

# Experts Weigh In: What worked in 2014 that you will carry into 2015?

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As 2014 comes to a close, business owners everywhere are reflecting on the past year. What

worked? What didn't work? We asked 54 of our small business experts what really worked for them in 2014 that they plan on carrying into 2015. Here's what they had to say:

1. *"In 2014, I learned about what it means to be fully online. I decided to move to Italy, and it truly impacted the direction of my new business. Moving for love forced me to work out how I could make money without ever actually meeting any clients face to face. Within 3 months I've gone from f2f to purely online AND increased my rates by 200% :)"* -Deepak Shukla, [The CV Guy Website](#)

2. *"Debra Ann Matthews of Let Me Write It For You: Job-Winning Resumes and Career Services, found that writing on her blog and contributing to others including LinkedIn, Career Thought Leaders, Local Job Network, Examiner.com, as well as Ezine worked in 2014. Her company has received invitations for local and national interviews as well as contribute her expertise as a guest speaker for national conferences.*

*She will continue to do the same in 2015."* -Debra Ann Matthews, [Let Me Write It For YOU! Job-Winning Resumes](#)

3. *"In 2014, I made a few changes in my business, including dramatically reducing my costs. This strategy involved closely looking at the return on investment for every dollar spent. If I wasn't seeing a return, the expense was eliminated. Because of this strategy, though, I can say without a doubt, that my two best investments were also two of my lowest dollar items — Hootsuite and MailChimp. Both of these products allowed my business — and my very small team — to make a bigger impact with less effort."* -Kathy Davis

4. *"One of the best thing that I did for my company in 2014 was focusing my energy on social media. There really is no better way to build a brand better than through boosting social media engagements. It's benefited us in unthinkable ways, primarily in increasing sales and developing relationships with our clients. Having that personal touch will always go a long way, especially for new startups. It's no wonder that marketing these days revolves almost entirely around social media!"* -Aaron Lin, [ZOOM Articles](#)

5. *"I've started to build business processes. It gave the company a better flow. So i will take this into 2015 with me."* -Tomasz Smykowski, [Social Media Marketing Agency Websoul](#)

6. *"Though I'm an online marketing specialist, I truly believe that offline networking is a major ingredient to long-term business success.*

*The relationships that are formed when you meet someone belly-2-belly are amazing and it can catapult your business successes. Partnerships are formed and when you have the bond of meeting eye-2-eye your business will always be the first one that person thinks of when it comes to doing business or referring business.*

*The real beauty though happens when you marry that offline relationship with online marketing to stay in front of the new connection. That's when businesses truly expand. I plan to continue offline networking regularly throughout this coming 2015 year."* -Mike Kawula, [Self Employed King](#)

7. *"I'm a co-owner of a video strategy and production company that doubled in size this year (and plans to double again next year!)*

*In 2014, we did the following:*

1) *Worked really, really hard. While longer hours and wearing lots of hats was part of 2014, we plan to continue searching for employees that are willing to work hard on a specialized task.*

2) *Began saying no to projects that don't match our strong suites. It takes a long time to recognize that some business... some money... hurts you in the long-run. We noticed that many of the smaller projects began taking up more time than our larger projects. In 2015, we'll continue to narrow in on the type of business that progresses us forward.*

3) *Recognized our value. Video is in high demand and companies are looking for trusted partners as opposed to qualified vendors. Recognizing this allowed us to grow with our best clients and find new clients that care about our strategic advice. We adjusted our positioning to be a video strategy and production company versus just a video production company.*

4) *Engage with professional networks and consultants. We recently joined a professional networking group that challenges us to think more strategically. This group acts like a fitness trainer by ensuring that we do what we say we're going to do.*

5) *Expanded our team. If you're planning to grow, you need to constantly be searching for qualified candidates who match your culture. We didn't plan on hiring more people, but we did... and we will in 2015.*

6) *Invested in equipment. We're in a fast-paced industry with technology at its core. While consumers have more and more access to prosumer technology, investing in the best of the best creates immediate separate between the competition."* -Justin Andrews, [ANIMUS STUDIOS](#)

8. *"Make More Money and Make it Quicker – That's my new motto: This year I decided to amp up the revenue and do it at an accelerated pace. Here's what I did:*

- Instead of working with my clients singly, I decided to group them together*
- I increased my service offering*
- Restructured the service delivery*
- Brought on additional help and service providers*
- Hired a coach to help me look at my business in a new way*
- I focused more on implementation than learning new skills*

*In the coming year I will continue to do even MORE of the above things. 2015 is going to be my best year yet! Small business owners just need to have outside help to look at their business in a new way. A professional coach or consultant should be able to help them make more money in less time while making their business easier to run. The key to success is in reaching out.” -Lauri Flaquer, [Saltar Solutions](#)*

9. “2014 was a year of ramping up productivity. Here are a few things that we’ll be taking with us into the New Year and beyond:

1) *Product is Important. Customer is Everything.\* It’s easy to get sucked in while building a product. You start adding features for the sake of features and forget about how they help the customer. You can avoid this mistake with one simple step. Talk to your customers. They know what they like about your product and if you explain/demo the improvements they’ll tell you how much they really help.*

2) *A Happy Team is a Productive Team: Encourage your team members to take some time each day to do the things that matter most to them. Whether that’s learning a new programming language, or keeping up with friends/family. Having scheduled break times for the team cuts down on intermittent distractions and can be incredibly motivating.” -Sean Higgins, [ilos Videos](#)*

10. *“I found GREAT success in 2014 by outsourcing any task I’m not an expert in or when my time is better spent doing something else. As a voice actor, the more time I spend behind the mic (working), the better my business will do financially. By hiring and building a team of trusted experts (graphic designers, web developers, writers, audio editors, etc.) in their individual fields, it frees me to focus on the income producing part of the business. I still manage all aspects of the business but by only having to oversee parts of the business it saves me time every day. My business instantly became scalable thanks to outsourcing!” - Jason McCoy, [McCoy Productions](#)*

11. *“I am using the traditional media to help build my family business in 2015. I love social media and making new friends but nothing has done more for establishing myself as a credible expert than being featured on television, radio and in print. I have a column in Entrepreneur Magazine as a result. I’ve been featured or profiled in CBS News, ABC news and more. I now organize a publicity crash course as result to help other business owners do what I’ve done. Media coverage has really worked for me and I hope to double my efforts in 2015.” – Daphne Mallory, [The Daphne Mallory Company](#)*

12. *“We started to use social media and it boosted our sales. We also tried a new marketing campaign where we hit the brick and mortars, which was success-ful. We also started building our team and brought on a supply chain specialist.” – Joseph Hwang, [Barring Eyewear](#)*

13. *"The most surprising success I had in 2014 was how beneficial it was to build simple, repeatable daily habits to improve UsersThink.*

*The tactics that get the most attention are either one-time heroic efforts, or the one weird trick approach, but I discovered that things I could do every day, that might not appear to be all that impressive, would build into impressive returns over time.*

*The miracle of compound interest is at work here, as well as the encouraging effect of being able to do these tasks successfully everyday, instead of hoping that a one-off effort catches. For small business owners, it's better to invest in compounding efforts than hoping you have a winning lottery ticket." – John Turner, [UsersThink](#)*

14. *"Grassroots marketing with business cards to simple networking, handshaking and 'hustle' on-the-ground. This trumps the online eyeballs theory which has brought-in minimal business beyond acting as a billboard only for branding with traffic. Nobody has bought from Twitter or Facebook driving to our stores. Suffice to say the old lead metrix are still the most effective!" – S. Rowan Wilson, MBA, [Mary Janes World](#)*

15. *"As a professional speaker, I'm in an industry where other speakers can easily spend \$100,000 or more per year on marketing and commissions. But now, I spend virtually nothing. Word of mouth and repeat business keeps my calendar full, and also allow me to keep my fees down, since they cost me nothing.*

*I've manage to do that by following a very simple strategy that too few companies ever try. I simply try to do the best possible job for the customers I do have. There's no marketing anywhere nearly as powerful as a satisfied client. Or as cheap. What's more, your best clients are likely to recommend you to business that are similar to their own. So you'll get more the of customers you want the most.*

*We don't send out thousands of glossy one-sheets and brochures, and our website might not be as slick as many of our competitors, but we'll happily match the quality of the presentations against anyone in the industry. At any fee. So clients not only come back but are happy to refer us to their associates." – [Barry Maher](#)*

16. *"I tried a new strategy in regards to the size of my team this year, but it was the opposite of hiring on a bigger team. We normally use contractors and we elected toward the end of 2014 to use fewer people and pay them more. The result was amazing! They were more motivated, productive, and happy to work. With a smaller team we were actually able to get more done. We'll definitely be carrying that into 2015." – Brandon Howard, [Toner Emporium](#)*

17. *"Our team – which is mostly millennials — has nearly tripled in size to about 50 employees over the past 20 months, and our referral process has been a unique component of our hiring. In 2014, we started offering a referral reward to ANYONE (both employees and*

*non-employees) who referred a potential applicant for an open position within our company. If we end up hiring the referred person and they work for us for at least three months, the person who referred them receives \$1000. This has been a great initiative for our company in acquiring top talent that our team already knows and is comfortable with, and we look forward to picking up a few more great referrals in 2015!" – Rob Bellenfant, [TechnologyAdvice](#)*

18. "For 2015, at Spreadshirt, the focus will be on going global and mobile:

1. Globalization is not an option, it is a matter of survival

2. Get mobile right or lose your customers to competitors

3. Publish any idea on everything we offer in 60 seconds or less." – Philip Rooke, Spreadshirt

19. "Since I am in the unenviable position of having practicing what I preach, I adopted a simple strategy in 2014 that really paid off- doubled my business in fact. I upgraded to LinkedIn premium and sent very under-the-radar In-Mails to prospective clients asking for 10 mins of their time, during their drive to or from the office. The ask was written in a way that didn't presume that we'd be a good business fit but my experience indicated to me that a conversation would be worthwhile. I got a 70% hit rate on conversations and closed 11 pieces of business." – Rich Austin, [Sandler Training Ann Arbor](#)

20. "Something that worked for us this year is that we covered our office walls in whiteboards! We wrote all over them including a large list of goals for 2014. As we've made progress it's been awesome to check things off and show our accomplishments. It has also been a great way to share our goal with employees and other colleagues who were visiting our office. There are days when you don't feel like you've made much progress but the list showed how much we were actually doing. We will put a whole new list up for 2015 to keep us motivated. I highly recommend this to other companies." –Samantha Abrams, [Emmy's Organics](#)

21. "I've stopped the paid for ads in my marketing. I've realized that pitching reporters, or responding, reaches more people and shows them that you're recognized as an expert in your field. When they've seen me in CNN, Money, Associated Press, Glamour or Vice.com, their legitimacy concerns are already assuaged." – Richard O'Malley, [The How Behind the WOW](#)

22. "In 2014, we really upped the ante in our marketing efforts. We hired a stronger team that consistently publishes content and news about our company. They've also boosted our social media communications with clients and other companies. All of this combined has brought in tons of leads for our sales team. That's why in 2015, we're going to continue this trend, and hire a PR team to back up the efforts of our current marketing department. We want a good all-round department, and we want to make sure we have enough manpower to not miss anything in the new year." – Rich Kahn, [eZanga.com](#)



23. *"We did a few things in 2014 that worked well for us that we will continue into 2015. We hired a professional to design and build a new website for us- we have already seen the benefit of this by increasing our online inquiries by 50%. We started sending out once a month marketing emails to highlight our new releases and give our loyal followers a chance to purchase them first at a small discount with free shipping- we have received many orders from this strategy. The most important and successful thing we did was make a new product line called Immersed Canvas- it is a product we created and spent two years perfecting. It is now our number one selling material for our art. No one else offers this and it looks amazing so it sets our art apart from everyone else."* – Chris Gug, [Gug Underwater Gallery](#)

24. *"I have taken an all hands on deck approach to raising the visibility of my product, The Palit, the portable beauty workspace. From submitting to various blog postings that are looking for entrepreneurs' stories, to posting to each and every person in my social media network asking for their support, to scoping out new versions of my product to accommodate different audiences. Growth is modest, but perhaps without each of these different tactics there would be no growth."* – Brandon Kelly, [NYCVanity](#)

25. *"We were rewarded in 2014 for focusing our resources on our legal services website, johnson-moo.com, the source of our initial success. A large portion of our revenue is generated online. Because we consistently received leads through our website, we stopped focusing on improving it. Growing tired of uninspired content, a suboptimal layout, and broken links, we challenged ourselves, our designers, and our content firm to create a legal services website with user experience that surpasses that which is common to law firms. Reaction from our clients has been encouraging and analytics show that website visits spend 13% more time on our site. Having combed through the Johnson Moo site, we determined it was best to launch a supplemental marketing services company, Furzy Inc (furzymarketing.com)." – Jovan Johnson, [Johnson-Moo.com](#)*

26. *"In 2014, I made the conscious decision to treat my motorsports marketing business like a business instead of a passion project. For me, that meant identifying an overarching vision with a corresponding set of goals and using a strategic plan to execute them. Once I identified my goals, I posted them in my office where I could always be reminded of them – so that every time I go to execute a task, or search for what to do next, I can ask myself if that's moving my business further toward those goals. That made all the difference in keeping me on track, becoming more productive and focused, and influencing the overall success of my year."* – Kristin Swartzlander, [DirtyMouth Communications](#)

27. *"Flexiworkforce was launched in June 2014, and already has the backing of large corporates like PwC, RBS and Santander. As a start-up we have fully embraced flexible working, and CEO Tracey Eker believes that flexibility is actually the key to staying productive."*

*When we work remotely, the team can be working together no matter where they are. I often*

*travel to London and technology allows me to be in constant contact with my staff, keeping productivity high. In the holiday season, working remotely allows us to spend more time with our families, while remaining in contact. This way, issues are dealt with fast and output remains high. We will be continuing this flexibility in 2015.” – Olivia Carr, [Flexiworkforce](#)*

28. *“In previous years, I would try different marketing strategies all at once, and would not see any incredible or significant results. I tried everything from Facebook ads to newspaper ads. In 2014, however, I focused really on giving value to my audience through my blog and my content marketing campaign took off. It opened up business opportunities I would’ve never been previously exposed to. Instead of spending money in traditional advertising, I grew my brand organically. Advice I have for other small business owners is to find an angle in your brand that you can use to give value back to the community, be consistent, and watch your business grow.” – Yogin Patel, [YP Media & Consulting](#)*

29. *“Mentoring was both beneficial to me and the university student I mentored. As business owners, we forget that there are many hungry for our knowledge. We often use the excuse of time to not pursue these opportunities.*

*Mentoring benefited my company by identifying qualified candidates early in the hiring process. I will be expanding the program in 2015.” – Corey Barnett, [Cleverly Engaged Marketing](#)*

30. *“I founded Waldorf Publishing over a year ago. It began with a book called “Kenny’s Garage” by NASCAR’s Kenny Wallace. In the year 2014, we have expanded from this humble beginning to have over 20 titles available. Here are some of the strategies we utilized to grow the company:*

- *We booked our Authors hundreds of Media appearances including CNN, FOX News, BBC, CBS affiliates, NBC affiliates, FOX affiliates, ABC affiliates, WGN, SIRIUS Radio, FOX Good Day NY, WPIX, The Guardian Newspaper, NPR, PBS, French Television, Irish National Television, and Radio, The Globe, National Magazines, Newspaper and Radio interviews.*

- *I hired an assistant to help me with publicity and general management of the company.*

- *We reassessed our team of writers and editors, and brought motivated professionals on board.*

- *We created an eye-catching and memorable logo to represent the company.*

- *We upgraded our website and used social media tools, such as Bufferapp, to bolster our online appearance through Facebook and Twitter.” – Barbara Terry, [Waldorf Publishing](#)*

31. *“We’ve definitely implemented some new strategy in 2014 that really delivered exception results! First in foremost, we tend to be more on the conservative side when it comes to our marketing messages, but when we attempted something a little more “edgy” with a recent email blast to some customers it was our most successful email campaign ever with regards*



*to click throughs, sales, and reorders! The email was for a duct product for dryers that we sell to duct cleaning companies, and our email title was “We give a DUCT, and so should YOU!” This headline really captured the attention of our customers and resonated with them on a special level, many of them emailing us back and sharing the buzz on social media, “Who gives a duct? ME!”*

*Team building is also a very important part of our corporate culture that we feel really drives productivity. We often share a beer together at the end of a long work day, attend company dinners together, play gold, enjoy water sports up at the owner’s lake house, and even walk to the beach together from our office.” – Chris Heuwetter, [In-O-Vate Dryer Products](#)*

*32. “At the very end of this year, I created a category-exclusive \*Women Entrepreneur Business Development Group. This combines coaching, mastermind and organic referrals for women service-based business owners. Response has been incredible and I’m looking to start a second group in the New Year. This really taps into what my market needs and wants – - support and ideas for growing their business, and a sense of community and belonging where they can also share their knowledge. As a business owner I believe this will be a very profitable service and significant source of income for 2015. The category exclusivity feature allows members to feel comfortable really sharing what their challenges are and what they are doing to grow their business.” – Victoria Cook, [The Center for Guilt-Free Success](#)*

*33. “As part of two acquisitions and the significant increase of demand towards more cloud and mobile technology solutions, our 24 year old technology consulting firm needed a significant overhaul to what we do and how we do it. In short, C/D/H needed a major reorganization and rebrand. To ensure that we captured the best input and built staff buy-in, we scheduled a series of off-site meetings and pushed our team of 30 to refine the leadership’s high level plans and build action steps, as well as metrics and rewards to implement them. We have seen concrete and realistic plans come from our staff’s work and a level of enthusiasm we haven’t seen in years. While the investment in time and lost revenue is quite large, the initial results are confirming our best hopes and leading us to building this model into how we drive change and address challenges going forward.” – Jim Brown, [C/D/H](#)*

*34. “This year we made a concerted effort to improve our face to face connections with our customers and potential clients. Face to face time pays dividends compared to making phone calls. It creates a personal connection with our clients that not only helps us keep their business but also drives us to always deliver above and beyond their expectations.” – Spyros Nomikos, [FOS LED Lighting Solutions](#)*

*35. “What worked for us best in 2014 was our complete dedication to the customer experience. We used to tell customers what we made and why when they walked in. Now we ask them what skin care issue or problem can we help them solve. By changing how we approached our customers in general, and the sale in particular, it made us actually sell more, and made people stay longer. Another thing we implemented is a redefining of our positions.*

*As a small business, we wear so many hats, but sometimes they overlapped. We now have a more strategized set of who does what and when, which has streamlined our entire business. If you need anything further, please do not hesitate to ask.” – Roberta Perry, [Scrubz Body Scrub](#)*

36. *“One business strategy that really worked for us in 2014 that we’re bringing into the New Year is creating good content – whether it was written, pictures, or shareable videos. We did this in 2014 because producing good content is a new trend in internet marketing where you must consistently produce and optimize it such a way that people will want to read and share it, which ultimately helps convert your traffic into customers. Optimizing content for discovery and conversion is really the only way going forward that you will be able to gain and retain position in the search engine’s results pages. So instead of focusing on gaming the search engines, you should put your efforts towards serving high-quality content that people will crave. This is a major marketing trend that started this year and that we will carry forward into 2015 and beyond.” – Ian Aronovich, [GovernmentAuctions.org](#)*

37. *“Pascale Communication, a PR firm specializing in healthcare, was fortunate enough to achieve several key successes in 2014. Notably, we expanded the team, revamped our website and increased integration with key partners with other marketing specialties. The results: a smoother functioning team, increased SEO opportunity and the ability to approach new prospects/projects with a wider range of capabilities than ever before. In 2015, we will carry these tactics forward and continue to build our senior level strategy team, develop a robust digital content pipeline and work with agency partners to deliver successful multi-channels campaigns that wow clients and move the needle.” – Michael Elofer, [Pascale Communications, LLC](#)*

38. *“As the owner of a computer service company, I’ve realized social media has become an integral portion of marketing. At LaptopMD we’ve decided to use it to achieve a dual-purpose: to ingratiate ourselves to our customers and show our expertise.*

*We post pictures of ourselves having fun in the office, we reply to customers who leave reviews (good and bad).*

*Presenting ourselves as friendly, accessible, and knowledgeable on social media shows our clients we aren’t all about monetizing. We’re there for them. You can tell a lot about a business’ true devotion to customers by the way their website or social media pages look. You don’t want to be the business with a barren page full of outdated material and prices.*

*We want our customers to appreciate us. For instance, we like for customers to contact us on facebook or twitter with computer issues. If it’s something they can repair or fix themselves, we’ll help them online, they don’t have to come in or pay a thing.*

*We keep them informed of new technology, we provide tips for computer maintenance. Social*

*media gives us the opportunity to not just be a regular business, which people only think about when it's time for service. If you provide content and communicate people will visit your page just because, and that's only good for business. We look to expand our social media profile into 2015."* – Arthur Zilberman, [LaptopMD](#)

39. *"In 2014 we really tried to let our users feel our support. We had a big focus on community building, and continuously reached out to users (taskers) to make connections. We brought in our top users or Tasker of the Month and offered as many discounts as we could to show our appreciation. Mainly, in 2014 we made sure to ramp up our customer support in terms of support available through phone, email and even text messages. Some of our team members are so dedicated they even take customer phone calls on their personal lines!"* – Nabeel Mushtaq, [www.AskforTask.com](http://www.AskforTask.com)

40. *"This year I've focused on building strong relationships to create a referral network. It's worked great for me and has saved time by allowing me to skip the time consuming process of marketing to strangers. With a referral, the potential client always knows they can trust me so I can get to the point with all the ways my services can benefit them and free up their time."* – Lark Ismail, [Lark's Virtual Solutions](#)

41. *"In October I purchased new LinkedIn software to help me garner leads from MOJO Video Marketing. Since starting to use it in December (had a family emergency which made me postpone the launch) I have closed new clients with more expected to close in January. I used the software to promote a complimentary LinkedIn Profile analysis (I optimize LinkedIn Profiles to help people get found by the LinkedIn Search engine). Giving away the free analysis has been a boon to my business and some new clients have me create the analysis but then go on to have me work on press releases (another of my marketing services).*

*I will definitely continue to use a complimentary offer with value as a way to find new clients."* – Karen Taylor Roane, [New Destiny Marketing, LLC](#)

42. *"2014 was definitely a big year for content marketers and curators. At Vibin we also did something similar, but rather than using standard content marketing practices we focused on storytelling marketing, that is, creating a compelling and unique story, that readers could relate to and a story that would create anticipation after every chapter. But it wasn't just WHAT we wrote, it was WHERE we put the story. That's when we decided that we want anyone looking for us to land exactly where we want them. And I'm not talking about SEO; I'm talking about using every available resource – social networks, blogs, v-logs, review websites, forums, etc. – to make a touch point on the internet for Vibin and PhotoNotes, that anyone could find. We created a vast network across desktop web, mobile web and even mobile apps, to make sure that wherever a user goes, be it Facebook or some undiscovered app such as Yappie, they would always find us and find the same story about us."* – Pavel Liser, [Vibin Technologies Inc.](#)

43. *“A strategy that works for us is to ensure we are taking time to think and reflect on how we developed the relationships we have with our customers. This strategy will be carried into 2015 and beyond.”* – Clive Williams, [Rights for Us – R4U Ltd](#)

44. *“I hired a part-time student from the high school. In 25 years of business I have had perhaps 10 administrative assistants and she outshines them all. She is AMAZING. She comes to the office 1 – 2 days a week for 2 – 3 hours each time and the rest of the time she works independently. She does all my social media (twitter, blogging, LinkedIn and monthly newsletter – I write it, but she assembles it), proofreads and edits documents, makes PowerPoint presentations and more. The business has really grown this year thanks to a concerted focus on social media which I simply could not have done without her.”* – Nanette Miner, [The Training Doctor, LLC](#)

45. *“At Chelsea Technologies, a firm that provides first-class IT advisory, design, implementation, hosting and support services to the global financial industry, we have made numerous changes to our business throughout 2014. We expanded our sales force to Florida in addition to our New York location. We established a marketing department, one which we never had in the past, in order to grow our company’s presence in this ever-changing business. We established a new Operations Coordinator position in our Operations department, who is responsible for managing the schedules and project managing several of the more complex assignments of Chelsea Technologies’ engineers. We launched a new business strategy that proved to be very successful, in which we offer an all-inclusive price for Hardware-As-A-Service to companies in the hedge fund industry. Chelsea Technologies has experienced much success in 2014 and cannot wait to see what 2015 has in store for us.”* – Meyer Ben-Reuven, [Chelsea Technologies](#)

46. *“While social media is great it is also vast and used improperly will not help a business get found much less grow. We used Facebook and woobox (www.woobox.com) to build a list of customer, marketing prospects, and bring attention to our infant company. We offered a prize valued at \$1800 for the Grand Prize Winner and used weekly poll questions to keep our entrants engaged and talking about us. Participants could also earn additional entries by posting on their Facebook wall and forwarding via their e-mail. Those voting on the poll questions were also eligible for the weekly game prize drawing.*

*We had more than 24k entries, 17k distinct e-mail entry registration, 2K sales. It cost us less than \$35.00 the entire month. Needless to say, we will be creating a new promotion for Valentine’s Day.”* – Denise Beauregard, [Urban Intima Inc.](#)

47. *“Last year I tried a new approach to our email marketing that really worked. Instead of sending out complete information on our newest offerings, I sent teasers that would surely generate questions, and lead to conversations. The new approach produced higher response rates and led to new projects in 8 countries. This came after hearing informal experience sharing conversation between a couple Entrepreneurs’ Organization San Francisco members*

at dinner after an event.” – Bill Gallagher, [Lori Bonn Design](#) and [Humanisteq Business Advisory](#)

48. “Since 2003, *Two Maids & A Mop* has grown from one small office location in northwest Florida into fourteen locations spread across seven states. The growth rate has been impressive but somewhat limited since each location operated as a company-owned entity. In 2014, we began franchising our brand to all 48 US states. Almost immediately, we began receiving franchise interest from coast to coast and have subsequently sold the rights to more than six additional markets just this year. Franchising our brand has allowed our success story to be come more public so the interest in our brand is increasing everyday. In 2015, we plan to continue franchising our brand and have expectations of selling at least ten new markets throughout the year.” – Ron Holt, [Two Maids & A Mop](#)

49. “This year, I found a top notch executive assistant who is already assisting in managing the flow of our work and increasing capacity. This will allow my former executive assistant, whose real strength is in marketing and communications, to lead the charge in this area, helping me to develop additional opportunities for speaking and publishing relevant content in the field of forensic accounting and fraud investigation.” – Tiffany Couch, [Acuity Forensics](#)

50. “The strategy for 2014 that changed our game was setting up a rockstar remote workforce. In 2013, we didn’t have enough large accounts to justify such an expansive group of writers, but 2014 proved to be the right year to launch it.

Our development team launched a new User Intelligence and Customer Communication platform to manage & measure all of our writer and client interactions. *Intercom.io* has enabled us to take our remote team to the next level. As we move into 2015, we have a solid remote team & tools that can accommodate even more business.” – Andy Zenkevich, [Get A Copywriter](#)

51. “This year *BalancedComp* nearly doubled the size of our team, and we did so by hiring the right people. They all had clear strengths that they brought to the team, we hired to achieve a particular purpose, and were excited about the work that we do. We looked for people who were willing to be forged by fire and saw *Meets Expectations* as an insult. We move quickly and need people who do things they aren’t even asked to do and are willing to adventure learn. We feel that those hiring practices are what make growth successful and worthwhile.” – Kenton Hansen, [Go Banana](#)

52. “People always say that the key to successful business is having a strong repeat and referral rate, so in 2014, I began focusing heavily on existing clients rather than trying to find new clients. This has been much more cost effective and efficient, and my existing clients have appreciated the extra time and resources spent on them, and many have recommended me to their friends and family. For me, it’s also a more comfortable experience as well and I will definitely be looking to continue the same strategy in 2015 since it has been



*advantageous for me and my clients.” – David Betlejewski, [CruiseOne](#)*

53. *“2014 was a big year for us! We actually tried three new things this year, and they were all very successful.*

*-I hired a business coach, who helped with infrastructure and future planning.*

*-We now plan quarterly company outings for team building—our most recent one was Escape the Room, which was a lot of fun, and challenging.*

*-Goals have been implemented for all employees, which sounds elementary, but we did not have as structured goals in the past.” – Georgette Blau, [On Location Tours](#)*

54. *“Coming into 2014, Killer Infographics was undergoing a lot of changes. Three years into our business, we were working with bigger clients than ever, including landing a lot of great projects with Microsoft. But working with bigger companies meant that instead of following our standard project management process, our clients were increasingly asking us for custom schedules, detailed statements of work, and a different approach to customer service. We knew we needed to overhaul our project management approach if we wanted to keep our dream clients happy.*

*So in 2014 we took a number of steps to overhaul our process, and we’re looking forward to full implementation in January. We started by solidifying our executive management team, empowering each exec to represent and speak for their departments in regular executive team meetings; these meetings were key to kicking off the discussion. In July, we organized a company-wide team-building retreat to identify key pain points in our process and start brainstorming solutions. Since I am one of our most senior employees, I was put in charge of managing and delegating the creation of a whole new process. At the start of 2015, the entire process will be implemented. We’ll have more time to spend with each client, ensuring that they have the most positive customer service experience possible from start to finish, and ensuring that we can accommodate the individual needs of companies so that our process aligns with their internal processes.” – Alex Blackstone, [Killer Infographics](#)*





## : Deborah Sweeney

Deborah Sweeney is the CEO of MyCorporation.com. MyCorporation is a leader in online legal filing services for entrepreneurs and businesses, providing start-up bundles that include corporation and LLC formation, registered agent, DBA, and trademark & copyright filing services. MyCorporation does all the heavy lifting for the business formation and maintenance quick and painless, so business owners can focus on what they do best.

by Deborah Sweeney →

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