RESOURCES
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Running your own business is a time consuming task so anything out there that can make it easier is a bonus.

There's so many options out there and with so little time to trawl through the depths of Google to find them we thought we'd compile a list of business tools to speed up your efficiency. Many of these suggestions have come from our merchants from the Inkthreadable Hub so are tried and tested resources we hope will help your business.

MANAGEMENT

Trello

Trello.com

This online free service helps you manage your to-do list digitally. With boards, lists and cards you can go crazy with categorisations. You can colour code, invite and assign people to tasks and for a small charge plug in other services like Google Docs and Toggl.

"Only recently discovered Trello, life saver 😊 never realised how much it would transform what I do." - Marc Ayres

Wunderlist

wunderlist.com

Wunderlist is an app that can be accessed from any device to manage your to do list and share with others. It also has reminders to make sure things don't slip through the net when you're busy.

"I use Wunderlist for my todo / project management as its really simple and I have it setup automated from my system and email adding customer service and weekly tasks automatically." - Joe Müstanski

Basecamp

Basecamp.com

Another alternative but paid, Basecamp is another service for teams to work together on projects and manage your businesses time and teams.

Booking apps

Youcanbook.me or calendly.com

Need to schedule meetings but don't want to be going back and forwards working out what day and time works best? Share a link to your own calendar so they can see your availability and fit a time that works for you both.

People Per Hour

Peopleperhour.com

Too busy to progress your business or have any downtime. Hire someone to do the jobs you'd rather avoid.

Meeting apps

zoom.us Join.me, skype.com, hangouts.google.com

There's too many out there to mention but a great way to collaborate with remote teams as well as hosting live webinars.

Toggl

Toggl.com

Track yours and your team's time to be able to estimate better in the future.

Charlie HR

Charliehr.com

If you've got a small team to manage then Charlie HR can streamline the management and keep all your HR information in one place.

"If you have staff that you wanna keep track of holidays and stuff charlieHR.com was a decent app I used and Hubspot - if you need a ticket system Spiceworks - all free." - Charles Greig

CircleLoop

Circleloop.com

A new way of running your business phones. Access your contacts from your desktop or the app and choose which number you want to call from. Use multiple phone numbers for different businesses, record calls and host conference calls.

SOCIAL

Social Pilot

Socialpilot.co

Social Pilot is a social media manager to save you hours of reposting the same message across all your accounts. You can schedule your business posts as well as analyse your data all in one place.

It's also great for teams with functionality to send posts for approval before going live.

"Another good one I use daily is SocialPilot, allows me to schedule all my social media accounts. Its got csv, rss and api import too so I can plan in my system and automate somewhat my social media marketing. Esp. find it useful for Instagram instead of typing posts out on my phone it's just copy and paste from the app... It has a Chrome plugin too which is great, so if I see something on Facebook I want to share everywhere I just hit the Social Pilot button and it adds to Facebook posts. I actually often write my posts on Facebook first then just hit the Social Pilot button to share on about 10 other networks / pages." - Joe Müstanski

Hootsuite

Hootsuite.com

Hootsuite is also a social account manager with a lot of the same functionality as Social Pilot but it does offer a free plan for one user and 3 social profiles.

Boardbooster

Boardbooster.com

Schedule Pinterest posts, check for broken links and errors and gives you data to know when is the best time to post and what performs well with your followers.

"For Pinterest marketing I love Boardbooster. Just had to set things up once, and now my Pinterest account almost runs on autopilot. I started using it a few months back and my account has been growing steadily." - Celine Adam

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EMAIL MARKETING

Mailchimp

Mailchimp.com

Email marketing has such a good conversion rate it's something you can't ignore running when running a small business. Mailchimp is a great service to run your email campaigns and for free up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month. You can connect to Shopify with [an app](an app) to also track how much sales you get through your marketing campaigns as well as how many opens and click they recieve. You can also schedule campaigns to be sent in the future, segment your mailing list and send automated emails for things like abandoned cart emails and daily email courses.

Campaign Monitor

campaignmonitor.com

Much like Mailchimp with the same features available you can also pay per campaign if you only send intermittently. It also used a drag and drop editor much like Mailchimp to design your email exactly how you'd want.

General Apps

IFTTT

Ifttt.com

IFTTT, standing for If This Then That, is a little miracle worker combining hundreds or services with others. Do everything from posting your Instagram posts on Twitter to tracking work hours in Google calendar. For some more inspiration check out this and this.

Zapier

Zapier.com

Similar to IFTTT Zapier combines other services to streamline and automate your small business. Get notified in Slack when someone completes a Typeform, save Instagram posts to Google Drive or pin new Shopify products to Pinterest.

Papaly

Papaly.com

Personally I think this is my best kept secret and must save me so much time. Papaly is a bookmark page for your browser. I get that all browsers have bookmarks and bookmark bars but this ups the game for me.

Set Papaly to be your default page when you launch your browser or open a new tab and see all your go to links categorised and searchable straight away.

As an example I have a public board with all the useful links I've found connected to ecommerce and working as a freelancer (what I do on the side). You can check it out as well as all the resources I've collected that you may find useful here.

Google Docs

google.co.uk/docs

A great alternative for Word and Excel and can be accessed anywhere with internet connection, create documents, spreadsheets, slides, forms and more all stored in Google Drive.

"Big fan of Google docs, so useful and free!" - Dan Jet

Google Trends

trends.google.com/trends

Got an idea for a product but don't know if there's even a demand for it? Pop it in Google trends to see how many people are searching for it in Google over years. It's a great way to spot products on the rise, seasonality and decline.

AirTable

Airtable.com

Airtable is a spreadsheet-database hybrid, with the features of a database but applied in a spreadsheet format. It can be used for anything from creating content calendars to tracking sales leads. It's cloud based and workspaces can be shared with colleagues to collaborate on.

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SUPPORT

Monosnap

monosnap.com/welcome

Great for teams as well but I found Monosnap really comes into its own when helping with support. Record your screen and/or yourself with or without audio, screenshot images and add annotation. Blur, highlight or box areas and when you're done you can either download or get a link to the image/video so you can share straight away with the paste of a link. The value of a video walkthrough when you have a customer struggling on your website is invaluable!

Intercom

Intercom.com

A customer service platform that tracks leads and current users, and embeds a live chat to your website. Intercom integrates with external platforms like Facebook and Gmail to pull all customer communication through to one platform. You can also segment customers based on variables and send auto messages or emails to any lead or user in your database. This is what Inkthreadable uses to handle customer service!

Olark

Olark.com

There are hundreds of chat apps out there which all do a similar service. Online chat apps are getting more expected with online businesses. Support is now such a priority it is something you should really invest in as well as your after sales services.

Facebook Messenger

En-gb.messenger.com

More and more people demand on Facebook messenger to connect with businesses and now with Messenger bots and integrations into popular platforms it's easier than ever to keep in touch with your customers.

STORAGE

Dropbox

Dropbox.com

Get your files from wherever you are, access them from your finder/drive and also includes a 2GB free plan.

Google Drive

google.com/drive

Start off with 15GB free. All with the same functionality as dropbox to easily access your files anywhere.

Evernote

Evernote.com

With Evernote you can keep track of notes, images, receipts and more. Share them and pin them too.

SEO

Keywords everywhere

Keywordseverywhere.com

A great little Chrome extension that shows you how many searches are performed a month on any keywords you enter. Really useful when doing keyword research which works wonders when combined with…

Uber Suggest

neilpatel.com/ubersuggest

Type in a keyword to get hundreds of variations you can target in your SEO plan and when you have Keywords everywhere installed see all the data you could ever need relating to them!

Page Speed Test

developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/

It's so important for your website to load quickly not only for your visitors to not get bored and leave but also for Google to boost you up the ranking. Get your site tested!

ECOMMERCE

Shopify

Shopify.com

With 1,000,000+ active users Shopify offers an easy way to sell online with 24/7 support and app integrations (Like Inkthreadable!) it's a great place to start building your online business.

EKM

Ekm.com
A UK based ecommerce platform that provides you with an account manager when you start to help you build your business with marketing and general advice and guess what... we integrate with them as well!

Storetasker

Storetasker.com
Have a small tweak or change you want doing to your Shopify store then post it on store tasker and get vetted experts to help you out within hours

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CREATIVE

Envato

Elements.envato.com

Envato have resources for all sorts including mock ups for clothing and accessories. As Kat Louise suggests your own photos are always better but resources like these are a great in between.

"For the mockups on my site, I used PSD files downloaded from Envato Elements, which is a subscription service for downloading mockup designs that can be used commercially. Obviously nothing will beat a proper photograph of your products, but as an interim fix these work quite well. It includes things like model mockups, t-shirts, sweaters, hoodies, folded t-shirts etc, and brand labeling.

It costs $29/month, but you can download an unlimited number of files during that month, so if you plan ahead, you can download more than you'll ever need to make your site look pretty good (hard drive willing - some of these files are in excess of 2GB!). Obviously make sure to cancel it once you've subscribed so you won't get charged every month." - Kat Louise

Placeit

Placeit.net
Place it is a website full of mockups. You can pay per item or a subscription to quickly and easily place your designs on lifestyle images changing the item colours as well if you want.

Beware when using mock up websites that you use as close as possible to the real thing to avoid returns due to the product not being as advertised!

Canva

Canva.com

As a designer myself I hate to add this to the list but not everyone can afford a designer to create their website and social assets so Canva is the next best thing... for free!

Pexels

Pexels.com

There are hundreds of free stock photography out there which could be a blog post on it's own such as stocksnap and picjumbo but Pexel is my favourite because it's searchable, usually has what I'm looking for and only has good quality images.

For an idea of more free stock and video sites you can see my papaly list here.

Graphic Burger

Graphicburger.com

A handy resource for free mockups, fonts, icons, imagery etc. Always free for personal *and* commercial use.

Subtle Patterns

toptal.com/designers/subtlepatterns/

Another free resource for simple background repeating patterns.

Font Squirrel

Fontsquirrel.com

Free, tasteful fonts all of which can be used on commercial projects.

Grammarly

Grammarly.com

Install this app in your browser and it'll automatically check your spelling and grammar as you type, underlining any issues it finds for you to click and correct! It's invaluable, especially if spelling and grammar aren't your strong suit. Plus it's free, with a fee to upgrade for extra gramatical advice.

Frontify

Frontify.com

More of a 'nice to have' option, Frontify helps you manage your brand. Once you've chosen your brand assets you want to make sure they're used and stuck to so Frontify compiles all your assets from fonts to colours and media as a go to resource for both internal and external team members to make sure your brand stays on point.

KNOWLEDGE BOMBS

Skillshare

Skillshare.com

A great place to start when wanting to boost your knowhow. There's a whole section on ecommerce to get your teeth stuck into here.

Smart Passive Income Podcast

smartpassiveincome.com/podcasts

If you're not listening to podcasts yet, you're missing out. It's a great way to get insights into other peoples methods and tried and tested processes and Pat Flynn and his guests know what they're talking about. Stick it on whilst your out for a run or doing some admin and get ready to take notes!

Shopify Masters Podcast

shopify.com/podcasts/shopify-masters

It is a Shopify specific podcast but it covers so much of ecommerce in general with everything from choosing suppliers and drop shipping to using influencers and using Kickstarter there's a wealth of information there for everyone selling online.

Website & Marketing Apps

Google Analytics

Analytics.google.com

We can't make this list without mentioning Google analytics. The go to place for all your website data from the people who visit your website to their devices, location, user journey and so much more.

Hotjar

Hotjar.com

With a free plan Hotjar is such a great app to let you really see inside your customers heads when it comes to your website. Record click and scroll movement across your store and even better (if not a little creepy) watch a video recording of your customers actually using

your website. It's a great way to see if you have any errors or where people might be dropping off your store and why.

User Testing

Usertesting.com

If you're ready to really get some deep insight into your customers, User Testing is a slightly pricey but not unobtainable option to have real people use your website, gaining valuable insights that you can take away.

Gleam

Gleam.io

Run a variety of competitions with ease and integrate with other apps like Shopify and Mailchimp.

ACCOUNTING & BANKING

Quickbooks

Quickbooks.intuit.com

A great online service to track all your money movements online and in their app. It also track your mileage and you can save your receipts within it.

Xero

Xero.com

Based in London they do similar to quickbooks helping you manage everything from payroll to invoicing

Tide Business account

Tide.co

An independent, London based, business account company with no monthly fees just 20p for transfer and £1 per ATM withdrawal.

WEIRD & WONDERFUL

F.lux

Justgetflux.com

Is your business a side hustle? Working late? Make sure you look after your eyes with F.lux. Once installed it reduces the blue in your screen the later it gets helping you switch off once your done and reduces eye strain