.

What's Inside:

1. Rethinking the Customer Experience
2. What If You Don't Have a Website Yet?
4. Building a Lead Magnet That Converts
5. Connecting With Customers Online
6. Earning Passive Income
7. Managing Your Online Reputation
8. Bonus: Your First Online Tools Checklist



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PART 1:

RETHINKING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Why Your Shopfront (or Tasting Room, Guesthouse, or Retail Space) Isn't Enough Anymore

You've spent years perfecting your real-world experience — the welcoming check-in, the thoughtful product selection, the story behind your locally crafted spirit, the extra touch that keeps guests coming back.

But today's customer journey often begins long before they walk through your door — and sometimes, they never do unless your digital presence convinces them to.

That doesn't mean what you've built is outdated. It means it's time to extend that same care and connection into the online world, where the first impression often happens.

WHAT'S CHANGED

- Discovery happens online. Most people search before they book, buy, or visit — especially when they're travelling.
- Connection is expected online. Customers want to ask questions, read reviews, and understand your vibe digitally.
- Trust is built digitally. Your website, photos, social media, and Google profile help build the confidence to choose you over the competition.



REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

- A couple planning a romantic escape finds your boutique hotel on Instagram — and decides to book based on your aesthetic and reviews.
- A beer-lover browsing for “best brewery experiences in Central Queensland” finds your 5-star Google profile and detailed tour description.
- A family looking for a unique weekend away discovers your local itinerary blog and clicks through to your retail space, tour, or tasting room.

THINK ABOUT:

- How do your guests or customers first hear about you?
- What would they see if they searched your business name on Google, TripAdvisor, or Instagram right now?
- Are you making it easy for them to get a sense of your story, style, and offer — with out needing to call or visit first?

ACTION STEP:

Sketch your typical customer journey — from the first moment of online discovery to the final booking, sale, or visit. Identify 2–3 places where a digital touchpoint (e.g. Google review, Instagram reel, downloadable guide, welcome email) could help build connection and smooth the path to conversion.



PART 2:

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE YET?

If you don't yet have a website, you're not alone.

Many business owners feel stuck here — unsure where to start, worried about cost, or overwhelmed by tech.

Here's the good news: your first website doesn't need to be fancy. It just needs to be findable, functional, and friendly.

WHAT YOUR STARTER WEBSITE NEEDS:

- A simple homepage that explains who you are and what you do
- Clear contact information and business hours
- A way for customers to contact or book with you (contact form, phone number, or email)
- For accommodation providers, your website should include: room photos, location, amenities, booking options, and local tips.
- For boutique retailers: consider adding an online store or at least a gallery with pricing to inspire interest and in-person visits.
- For experiences or accommodation strongly consider an online booking platform.
- A place to collect emails if possible (we'll talk about this more soon!)

TIP: Don't overthink it. A clean two-page site is better than a complicated six-page site you never finish.



RECOMMENDED PLATFORMS:

- Squarespace – Beautiful templates, great for service-based or retail businesses
- Shopify – Best for product-based businesses who want to sell online
- WordPress with Elementor – More flexible, best if you plan to scale or blog heavily and use with booking plugins (e.g. Acuity, Rezdy, or Checkfront).
- Site builders with hosting providers like GoDaddy, Wix, or Zyro — simple and fast to set up .



PART 3:

BUILDING A LEAD MAGNET THAT CONVERTS

Think of this as your digital welcome mat — or your sample table at the front of the store.

In the online world, a lead magnet is something valuable you give away for free — in exchange for someone's email address. But more than that, it's a way to start building trust before money ever changes hands.

WHY LEAD MAGNETS MATTER

In traditional retail or hospitality, your charm, knowledge, or beautiful product display makes the first impression. Online, it's your content. A lead magnet is a way to say: "Here's a little something helpful. If you like it, there's more where that came from."

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEAD MAGNET?

- It solves a real problem for your customer.
- It's quick and easy to consume.
- It feels personal and relevant.
- It positions you as helpful, trustworthy, and worth listening to.

IDEAS FOR RETAILERS:

- "5 Ways to Style Your Wardrobe With One Signature Piece" (PDF guide)
- "The Ultimate Gift Guide for Busy Mums" (Downloadable checklist)
- "3-Minute Home Styling Tips for Every Season" (Mini video series)
- "VIP List: Early Access to Sales & Styling Tips" (Email series)



HOW TO SET IT UP

- Use a platform like MailerLite or ConvertKit to create a simple sign-up form.
- Once someone enters their email, they're automatically sent your freebie.
- This begins the journey from stranger to subscriber to customer.

Pro Tip: Name your lead magnet clearly and directly. It should immediately signal its value.

For example: "Your 3-Night Itinerary for the Capricorn Coast" is better than "Travel Guide Download."

IDEAS FOR TOURISM & ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS:

- "Weekend Escape Planner: What to Pack & Where to Go" (PDF download)
- "Top 5 Hidden Gems Near [Your Town]" (Local tips guide)
- "Planning a Romantic Getaway? Here's Your 2-Night Itinerary" (Printable itinerary)
- "Insider Access: Secret Deals & Seasonal Offers" (Lead-in to exclusive subscriber-only rates)

IDEAS FOR DISTILLERIES & MICROBREWRIES:

- "Tasting Notes + Food Pairing Guide"
- "3 Signature Cocktails You Can Make at Home"
- "Behind the Bottle: How We Brew Our Small-Batch Releases"

ACTION STEP: Write down three pain points your ideal customer faces. Now brainstorm a freebie that solves one of those pain points in 10 minutes or less.

PART 4:

CONNECTING WITH CUSTOMERS ONLINE

The magic of your business shouldn't stop at the counter.

Now that you've got someone's attention (and email address), it's time to keep that connection going — without being pushy.

This is where email, social media, and even your website content become extensions of your hospitality and personality.

HOW TO BUILD TRUST ONLINE

- Share helpful content — think tips, stories, local insights, or behind-the-scenes moments.
- Be consistent — showing up weekly or fortnightly is better than disappearing for months.
- Stay real — speak like a human, not like a brand.

EXAMPLES FOR RETAILERS:

- A weekly "Product Spotlight" featuring bestsellers or new arrivals
- Seasonal styling tips (with links to your online shop)
- Sneak peeks of upcoming sales or local events

EXAMPLES FOR HOTELIERS:

- Monthly "Local Events Roundup" for planning a weekend stay
- Travel tips or itineraries emailed after someone downloads a lead magnet
- Behind-the-scenes stories of the team or upgrades to your rooms



AUTOMATION CAN HELP

Using tools like ConvertKit or MailerLite, you can set up a short welcome sequence — a series of 3-5 emails delivered automatically after someone joins your list. These emails can:

1. Say hello and share your story
2. Deliver your freebie
3. Offer extra value (a blog post, tip, or review)
4. Invite them to explore your services

Krista's Tip: Keep your tone friendly and conversational. Picture a loyal customer reading it — how would you talk to them in real life?

IDEAS FOR BOUTIQUE DISTILLERIES & MICROBREWERIES

- "The Ultimate Tasting Guide: How to Pair Our Spirits With Local Flavours"
- "Behind the Bottle: The Story of Our Signature Craft Brew"
- "3 Local Cocktails You Can Make at Home"
- "VIP Tasting Invitation List – Be the First to Know About New Releases"

ACTION STEP: Write a short welcome email. Keep it simple: introduce yourself, remind them what they downloaded, and offer one helpful tip or blog post to explore.



PART 5:

EARNING PASSIVE INCOME (WITHOUT FEELING SALESY)

Because you already recommend things you love — why not get paid for it?

You're a helper by nature. Whether it's pointing someone to your favourite café, your best local supplier, or a great program you've used — sharing comes naturally. That's why affiliate marketing is a great first step into passive income.

It's not about being a "salesperson." It's about being real and helpful — and earning a little extra while doing it.

WHAT IS AFFILIATE MARKETING?

You earn a small commission when someone buys a product, service, or program you've recommended — using your unique affiliate link.

This could be:

- Travel or accommodation booking platforms
- Products you stock in-store, available online
- Tools you already use (e.g. Canva, ConvertKit)
- Online programs you may have learned from (e.g. Modern Wealthy Program)

WHY IT WORKS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS:

- You're already building trust.
- Your recommendations feel natural.
- You can create evergreen content (blogs, emails, videos) that continue to work for you.



REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

RETAILER:

Creates a "Styling Tips" blog with affiliate links to accessories, shoes, or homewares they love (and don't stock directly).

HOTELIER:

Sends post-stay emails linking to travel gear, booking tools, or tours available via affiliate partnerships.

DISTILLERY OWNER:

Sends follow-up emails after a tasting event or cellar door visit, linking to cocktail kits, artisan mixers, or home bar accessories through affiliate partners — helping customers recreate the experience at home and earning passive income from each referral.

KRISTA'S EXAMPLE:

I promote the Modern Wealthy Program because it helped me shift my business online in a way that felt sustainable and real — no hype, no pressure. Just solid, human-focused training. [\[Check it out here by clicking this link!\]](#)

Krista's Tip: Only promote affiliate links you feel are quality and will genuinely benefit your consumer — otherwise you risk damaging your brand!

ACTION STEP:

Think about the tools, products, or services you regularly use or talk about. Could any of them offer affiliate programs? If so, join one and write your first honest review.



PART 6:

MANAGING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

People talk. Make sure you're part of the conversation.

Your online reputation is often the first impression new customers get. Whether you're running a café, a boutique, or a holiday rental — reviews matter.

STEP 1: CLAIM YOUR LISTING

If you haven't already, claim and update your business listings on:

- Google Business Profile
- TripAdvisor
- Facebook Business Page
- Yelp or Booking.com (depending on your industry)
- Untappd or BeerAdvocate reviews can shape perceptions for distilleries and breweries.

Keep your:

- Hours, location, contact info up to date
- Description warm and customer-friendly
- Photos clear and recent

STEP 2: RESPOND TO REVIEWS (Yes, even the bad ones)

Positive reviews? Thank them sincerely.

Negative reviews? Respond politely, acknowledge their concern, and show a willingness to improve.

- Always keep your tone positive and professional — even if the review stings.

Example Reply (to a 3-star review):

"Thanks so much for your feedback, [Name]. We're sorry to hear your expectations weren't fully met this time, and we're taking it onboard."



STEP 3: MAKE REVIEWS A HABIT

Ask happy customers for reviews — especially after a great purchase or stay. You can include a request:

- In your email signature
- On receipts
- As a small card with purchase
- In follow-up texts or emails

ACTION STEP:

Google your business right now. What comes up first? Is your profile claimed and current? If not, that's your task for today.



BONUS:

YOUR FIRST ONLINE TOOLS CHECKLIST

Start simple. Pick one tool in each category to begin building your digital presence

WEBSITE PLATFORMS

Choose one to build your online home base:

- ☐ Squarespace – visually polished and beginner-friendly
- ☐ Shopify – ideal for online retail and e-commerce
- ☐ WordPress + Elementor – flexible and scalable
- ☐ Checkfront or Rezdy – best for experience bookings (e.g. tastings, tours)
- ☐ Square Online – easy to link with in-store POS

EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS

Choose one to build and communicate with your customer list:

- ☐ MailerLite – simple, effective, and great for automation
- ☐ ConvertKit – powerful for storytelling and sequences
- ☐ Flodesk – stylish templates, perfect for brand-conscious businesses

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM (PICK ONE TO FOCUS ON)

Choose where your audience already hangs out:

- ☐ Instagram – perfect for visuals, stories, and reels
- ☐ Facebook – good for local connection, reviews, and events
- ☐ Pinterest – works well for tourism inspiration or product discovery
- ☐ TikTok – fun, short-form storytelling (especially behind-the-scenes)



DESIGN & CONTENT TOOLS

Create consistent branding and engaging content:

- ☐ Canva – essential for everything from social graphics to menus and flyers
- ☐ CapCut or InShot – easy video editing for social posts
- ☐ Unsplash or Pexels – free stock photos for blogs and website visuals

BONUS: BOOKING & SELLING TOOLS

For tourism experiences, retail, and hospitality:

- ☐ Acuity / Calendly – for tastings, consultations, or workshops
- ☐ Airbnb / Viator / GetYourGuide – for listing your experiences to travellers
- ☐ Etsy – great for boutique or handmade goods
- ☐ Square / Shopify POS – link in-store and online sales

KRISTA'S TIP:

You don't need every tool. Just start with what feels manageable – and grow from there. Highlight your starting picks and commit to learning one new tool this month.



FINAL WORDS:

from Krista

Small business is the heartbeat of every community— but many are still set up to serve a world that no longer exists.

I've spent most of my career working with a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation supporting and promoting local businesses across Queensland, Australia—especially in the tourism and travel sector, a space I'm deeply passionate about.

From helping boutique retailers attract visitors, to supporting local tourism operators through digital transitions, I've seen firsthand how powerful it can be when small businesses embrace the right tools and stay connected to their story.

This toolkit isn't about turning your business into something it's not. It's about helping you translate your offline magic into an online presence that feels just as personal, approachable, and real.

You don't have to know it all. You don't have to do it all at once.

You just need to start. And I'm cheering you on!

Find more tips and useful tools anytime via my website:

www.nextwavewithkrista.com

Disclaimer

This guide is for general information only and isn't a substitute for professional advice. Every business is different, so results will vary. NextWave Marketing with Krista Brown isn't responsible for any decisions you make based on this content or for the performance of any third-party tools or services mentioned. Use what works for you and your business.



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