

OPINION

Getting noticed during Derby week: 5 ways businesses stand out

Kentucky Derby season is here, and Louisville businesses will soon be competing for the attention of visitors looking for places to stay, eat, shop and explore.

But standing out in the crowd has become harder every year. While your business may have built awareness among locals, to the thousands of visitors coming to the area you're an unknown.

They are unfamiliar with the city and are deciding in real time where to spend their money. An influx of visitors ready to spend offers great opportunities, but to take advantage visitors must know who you are, what you do and where to find you.

Here are some tips to enhance visibility and show up when it matters most.

Treat Google like your front door

For out of town visitors, Google is the welcome mat, and often the ultimate deciding factor. If your hours, photos or location are outdated, you are essentially invisible. Reviews matter just as much.

Visitors want reassurance that they are choosing the best spots, and a low or poorly maintained rating can quickly repel newcomers. Updating your website is equally important, as Google algorithms favor active, refreshed sites.

Consistent updates can boost your visibility during high-traffic periods. A clean, accurate, high review Google Business profile will often accomplish more during Derby Week than any paid advertisement ever could.

Acknowledge the moment

You do not need a themed logo or racehorse branding across every platform, but ignoring Derby is a missed opportunity. A simple banner, featured post or dedicated page that gives a nod to Derby week signals to visitors that they are in the right place.

Highlight products or services that align with Derby festivities. Pair them with thoughtful graphics and social posts so out-of-town guests immediately recognize their relevance.



BRENDAN SULLIVAN

A keen marketing approach can help capture some of the hundreds of thousands of fans in town for Kentucky Derby 152.

Creating blog content around Derby related offerings can also help capture the surge of frequent event driven searches during this time.

Show up where people are looking

Derby visitors are not scrolling leisurely; they are searching with purpose. Instagram, TikTok and Facebook become decision-making tools.

Highlighting Derby-related products and clearly communicating how you can enhance a visitor's stay during the Kentucky Derby can set you apart.

Quick updates, behind-the-scenes stories and real-time posts often feel more authentic and trustworthy than overly polished campaigns during such a fast-moving week. Agility and relevance matter.

Make mobile the priority

Most Derby searches happen from a sidewalk, a rideshare or a barstool. If your site loads slowly or forces users to hunt for basic information, they will simply move on.



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Websites can display and function differently on mobile devices, so it is critical to ensure your mobile version is fully optimized. Fast load times, seamless functionality, clear directions and visible contact information make all the difference when decisions are being made in seconds.

Think beyond the weekend

Derby traffic may be fleeting, but the opportunity does not have to be. A social media follow, an email sign-up or a small in-store incentive gives visitors a reason to remember you long after the Derby hats and mint julep cups are packed away.

The businesses that succeed are not always the biggest or flashiest. They are the ones that are easy to find, easy to trust and prepared when the city fills up.

When the spotlight turns to Louisville, preparation becomes your greatest advantage. A polished, responsive and relevant digital presence allows your business not only to participate in Derby week, but to truly benefit from it.

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