



Local Marketing Fundamentals

Start with a Plan

How to build a marketing machine that attracts, nurtures, and converts —without burning you out.

For a lot of Small Business Owners, marketing essentially often looks something like this.

- A couple of Instagram posts a week (if they have time)
- A last-minute email blast when she remembered
- Boosting posts whenever sales dipped

Here is the thing...Random acts of marketing do not work. You need to be consistent, and that requires a plan.

"Marketing isn't magic. It's a machine. You just need the right blueprint."

The Problem with Random Acts of Marketing

Posting just to post. Emailing just to email. Running a one-off ad when sales are slow. That's not strategy. That's marketing roulette. You don't need *more* tactics. You need a system—a way to consistently bring in the right people, guide them through a journey, and turn them into loyal customers.



Understand the Funnel: The 5 A's of Modern Marketing

Forget outdated “funnel” diagrams. Here's a more intuitive way to think about it—especially for small businesses:

1. **Attract** – Get noticed by the right audience
2. **Arouse Interest** – Make them curious and want to learn more
3. **Activate** – Convert them into leads or customers
4. **Ascend** – Increase their value over time
5. **Advocate** – Turn happy customers into your marketing team

You want a strategy that guides people through those five stages. Each stage needs its own tools, messaging, and metrics.



A hand is holding a camera lens, with the lens's aperture visible, showing a reflection of a lake and mountains. The background is a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Strategy = The
Right Message +
The Right
Channels + The
Right Cadence

Let's break this down.

1. The Right Message

You already started this work in Chapter 1. Now, apply it across your entire customer journey.

- For cold audiences → Use messaging that **sparks interest or empathy**
- For warm leads → Speak to **pain points and outcomes**
- For buyers → Reinforce **trust, loyalty, and exclusivity**

Consistency is everything. Your ads, website, social posts, emails—they should all feel like they came from the same human, with the same promise.



2. The Right Channels

Don't spread yourself thin. Focus on channels that:

- Your audience already uses
- You have the time or team to manage well
- Can actually convert

Let's talk real-world examples.

Goal	Channels That Work
Build awareness	Instagram, TikTok, SEO, local events
Generate leads	Facebook Ads, Google Search, email list building
Convert traffic	Retargeting ads, SMS, email automation, website optimization
Retain customers	Email newsletters, loyalty programs, direct mail
Drive referrals	Referral programs, reviews, ambassador content



3. The Right Cadence

Consistency beats intensity.

It's better to send one great email every week than 5 in a row, then disappear for a month. Your audience needs rhythm to remember you.

Set a sustainable content and campaign rhythm:

- Weekly: Social content, emails
- Monthly: Promotions, campaigns
- Quarterly: Big marketing pushes, launches, partnerships





Your Website and Beyond

*Why your online storefront matters
more than ever—and how to make it
work for you 24/7.*

I once reviewed a website for a high-end dog training company. They charged \$2,500 for private sessions. But their site looked like it hadn't been touched since 2011—blurry images, vague headlines, no pricing, and the contact form was *broken*.

They were getting *tons* of traffic from word of mouth and ads. But almost no one was converting.

Here's the lesson:

Your website doesn't have to be fancy. But it does have to work.

That means it builds trust, communicates value, and makes it stupid-easy for someone to take the next step.

Let's clean up your digital house—and make it your hardest-working employee.

The 5 Must-Haves for a High-Converting Small Business Website

1. Clear, Compelling Headline Above the Fold

This is the “don’t-make-me-think”
moment.

Bad: “Welcome to Our Website” Good: “Expert Dog Training That Works—Guaranteed”

Better: “Transform Your Dog’s Behavior in Just 3 Sessions—Or You Don’t Pay”

Rule of thumb: Make a bold promise. Back it up fast.



2. Strong Calls-to-Action (CTAs)

Every page should guide the visitor. Tell them exactly what to do.

- “Book a Free Estimate”
- “Schedule a Discovery Call”
- “Download the Pricing Guide”
- “Claim Your First Month Free”

Make your CTA buttons obvious, repeated, and action-oriented.



3. Trust Builders Front and Center

People are skeptical—so give them reasons to believe.

- Customer testimonials or reviews
- Media mentions or awards
- Certifications, affiliations, guarantees
- Logos of clients (if B2B)

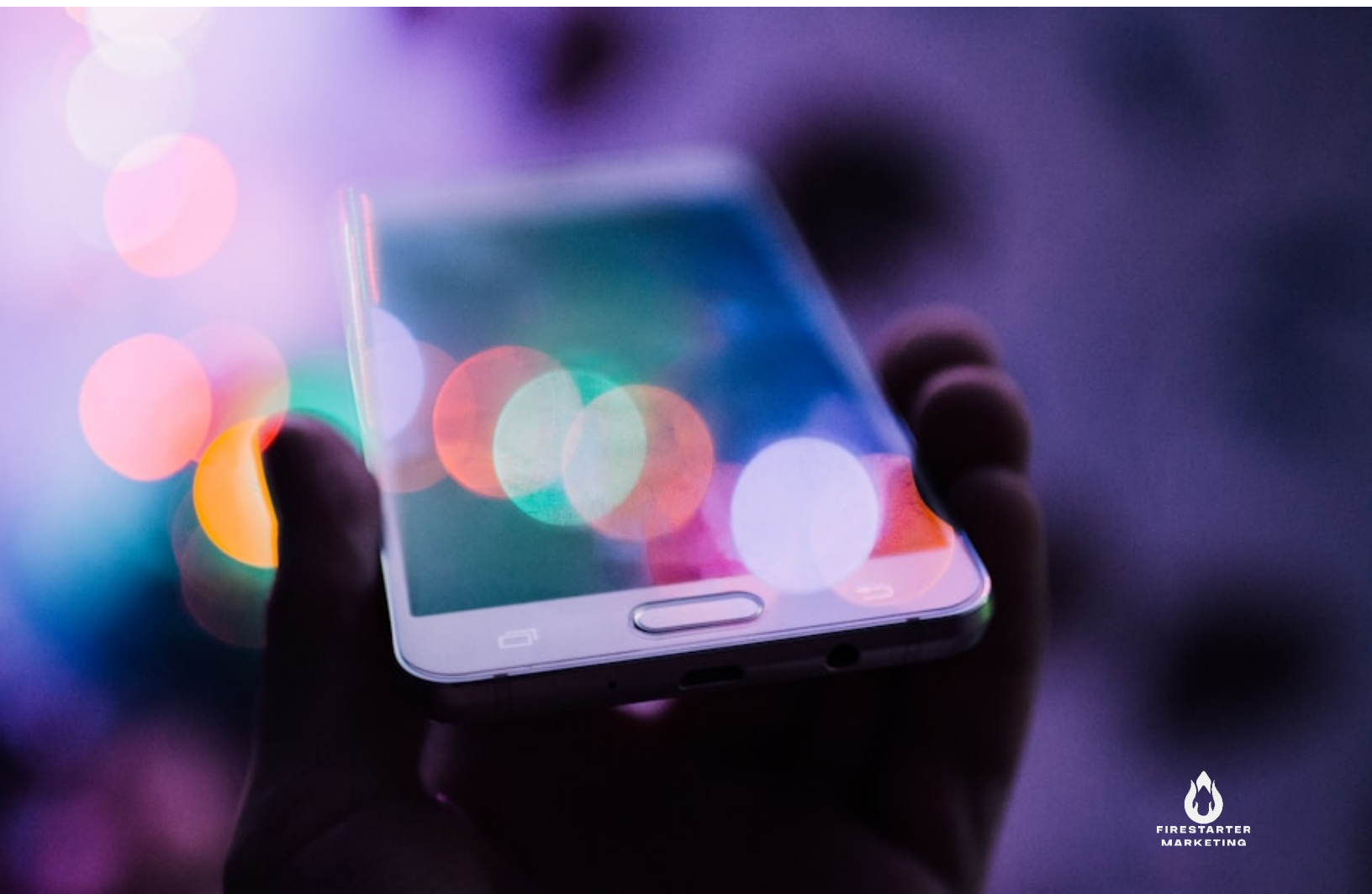
Put this social proof near your CTAs. It's what tips fence-sitters into action.



4. Mobile Optimization

Over half your visitors are on mobile. If your site is slow, cluttered, or broken on a phone –it's game over. Make sure that your site looks good on a mobile device as well as loads quickly. Being found by a mobile customer is a key to success.

Use Google's Mobile Test to check.



5. Don't Stop at Your Website: Optimize Your Local Digital Presence

Google Business Profile (GBP)

- Claim and fully complete your profile
- Add updated photos, business hours, service areas
- Respond to reviews—good *and* bad
- Post weekly updates or promotions (Google loves activity)
- Add FAQs and service descriptions

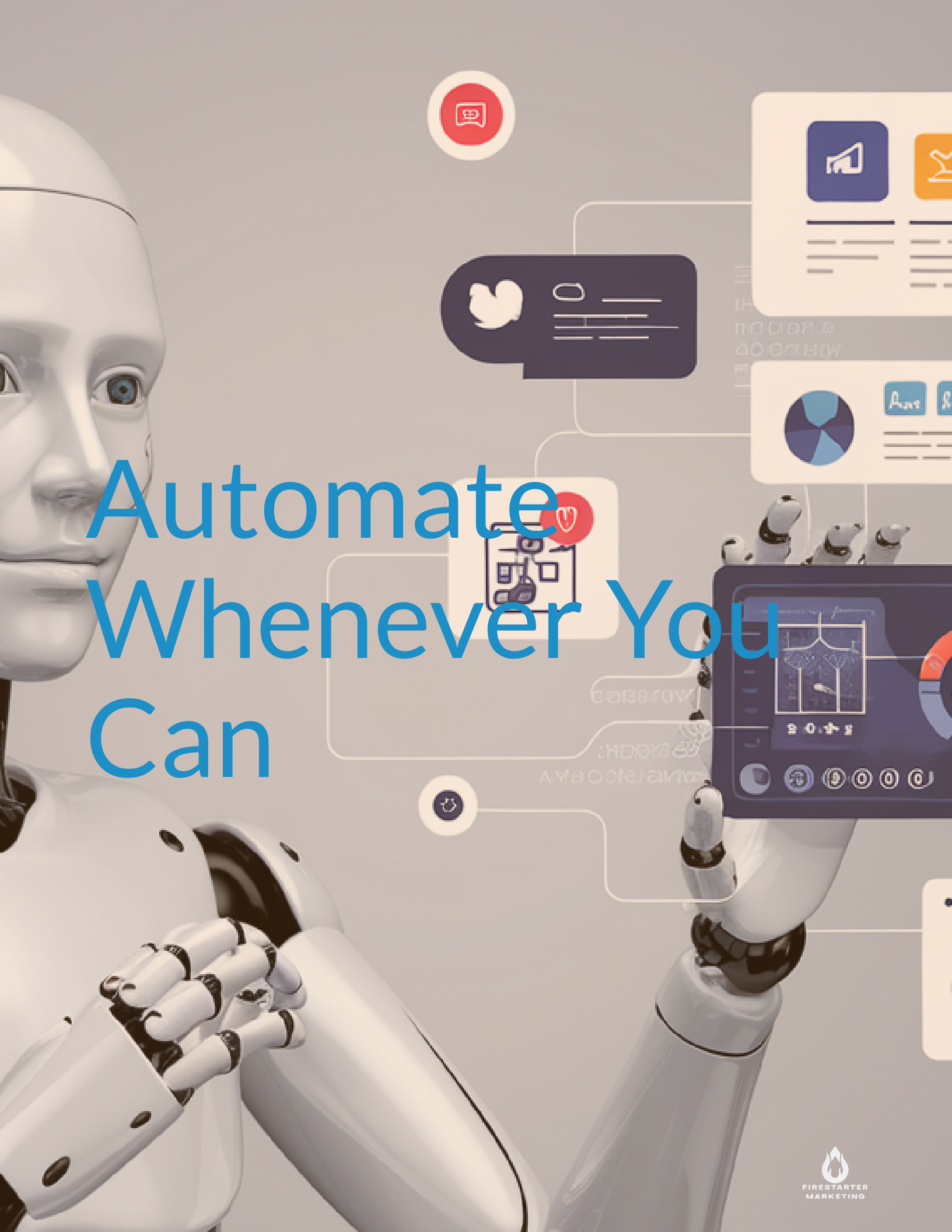
Your GBP is often the *first impression* people get. Treat it like a mini homepage.

Local Listings and Directories

- Yelp, Angi, Houzz, Thumbtack, Nextdoor, etc.
- Make sure info is consistent across platforms

Encourage happy customers to leave reviews on multiple platforms

If you're a service-area or local business, this part matters a lot.



Automate Whenever You Can

Marketing Automation for the Time-Strapped Owner

Let's Start With a Simple Truth

Very few business owners that I speak to have the time or the passion for marketing, but it is essentially to keeping the business going and attracting the right level of customers that you need to sustain your dream.

So let's talk about some ways that you can set up active marketing campaigns with less effort and more automation.

Marketing automation isn't just for tech companies or enterprise brands. If you're running a small business, you can—and *should*—use it to grow without losing your mind.

You don't have to hustle harder—you have to systematize smarter.

Marketing automation is about freeing up your brain, your time, and your team to focus on the stuff that moves the needle, not the stuff that eats up your evenings.

What Should You Automate First?

Start with repeatable moments in the customer journey. If you're answering the same question or sending the same message over and over, it's ripe for automation.

The Basics:

- **Welcome Emails** Every new lead or customer should get a warm, timely “here’s what to expect” message. Set it and forget it.
- **Nurture Sequences** Educate your prospects over time. Give them value before you ever ask for the sale.
- **Cart Abandonment / Follow-Ups** Someone started the journey—don’t let them fall off. Tools like Mailchimp, Klaviyo, or HubSpot make this easy.
- **Appointment Reminders / Confirmations** Great for service-based businesses. It reduces no-shows and shows you’re buttoned up.
- **Review Requests** We’ll dig into this in a second—because it’s *huge*.



Ratings & Referrals: Your Hidden Growth Levers

Let's be blunt—people trust people more than they trust your marketing. And yet, most small businesses treat reviews and referrals like an afterthought.

Not anymore.

Ratings: Automate the Ask

After someone buys from you, gets their haircut, finishes their coaching session—*that's* the moment to ask for a review. Not two weeks later.

Here's the play:

- Send an email or text after the service is complete
- Include a **direct link** to your Google Review page
- Thank them and let them know it helps more than they realize



Referrals: Gamify the Experience

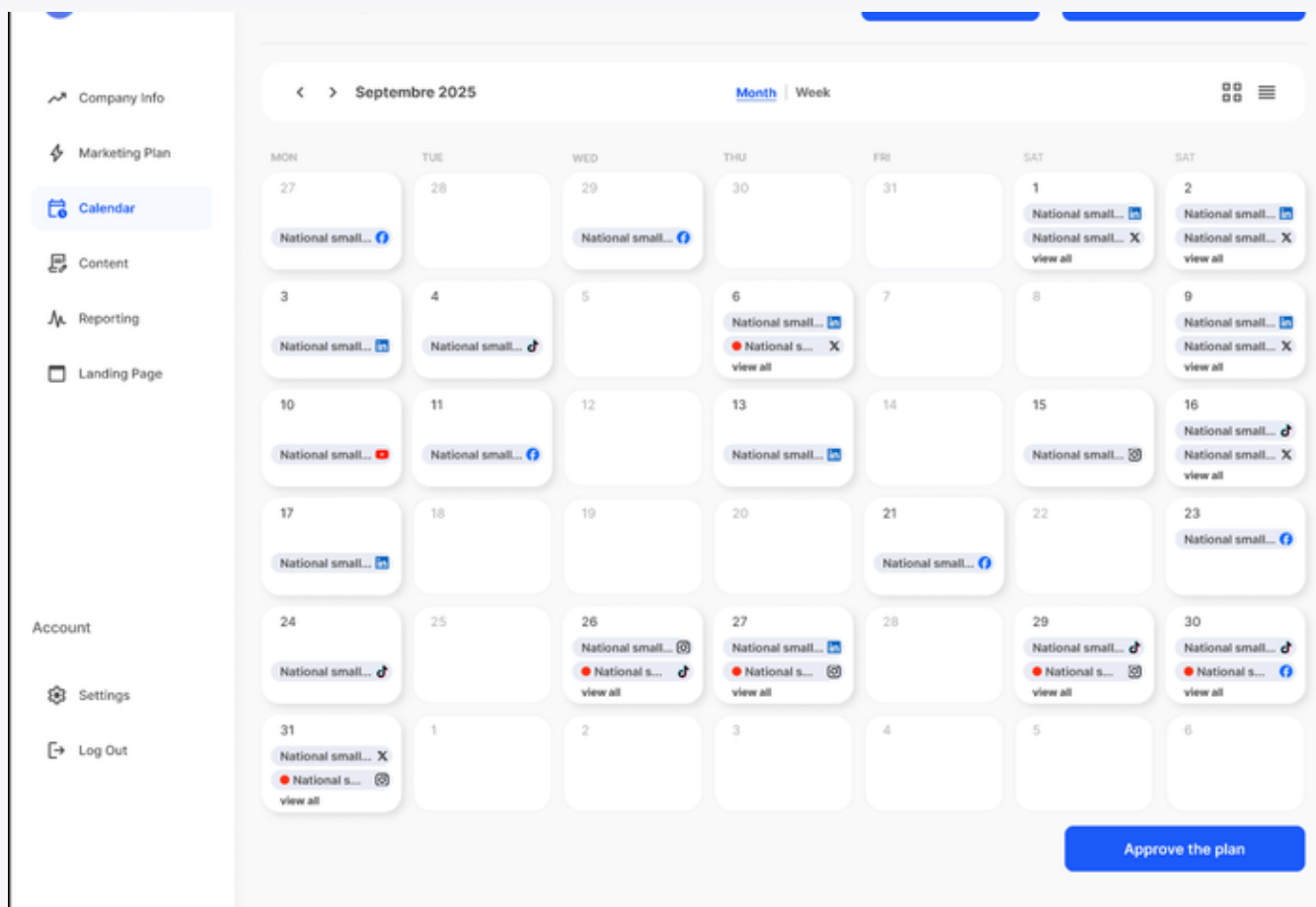
Once you automated her post-purchase review request, we added a second email:

“Hey, if you loved our service, would you tell a friend? When you refer 3 friends, your next service is on us.”

People *loved* it. More importantly—they actually did it.

Here's why it works: **gamification**. It plays to the competitive nature in us all. Something like:

 Referrals	 Reward
1	10% off next order
3	Free upgrade or product
5	Exclusive swag / VIP status
10+	Mega reward (free month, event invite, feature on your site, etc.)



Automate it All with Firestarter Marketing

The growth engine for solo entrepreneurs who want custom, high-touch marketing—without the high-maintenance. Think of us as your fractional CMO + content team + tactical executor—wrapped in an affordable monthly plan that feels like having a secret weapon.

*"We Love marketing
so you don't have to."*



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