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10 Creative Advertising Ideas That Actually Work

Creative advertising is one of the most effective ways to reach your customers and drive sales.

When competing with other companies, it can be an expensive process especially if you're trying to buy adverts in the same places. However, traditional billboard adverts and social posts aren't your only option.

In fact, being creative with your advertising can not only bring in new customers, it can often be much cheaper too.

Read on to discover some advertisement ideas that can make your business better.

Coming Up With Advertisement Ideas

There's a reason people use advertising agencies instead of doing it themselves. Agencies hire skilled people who are trained at creating unique ideas to appeal to consumers.

You may remember the Old Spice commercials or the famous Apple adverts. These were all thought of by someone looking to speak to people in a new and compelling way.

When thinking of ideas, it's essential to think about your customers as people with values, goals, and what it is your business can offer them.

From there, try to think of fun and surprising ways you can talk to them about what you do. The more creative you can be the better because people only remember the adverts that are different. Not the ones which look and sound like all the others.

To get you started, here are ten ideas you can try.

1. Advertise Somewhere New

Too often businesses throw money at magazine ads or online banners because of the number of people they think they'll reach.

What they forget is that consumers are used to advertising and it's traditional placements so they'll often ignore most ads. When was the last time you really looked at a banner advert on the side of a website?

There are no rules to where you should or should not advertise so think creatively.

For example, rather than a billboard or article, a luxury wine company could sell their grapes at a farmers market where they know some of their customers shop. By physical numbers, they'll only reach a few people. However, this approach is so different that every single person will remember who they are and the service they received.

From there, word of mouth about the company will spread and more people are likely to try the wine. Stunts also tend to be photographed and posted online by customers and local newspapers meaning you get free, organic promotion of your business.

2. Give Away Unique Merchandise

What is the product or service your company offers and what is a really fun or cool physical representation of that?

Let's say you provide IT solutions, the first thought is something like a USB with your company logo on it. But what if instead, you gave them padlocks to represent your cybersecurity services?

Sure, custom merchandise is more expensive and therefore you won't be able to buy as large a quantity. But thirty people walking away with your cool, memorable gift is far better than two hundred with a boring pen that they'll forget about.

3. Hire an Illustrator or Graphic Designer

One of the biggest mistakes companies make is assuming the quality of their product or service will be enough to make sales. But this is a world where people really do judge a book by its cover.

An ugly website, boring brochures, and plainly uninspired presentations all send the wrong message to customers.

Take the craft beer industry for example. In the past, companies like Budweiser and Heineken dominated the market with their simple and flat designs. But when you look at the packaging of craft beers, they usually have beautiful designs and artwork.

This not only makes them stand out but it offers a distinct character and personality to the beer before someone even tastes it.

And don't think that because you're in a more "serious profession" like law or finance firm you can't be creative. Adding in that extra spark makes your company look more human, more personable, and most importantly more memorable.

4. Make a Video That Tells a Story

Everyone is sick and tired of seeing videos that go:

"Hi I'm [who cares] and today I'm going to [bore you with talking about my product or service]."

Just like with advertising in new places, it's crucial to think about what will really resonate with your customers.

Many companies have found success by selling services through their customer's own stories and experiences.

5. Do a Live Stream

Live streaming is a great way to bring people into your business and see what you do first-hand.

For example, a cafe could show where they source their coffee beans from and how they prepare them before serving them to their customers. You may think this is risky as customers could point out flaws or issue with your process. The smart companies, however, will thank those customers and do a follow-up video showing how they took the feedback and improved.

You don't need to be perfect, customers more than anything want to see that they are being listened to. Letting them in allows them to feel more connected to your business than any other competitor out there.

6. Pro Bono Work

There is nothing better for your business than doing pro bono work for a charity or non-profit.

For your employees, it gives them a strong sense of satisfaction and happiness that they can use their professional skills to help others. It also means they will value working at your company more than if they were somewhere else.

For your business, you will be making real change that helps others as well as giving yourself the opportunity to do some amazing work. Instead of a paying customer that makes demands, charities are often very flexible and will trust you to do the work you recommend.

7. Utilize Microtargeting

Commercial advertising is at its worst when it tries to appeal to everyone.

Again, you will be more memorable if you choose to target just a few specific customers rather than all of them.

To do this, think about a product or service you offer that you want to promote. Then, consider who specifically will benefit the most from that and think about a unique way to reach that audience.

For example, an online store selling jewelry may want to increase the sales of a butterfly necklace they have. To do this effectively, they will think about the type of people who will actually buy this specific item. Nature lovers, people who go on hikes and enjoy forests and meadows, etc.

They will then look at their data to see where the majority of their sales are coming from, is it young women in urban areas or middle-aged woman in rural communities? Once they figure

this out, they can purchase ads that will specifically target those customers in spaces around nature and outdoor lifestyles.

This is not only cheaper, but it means the ad will actually be shown the people most likely to buy the necklace meaning sales will be higher.

8. Partner With Another Business

Collaboration is an excellent way to split the cost of advertising and bring in new business.

The best companies are those which pose zero competition to you but offer products or services that complement your business.

Have a bakery? Partner with a nearby cafe. Do you offer financial services? Try working with a local real estate company to help people find a home.

Giving people a joint deal doubles the effectiveness of your advertising and also helps foster a network of reliable business to work with in future.

9. Reach Out to Influencers

We don't mean Drake or other famous celebrities. We mean normal, down to earth people with a humble following on social media channels.

Just like with microtargeting, it's better to find someone who is a perfect fit and is followed by the exact audience you're trying to reach.

To return to the butterfly necklace example, there may be an Instagram account run by a photographer dedicated exclusively to butterflies. It's obvious that anyone who follows this channel loves them so promoting through that channel would be immensely effective.

10. Hold a Pop-Up Event

Small events are an incredible way to give your business exposure and connect with members of the community. You can do this alone or follow the above tip to partner with other businesses.

Again, don't think of just making a stand like at a tradeshow and hoping people will come by to talk to you. Do something fun and different that people will enjoy.

A great way to think of ideas is just to think of yourself. What would you like a company to do if you went to an event? What would be memorable and fun for you?

As a bakery, you could involve customers in the baking or decorating process at the stall and give them a discount for helping out. As an IT company, you could provide on the spot advice and help those with problems to show off your expertise.

The possibilities are endless and whatever you do, just enjoy yourself and make it fun.

Time to Shine

Coming up with advertisement ideas is both a challenging and rewarding experience.

A good sign that you've got a good idea is that it's easy to explain in a single sentence and everyone you tell it to understands it.

To be clear, the creative process is difficult. For every amazing advert you've seen there was definitely hundreds of terrible ideas that were thought of and thrown away.

What's important is that you push yourself and don't get disheartened if the idea doesn't come right away. Just keep trying and working on it until you find something which is so simple and exciting you can't believe you didn't think of it first.

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How to Set Up Geofencing for Your Business: 5 Strategies for Beginners

Geofencing is quickly becoming one of the most adopted forms of targeted advertising in the world with its market value set to reach \$1.7 billion in six years.

This is due to its ability to reach customers at the perfect moments to drive sales and encourage interactions with your brand.

With geofencing technology producing more sophisticated apps and uses, now is the perfect time to start adopting it for your business.

Read on to learn everything you need to know and how to set up geofencing effectively.

What is Geofencing?

Geofencing is a developing technology that allows organizations (such as the government) and businesses to communicate or advertise through location-based services.

There are a number of ways this is being utilized. For example, the government can disable drones which fly within a certain area of the White House and other government property. Another use could be a bar alerting customers who are nearby of their happy hour special.

The uses are infinite, so understanding how the technology works is essential to know how to use it effectively.

How Does Geofencing Work?

Unless it has been disabled, all our devices transmit our location to help our applications work accurately. For example, the only reason Google Maps can alert you to traffic is because it is tracking other people's journeys. It can see they are all slowing down below the average speed in a specific area and can conclude that traffic is happening.

Geofencing capitalizes on this information by isolating specific areas inside a set virtual fence. That way when a user (who has opted into the service) enters or exits this area, the system is alerted and is programmed to produce a response.

To make the most of this for your business, we'll cover the options and strategies you can use below.

How to Set up Geofencing

There are many companies who can offer geofencing services that suit your needs. The costs can range anywhere from \$1000 to over \$50,000 depending on your budget and goals.

Knowing what it is you want ahead of time can help ensure you find the best provider.

By having an idea in mind, you will discover more opportunities available to your business to implement a successful campaign.

1. Develop an App or Join Another

Creating your own custom app can be expensive with a minimum cost still being around \$30,000, but it does carry a number of advantages.

You can interact with your customers on a more personal level and it means you don't need to compete for their attention with other brands. You can also use it to gather data specific to your business to help you improve your products and services.

Of course, if you're just starting out this option can be too expensive. In this case, you can join a coupon or discount app that messages customers about your latest offers and deals.

You can then combine this with geofencing to ensure that customers are only alerted when they are most likely to make a purchase decision.

2. Choose Your Locations Wisely

With geofencing, the choice of your location is extremely important to guarantee success.

For example, Gatorade could set up geofences around gyms and parks to target anyone out exercising with an offer. A dry cleaner could set up geofences around nearby offices and restaurants to catch anyone who accidentally spills their morning coffee or breakfast.

You can even place geofences on a competitors store.

Let's say you own a bakery and have decided to start selling coffee. You could set up a geofence around a nearby Starbucks so that any customer who walks in receives a message. An example could be: "Grab a morning cup of coffee with us and receive a free donut!"

If someone was going to buy a coffee anyway they're more likely to go to your store instead.

3. Consider Your Customers

One of the best ways to think of ideas to reach your customers effectively is to forget your business and try being them.

What this means is it's common for business owners to stop seeing customers as people with worries and things to do. Imagining what potential situations your customers could be in will help you think of ways to reach them.

Let's say you run a clothing store that specializes in high-end dresses and gowns. People will likely only buy your clothing if they have a high-profile event or party they are going to and are worried that what they already have isn't good enough.

So rather than geofencing a shopping mall where you will be competing with every other business, you could place the geofences around high-end bars, restaurants, and venues. To save money, you could even limit the geofencing to those areas in the build-up to events you know are happening.

By understanding the mindset of your customers and their reasons for going to your store, you can tailor your messages far more effectively.

4. Make Use of Offers

This is where using offers is a great option to entice customers to your store.

As mentioned in the examples above, there are many ways you can do this. What's important is that the offer is directly tied to something actionable and relevant to your customers.

It's also recommended you go beyond the typical 'buy-one-get-x-free' and engage with your customers in a new way.

If we use the dress store as another example, rather than just offering a deal, you could ask customers to bring their favorite accessories with them to find a dress that matches.

For the bakery, the store owner could give discounts to any customer that's able to guess which roast of coffee is which based on taste. This is not only a fun for the customers but it also lets them try all of the products too. It's a fun experience that will elevate the store compared to all the others in the area.

5. Get Creative

Of course, you are not restricted to just offers.

You can combine the information from your customers' social media profiles to wish them a happy birthday and an offer when they're nearby. If you are a music band you can leave fun messages when your fans are near a venue you will perform at.

There's no limit to the possibilities so just think of ways you can surprise and delight your customers.

Enjoy a Better ROI

With geofencing, you are able to contact your customers in a specific location. How you talk to them and what you say is entirely up to you.

By thinking about their journey and their mindset, you'll find fun and creative ways to draw them to your store and encourage purchases.

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Google Analytics 101: Your Complete Guide to Measuring Your Digital Marketing Success

Google Analytics is a powerful and comprehensive tool used by 55% of the top 10 million websites on the internet.

Of those who use analytics software, the number goes up even higher to over 85%.

But for many, using Google Analytics seems like a challenging endeavor that requires extensive knowledge. This often means they create an account but end up just trying to make sense of the general data without picking out crucial specifics.

Once you get past the initial learning curve, however, there is a wealth of information at your disposal to help improve your business.

Welcome to Google Analytics 101--a complete beginners guide designed to take you through the entire process from setting up an account to understanding reports.

Why Google Analytics is Worth Your Time

Imagine you're a business selling bespoke products online.

You promote your products on your Facebook page, Twitter, and other reputable, related sites. But without an analytics tool, you don't know which sites are bringing in the most traffic, who is buying your products, or even which areas are causing issues for customers.

By using Google Analytics, you can drill down into the essential bits of data to discover the answers to all those questions and more. You can even learn about your best-selling demographics and their shopping habits.

This means you can start advertising in very specific places to a very specific audience saving you costs on broad ad placements while still significantly increasing your revenue.

The insights you can learn from data are infinite and are excellent ways to optimize your business to create a fluid, effective sales funnel.

Best of all, Google Analytics is free.

Creating an account is the obvious first step, but there are few key elements you should be aware of.

Setup a Google Analytics Account

Sign Up

Creating an account requires a general Google account. However, avoid using a general one that many people can access. For security reasons, it should be an account only you have permission to use.

This is because Google Analytics lets you assign access to others (which is something we'll cover later) and manage their permissions.

Apply Your Tracking Code to Your Website

After filling in your information, you will then be assigned a tracking code that will be used to collect your website page data. This code will need to be added to every page you wish to track.

If you use WordPress, there are numerous plugins available that will easily do this for you. Other sites provide specific areas for adding the code or ID itself, otherwise, you'll have to add the code in manually using these instructions.

Create Top Priority Goals

In Google Analytics, you can set up goals which track specific user actions to garner tailored sets of data.

This is done by clicking on 'Admin' and then 'Goals' in the View column. You then select 'New Goal' and either choose a premade template or create a custom goal. Fill in the information and provide a final URL that will act as an indicator an action has been performed by a user.

Be careful about how you set this up as it could lead to the wrong data.

For example, let's say a customer lands on your homepage, scrolls to the bottom, and decides to sign up for your newsletter. If your final URL is the homepage then Google Analytics won't be able to track that someone signed up.

Instead, set up the proceeding 'thank you' page as the URL and label it accordingly to make monitoring data easier.

For websites where users follow linear paths such as a checkout process, you can set up a goal funnel which will track every step along the way. This is extremely useful to see where you are losing customers and adjust your website design to help mediate the problem.

Each website can have a total of 20 goals assigned to it so take time to figure out the core success metrics of your business.

It's also important to note that once a goal has been created it cannot be deleted so only proceed when you are certain.

With the essential components of your Google Analytics account set up, the next step is to filter data and establish who else has access to it.

Organize Your Account

Google Analytics has the following hierarchies to let you delegate access and responsibility.

Accounts: This is what you set up initially. Your general Google account can have multiple Analytics accounts set up underneath it.

Properties: This is anything you wish to track data from like a website or an app. Each property has a unique tracking code like the one you were assigned at the start. Just like before, the code will need to be added to the pages of each new property.

Views: A view is where you access reports containing information from your data. Initially, you will have an unfiltered view called "All Website Data" automatically set up.

We recommend leaving this view alone so you always have a raw version with all available data.

You can create multiple views for one property with unique filters for more specific data. For example, you could create a view that tracks data for a subdomain or just consumer purchases.

Note that a view will only start collecting data from the moment it is created and cannot access information from before. Equally, if you delete a view then all the data it has gathered will be deleted permanently as well.

Try making an experimental view with the intention to delete it if anything goes wrong. It's a great way to familiarize yourself with the software while minimizing the risk.

Users: You can add users to any point in the hierarchy depending on what you need them to do. Google Analytics makes it very easy to set permissions so that access to data is controlled at every level.

As soon as you add the tracking code to your pages, Google Analytics will start pooling data. The next step is to make sure you can understand and utilize it effectively.

Google Analytics 101: Understanding Reports

Google Analytics offers different data accessed through a variety of reports. Each type gives you specific information that can serve as useful benchmarks for planning your business' next move.

Real-Time Reports: These give you an immediate glance at your audience's current activity and can be used to drive conversions. For example, if you are seeing a surge in a particular product but low conversions, you could promote a flash sale as an incentive.

This data is an essential resource for companies that need to adapt quickly to market trends.

Audience: This section gives you the opportunity to understand your audience. What is your best demographic? What are their main interests and common behaviors?

Answering these questions can make a huge difference between selling to anyone who will listen and selling to those already listening.

Acquisition: Use these reports to discover where the majority of your users are coming from.

Knowing the websites that drive the most traffic, and those that don't, helps you decide where to best allocate your future ad spending.

Behavior: What do your users do once they land on your site? Which pages capture the most attention and which are responsible for putting people off?

Understanding your user's journey will help you improve your current site and any new web design you do in the future.

Conversions: This exclusively tracks the significant actions of your users. You can use these reports to assess the effectiveness of your website.

What's great about this data is that it may show you areas that only need a small fix that will drastically improve your conversion rates.

Now that you know which reports you would like to look at, the next step is to be able to make sense of the data.

How to Use Google Analytics' Reports

All reports start with an overview depicting the progress of data over time. From there, you'll want to filter the data to get the most relevant information.

The most important advice is that you approach the data with curiosity every time. Ask yourself questions, don't accept the data for how it is, try to look for the deeper meanings behind your user's behavior.

Date Range: Change the date range for insights into key periods such as high traffic or conversions.

You can use this to isolate different moments in the year and see the progress of your sales cycle in more detail.

Compare Data: This is an excellent way to start finding new insights for your business.

How did a guest blog post on one website compare to a post that appeared on another? Is the increase in purchases at 1 am random or does it happen on specific days of the week?

Again, be curious about what the data is telling you.

Narrow Your Search

As you continue to look over the data you'll be given more and more options to refine the parameters. Anything from a user's chosen language to the operating system they were using when they landed on your site can give you clues you can leverage in future.

If you're interested in a particular country, for example, you can select it to see where your users are concentrated geographically. This is essential knowledge especially when it comes to your communications and social media posts.

A southern Californian will likely have different values and interests compared to someone from Northern Maine. This allows you to target your messaging more specifically and create tailored ads for each audience.

Having access to so much data is both a blessing and a curse. It's easy to lose many hours tracking each peak and trough in traffic and trying different views and filters in an attempt to discover a new insight.

This is especially true for small business owners who can't afford enough staff to delegate and spread out the work.

Fortunately, Google Analytics gives you some options to help mediate this.

Optimize Your Time

Once you've familiarized yourself with the software and explored the different reports available, you should naturally find yourself frequently returning to your favorites to check up on.

If this is the case, simply create a shortcut or email update.

The Shortcuts section is in the left-sidebar so once you add a report to it you will instantly be able to return to it whenever you like. Equally, the email option will let you not only send yourself updates but also anyone you feel needs to be kept in the loop as well.

Of course, you may wish to take this even further by saving yourself the hassle of going through all the data yourself.

If that's the case, there are many companies that specialize in Google Analytics data summary and visualization. They compile the data into succinct infographics and reports giving you an easy way to get a quick overview of your business' performance.

Make Each Visit Count

It's important to know that this Google Analytics 101 guide is just the basic information you need to start off on the right foot.

There are many more features available that give you even greater control and more tailored data.

Equally, bear in mind that there are many other factors that contribute to your business' success such as your SEO rankings or brand equity.

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All in the Clear: 10 Things You Need to Know About Filtering Water in Your Home

The quality of water varies drastically in the United States from state to state and even region to region.

In fact, over 60 million people are at risk of drinking unsafe water and this number can easily be even higher. The issue is not just America's size, but also the funding available to each area.

While there have been huge strides made to rectify this issue, filtering water is still the safest way to ensure you're drinking something clean and contaminant free.

Read on to learn about water quality and the best options for your home.

1. Understand Your Local Reports

Thanks to the EPA, the water supplier in your area has to provide a water quality report every year.

Known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), it gives an overview of the source of your water and the levels of contaminants and bacteria found in it.

While these reports are useful, you should be aware, they do leave out some crucial bits of information.

2. What Reports Can Miss

While the CCR reports are essential and useful knowledge, they don't provide a full overview of your drinking water.

This is because the report only covers the overall levels found in your town or city and the process at the water treatment facilities nearby.

What it can't do, is tell you exactly about the water coming directly from the tap in your kitchen. The problem is that while the water leaving the plant may be acceptable, you may live in an area with old piping or with areas exposed to contaminants.

This can lead to a number of health issues that you wouldn't know about from the report.

Because of this, it is recommended to get your water tested at least once a year. You can do this with either a home testing kit or even send your tap water to a state-certified testing lab.

3. Bottled Water Can Be Just as Bad

While many think it's a good idea to avoid the issue altogether by drinking bottled water, they don't realize that this has issues too.

The CDC clearly states that bottled water is not covered by the Safe Drinking Water Act nor is it regulated by the EPA.

Of course, there is some regulation by the FDA but even then the standards don't line up. This means that bottled water can just as easily have contaminants as your tap water if not more.

Plus when you consider the huge devastation plastic bottles cause the environment, it's better you never buy a bottle of water again. Instead, use filtered water poured into a reusable sports bottle.

4. You'll Save Money

Having safe, filtered water is significantly better for your health and can help you save huge sums of money over time.

For example, if you buy bottled water right now, just stopping that can easily save you hundreds of dollars a year. Equally, ensuring your drinking water is safe helps prevent your risk of getting ill which can have costly consequences.

5. Filtering Water Removes Dirt

The water you drink is likely already filtered for most sediment and minerals. However, setting up a home filtration system is one of the best ways to protect yourself from further issues.

One problem with sediment and minerals such as dirt particles or iron is that they can give your water an unpleasant taste and sometimes even smell.

Equally, some minerals can stain clothing and in some cases even some types of dishes too. Over time, these minerals can also start to line your plumbing which can lead to clogs, issues with water pressure and other problems.

6. Remove Contaminants

More importantly, however, filtering your water ensures that it is safe to drink.

Specific filter systems (which we'll explain in more detail below) are better at helping reduce certain contaminants. For example, pathogens which can cause diarrhea and other health risks are prevented by filters that help separate the particles from your water.

Both chlorine and lead can be found in some home's water as well and this is for a few reasons.

Chlorine is great for killing bacteria and is used by many companies to purify it. However, sometimes the separation process isn't effective leading to unsafe levels entering the public supply.

While lead piping is no longer used, old lead pipes have been known to contaminate newer systems. For both of these, there are filters that have specific properties designed to help remove any harmful traces.

7. Your Water (And Food) Will Taste Better

As mentioned above, incorrect filtering processes can lead to your water tasting metallic or just bad in general.

Completely purified water is odorless and essentially has no taste. This not only makes it easier to drink more of it, but it will also affect the taste of your food and drinks.

Think about all the ways you use water, from making tea and coffee to cooking vegetables and other food items. By having properly filtered water, you'll ensure that the flavors are more balanced and purer than if it wasn't.

8. The Different Filtering Processes

Having your faucet water tested is the best way to ensure you know what filter is right for you. This is due to the fact that not every filter is the same and some are better at filtering certain things out than others.

- **Activated Carbon Filters** - great for removing debris and contaminants from your water, they work by absorbing them out of the water. This process also means your water will smell and taste better.
- **Reverse Osmosis** - popular for their ability to remove many contaminants, these filters are the best for removing lead if you find any levels in your water.
- **Alkaline/Water Ionizers** - these devices are great for creating water that is less acidic. This means your water will be softer and also good for your skin if you shower through a home filtration system
- **UV Filters** - UV rays from the sun naturally kill bacteria on the surface of the water. Using this same technique, these filters are excellent for destroying contaminants and don't use any chemicals to do it.

No matter what filter you end up buying, just ensure it is certified by the NSF which is an independent group dedicated to testing the quality of filters.

9. Filters need to be changed

Just remember that filters don't last forever and will require replacement or maintenance in the case of larger systems.

Overall, these costs will still be less than buying bottled water and the possible medical issues that could arise from drinking water that isn't safe.

10. Get The Right Filter

There are a few filtration options to choose from depending on your home and lifestyle.

- **Pitcher/Carafe** - these are the most basic types to have and can easily fit in your fridge. However, they have limited storage and you need to wait for the water to filter which can be time-consuming and annoying
- **Faucet Mounted** - these fit easily over your faucet and are good ways to filter water. Just be aware that they do slow down the flow of water coming out of the tap and are not compatible with every tap out there
- **Countertop** - these help you get larger volumes of filtered water and can provide excellent filtration. Their only downside is that they take up counter space and again, may not fit with your faucet at home
- **Under the Sink** - these types free up your counter space and make it easy to have access to clean, filtered water. Their installation is technical however and is best performed by a professional
- **Whole House Systems** - These systems are larger but provide an all-around filtration process that is unmatched. It not only guarantees all your drinking water is safe, but also the water you use for bathing and watering your garden

Choosing the right system can be difficult and often confusing. That's why it always is recommended to hire professional companies to help assess the best system for your needs. Look for organizations like Water Filters To Go and other companies which offer a full suite of filtration options so you know you're getting expert advice and installation.

Be Safe

Getting your water tested is the best way to ensure peace of mind and know exactly what issues your water has.

From there, it's essential to make sure you get the correct filter for your needs so that you know your filtering water the right way.

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The Ultimate Guide to the Best Recurve Bow String Silencers

There is nothing more frustrating than being out hunting with your recurve bow and having a perfect shot lined up, only for your game to drop low or swivel directly after you release the arrow.

This is often caused by "string jumping", where the animal is reacting to the noise given off by your bow.

At an average temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit, sound travels at about 770 mph, yet arrows shot from recurve bows can only reach up to 150 mph so it's no wonder skittish game can react so quickly.

That's why the best bow string silencers are designed to dampen noise and have as small an impact on your arrow's speed as possible. The quieter you can be, the higher chance you have of a successful hit.

So what makes a bow silencer effective and which one is right for you?

First Understand the Problem

There are a number of factors at play when hunting, so it's important to make sure you're doing everything right.

While having a correct technique is essential, it will only form part of your overall success. There's no need to get too technical here but it's still important to understand the basic physics and the forces at work when you shoot an arrow.

On the initial draw, the tension you feel in the bow is the potential energy. Everything from the limbs to the string is straining to return to the shape it holds when at rest.

Once you release the arrow, the energy is converted into kinetic energy which launches the arrow forward and makes the string vibrate. This is what causes the familiar "twang" sound that can alert game to the oncoming shot.

Since the energy travels in waves throughout the bow and the string, the best thing you can do is give that energy somewhere else to go or cancel it out.

That's where bow string silencers come in.

Spread Out the Energy

A bow silencer works by absorbing some of the energy created by the shot which helps prevent excessive vibration and slow the string down faster.

This has a number of advantages:

1. With less vibration throughout the bow and string, your arrows will fly straighter improving your accuracy and chance of hitting the target
2. Over time, the energy from every shot you make can wear the string down and weaken your bow. The absorption from the silencer helps reduce this impact and can prolong your equipment's life
3. The shaking feeling in your bow hand after loosing the arrow is caused by the same energy. The quieter the bow, the more comfortable each shot will feel

Choosing the Right Type

To find the best bow string silencer for your needs, it's important to know if you want to prioritize noise reduction, arrow speed, or cost.

While cheaper options are always more appealing, just be aware that they tend to wear down faster and replacing them may end up costing you the same in the long run.

The main options available are as follows:

Synthetic

These are some of the best selling silencers and are often recommended on forums by other seasoned archers.

They are very light weight which gives you easier drawing power without reducing the impact they have on your arrow's speed. They are often made with rubber which makes them weather-resistant and much more durable than fabric-alternatives.

They also come quite long which gives the kinetic energy more surface area to travel helping reduce the noise generated further. If you find them too long, they are designed to easily be cut to a length you prefer.

Natural Fur

Despite their popularity, there are many who dislike the synthetic silencers and prefer to use furs for their performance, traditional look, and the variety of options available.

The fur used is often naturally water-resistant and the thickness can mean they are heavier than synthetics making them extremely effective at reducing noise vibrations. Because you can choose anything from beaver to otter, you may need to read up on the individual qualities of each fur to see which one is more likely to serve your needs best.

Weighted

Effective and quiet, weighted bow string silencers offer many unique benefits unmatched by the alternatives.

The design and shape makes the string more balanced and the weight itself reduces noise considerably by preventing the string from vibrating as far. Think of the difference between a guitar string being plucked gently or with force.

Bear in mind the increase in weight can initially affect your accuracy as you get used to the subtle increase so be sure to spend time trying them out at a range before heading off on your next hunting trip.

Groove

Silencers that you place on the string itself are not the only option. Groove silencers are placed at the tip of your recurve bow to dampen the noise made when the string slaps against the limb.

The strips usually have an adhesive back making them very easy to install and their small size keeps from interfering with the overall look of your bow. When used with a string-attached silencer, you'll experience even more reduced noise for an effective shot.

Stops

We'll be honest, the jury's out on whether string stops noticeably increase arrow speed or improve your shot accuracy consistency. However, many people do report a drop in the vibration of the string which reduces noise.

While not the first pick, those looking to hunt game that's often on high alert such as the whitetail deer should consider using every tool at their disposal. The noise you prevent can be the difference between a shot to the vital organs or a messy wound and resulting chase.

There's a lot to consider, but even after you've decided on the right type you still need to ensure you maximize its potential.

Placement is key

Once you have a good idea about what bow silencer will best suit your needs, you need to understand where to place it.

Conventional wisdom says that the string produces the most amount of noise around one quarter or one third of the bow length from the tip. This is simple to calculate.

Just measure the length of bow string from where it contacts one tip to the other, divide by four (or three) and you'll know where to place your bow silencer.

The reason there's no exact spot is because every bow is different. The quarter or third mark is a great starting point and you just need to make small adjustments from there. Just give the string small plucks as you go until you find the spot that produces the least amount of noise.

Now that we've covered the technical aspects of bow silencers, you can understand the advantages of what's available. We've compiled a short list of the best products to help ensure your next trip is as successful as possible.

The Best Recurve Bow String Silencers

To make the list below, each product needed to meet a set criteria of durability, value, and most importantly, noise reduction with as little interference with your shot as possible.

Carbon Express 57509 String Silencer

We saw this item recommended a number of times on separate sites and forums and for good reason. They also are one of the highest rated whisker silencers on Amazon.

People love them for their reasonable price and find them very effective at reducing string vibration giving them a more quiet and stable shot. They're lightweight and made of rubber which as mentioned gives them excellent durability and keeps them light even in the rain.

This is a great option for anyone seeking a cheap and reliable silencer, just be sure to install them correctly to avoid them coming apart while you're out on your next trip.

Mountain Man Beaver Balls String Silencer

You don't have to search for long to see that this beaver fur silencer is a favorite among many archers in the field.

Made from tanned beaver hide, the end result is a large and authentic looking bow silencer that provides superior noise reduction. And since beavers are aquatic creatures, this silencer comes with natural water-resistant properties meaning they function just as well in the rain shaking water off without issue.

Bowjax 1036 Ultra Bow Jax II Dampener

A top seller, this is Bowjax's most popular model known for helping improve overall performance and silence with little compromise.

Each dampener is well balanced and weighted to ensure vibrations are kept to a minimum while keeping your arrow speed consistent. Sold as a pack of four, this will give you a lot of adjustment options so you can find the configuration that works best for you.

Traditional Archery - Recurve Bow Bowstring Groove Silencers

A perfect addition designed specifically for recurve bows.

Made from natural leather, these bow silencers are built to last over many uses. They have an adhesive back for easy application and Traditional Archery went a step further by including padding for extra noise absorption.

If you still wish to further reduce noise produced by your bow, then there are other important factors that can significantly help you.

A Few Small Tweaks

Even the best bow silencers can't fix a bow that isn't properly adjusted. This part is at the end of the guide because it's actually better to do the adjustments with the silencers already installed.

Here's a quick rundown of what to be aware of and what you can do to fix it.

Do Some Fine Tuning

Adjusting the brace height of your recurve bow is a great way to help reduce the noise level. It also helps improve your performance and accuracy so be sure to adjust it for your level and activity.

Check the Connections

If you've been enjoying going out with your bow a lot this year, you should take a closer look at every part of your bow. The more you use it, the looser things like screws and other sections can become causing rattles and unwanted vibration.

Use Heavier Arrows

While heavier usually means louder, when it comes to hunting arrows the opposite is true. The extra weight makes them able to absorb more energy meaning less is transferred to the bow itself.

With all that in mind...

Enjoy Your Next Hunt

Hunting is a thrilling activity that requires extreme patience and dedication. While there are missed shots and difficult days, the rewards of hitting your target make it all worthwhile.

That's why you should do everything possible to ensure you give yourself the best chance of success and come home with a wall-worthy prize.

While there are many factors involved, nearly all hunters agree that silence is one of the most important. Especially when the difference is based on just a few crucial milliseconds and the reactions of your target to any noise you might cause.

Understanding your equipment and knowing what you can do to improve it is an essential part of being a good hunter. Hopefully by reading this guide you have learned what the best bow string silencers are, why they are effective, and the best way to use them.

Don't feel discouraged if the results aren't immediately what you hoped.

Every hunter has their own preferences and it takes time to try out different accessories to find the set up that works for you. Just continue to use your bow and make adjustments as you go.

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What You Need to Know About the Dry Herb Vaporizer

The marijuana market in the US is skyrocketing with the 2017 value set at \$9.2 billion with expectations this will only increase as time goes on.

Recreational weed is legal (at the state level) in nine states, available medically in forty-six, and illegal in only four. So it's essential to understand the different options out there so you can give your customers the best options.

While some still prefer the traditional approach of using bong, pipes, and joints, vaping is slowly taking over as the preferred method for a number of reasons.

Read on to find out more about dry herb vaporizers and why they are becoming so popular.

Understanding the Dry Herb Vaporizer

When you light a joint or a pipe, you apply a direct flame to the weed causing it to burn and release smoke. The downside to this process is that the weed which comes into contact with the fire burns at a range of 700-1200 degrees Fahrenheit which is far beyond the necessary amount.

Research has shown that in order to release THC (the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana) the temperature only needs to be around 365° F.

That's almost half of the heat burning through a joint or pipe produces.

This lower heat is not only a more efficient method, it makes smoking easier on the throat and lungs. It also reduces the number of harmful carcinogens released at higher burning temperatures.

Further research also showed that when a joint was burning but not being smoked, a lot of the THC is lost in the form of the smoke trail at the end.

With a growing variety of vaporizers available on the market, consumers are getting increasing control over the way they can enjoy their favorite plant.

Currently, there are three main types of dry herb vaporizers available.

Desktop Vaporizers

Before the technology became smaller, desktop vaporizers were one of the only ways a person could vape dry herb.

Today, however, their size is now a big advantage as it allows the addition of numerous features. For example, the heating methods produce a higher quality vapor compared to the

smaller devices. Equally, their size allows for a larger chamber meaning you can relax alone or with friends without having to refill very often.

Of these varieties, there are two main types to choose from:

1. **Tube Vaporizers** - Flexible and effective, these usually heat herb in a glass section which attaches to the heating element. This then allows you to draw vapor through a mouthpiece at the end. Not only is it easy, it's a great device for social settings and sharing with friends.
2. **Bag Vaporizers** - Rather than using a tube, these vaporizers have a bag placed over the unit which is slowly inflated by the vapor. The bags are attached with a valve to stop vapor escaping and you can breathe in the smoke straight from the bag. Alternatively, there are options to attach a mouthpiece to make it easier.

Of course, many people are put off by the large size and the fact that most of these devices need to be plugged in order to work. That's why the portable vaporizer and pen market has seen continued growth.

Portable Vaporizers

These devices are by far the most customizable options out there. For customers, they offer an extensive range of modular components perfect for personalization.

While dry herb vaporizers have fewer features, there are many devices which can do both herb, e-juice, and concentrates. These specific devices provide many more options for customizing.

Their main advantage is that they often come with temperature control settings. This allows customers can find their perfect temperature and get the most out of their bud.

Because of their convenient size, they make excellent devices for customers who like to travel. Equally, their longer battery life makes it great for day trips where charging may not be possible.

Vaporizer Pens

These are extremely popular among customers who seek a discrete and cheaper alternative to the portable vaporizers.

Marijuana vape pens are great because their simple design only requires a battery (which is USB charged) and a chamber to place the dry herb in to.

While most models don't allow customers to control the temperature specifically, there are techniques to mediate this.

When breathing in, the battery is activated and begins cooking the bud to produce the vapor. If a person takes in a long draw, they risk raising the temperature too high and overcooking what's

in the chamber. That's why it's recommended to simply take in small short puffs to get the same amount but at a lower, more accurate temperature.

Another advantage of this is that it produces a smaller cloud which can be undetectable and smell significantly less. This combination of convenience, size, and reduced smell makes it a very popular choice for customers everywhere.

A New Way to Smoke

The US is nearing an interesting situation where marijuana is legal in every state but not federally. This will only lead to full legalization nationwide putting dry herb and related devices in high demand.

Because dry herb vaporizers cook marijuana rather than burning it, many people find them much easier to smoke while also reporting better flavors.

From the larger devices to the more portable, the range of options available makes them a worthwhile investment for your business.

The more varieties you stock, the more likely you'll be able to attract and retain customers while also showing an expertise in the field.

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Why Your Next Home Should Be a Shipping Container Home

The average cost of a new home in the United states is over \$380,000.

Even if you're happy to buy an older home, the cost still reaches \$200,000 at purchase which doesn't even include the costs that come after. Older homes will always require updating, renovations and repairs which can drive the final bill up by another \$20,000 to \$40,000.

But there's another option that brings all of the modern features of a new home with the ability to personalize your living space. And it's cheaper.

Shipping container homes are becoming an increasingly popular movement for people looking for an alternative to the swollen and expensive housing market.

Read on to discover everything you need to know about this growing movement.

What is a Shipping Container Home?

Whether in person or in movies, you've seen what a shipping container looks like. They're long, metallic, and often stacked on top of each other as they sail over the oceans.

Remember, these are originally designed to ship products around the world so companies insist that these are waterproof and immensely strong to protect whatever is inside.

In terms of building a home, think of them as hollow Lego bricks that you can stack and position in anyway you like. From there you add insulation, piping, and electronics and before you know it you have a large, safe, comfortable living space.

They also come with numerous advantages.

They're Relatively Cheap

A standard 20-foot used shipping container only costs around \$2,000 which gives you about 144 sq ft. It's 40-foot equivalent costs just \$2,800 and gives you up to 300 sqft to work with.

That means that at just under \$15,000 you can buy 1500 sqft of living space and still have tens of thousands left over for creating the perfect home.

The most minimalist out there have even constructed entire homes out of just a single container while others have chosen larger projects and still come out spending only around \$150,000.

Compared to the average cost of a home in the US the savings alone make container homes a very tempting option.

You Can Customise Them

The only way a home will be perfect is if you get to design every single room yourself. After buying a traditional house, it can take years to save up enough to change every room to the way you like it.

With shipping container homes however, all the money you would have spent on just a deposit and repairs can instead be used for the construction and personalization of your house.

Think back to the Lego bricks. You don't have to build a simple square home. You can put the containers vertically or diagonally, and stack them in anyway you want to create the ultimate living space that can be adjusted to fit anywhere.

However you like to live, shipping container homes give you personalization previously only available to the super wealthy.

It's Good For the Environment

There are hundreds of thousands of used shipping containers in the world and many of them are still in great condition. This is mostly because companies will want the latest containers to ensure their product is safe leaving perfectly good containers to waste.

By using a shipping container as your home, you save countless resources that would normally go into the frame and structure of a home.

And because you're in control of what goes into the house. You can even choose the most environmentally sourced and friendly materials in the construction process.

This can lead to a home which is both personalized to your preferences and eco-friendly at the same time.

A New Way to Live

Every year the cost of housing continues to increase pushing more and more people out of the housing market.

Because of this, shipping container homes are quickly becoming a viable and enjoyable option for many.

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Realty Realities: Here's What You Need to Know About the SoCal Housing Market

California's real estate market is facing concerns that it is a bubble set to burst.

However, there are many factors to take into account which suggest that may not be the case. When you look at the housing market between 2003 and 2006 before the recession, prices were jumping consistently every year. Comparatively the current prices are a moderate increase since over a decade has passed since the financial crisis.

That doesn't, however, change the issue that prices are still very high for most low to middle-income buyers.

Read on for a comprehensive guide at the market and its projected forecast.

Factors From the Past

Proposition 13

In the past, California passed Proposition 13, a law which limited property taxes to just one percent of the home's value on the purchase. It also restricted the increases to be no more than 2 percent a year.

While it was great at the time, property prices have increased so much it has now created a situation. Many homeowners don't want to sell their home. This is because a house bought in 1990 for \$150,000 would only pay \$1,500 in property taxes. By 2018, at the maximum increase, it would still only be around \$2,500 a month.

Now consider if they sold their home and bought a new property (which would be the same size or smaller). At the current average price of \$623,000, their taxes go up to \$6230. Anyone who has paid off their mortgage (or is close to it) would be very reluctant to accept this new cost. This true especially as they near retirement which has led to a less fluid market.

The Financial Crash

The recession caused significant damage to the growth of the California Real Estate market. This not only affects consumer confidence but resulted in many fewer homes being built in the following years.

As the economy picked up, people flooded the market to buy houses at low costs spiking demand and increasing prices by a large factor.

The Cost of Land

In the major cities, most of California's natural flat landscape has been covered by buildings.

Unfortunately, this means if a company wishes to purchase land and build a row of new houses or apartments, they have a 'brown-field' to deal with.

This is where the current buildings have to be demolished before construction can start. Combining this massive cost with the highly restrictive environmental laws and you end up with many investors unable to afford the upfront costs of construction.

Current Migration Rates

California as a state is continuing to lose more people than the amount that is coming in.

While a smaller population is better for California's housing market when you look at the data it actually poses a problem.

The majority of people leaving California are people in the lower income brackets and they are being replaced by those with higher incomes. This has led to areas where housing prices and the surrounding shops and restaurants are more expensive which exacerbate the issue further.

Long-term, homeowners and potential buyers may find local prices jumping at increasing rates in areas that are still cheap right now.

Housing Development Has Slowed

According to the California Department of Housing, less than 80,000 new homes were built annually over the past ten years which is significantly below the forecasted requirement of 180,000.

This compounds the housing shortage issue with the state being short by a million homes and production is still not set to increase at the rate it needs to.

This only guarantees that demand will significantly outweigh supply for a number of years to come and prices will continue to jump at a rapid pace.

This is because the cost of construction itself for new properties has increased significantly. This is due to the legal and environmental factors mentioned above as well as the concerns of reduced ROI in the future.

The Current California Real Estate Market

The imminent risk of the housing market bubble bursting and an impending second financial crisis make this an interesting time to be a part of this market.

Anyone already in the market or looking for short-term investments will find that now is an excellent time to get involved.

With high demand and increasing prices, many investors and buyers are looking to purchase houses to flip or sell. This is especially effective as many sellers are experienced high bidding wars between buyers effectively driving the price (and profit) up further.

Because of this, if you are looking for a property to have for a few years and sell on, it is recommended to wait and see how to market changes in the next few years and take your time to secure a good deal.

As always though, long-term investments in this market can be confidently made. Even if the market stagnates or falls, it will almost certainly bounce back and you will have a significantly higher return on your investment.

Weigh Up Your Options

While there are a few differences in prices and forecasts per region in the Southern California real estate market, the advice is still the same.

It will be many years until supply gets anywhere close to meeting demand and the prices will continue to be driven up higher. Long term this market is a strong investment as long as you are not looking to sell within the next few years.

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Top 10 Best Marijuana Stocks of 2018

The marijuana stock market is growing at a tremendous pace.

If you've been holding back investing then now may be the best time to get involved. With over half of America's states legalizing medical marijuana and nine including recreational pot, this is one trend that's showing no signs of stopping.

Over 65% of Americans are in favour of legalization and the data suggests the percentage could be even higher. This is because of the old stigma surrounding pot meaning some are worried that voicing their support will possibly damage their reputation.

As marijuana becomes more mainstream and no longer seen as taboo, many quiet supporters will emerge creating another huge surge in stock prices.

If you want to get ahead of the game and invest early, then check out our list of the best marijuana stocks right now.

The 10 Best Marijuana Stocks

1. Scotts Miracle-Gro (NYSE: SMG)

Any company that shows it's willing to adapt to changing markets is worth keeping your eye on.

Originally, the company had just been focussed on lawn and garden products. However, since the legal cannabis industry started showing promise, Scotts Miracle-Gro has made huge strides to enter the market.

Very recently, they purchased an industry-leading distributor of hydroponics equipment, (the method used by many to grow cannabis indoors) indicating a strong commitment to their future investments.

Stocks sank at the start of this year but that was industry-wide due to Jeff Sessions' announcement to allow federal prosecutors to go after states with legalization.

With market trends indicating continuing growth for the cannabis industry long term, it may be advantageous to purchase stocks now while they are low.

2. Kush Bottles (OTCMKTS: KSHB)

Recently, new laws from the California Department of Public Health meant that all cannabis products be sold in child-proof packaging. This was a huge blow to many retailers that were unable to sell their stock in time before the law came into place.

It was fortunate for Kush Bottles, then, that this style of packaging was already in their repertoire. As the law came into place, growers and retailers had to scramble to source child-safe packaging driving Kush Bottle's sales and market value at the same time.

While the law only affected California, it set a precedent that will likely be adopted by other states in the future.

Kush Bottles also recently announced their expansion into Canada with their subsidiary: Kush Supply Co. This combined with Canada's recent law to make cannabis legal nationwide, starting October 17th, sets Kush Bottles up to be a very lucrative stock.

3. Cronos Group Inc. (NASDAQ: CRON)

This year, the Cronos Group made history by becoming the first cannabis-related stock to move from the OTC market into the more reputable Nasdaq.

This ensures better transparency and more stable market prices, making it a far safer investment when compared to other stocks available.

Equally, Cronos Group signed a monumental five-year deal to supply over 44,000 lbs of product to a growing firm in Canada. This solidifies a revenue stream in what can be a difficult market to sustain sales due to increasing competition.

When taking into consideration their stock status, secured deals, and projected growth in a soon to be fully legalized market, Cronos Group is definitely a top weed stock.

4. Aphria (OTCQB: APHQF)

Based in Canada with huge international ventures, Aphria is showing no signs of stopping its ambitious growth plans.

The global plan stretches its operations from Latin America and Australia to South Africa, with a wide range of distribution networks already set up.

For example, a recent deal with Southern Glazer's gives them a huge advantage in North America as it secures points of sale and supply. With a projected production of 225,000 kilograms, Aphria has a lot of strengths that can make it a top marijuana stock to watch.

5. Canopy Growth Corp. (NYSE: CGC)

If you want a solid investment that has a high guarantee of return, the Canopy Growth Corp is an excellent cannabis stock.

While many companies struggled to show growth in the first half of 2018, Canopy Growth defied the market increasing its share value by 45%. This is mostly to do with the successive agreements and partnerships it has managed to secure.

In light of Canada's legalization, the company has locked in with many Canadian provinces as well as Yukon Liquor Corporation and a variety of retail partnerships.

They also have been successful in other global markets like Germany with plans to diversify into the beverage market with a cannabis-infused product. Their extensive network and diverse plan should ensure healthy growth and increase investment as the new law takes effect.

6. MariMed (OTCMKTS: MRMD)

Defying the market trends and establishing themselves as a key player, MariMed offers a strong and unique investment.

While many have moved into the market as suppliers and distributors, MariMed has differentiated themselves as a consultancy service helping others navigate the complex process of entering the market.

They've seen consistent success with their stock prices rising at an increasing rate since the year began from \$0.21 in December 2017 to \$2.50 USD at the time of writing.

They also have plans to use their knowledge to begin production in legalized medical markets in both Maryland and Massachusetts. With such a low stock price, it could be worth investing now to enjoy potential big gains in the future.

7. AbbVie Inc. (NYSE: ABBV)

As a biopharmaceutical company, AbbVie has a more secure place in the market than some of the OTC stocks we've mentioned.

Known for Marinol, a marijuana-based drug used for helping patients with digestion, the company is taking steps to ensure they become a market leader.

While many companies are focussing on the plant, AbbVie is finding ways to create commercial products that can treat various ailments.

They've already shown a strong ability to navigate the early 2018 market drop so currently are projected for continued growth.

8. Aurora Cannabis, Inc. (TSE: ACB)

This Canadian company is a big grower with a lot of potential. As a licensed producer, they're able to create unique and distinct buds that can easily make waves in the industry.

While their stock price fell this year, it is all set to change as Canada's legalization law sets in. Equally, this focus on production will allow them to be early adopters and suppliers to any potential new markets in the remaining US states.

They've also diversified their business becoming a known brand in multiple international markets. Most notably, they've got a majority stake in a growing facility based in Denmark and other plans that could lead to over 100,000 kilograms of production.

Out of all the marijuana stocks to watch, Aurora Cannabis should definitely be on your radar.

9. MedMen (CNSX: MMEN)

Based in the United States MedMen has a vertical model covering from cultivation through to retail.

While smaller than some of the other stocks listed here, their presence in key US states such as California and Nevada gives them an advantage over potential competitors.

Their targeted retail strategy has already proven successful with profits in June 2018 reported to be exceeding \$19 million. Equally, they have recently expanded into Canada which, as mentioned, is already guaranteed for growth.

If you are unsure of investing this early, keep updated on MedMen's progress as they could become one of the top weed stocks in the coming years.

10. CannaRoyalty (CNSX: CRZ)

With cannabis still a Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substance Act, federally, it is held to the same level of notoriety as LSD and Heroin.

This naturally can make gaining investments and loans from banks a difficult and sometimes disappointing process. Noticing this gap, CannaRoyalty emerged as a financing business to help marijuana entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground in exchange for royalties.

The success of this so far has seen their stock rise steadily with multiple brands secured in California setting them up for a bright future.

A Growing Market

Considering Canada's upcoming national legalization and the potential of the US market, the above list shows the best marijuana stocks chosen for their current and projected success.

Marijuana is a fantastic plant and the industry is set to go from strength to strength. But because of the clash between federal and state legislation, the US market can seem like a risky investment. That's why companies with diversified portfolios and an international presence are the safest bet for the moment.

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Your Step-By-Step Guide to Controlling Your Emotions

I was once in a job so stressful my reaction was to switch off my emotions rather than learn to control them.

I didn't do it intentionally, at the time I thought feeling nothing *was* me being in control.

It wasn't until I left the company that I realized that by shutting out stress and unhappiness, I had also shut out joy and excitement. I was numb.

I learned that controlling your emotions does not mean you should not feel them, in fact, it's the opposite. Control comes from being extremely aware of how you are feeling so that you can make a rational decision about how to proceed. That way, you will no longer simply react to situations based on a sudden flare of emotions.

Just like a habit, making changes to our behaviors is a consistent, conscious effort that can even take up to two-thirds of a year to fully alter. Fortunately, the research also indicates that messing up once in a while does not affect your progress as long as you continue to work on it.

This guide is designed to help you prepare for, or learn from, the daily situations that cause unwanted emotional reactions and how to control yourself.

Controlling Your Emotions

When it comes to making changes to your emotional state, there are three different perspectives you need to take.

First, you need to consider your past actions and memories to learn about yourself and how you react. Next, you need to become mindful of your emotional state and understand what you can do to deal with unwanted emotions as they occur. Finally, it helps to look to the future and prepare yourself for situations to give yourself the best chance for emotional control and success.

Forgive the Past

Often, the way we react to situations is based on our past experiences.

For example, if you have had unpleasant experiences with a colleague at work, you're more likely to perceive their future actions as malicious or annoying. Or if you were prevented from acting a certain way when you were younger, you may react angrily if a parent or sibling questions your independence now as an adult.

How you were treated in the past does not indicate how you will be treated in the present. You need to let go of your assumptions and take each present moment as a new opportunity.

Look For Emotional Triggers

Search your memory for unpleasant moments where your emotions got the better of you and begin writing them down as short descriptions.

Now ask yourself: "Why did I act this way?"

When answering this question, avoid blaming the people or the situation you were in, they are not responsible for your actions, you are.

This exercise can be hard, and even painful, but in doing so you will begin to understand yourself better. You may also start to notice a pattern in your behaviors.

For example:

- "I feel angry when people tell me I'm wrong. It makes me defensive and I try to point out other areas where they are wrong."
- "I feel embarrassed when people ask about my love life. I always give a vague answer but it just causes more questions making the conversation awkward."
- "I feel anxious when I can't contribute to conversations. I get so in my head that when people ask my opinion I shut down and just say I don't care."

Once you identify your triggers and reactions, you can start to overcome them and gain more emotional control.

Consider the Consequences

How does holding on to the past actually benefit you?

Maybe that colleague was rude to you because they were having a bad day. What if your family is now just curious rather than unsupportive?

If you assume people and situations will be same as before, you're missing out on many opportunities to build new and better memories.

Let go of the past and allow yourself to...

Be in the Moment

Mindfulness has become seen as an essential practice for living a more peaceful life every day.

As situations arise it is important to follow these steps to help you control your emotions better and project a more positive self to others.

Don't React Immediately

We all feel pressured to give an immediate response when something happens for fear of looking slow or clueless. However, giving yourself time before reacting can help you control your emotions and respond in a more thoughtful, intelligent way.

The first step is to breathe.

Simple as it sounds, we actually tend to tense up and hold our breath when confronted with something we don't like. Breathing helps us relax our body and mind giving you better control moving forward.

Consider the Other Point of View

Unless you've actually wronged someone, most people don't want to upset or offend you. Often, they don't understand how they are making you feel or realize the effects of their actions.

Whether your boss or your parent, try to think about the situation from their perspective. This will help make you more empathetic while also tempering any sudden emotion you may have started to feel.

Understand the Mind-Body Connection

Science has shown there's a direct link between how our thoughts shape our physical feelings and how our actions affect how we think.

If you put your arms in front of you or fidget with clothing when you're feeling nervous, you are actually only making the feeling worse. It's why business leaders are taught to stand tall with their feet firmly on the ground when presenting to clients. They may still be feeling nervous, but their body language will be one of confidence which, in turn, will help them feel more confident.

By being aware of your body and your thoughts, you can actively make adjustments in the moment that will help you control your emotions better.

Release

Of course, sometimes the situation is truly awful and the best response is to bite your tongue and hold back how you feel.

After the moment has passed, allow yourself time to acknowledge and release that emotion. You can talk with a friend, do some exercise, play music or do some art.

Whatever helps you relax, be sure to think about the situation that caused you to feel that way and release that energy into what you're doing.

Think to the Future

If there is any upcoming situation you are dreading or nervous about, think of it as a perfect opportunity to help yourself grow.

Prepare

Knowing your emotional triggers and how you tend to act in situations has many advantages. You can anticipate what will be an issue and decide ahead of time how you will stand, speak, and act.

Going into the situation, you will already have far more emotional control than had you just worried about it.

Plan

If you find yourself in a situation where your best option is to leave, then start asking yourself the tough questions.

In the meantime, try to make the best of the situation and learn from it as much as you can to help you with any new opportunities in the future.

Be Patient With Yourself and Seek Guidance

My own journey is still ongoing.

I continue to reflect and be conscious of my thoughts and actions, but even after years I still make mistakes or forget myself sometimes.

Controlling your emotions is a never-ending process of learning and self-discovery. You may not be better each day, but you will definitely improve as the months go on.

I sought many different forms of guidance, each with their own benefits. I started doing yoga, took part in guided meditation, and opened my mind to other possibilities too.

By reading this article you have acknowledged that you want to make a positive change in your life. Now it is time to take action and make those changes happen.

[FINAL CTA SENTENCE REMOVED]