

# FIVE STEPS TO CREATE A DATA STRATEGY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

*(without breaking the bank)*

## 1 IDENTIFY METRICS THAT MATTER

**Don't overcomplicate things.** Focus on the metrics that are key to your business success, like customer purchases, sales trends, and operational efficiency. You don't need complex platforms to track this—start with a basic spreadsheet to track these numbers manually. This will give you clarity on what's happening in your business without all the bells and whistles.

**Example:** Is your revenue down this month? Look at your spreadsheet to see if it's a seasonal trend, or maybe it's time to boost your marketing.

## 2 USE FREE OR LOW-COST TOOLS

**Who says you need to break the bank to get data insights?** Free tools like Google Sheets can help you track performance, Google Forms can gather customer feedback, and free CRMs like HubSpot or Zoho can manage customer interactions. These tools are user-friendly and cost-effective.

**Example:** Create a Google Form to ask customers what they love about your products. Use the feedback to tweak your offerings based on customer preferences.

## 3 START SIMPLE WITH REPORTING

**You don't need fancy software just yet.** Start by manually tracking key metrics like sales, customer feedback, and inventory. Set up a weekly routine, like **"Reporting Fridays,"** to review your data. This hands-on approach helps you stay connected to your business and spot trends before they become problems.

**Example:** A small business used Google Sheets to manually track their inventory and sales. By reviewing their data weekly, they noticed certain items moved faster during specific seasons and adjusted stock levels accordingly.

## 4 MAKE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK YOUR BFF

**Your customers know what's working and what's not—so listen to them!** Use free tools like Google Forms or Typeform to regularly gather customer feedback. This simple step helps you understand what customers love and where you can improve, giving you valuable insights without paying for a fancy system.

**Example:** If customers keep mentioning that shipping is slow, you know exactly where to focus your efforts for improvement.

## 5 FOCUS ON CONSISTENCY

**A strong data strategy doesn't just rely on collecting information—it's about building the habit of reviewing and acting on it consistently.** Behavior matters: the more regularly you review your data, the more comfortable you'll become with spotting patterns and making informed decisions. Consistency breeds clarity.

**Example:** If you're consistently checking sales every week, you'll be more prepared to handle sudden dips or capitalize on spikes in demand.

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