



What ABC Can do For You

ABC's mission is simple: to promote and protect the future of small business.

What is ABC?

America's Best Companies is a nationwide small business organization dedicated to helping small business owners stay in business, grow their business, and make more money in their business. We have built on the strong belief that small businesses are the most important companies in America and the cornerstone of our communities. We built ABC to help protect the future of small business in what is, with the influx of big-box corporate chains, an increasingly competitive environment.

ABC's mission is to provide small businesses with the tools and resources to compete with the existing megamarts and giant online retailers.

We'd like to see the point-and-click generation of today recognize the unique products and personal services that local business owners can provide. We believe, after all, that the American Dream has always begun with the idea of starting a small business.



Statistics You Should Know

14% of Inc. magazine's 500 **fastest growing companies** in the United States started with less than \$1,000.

Over **54 million people in America** are employed by a small company.

Dept. of Commerce





Online retailers are acquiring new customers at a **15% annual rate** versus 2% for traditional brick and mortar retail outlets.

Deloitte & Touche USA

Small businesses represent 99.7% of all employer firms.

-SBA



34% of consumers shop online before they ever get to the store, according to ComScore.

While an estimated **627,000 new employer firms began operations in 2008**, unfortunately 595,600 firms closed.

- SBA



Reasons Why Small Businesses Fail	How These Problems Arise
1. Lack of marketing expertise	Customers won't show up at a business owner's door if they don't know they are there. While small businesses may have a smaller marketing budget, it is an expense that cannot be ignored. They need to market themselves.
2. Competition	Small business owners need to be researching their competition before they even start planning their business. If they start losing their customers to the competition, it's important that they do some detective work and find out why.
3. Not seeking professional advice: i.e. legal, financial, etc.	Knowledge and wisdom alone will not make a business successful. All small business owners need top quality professional advisers to help with important decisions.
4. Out of touch with customers	Most small businesses build personal relationships with their customers. However, they forget to use that to their advantage by asking customers for their feedback and advice.
5. No website/online exposure	Every business owner needs a website — no exceptions. In today's market, having a website will allow them to keep up with the competition and reach a much larger customer base.
6. Lack of capital or poor cost control	Small business owners often can underestimate the capital required to break even and end up taking on too much debt in the process. Cash flow is one of the top priorities for a business. Often times as a business grows, it needs more capital to meet the needs of suppliers, as well as clients.
7. Poor advertising	There is no point for small business owners to do one mass mailing to all of their potential customers. It also does them no good to run a single small advertisement in their local newspaper. Advertising is about repetition. Small business owners need to get their marketing materials in front of their customers as many times as possible so it sticks in their mind.

ABC Can Help You Avoid These Issues

When you become a member of ABC, you will not only become part of a nationwide network of business owners; you will also have access to five key tools that will help you maximize your business experience and obtain more customers quickly, easily, and inexpensively.



The ABC Story

Our story is a fascinating one of a man, a vision, and a goal for America. Here is a peek at some important milestones through the years at America's Best Companies.

2005

AUGUST

ABC President Jim Tracy's favorite donut shop closes.

OCTOBER

Inspired to make a difference, Jim commits to help restore small business in America.



2006

JUNE

ABC is officially born. Headquarters in the Oakbrook Terrace Tower.

JULY

It all begins with a sticker in the window.

SEPTEMBER

Americasbestcompanies.com goes live.

OCTOBER

Hertz becomes first member of ABC's discount program.

Over 565,000 small businesses reported closed (SBA).

2007

MARCH

ABC launches its easy-to-build website tool—myabcspace.com.

JUNE

First issue of America's Best magazine is published.

OCTOBER

Beta version of EZlocal goes online.









2008

JANUARY

The ABC Small Business Blog goes live.

MAY

First ABC e-Weekly newsletter.

AUGUST

ABC hosts its first event with local chambers of commerce to celebrate the growth of small business on the anniversary of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

2009

JANUARY

ABC reaches 100 discount program partners.

FEBUARY

ABC hits the radio airwaves on XM Sirius and local stations across the country.

MARCH

ABC partners with Careington International to provide members access to discounted health care options.

AUGUST

Our 15,000th member joins ABC.







marketing materials

Proudly Display Your ABC Membership

We encourage members to use the ABC logo in all of their marketing.

What Do I Receive?

Within two weeks of joining, all members receive an official ABC Welcome Kit containing:

1. Large ABC Window Decal

Display your ABC membership decal in a prominent place in your business. Let others know you are a part of the America's Best Companies family.

2. Custom ABC Certificate

This full color certificate is printed on high-quality paper and includes your business name, date of membership, the ABC logo and is suitable for framing.

3. Access to Official Logos

Include the ABC logo on your letterhead and business cards and our Web logo on your website to garner more attention and stand out from the competition.





"The marketing tools
that ABC puts forth to
help your business grow
are remarkable.
We are very proud to be
part of America's Best
Companies. When you have
the logo from America's
Best Companies on your
stationery, other companies
and customers are very
impressed."

Show Your Support

America's Best Companies' success is only possible because of the strength of our numbers. ABC represents thousands of active and involved small business owners—our **buying power** and **advertising reach** grows with every new member we add. The future of small business depends on the commitment of independent business owners to join together and fight back against the big-boxes. Show your support for small business by placing the ABC decal in your window.



information resources

Advice, News, Feedback and More

We provide all the resources that you need to run a successful small business.

What Do I Receive?

As a member of ABC, you'll receive access to critical information resources on small business issues, trends, success stories, and news that you can use right away to start, grow and manage your business more successfully.

1. ABC eWeekly

- ★ What's new for small businesses: The latest ideas, advice, tips and info.
- See what your competition is doing successfully.
- Spot industry trends and act on them quickly.
- * Stay up-to-date on the latest ABC news with information on our social networking efforts.

2. America's Best Magazine

- ★ Offers advice, information, tools and services to help small business owners. with best business practices.
- Simple ways to shop and save.
- ★ Success stories, product reviews, marketing advice and more.
- * Every issue is as inspirational as it is informational.
- The #1 resource for the small business owner!





3. ABC Small Business Center

The Small Business Center at AmericasBestCompanies.com is your **one-stop resource** for small business news, views and information. Here you will find the latest in small business news with today's top articles; the answers to your small business questions with our popular Small Business Answers section; our **highly informative** Small Business and Bottom Line Blogs, as well as ABC podcasts, videos, and small business tools.



Small Business Answers

From marketing to management, technology to employment, our small business experts and outside professionals have the expertise to answer ANY questions you might have.

Small Business Articles

ABC's Small Business Articles provide real-world advice to people who are just starting a business and those who want to grow their small business.

The Bottom Line Blog

The Bottom Line serves as the hub for opinions, analysis, and insights about today's news on a wide-variety of topics including healthcare, social networking, and taxes.

Small Business Tips

Each week, we publish five new small business tips covering topics important to small business owners such as sales, operations, customer service, how-to, and more.

ABC Business Tools

ABC's Business Tools offer resources for small businesses such as a loan calculator, business plans, forms and templates, tax forms, and other tools for business success.

Maximize Your Savings

Save hundreds or even thousands of dollars on everyday purchases.

Being an ABC member gives you immediate access to key benefits that save you **money** and **time**. We are always developing and adding new discount programs for many products and services for you, your small business, and your family.

Our member discounts are designed to help with your **critical business needs**: Insurance, office supplies, health care, shipping, technology, utilities, financial services, and more. We've already teamed up with over 100 companies nationwide to offer the most complete and competitive discount program of any association in America.

40%-60% OFF

UP TO 65% OFF

SAVE 3%



Office Supplies

ABC and Staples Business Advantage have partnered to offer unbelievable discounts on all your office supply needs. Discounts average 40% TO 60% OFF over 8,500 items.



Shipping

Take advantage of exclusive discounts. Save time on shipping and track your packages with this reliable service. Also Save 10% at The UPS Store®. **SAVE UP TO 65%** on LTL freight.



Gasoline

SAVE 3% on fuel and more with the Shell Fleet Card! Thanks to your membership in ABC, you may enjoy the benefits usually enjoyed by Shell's largest customers. All monthly program fees are waived.

DISCOUNT PLANS

25% DISCOUNT

DISCOUNT POLICIES



Health Insurance

ABC and Assurant Affinity have partnered to offer you and your employees discount health insurance on a group and individual basis. Plans include Group HSAs, PPO plans, Short Term, and Student Health Plans.



Tax Services

Receive a **25% DISCOUNT** on your TaxCut Online federal return, prepared by the tax professionals of H&R Block.



Nationwide[®] On Your Side

Auto Insurance

Get out of the red and into the blue with discounted Nationwide auto insurance. For members of America's Best Companies, Nationwide delivers! We offer discounts on auto and home insurance.

"ABC has been amazing! When we joined, we cancelled our previous legal service and contacted a couple of other accounts we already had that offer ABC discounts. In the first month, we started saving \$20 per month instantly! As we use the other discounts ABC offers. we have saved hundreds of dollars. And we've only been members for a couple months! Thank you for introducing me to this business-changing progam!"



Advertising/Marketing

41mprint 7search

21st Century Marketing Systems

The Ad Shoppe **Constant Contact**

G1 Graphics **Hot Pluto**

L.A.R. Consulting & Design

MediaBids

MIVA

PR Newswire

Small Biz America

Yodle

Finance

ABC Realty Rewards

A-Salt Group

America One Unsecured Loans

BizFilings

Creative Capital Associates

Discover H&R Block

MBS Financial

Merchant's Choice

Merrill Lynch

National Translink Corporation

The X Banker

Insurance & Medical

DentalInsurance.com

DentalPlans.com

DPRxCard

Liberty Mutual National Long-Term Care Brokers

Nationwide

Industrial/Commercial Products

B2BProfessionalTools.com

Bellacor

CLK Supplies

Improvement Direct

Jersey Towel Supply

Pros Salon Supply

ReceptionDesks.com

SalonFurniture.com

Tool King

Printing

PlatinumPrinters.com **PrintingForLess.com**

Shipping

Pitney Bowes

Shipwire.com

Stamps.com

UPS

Travel & Leisure

Alamo

Dish Network

Hertz

Hotels.com

Orlando Vacations

Restaurant.com

Shell

Web Design/Hosting

Logoworks **SetNine**

Starmen

Web By Design

Website Magazine

Office Products/Services

2iAmerica

Adept

ADP

Appointment Diary

BackupmyBusiness.com

BizFilings

Business-in-a-Box

Deluxe

Fax2Mail

Feller Business Solutions

Granite Telecommunications

Grasshopper

Great Web Meetings

Intuit

Laborchex

Lenovo

LiveVault

Mind Your BIZness

My Business Assistant

Palo Alto Software

Premiere Global Services

Shoeboxed

SoftSearch

Staples

T Mobile

TNCI

US Legal Forms

Varian

Vital Signs

Zoomerang

Sales

InfoUSA.com

Salesconx

SalesGENIE.COM

Making a Difference for Small Business



America's Best Companies is in constant contact with our legislators keeping them informed on important issues that affect small businesses and urging them to take the needs of small businesses and the self-employed into consideration as they work towards the goal of economic recovery. Our promise to you is that we will do everything in our power to put pressure on politicians at all levels of government to pay attention to the many needs of small business owners and we will never give up the fight!

America's Best Companies knows the facts regarding small businesses and we know what's relevant so we can communicate effectively on your behalf. We're working hard to represent the over 25 million small businesses in the U.S. and make your voices heard.

The Top Issues We're Working To Address:

Health Care

Health care should be affordable for all small business owners and their employees.

Inheritance Taxes

Relieving the inheritance tax burden will keep many small businesses from having to sell or discontinue operations when their founders die, allowing the business to be passed down as a heritage to the next generation.

Alternative Minimum Tax

Reducing the Alternative Minimum Tax will allow more small business owners to reinvest in their business by creating more jobs, expanding, and purchasing new property or equipment.

Capital Gains Taxes

To encourage venture capital, a lowering of capital gains taxes on small business investment is advisable.

Legal Reform

Every year small businesses pay out millions of dollars in lawsuits. Having a cap on punitive damage awards would help to protect small businesses.

Labor

Small businesses, at least those below a certain threshold, should be exempt from laws proposed by unions and government regulators.

Retirement Security

Specific retirement plans for small business owners should offer favorable tax treatment.

Access to Capital

Small business owners having access to credit and capital will ultimately lead our economy into recovery.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

America's Best Companies has been featured by prestigious news outlets, blogs, podcasts and radio stations around the country, including:

Los Angeles Times

HOUSTON☆CHRONICLE

The Boston Globe

Entrepreneur



BusinessWeek





BUSINESSJOURNAL



Who Are You Doing Business With?

We are always looking for new ways to further our mission for small business.



America's Best Companies proudly presents a viral video featured on YouTube starring Britney, a little girl starting her own lemonade stand. Her success drew attention from corporate giants seeking ways to get more customers for their big box stores from smaller businesses. As

Britney competes with these corporate giants, the meaning and value of small businesses becomes the center of attention. The genuine message of keeping small businesses alive and supporting your local businesses is what America's Best Companies is all about.

Will Britney's small business survive? Watch and find out! www.gowithabc.com/youtube

Events and Activities

At America's Best Companies, we are dedicated to the provision of experiences that enhance our mission through relevant events and activities.

To strengthen its cause, **America's Best Companies** has held numerous events to fight for the small businesses attempting to achieve the American Dream.

In August 2008, ABC hosted "Chicago's 75 Years of Progress", to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Located at the One Museum Park Club in the South Loop, overlooking the site for the 1933 World's Fair, the event brought together important small business leaders, politicians, and activists

from the Chicagoland area. Season One Apprentice winner Bill Rancic spoke to attendees about his transformation from a corporate employee to a champion for small businesses, and ABC President Jim Tracy spoke about his fight for the American Dream and his aspirations for the future of small business.

In April 2009, ABC held its first national sales seminar in Oak Brook, IL, bringing in sales representatives from around the country. We are dedicated to training our

sales staff on a continuing basis to ensure they have the knowledge necessary to help you make the right decisions when it comes to your business.

ABC also invited over 20 Illinois chambers of commerce to attend a Chicago Bulls game in December, 2008, to enjoy some exciting basketball and learn more about our mission and our desire to work in conjunction with each other









custom website

Get Your Business Online Today!

Professional websites for ALL business types.

ABC Members can create their own myABCspace website for FREE!

- ★ Choose from almost 100,000 possible design combinations to fit your business.
- **★** Promote your website FREE with unlimited exposure on our Internet directory.
- ★ Communicate to your customers 24/7/365!
- * Add your own text, graphic coupons, company logo, graphics, videos, and more.

Browse
through 1000s
of possible
background
& color
combinations.
We add new
backgrounds and
seasonal themes

every month.

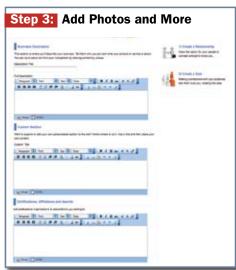


Step 2: Enter Business Information

| Comparison | Compar

Write everything you'd like customers to know about your business. Content can be easily edited and updated as often as you like.

Add graphics, photos, and even videos!





You're almost done. Choose a name that's easy for you and your clients to remember. Click "Finish" and you're ready to start advertising your new site. **It's that easy!**

Welcome to the Web!

Within 24 hours a confirmation e-mail will be sent with your live Web address. Your new URL will automatically be added to your business profile advertised at ezlocal.com, as well as other **popular search directories.**





"I had received information regarding America's Best Companies and called to see what they offered. I was greeted with an **enthusiastic** voice that explained ABC services in regards to web design and support. In a few minutes they were working on building a website from my draft documents. Within the hour we had made considerable progress."

Action Specialty Carts Lynn Knight - Cumming, GA

Your Website, How You Want It!





Upload Your Own Photos

If you have a photo on your computer it's as easy as 1, 2, 3 to put it on your website. Click browse, select the image you want and click ok. Then tell it to upload by pressing the upload button. You can then easily drag and resize your graphic or move it around the page.

Contact Pages

You can choose to have an additional contact page to your website. It's purely optional but allows you to request specific information from your customers or create a simple way for them to reach you; all sent to you via email.

Maps and driving directions

It's easy to use your website to drive walk-in traffic to your business.

MyABCSpace allows you to integrate maps and directions on your website to bring customers straight to your door.

Drive Additional Traffic

Your website is submitted to over 40 of the top search engines to ensure potential customers will be able to find your website. As an added bonus we automatically optimize your content specifically so that you'll be found at or near the top of the search engines for local search results!

Advanced Editing

For those that want to add more spice and flavor to their sites, we've allowed you the ability to edit your own HTML in the custom editing boxes.

Increase Your Visibility

When it comes to local products and services, you want to make sure your business is actually seen.



EZlocal Premium

Online Presence Made EZ!

Premium Membership Includes:

- Highlighted feature listing in search results and on EZlocal.com city homepage
- $-\star$ Upload up to 10 images
- ★ Advanced business details for enhanced search optimization
- Printable custom coupons

Improve the placement of your business on thousands of search engines beginning with EZlocal.com. With better placement, and the benefit of enhanced features and promotion with EZlocal Premium, your business will **stand above the competition**. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to bring your local advertising online.

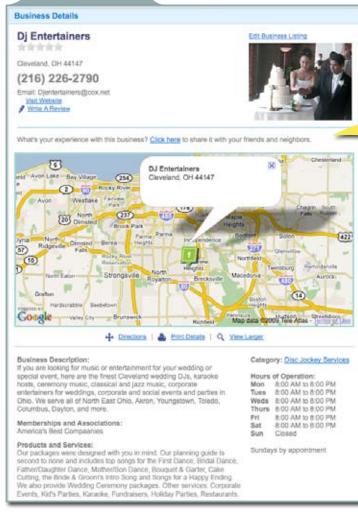
Customer Feedback

Customers will have access to writing reviews and rating your business. See and respond to what's being said.

Search Engine Submission and Visibility

Every element added to the EZlocal business listing increases placement and visibility on more than **40 of the top search engines**.





Search Results



Each business profile will be shared and distributed to over 40 of the top Internet search engines:













Online Advertising

Stand Out From the Crowd

The access and placement of a business is a key tool for online advertising. The cost of placement on large search engines is expensive but the importance is evident.

- **34**% of customers shop online before they ever get to the store
- Tover 60% of all searches in the U.S. are performed by Google
- * 86% of customers read online business reviews before making purchasing decisions.
- Tule U.S. online shoppers will double to 132 million in the next
- * 82% of local searches contacted a local business: 60% making a purchase.
- ★ Some **93**% of local search conversations take place offline.

We create an effective and robust online business profile with important business information including:

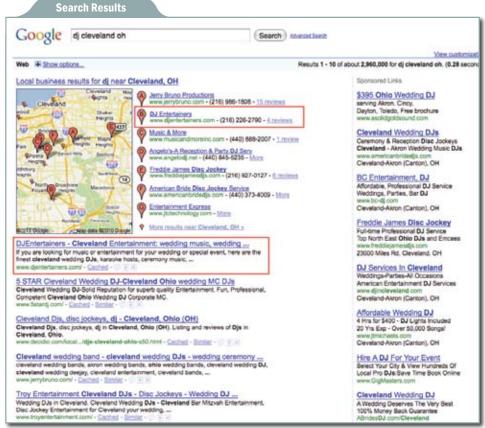
- Business name
- Address
- · Products and services offered
- In-store specials
- Hours of operation
- Driving directions
- Contact information
- · And more!

ezlocal premium

Get Results

Keyword search engine optimization





Rank Higher Than Your Competition

- Your EZlocal content is distributed to all the top search engines
- Keyword rich content gets indeed into your local directories

The top results in local search are the business profiles that not only meet the keyword and demographic requirements, but are also robust with information like 'detailed business descriptions', 'brands carried', 'website link', 'hours of operation', 'store or product images', 'payments accepted', 'product or service reviews', etc.

We maximize your listing.

We have special access to the same national database that helps power over 40 of the top search engines in the country. You can leverage our access and know-how to get top SEO rankings fast.

We take every member profile and make it as robust as possible.

We add the most search friendly description of the business, we add store hours, keyword tags, payments accepted, website address and/or their 'My ABC Space' and many other details.

Our team of Search Engine Optimization specialists work with you to carefully craft your business description on EZlocal – once that business' profile is maximized; we utilize our exclusive access to the Amacai national database to directly submit all of your business' details.

This "backdoor" distribution bypasses the tedious process of individual submissions, plus all the big search engines give data in this database more "clout" which yields better search results.

Getting found through organic "local search" is more valuable than any pay-per-click advertising a small business can afford.

ABC does this at a fraction of the cost of what it would normally cost a business to do this on their own with or without an SEO specialist and pay-per-click advertising — which could easily cost thousands of dollars per month.

