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DIGITAL MARKETING 2018 PLAYBOOK



£9.99

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“Digital marketing is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium.”

WHY DIGITAL MARKETING IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR ONLINE SUCCESS

With only 35% of businesses saying that they have integrated a Digital Marketing plan into their marketing mix, I knew I had to make a Digital Marketing Guide in the hope that it can give YOU a headstart to foolproofing your business for 2018.

So, why is Digital Marketing SO important?

Staying Laser-Focused On Your Target Audience

Your Digital Marketing strategy should be built around your target audience as they are what will make or break your business and to do this, you must do your research on your target audience.

It Is The Framework To Your Overall Marketing Plan

I think of Digital Marketing as the blueprint to my overall marketing strategy which I can build on, and integrate my other marketing strategies. Without a digital marketing plan, you do not have a marketing plan for success.

Conveying Your Brand's Story

Digital Marketing is a huge part of sharing your brand's story with your target audience online. People buy from people and the storytelling aspect part of your strategy is crucial to online success.

Digital Marketing Levels The Playing Field

As a small business, Digital Marketing is so important if you want to compete with companies that are more well know, or bigger in size than you are. You have the exact same Digital Marketing resources as every other business.

It Gets Results

The bottom line is that Digital Marketing DOES get results and that's why it's so important that you understand exactly how to use it to your advantage.

The rest of this guide will focus on each key component of Digital Marketing, followed by a Digital Marketing Plan for 2018.

SEO (SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION)

The first part of Digital Marketing that I want to talk about is SEO.

WHAT IS SEO?

“Search engine optimisation is a methodology of strategies, techniques and tactics used to increase the amount of visitors to a website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results page of a search engine (SERP) -- including Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines.”

SEO AS A PART OF YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

I have seen a lot of small businesses look at SEO and go “I’ll just leave it” or “It’s ok, I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m sure it will work anyway”. Thinking like this will have a massive affect how successful you are online.

SEO will not make a business, but having a good, solid SEO strategy in place will definitely work with the other Digital Marketing components and give you a great overall chance of succeeding online.

WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR SEO STRATEGY

Your Target Market

SEO isn’t just about attracting as many people as possible; you need to find your target audience, and niche market to them. Whilst you may think your product/service is for “everyone” this is not a viable marketing route. Think about demographics, behaviour, location, buying habits, age, sex etc.

Mobile Friendliness

As we move into 2018, mobile marketing is going to be just as important as email marketing and social media marketing. To get a big tick from Google in regards to your SEO, make sure your website is mobile friendly. Try Google’s Mobile-Friendly Test to see how your website performs.

Keyword Marketing

Having a great keyword strategy is more than just focusing on one keyword and getting onto the second page of Google for that keyword. Your target customers will search for one specific keyword, in thousands of different ways

so do your research using Google's Keyword Planner to find out the best keywords to drive the most traffic.

Quality Website Content and Navigation

Having a website that is user-friendly, with regular fresh content will help you build an SEO strategy that gives you a ROI. Every single page on your website should have at least 4% of your keywords, and each blog you post on your website should also have relevant links to one of your specific keywords.

Link Building

Although inbound and backlinks are not as important as they used to be, they are still a key part of your SEO strategy and will give Google the chance to rank you higher as both inbound and backlinks help build trust for your brand online.

Social Media Engagement

Now more than ever, Social Media plays a huge part in getting your website onto the first page of Google. I will discuss in more detail how this can be done further on in the guide.

CONTENT MARKETING

Content Marketing is such an important part of promoting your business online. 76% of businesses have said that they will produce more content throughout 2017, and this will likely rise moving into 2018.

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

“Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

Content marketing is vital to online success and I thought I would share some unique ways you can use content marketing to share your business with your target audience.

Incentives

Incentives are a great way to market your business to your audience. Giving your customers an incentive to purchase from you e.g. “if you make this purchase in the next 24 hours, you get a 25% discount”.

Contests/Giveaways

Contests/giveaways are one of the best ways to increase brand awareness, and is great for lead generation. Offer something for free and in return, ask for a name and email address. Utilise social media to visually display your contest. Don't forget to encourage people to share you content online!

Email Marketing

Email marketing is a huge part of my digital marketing strategy. When I am running a special offer on a product/service of mine, I always display this in a visually engaging way and find that conversion is a lot higher when I do this. I will talk about this more later on in the guide.

Humanise Your Brand

Give your online community an insight into your brand, and the people behind it. Share images and video's of the day-to-day workings of your business. This will only help your community understand your business better, and connect with it on a more deeper level.

Infographics

I absolutely love infographics. They are a great way to share data (that alone might be boring to read) in an effective way and spending some of your time creating an infographic will give you something to share online, that your community will appreciate it and share with their friends.

Quotes

Share quotes that are relevant to your audience in a visual way. Use Canva to create your visual quote, and share it on social media. Quotes are buzz-worthy pieces of information and tend to receive a lot of shares and retweets.

Slideshare Presentation

I absolutely love SlideShare and find it a great tool to use when I have delivered a new presentation at an event and I can post it on SlideShare, and give my attendees the link to look at it again. I have had tens of thousands of views on my presentations and it is completely free to use.

Testimonials

Testimonials are a great way to build trust, and give you the authority you need online. Take your testimonial one step further, and utilise video testimonials.

Tap Into Emotions

People buy from people. A purchasing decision is made based on an emotional feeling. Use visual content to build trust, confidence and to tap into the emotions of your target audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Did you know: 67% of YOUR customers expect you to be using social media?

There has been a significant shift in the way a small business communicates with their customers online. It's time for you to change your mindset, and think about social media as part of your Digital Marketing Plan.

What does the phrase "social media" mean to YOU? Does it mean a way to connect with friends and family, or is it just another phrase used to define the route to market a business online? Let's take the first word; social. The meaning of this word is often forgotten when people talk about social media and the idea of delivering a social experience. Just like Scott Cook said; "A brand is no longer what we tell the customer it is. It is what customers tell each other it is".

The biggest problem a brand faces when using social media is thinking about the customer experience and what a potential customer expects from a business.

Identifying the problem is just the first step. Understanding that social media is a part of the customer service given to every single customer, and potential customer is the solution to reaffirming the 67% of your customers expecting you to use social media.

Facebook is now at 1.6billion users, and their video and live-streaming feature has revolutionised the way "The Social Network" operates and how you can connect with your potential customers. Instagram (owned by Facebook) and Twitter, now 10 years old, have changed their newsfeed algorithms, giving the user the ultimate decision on what they want to see when scrolling through posts, ultimately putting your customer first... Are you?

If this isn't enough to convince you that social media is all about the customer... YOUR CUSTOMER, then understand that the online experience you deliver helps you achieve your social media goal and is a reflection of your business value proposition.

Whether you're on social media, or having a conversation with someone face-to-face, you need to find a way to turn a handshake into a hug. Make your customers feel comfortable, whilst being as transparent, honest, and as engaging as possible.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HASHTAGS

Talking about your business on social media is just the start of your social media marketing. How are you finding out about discussions taking place about your business?

Hashtags are used to centralise online discussions around a certain topic.

Creating Your Own Hashtag

Your hashtag is what will connect you with your community, and give your brand an online identity. Here is what you should consider when creating a hashtag online.

1. Be Unique

When choosing your hashtag, you first need to make sure it isn't being used by a competitor of yours. The last thing you want is a lot of noise being created around your hashtag of choice for another company in your sector. You can use Twitter Search, and Tagboard to do your research around this.

2. Be Clear

The hashtag you choose to use, must be clear and easy to understand. Using something like #VictoriaSecret4London2k18 is not going to work. If your audience even remember that, chances are they will spell it wrong, and this opens a whole new can of worms.

3. Be Memorable

If your customers are going to adopt a new hashtag when talking about your brand, it must be memorable. Avoid using unreadable abbreviations of words in your hashtag.

4. Keep It Short and Sweet

With social networks like Twitter where character limits are extremely limited, you need to think about creating a hashtag that is a maximum of 10

characters. The longer your hashtag is, the fewer characters Twitter users have to talk about your brand online.

4. Can Your Hashtag Be Interpreted In Another Way?

For example, the PR team behind X Factor winner; Susan Boyle came up with the “genius” hashtag of #susanalbumparty to promote her new album. Yes, this is in fact a real story.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

When it comes to using Social Media as a part of your Digital Marketing Strategy, you should have a “checklist” of actions you take into consideration.

Choose Your Social Networks

If you have a dedicated staff member that runs all of your social media and has done for quite some time then you probably already know how to manage more than one or two networks simultaneously. If this isn't the case, spend some time to find out where your target network hangs out, and only focus on those social networks. Don't spread yourself too thin when focusing on niche marketing.

Pin Important Message About Your Business

Facebook and Twitter allow you to “pin a post” to the top of your feed, so that it is the first thing your potential customers will see so make sure it shows your brand in the best light

Create Twitter Lists on Thought Leaders and Competitors

Create private Twitter lists of thought leaders in your industry, and other companies you want to monitor. This will allow you to block out the unwanted noise inside of Twitter and focus on a specific piece of information.

Run a Social Media Competition

One of the best ways to get people engaged with your brand is to run a competition. Giving away something of value, in exchange for a name and email address is a great for lead generation, and brand awareness. Use your social media activity to talk about the competition with your unique hashtag.

Drive Traffic to Your Website

When sharing a link with your audience to your website, use a tool called Openr to create a pop-up box that appears when someone clicks on this link. This pop-up box will have information about your business so that you aren't too far from the mind of your customer.

Get Involved on LinkedIn

LinkedIn has a few features that are designed for you to talk about your business and increase brand awareness. On your LinkedIn company page you can have a “showcase” page for you to do a press release. “Pulse” allows you to write an article based on the content your audience wants to see from you and “Groups” are the best way to build relationships with potential clients.

Monitoring and Listening to Conversations Online

Even if you are busy offline, you cannot forget about those connecting with you online. You should have a staff member monitoring, listening and taking part in conversations about your business online.

Live Streaming

Facebook just launched their live streaming feature, Periscope launched in March 2015 and now live streaming has become a popular way to connect with potential customers online. Have a think about ways you can use live streaming to your advantage, and build an online following through Periscope.

Share Images and Video's

Visuals and video's are a great way to keep your audience engaged.

Always Be Listening

Feedly is not only a tool to use when finding content to share online. Utilise the ability to listen in on press releases about your business so that you are always one step ahead.

PPC (PAY PER CLICK) ADVERTISING

If you decide that you want to spend money on native advertising, you can do so through PPC which means you will pay for every designated click you receive to your website.

Google

The holy grail of advertising comes from the largest search engine in the world; Google. Introduced in October 2000, Google advertising has allowed businesses to improve their search engine ranking for a small fee via PPC advertising. Google Adwords generated billions in revenue, which shows that businesses are seeing the benefits from using Google as an advertising platform. Expect to pay on average £1.53 per click for an advertisement (this may vary depending on your niche).

This is why you should be using Google Adwords for your business as a part of your Digital Marketing Strategy.

1. Measurable and Flexible

Online marketing and specifically Google Advertising is very easy to measure. Thanks to Google's other great tools, including Google Analytics you can measure how your website is performing and also it has its own PPC metrics which will give you all the information you need.

2. Faster than SEO

One of the biggest problems with search engine optimisation is that it can take months before you see any drastic results. With the use of Google AdWords, you will get instant results as soon as you set your campaign live.

3. Engaging

Google have introduced new advertising formats, which give users a more engaging experience by using image and in-video advertisement.

4. Full control over advertising costs

The same as on Facebook, you set a maximum cost per click for each day of your advertising campaigns. If you only have £100 to spend, Google will not go over this allowance and will give you the data you need to decide whether your advertisement is driving the right amount of traffic.

5. Get the upper hand on your competitors

Using AdWords gives you an advantage over your competitors because of how quickly it works. According to Moz 80% of search results now contain AdWords ad placements.

6. ReMarketing adverts

ReMarketing is showing ads to users who have previously visited your website as they are browsing your web. Doing this is one of the best ways to reach your target market, more than once.

Bing

Google isn't the only search engine. Microsoft's Bing controls more than 25% of the world's search engines, mainly because countries such as China have banned the use of Google. You might decide you want to focus more time optimising your site for Bing and the good news is that its algorithm is similar to Google's in many ways. These have a large number of high-quality backlinks and also, they optimize urls and domain names for keywords. However, there are some things you need to consider when optimising your website for Bing.

Bing favours older websites with more official domain names, for example .edu or .gov. Bing also knows how to index flash media (unlike Google) and Bing has a stronger attachment to showing small business results rather than bigger businesses. Google and YouTube are the two biggest search engines in the world and in my opinion Bing's popularity isn't substantial enough to focus a lot of time and effort on.

Advertising on Amazon

Amazon is the largest selling product service in history and has now made it easier for businesses to get better exposure through their product advertisement tool.

All you need do is upload your products using Amazon's user-friendly tool, decide on a budget set your product live. Your advertisement will be targeted at shoppers searching for related items on the Amazon website. Your ad will be seen in detailed pages, search results and the buy box. As soon as a

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potential customer clicks on your advertisement, they will be taken to the product page on your website.

Amazon will only charge you when a shopper clicks on your advertisement and reaches your website. This is known as CPC (cost per click). The amount you pay is based on your initial bid. As the customer ends up on your website to purchase your product, you are in complete control of the branding and user purchasing experience. This is a great way to capture leads while increasing sales.

AFFILIATE MARKETING

Affiliate marketing is, in essence a sales strategy. An individual will share links to your products and receive a commission when they get a sale. This is otherwise known as Performance Marketing. The 2010 IAB Internet Advertising Revenue Report showed that affiliate advertising accounted for 62% of Internet ad revenues. This has changed because of the increase in businesses using social media advertising. However, Affiliate Marketing should not be ignored.

To make your Affiliate Marketing a success, you need to be able to communicate. This needs to be regular, especially with key affiliates and clear, concise and straight to the point. This process teamed with planning, clear commercials, great product feeds and banners along with incentives and promotions are what will make your Affiliate Marketing a success.

Here are three tips to help you better utilise Affiliate Marketing for your business;

1. Know Your Audience

If you are going to spend money on an Affiliate Program, you need to understand the behaviour of your online audience, and whether you are staying consistent with your message.

2. Be Trustworthy

Affiliate Marketing will only work if you can be trusted as most online readers will be able to spot an affiliate link a mile away. Make sure that if you are having someone advertise your business, that they are also a trustworthy source.

3. Be Transparent

Let your audience know that some of your links are affiliations. Be as transparent as possible through every part of your marketing online as this is the quickest way to build trust, and increase sales.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing has been extremely important to my overall marketing strategy, and I have personally reaped the benefits of great email marketing. According to Econsultancy, 78% of their study believe that all email communication will be personalised in the next 5 years.

Email should not be discounted. It is 40x more effective at acquiring a new customer than Facebook or Twitter. Looking at personalisation; emails are 26% more likely to be opened if they have a customised email subject line.

If you decide to run a competition, ask for a name and email address. Your end goal for this should be to use it as part of your email marketing strategy. Lead generation is one of the best ways to build your email database. However, you should never buy lists unless they have been 100% qualified. Delivering highly relevant content is a strategic goal, which 67% of marketers say their business wants to achieve through email marketing.

Email has ranked highest in terms of ROI compared to other marketing strategies, and 78% of consumers rank email as the most preferred communication platform.

Don't forget your social sharing buttons in emails. Emails that include them, have a 158% higher CTR (click through rate) than emails that don't include share links.

Here are five things to consider for your email marketing.

1. Make email marketing a part of your customer acquisition journey
2. Use mobile optimisation
3. Use personalised templates
4. Give away great content and value
5. Know what you are going to share

DESIGNING A DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN

2017 is going to be a great year for small businesses and I can't wait to see what it holds, but before we can celebrate you need to understand how to design a digital marketing plan for 2018.

Regardless of your answers to this, you need to be starting the new year the right way with a digital marketing plan that helps you target new clients, retain current ones, and connect with former customers.

I'm sure you've heard the famous saying; "A failure to plan, is a plan to fail". So... let's get planning!

Step 1; Goals & Objectives

The first thing you need to do is set your goals and objectives for the upcoming year. These objectives/goals could include launching a new product/service, building a new website or understanding your competitors.

Defining your objectives is the first part, but you then need to add weight behind your goals and set achievable numbers. Maybe you want to grow your venue by 25% or increase your online following by 10%. Whatever it is, make sure it is achievable.

You need to ask yourself some of the following questions;

- Who is your target customer?
- What is the pain you are trying to solve?
- What is your USP?
- What products/services do you offer?
- How long have you been in business?
- What are you good at?
- What makes you different from your competitors?

Step 2; Target Customers

Part of setting your goals and objectives, is understanding your target audience. Do you know the following about your target customer?

- Their age
- Gender
- Location
- Income

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- Sexual Orientation
- Relationship status
- Do they have children?
- What car do they drive?
- Their hobbies
- Lifestyle

You need to be able to answer these questions, as they will have a huge impact on how you market your business online.

Step 3; Situational Analysis

After you have understood your target market and their buying habits, you then need to do situational analysis. This is where you analyse where your business currently stands, as you are creating your digital marketing plan.

Take a look at your current products and their main features, pricing, where you are selling your products and how you have been promoting them. This gives you a good understanding of where you can improve, and setting a timeline for implementing new tactics.

Part of understanding where your business is at, is looking at your competitors. You will want to look at their target market in more detail, as it is similar to yours, their USP, pricing and promotions along with looking at their financial standing and how they are marketing their business. Make sure you do your due diligence around this.

Step 4; Pricing & Positioning Strategy

Section 4 is about understanding your industry and the pricings around your product/service. Use the information you have collected from all of your research to determine whether you need to change your pricing strategy. You need to be competitive with your pricing, but understanding that any changes you make will impact the bottom line of your business.

Before changing your pricing, take a look at your customer sales statistics year on year, and your multi-channel sales.

Step 5; Promotional Plan

How are you going to promote your business online, and what channels are you going to use? Consider the use of channel partners, SEO, social media,

referral and affiliate traffic, PPC, offline marketing, email marketing and content marketing.

To really utilise any of the above channels, you need to understand that you have to spend money to make money. Yes, if you have a solid knowledge in how to use each social network you wouldn't need to spend too much, but online marketing is a huge area to cover and don't be afraid to spend money, and ask for help.

Step 6; Marketing Assets

Your marketing assets are the promotional material you use to share your business. This may be your website, business cards, photography and design work. These are all extra costs that need to be factored into your digital marketing plan.

Section 7; Converting Community into Customers

You might be driving a good amount of traffic to your website, but how are you converting this traffic into sales? If this is something that you are really struggling to do, consider;

- Improving your website copy
- Use testimonials & reviews of your products/services
- High quality images/videos

Experiment with different techniques to improve your conversion rate. It will take time to get it right, but stay consistent and you will get there in the end.

Step 8; Channel Partners

A channel partner is someone who has your target audience, but does not compete with you in terms of the product/service you are offering. Think about companies in your industry. I work with a number of channel partners, for example BIRA. We have the same target audience, but they don't directly compete, meaning I can market my social media bootcamp to their audience, and give them a percentage of every sell from their database.

Step 9; Financial Forecasting

The final part of your digital marketing plan is summarising all of the expenses from each part of your strategy, along with projected growth rates and timelines. This will not be 100% accurate but as you work through your

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finances, you will be able to analyse the success/failure of each digital marketing campaign.

Doing all of the above now, will make your online business ready for the year of online shopping; 2018.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR; WARREN KNIGHT



For the last ten years I've specialised in helping business owners, sales & marketing managers and entrepreneurs sell more products and services, through the convergence of Social Media, Digital Marketing and eCommerce.

My entrepreneurial skills started after receiving a grant from the Prince's Trust at 22 for a music and clothing European Distribution Company. Focusing on business growth I became the director of a global stationery and accessory business working with Disney and

Nickelodeon, growing a licensee from \$5Million to \$30Million selling to over 40 countries in a 5-year period achieving \$1 Million sales in 1 month.

I have also won various industry awards and co-founding two IT companies since 2010. The first being an eCommerce platform, getting £150,000 Seed Investment via "SEIS", valuing the business at £1M in less than two years. The second with a "Start Up Loan", we've built an online learning platform, teaching people how to setup and use Social Networks for their business.

I have over 25 years' experience in marketing and selling products and services globally and seven years in social media and ecommerce. I'm a member of the Professional Speaking Association, CPD Certified, a renowned international keynote speaker, trainer and coach, helping 1,000's of Start Ups and SME's grow using Social Media, Digital Marketing and eCommerce.

Former hip-hop dancer turned top 100 Global Influencer, Digital Transformation (DX) Strategist, multi award-winning blogger, author of "Think #Digital First" and technology entrepreneur with over 10 years' experience online and creator of multiple successful companies as a business owner.

Warren's vision is to help 100,000 global businesses successfully sell more products and services through the strategic use of social media and digital marketing by 2020.

Go to www.ThinkDigitalFirst.com and join our community for FREE.