

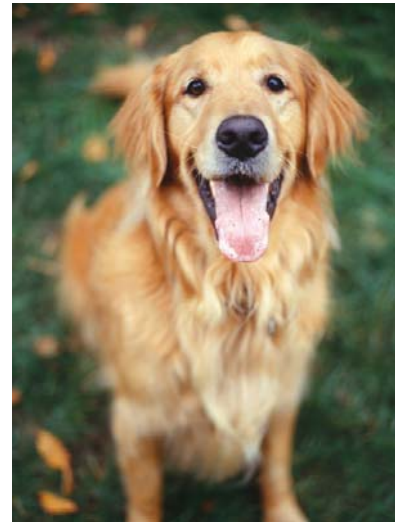
Inside This Issue

- [What's New:](#) New Categories, Sample Letters to Get More Reviews
- [Kudzu.com Works For Me:](#) Off The Vine
- [Expert Tips:](#) How Does Your Website Measure Up? and IT Made Simple
- [Kudzu.com Power Tips:](#) Hire Smart

What's New at Kudzu.com

New Categories Listed

Having trouble fitting your service into our existing categories? Tell us about it. That's what other service pros have done, and now we've added a handful of new categories, including Pet Waste Removal, Waterproofing, Pressure Washing, Home Warranties, Gas Stations and more. Check out our All Categories page and see if there is a category that more closely aligns with your service than how you have it listed currently. And remember, Premium and Preferred members can list their businesses in two categories, making it easier for more people to find you, so see if any other category applies and add it now.



Still not seeing your category? [Let us know.](#) We aim to please!

"But how do I ask for reviews?"

We hear you loud and clear! Response to our last issue of The Kudzu.com Advantage tells us that you are great at what you do but not so comfortable asking your best customers to sing your praises! If asking for reviews brings back bad memories of requesting letters of recommendation for your first job, then take some tips from other folks like you who are putting reviews to work for them in a big way.

Print a request for a customer review on invoices or bill stuffers.

Send a follow-up email after servicing a customer asking about their experience with your company and inviting them to post a review on Kudzu.com.

Offer an incentive to customers if they post a review, such as 10% off next service from your company.

Need some examples to get you going? We try to make things easy for you, so [click here for samples](#) of letters and e-mails you can use with your own customers.

And the Winner Is . . . You!

We're tickled to tell you we were recently recognized for excellence in the 28th Annual Telly Awards! Two separate commercials, which promoted our expansion beyond our home base of Atlanta into Phoenix, San Diego, and Las Vegas, garnered bronze awards. The prestigious Telly Awards honor the very best local, regional, and cable television commercials and programs, as well as the finest video and film productions. We commit to producing high-quality advertising for Kudzu.com in order to continually drive more quality consumers to our site—and your listing!

Kudzu.com Works for Me!



“Since listing with Kudzu.com, we’ve doubled our delivery area!

“We deliver fresh produce every two weeks, and many of my customers have stayed with me for years, so getting a new customer has a big impact on my business,” explained Shana Wolf, owner of Off the Vine—Home Produce Delivery. “Kudzu.com has been good for Off the Vine. The customers we get from Kudzu.com seem to be frequent Kudzu.com users, and listing my business in several categories gives me a way to reach more of them. Since listing Off the Vine on Kudzu.com, we’ve doubled our delivery area

and have reached many new customers.”

Follow Shana Wolf's lead—and get more quality leads for *your* business. [Contact Kudzu.com Sales now](#) and find out how you can maximize your presence on Kudzu.com.

From the Expert

An occasional series offering technical expertise from fellow Kudzu.com merchants.

IS YOUR SITE LOSING YOU BUSINESS?

See How Your Site Measures Up With The Caffeine 15

by [Benjamin Hyatt, CEO, Caffeine Group](#)

A lawyer commenting on his firm's website said "I'm not confident that our website will bring us new business but I'm certain that it can lose us business". It's not enough these days to just have a website. Your website has to be good, updated and it has to paint a positive picture of your company. If not, it will only drive business to your competitors.

Use the Caffeine 15 checklist to see how your site measures up. The first 5 were listed last month and here are the next 5 - be sure to check back next month for the last group in the series.

6-10 OF THE CAFFEINE 15

Questions to ask about your website:

6. Is it viral?

The Internet is powerful. Give people a reason to and they can tell dozens to thousands of their friends and family with the click of the mouse. We regularly hear about web videos, jokes and more that spread worldwide in a matter of hours or even minutes. Is there anything you can do that will get people talking about your site and your company?

7. Does it allow you to own distribution to your customers?

When you place a newspaper or radio ad you are paying for distribution to the newspaper or radio stations customers. Same goes for almost all other marketing mediums. Your website can help you own distribution to your customers ultimately saving you money. Do you have a mechanism for getting people to sign up and give you their email?

8. Does it make full use of the web?

The Internet combines the best of many old world mediums. Your website can be much more than a simple brochure or directory. It can be your own radio station, post

CHOOSING AN IT OUTSOURCING PARTNER

by [Marius Nel CEO Interfuse CTI](#)

IT Outsourcing and Support Services

Today most small to medium sized companies have information technology systems in place that only a few years ago were only available to much larger and better funded organizations. This has helped tremendously in leveling the playing field and as a whole, small companies today are competing very much on the same level as their much larger contemporaries.

Technology can be a huge help or a tremendous burden and very often the cost of supporting the infrastructure negate the gains through productivity. Mail systems, databases, operating systems, networks and phone systems can greatly increase effectiveness but if badly installed, configured or sized can have extremely negative effects.

There are a myriad of support options available today and choosing an IT Outsourcing Support Partner can be one of the most important choices you'll ever have to make.

Considerations when choosing an IT Support Partner:

- 1. References** – always check an applicant partners' references. Sales people can spend hours telling you what you want to hear but at the end of the day references count more than hours of acronyms and pretty literature
- 2. Responsiveness** – not response times. Service level agreements tend to lull people into a false sense of security. Response times, though important, should never be used as the only gauge of a companies' quality of service. The fact of the matter is that sometimes you need help NOW! Any company worth considering will have the necessary resources to be able to provide the correct level of service at the correct time.
- 3. Are they selling you what you need?** – Beware of managed service contracts with 24/7 monitoring of systems. In most cases SMB businesses do not need 24/7 monitoring. It's a fluff service designed to make busy work. The fact of the matter is that correctly configured systems will run perfectly fine without someone tracking every possible issue. You end up paying for someone to watch and monitor a perfectly operating IT system. SMB customers should look for companies that do regular check-ups not continuous monitoring.
- 4. Continuity** – Do you get to know your technicians/consultants or do they change more frequently than the weather? Over time you should be able to develop a relationship of trust with your provider and their employees. They will get to know your business and if you are lucky will actually start making suggestion on how you can enhance your own service offering by utilizing the technology you have.

office, TV station, library and customer service center. Are you making use of video, images, archiving and audio?

9. Have you taken any risks?

If you make a site that looks and does what all your competitor's sites do it will be hard for consumers to see through the clutter. There are hundreds of examples out there of companies that took a risk on the web and reaped the rewards. I encourage every company to allocate a percentage of their marketing budget for trying new things.

10. Is it easy & intuitive

Does your site make it easy for people to find the information they need? Are your phone numbers and locations easy to find? Your address? Is your ecommerce simple and to the point?

Very few sites do a great job in each of these 15 areas. You can only get there if you make a real effort to put resources and effort into your site.

[Call or email us today](#) and we can help you get started. And be sure to check back next month for the final 5!

5. **You get what you pay for** – technical resources cost money and the best ones cost a lot of money. Consider that you are handing over responsibility for your company data, the most valuable asset you have. Ask yourself if you would rather spend \$300 to have a critical issue solved in 15 minutes or spend \$75/hour to have it solved in 5 hours while the issue gets escalated through four levels of incompetency .

Look out for VOIP – wolf in sheep's clothing - in the next issue. Call or e-mail to investigate how we can make you more competitive [Marius Del 770. 518.7087 x 101](tel:770.518.7087)

Kudzu.com Power Tips

Hire Smart

Here's a good problem to have—so much business that it's time to hire more help. You're not alone if your Kudzu.com listing has put you in this position. We're hearing it over and over again.

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind as you try to find ways to grow strategically:

1. Identify your needs. Be clear about what human resources you need to handle increased demand for your services. Adding more folks in the field may not help your business if your back office is a mess. An office manager with strong organizational skills may make a bigger impact on your efficiency. Spend time considering what skill sets your company truly needs to move to the next level.

2. Screen smartly. Write a job description for the position for which you are looking to hire someone. Ask around, post ads online or in trade publications, or work with a headhunter to find qualified candidates. Conduct thorough interviews, check references, do background checks and take

every precaution to hire carefully. In a small business, in particular, the addition of a new employee can have a dramatic effect on a company's productivity and morale.

3. Cover the legal bases. If you are hiring employees for the first time, there are specific federal and state legal requirements you must address, such as establishing an employee identification number, verifying legal status, withholding the appropriate taxes and Social Security, setting up payment methods, obtaining worker's compensation insurance, complying with federal and state labor laws, and more.

4. Consider alternatives to hiring full-time employees. Is your business seasonal? Do you have peak hours when you need extra help? Consider part-timers, students, sub-contracting, temp workers or other arrangements that minimize the risks involve with hiring full-time employees while still letting you grow strategically. If your service involves a specific craft or skill for which students go to school, you may find that hiring an intern is a win-win way for you to get highly motivated, affordable help while teaching someone a skill he or she values.

Tap into the wealth of expertise of your fellow Kudzu.com service pros. Click to find [lawyers](#), [accountants](#), [headhunters](#), [small business consultants](#), and [more](#), who can help take your business to the next level.

This email was sent to: info@kudzu.com

This email was sent by: Kudzu.com
6205 Peachtree Dunwoody Road Atlanta, GA 30328 USA

** Please do not reply to this e-mail. If you do need to get in touch with us, please use this [Feedback](#) link or click [About Us](#) at [Kudzu.com](#). **If you no longer want to receive "Kudzu Advantage," please visit your [Business Center](#) and under "Login Information," uncheck the Kudzu.com Newsletter option. Then click the Continue button.

View our [Business Agreement](#).