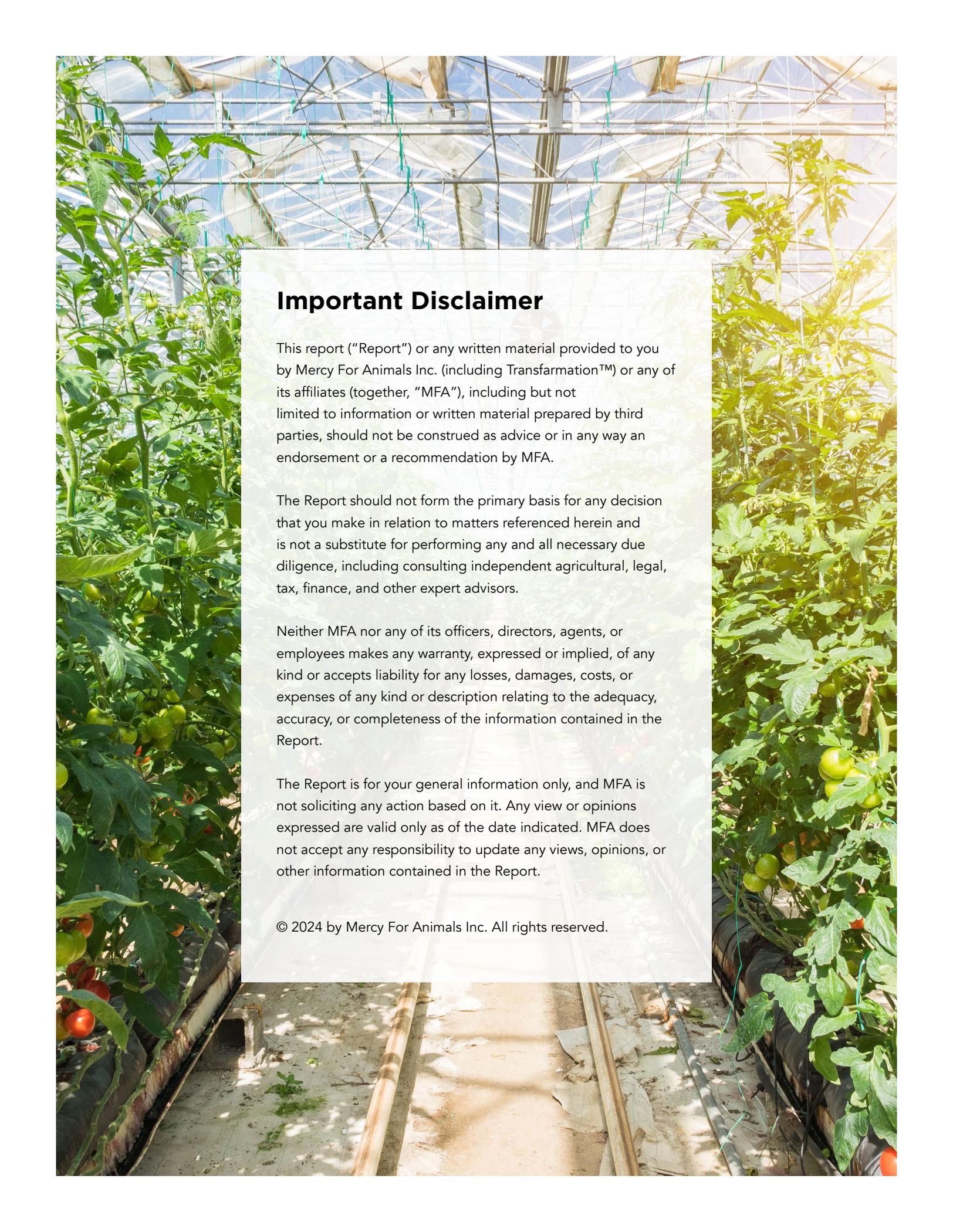




Building an Online Presence for Your Business



Transfarmation



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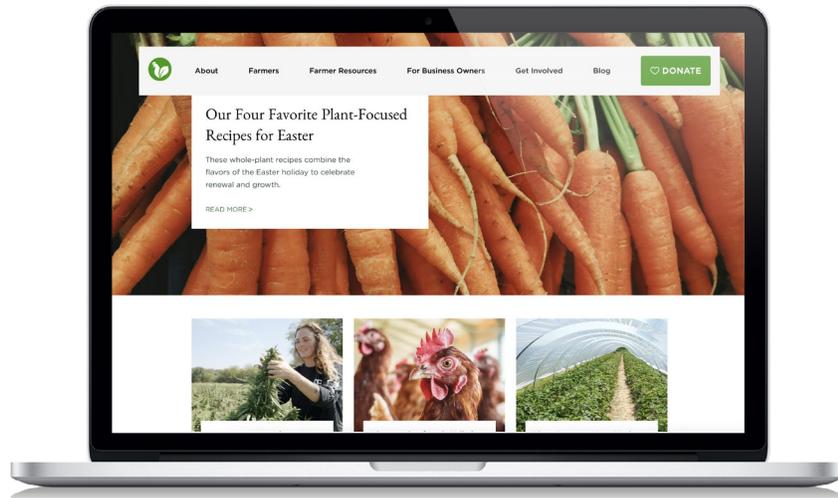
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Building an Online Presence for Your Business

In today's digital world, having an online presence can be incredibly important for businesses of all kinds. But what exactly does an online presence mean?

An online presence is how your business or brand shows up online—your online touchpoints, which could include these:

- Channels on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube
- Your business's website, blog, or online store
- An email newsletter
- Mentions of your business in online publications
- Your business's inclusion in membership lists, such as your area chamber of commerce

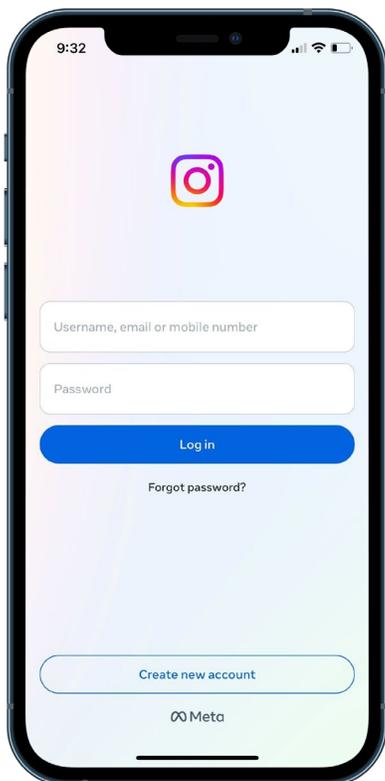


Each of these touchpoints enables existing and potential customers to learn more about your business and how to reach you. They also give you an opportunity to tell your personal story or your brand's story to help people feel more connected to your business and increase the likelihood that they'll want to support it.

A strong digital presence can do the following:

- Give your business greater visibility and attract more customers
- Help build trust and credibility
- Make it easier to communicate with customers and respond to their needs
- Provide opportunities for more budget-friendly advertising than through traditional means, like print, radio, or TV

When thinking about the online presence you want to create, there are several things to consider.



Which platforms make the most sense for your business?

You don't have to be on every social media platform. Which platforms align with the kind of content you want to share? Will your content be more image-heavy and therefore best for a platform like Instagram or Facebook, or would sharing videos be the best way for you to tell your story? Perhaps you want to create a weekly newsletter informing customers which crops are in season or a monthly blog post providing updates about life on the farm. Maybe you're looking for feedback from your customers on which crops to plant next year and need a platform that makes administering a poll or survey easier.

You may also want to consider your target demographic. For example, most Instagram users are between ages **18 and 39**. Most Facebook users are between **30 and 39 or over 50**. Both platforms are more oriented toward photo and video sharing, but they can also be used to generate discussion.

Regardless of your goals, having a simple website with your business name, hours, and contact information can have immense benefits and is worth considering. Also, take a few minutes to set up a free **business profile** on Google. This will help people locate your business more easily through Google or Google Maps; allow customers to post reviews; and enable you to share photos and business hours, respond to reviews, and more easily engage with customers.



How much time can you dedicate to maintaining your online presence?

You should keep the content on your website and any other digital sites up to date, including contact information, current inventory, photographs, and business hours (if relevant). Consider the amount of time you have to create social media content and post regularly, engage with comments and messages, and share posts from other accounts (and hope they reciprocate). If you go too long without posting or responding to messages, people may think you've gone out of business. You don't want to spread yourself too thin. Scheduling tools can help you manage your online presence by planning out your content. Some common ones are [Hootsuite](#), [Later](#), and [Buffer](#). Meta also has a scheduling tool in [Meta Business Suite](#) that you can use for free.

How can you make sure you're optimizing users' experience when they reach your content?

If customers reach your website and find it clunky to navigate; difficult to read; or lacking functional links, buttons, or forms, they will be unlikely to stick around very long, much less purchase anything. Consider the following:

Reading level

- More than half of U.S. adults read below a sixth-grade level.
- Avoid using jargon or overly technical, complex words with many syllables.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use readability calculators, like [this one](#), to determine the approximate reading level of your text.

White space

- Keep the layout of your website or posts simple.
- Use ample white space to make your content easier to read.

Font choice

- Sans serif fonts are easier to read than serif fonts.
- Avoid using script text and writing in all capital letters.
- Use 12-point font or higher.
- Avoid overusing bold or italic type and flashing or blinking text or images.

Mobile experience

- In the United States, nearly half of all internet traffic comes from phones and tablets, so make sure your content looks great on both desktop and mobile devices.
- Check out [this article](#) for a few great examples and tips.

Building an online presence can seem overwhelming and a bit intimidating at first, but many online tools are available to help you create a great representation of your brand. [Canva](#) is a user-friendly site that can help you develop social media posts, websites, newsletters, and more without any graphic design experience at all. There are also several website builders, such as [Weebly](#), [Squarespace](#), and [Shopify](#), that make creating a fantastic website or online store easy. Just be sure to do your homework to understand which option has the features you need at a price you're willing to pay. Watching YouTube videos of the various platforms can be a helpful way to get a better idea of how each site works and whether it's the right tool for you. [Here](#) is a free guide on using Instagram for business, and [here](#) is one for Facebook.



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