Digital Marketing

fundamentals

INTRO *duction*

At Intellitonic we specialize in digital marketing for businesses and nonprofits of all sizes.

Due to marketing's heightened importance in our increasingly digital world we created this guide to outline the basics of digital marketing. (Don't worry, you can thank us later.)

We can essentially divide digital marketing between paid and unpaid strategies: Pay Per Click (PPC) and organic Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

PPC takes the form of paid ad campaigns hosted by a search engine's own services, such as Google, Facebook, or LinkedIn. Organic SEO is performed through blogs, link building, and keyword research - all designed to raise your site's ranking in search engine results pages (SERPs). Both strategies benefit from keyword research and demographic targeting well-attuned to users' search habits. In addition, social media can improve your website rankings through both paid and unpaid campaigns.

"Use of either strategy should depend on budget, time, and resources..."

Use of these strategies should depend on budget, time, and resources - but, most importantly, on organizational goals. These may include driving sales, donations, and community participation and awareness, depending on whether you run a business or nonprofit. Formulating these goals should be the first step before choosing your approach to digital marketing (unless you specialize in reverse engineering).

If digital marketing is not your forte, consider contracting a specialist. The popular quote about not judging a fish by its ability to fly holds true (even though Einstein didn't really say it). We also appreciate Stephen Covey's quote about how *"the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing"*. Whether you outsource or do it yourself, this guide aims at making digital marketing compatible with *your main thing.*

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GLOSSARY OF *terms*

AVERAGE CPC

Short for average cost per click, the total number of ad clicks divided by the total cost of clicks.

CITATION FLOW

MajesticSEO score between 0 and 100, ranking how influential your URL is based on the number of sites that link to it.

CLICKS

Every instance of a user clicking on your ad. (No surprises here.)

CONVERSION

Self-identified actions a user takes after clicking the ad, such as ordering products or subscribing.

CONVERSION RATE

The number of conversions divided by the number of clicks on a particular ad within a given time frame.

CONVERSION VALUE

Sum of total conversions belonging to particular campaign, ads group, keywords or ads.

COST

Total advertising costs charged within a given date range.

CTR

Short for click-through rate, the number of clicks on an ad divided by the number of impressions. We consider 1-10% to be a solid CTR (depending on the market) that indicates keyword relevance.

IMPRESSIONS

Every appearance of your ad in the Search Engine Results Page.

CTA

A piece of content intended to induce a viewer, reader, or listener to perform a specific act. (E.G. Buy Now!)

EXTERNAL BACKLINKS

A link to your website from another website. Acquiring these improves your site's search ranking.

SERPS

Short for search engine results pages (the page that displays your search results). The top three positions usually get the most clicks. Definitely the first page, or top 10 positions.

TRUST FLOW

MajesticSEO score between 0 and 100, ranking how trustworthy your URL is by the trustworthiness of sites that link to it.

CMS

Content Management System (a system designed to manage the content of a website or other electronic resource that is used collaboratively by a number of people).

WEBSITE *fundamentals*

As a wise man (David Byrne) once said: *you may ask yourself, how do I work this*? When "this" is digital marketing, the answer is to create a solid website. All of your SEO and PPC operations lead back to your website eventually, so setting it up correctly should be your first step to digital marketing.
Below are a few things to keep in mind.

1

SITE LAYOUT

Single-page sites work if you desire a minimalist aesthetic, but multi-page sites provide more SEO and PPC opportunities. More pages means more optimizable metadata (tags, alt text, meta descriptions, etc.) and places where users can land. Single-page sites have quicker and stronger rankings for smaller pools of keywords (all backlinks lead to the same page). Multi-page sites benefit more from obscure, "long tail" keywords.

2

CMS

The platform you use determines how thoroughly your website can be customized, and what level of expertise is required to use it. Open source CMS systems such as Wordpress, Shopify or Squarespace, have a wide variety of free plugins to add. Wordpress is our personal favorite due to its extensive selection of SEO and web design plugins.

3

GOALS, CONTENT, & KEYWORDS

Before doing keyword research in programs such as Google Ads, try structuring content so you can easily add them in crucial places (see below). Your content should also include a call to action (CTA) that drives your main goal. You might want users to contact you, make purchases, make downloads, or sign up, depending on the product or service. No matter what you want, one clear call to action is ideal because too many may cause users to not click anything at all. Afterwards, you can look for keywords to put in the page titles, meta data, alt text, and the main body of text.

4

SECURITY

For fear of security risks and vulnerabilities such as phishing and viruses, Google has started catching and quarantining (i.e. penalizing) "HTTP" addresses. Use an "HTTPS" address instead, and they'll mark you as secure. Not only is this a best SEO practice, but improves user experience.

5

TRACKING

As we will elaborate in the Analytics chapter, you should constantly improve the site by measuring its performance. You can track PPC conversions (see Glossary) in Google Ads and traffic changes in Google Analytics.

6

SPEED

A slow site doesn't just make users jump ship, it hurts your keyword rankings as well. Aim to have each page load within a second and you'll get more conversions. Use speed-auditors like Webpagetest.org or Chrome's built-in auditor (Lighthouse) to test page speed.

7

UPDATES

Users and search engines both appreciate frequent site updates, especially when they create more landing pages. Blogs provide one new landing page per post, in addition to letting you share useful information and relevant images.

MARKETING *analysis*

The term, "digital marketing analytics" covers any sort of tool or service that identifies the ranking and performance of a site, typically providing suggestions for improvement. For any business owner starting a digital marketing campaign knowing the basics of market analysis can help increase sales, site traffic, and user engagement.

Whether you outsource or learn digital marketing on your own, access to platform data helps immensely. Tools include Google Analytics, Google Ads, Google Search Console, SEMRush, MajesticSEO, social metrics, and Keyword Planner.

GOOGLE PROGRAMS

Our friends from Google provide more than just tool suites and amusing doodles on their front page. They also provide four popular programs for market analysis: Google Analytics, Google Ads, Google Search Console and Google My Business.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

The free, in-depth, and aptly-named Google Analytics reports how users find and interact with your site. It divides traffic acquisition between organic, direct, referral, social, email, and paid searches. As a result, you can see where you have it made and where you can draw further attention.

Once you've seen how you receive attention, Analytics' landing page reports show where your viewers go and which pages could use a boost. It also shows whether they bounce or stay, whether they are new, and whether they were using desktop or mobile.

If you're new, here is a list of some of the most commonly used reports covered by each tab:

- **Real-time:** Overview of all real-time activity on the site
- **Audience:** Overview of information on users, such as demographics and operating systems
- **Acquisition:** Overview of sources of traffic by channel, user behavior by channel
- **Behavior:** Overview of pages with the most views, visualized user behavior on site
- **Conversions:** registers and measures progress toward self-identified goals

For an in-depth exploration, see *12 Awesome Custom Google Analytics Reports* from the Kissmetrics Blog. For custom questions, reach out to us for Google Analytics Consulting.

GOOGLE ADS

Google Ads tracks the impressions, clicks, and conversions of each keyword, ad group, ad, and campaign. Use it to continually improve each facet of your ads. The built-in tool, Keyword Planner, helps you brainstorm and compare keywords for Google Ads and SEO.

The height of your conversion rate compared to number of clicks will tell whether you need to narrow down keywords or broaden them. Alongside Analytics' data on bounce vs. exit rates, this data can tell you if your landing pages need improvement. A page with a high quantity of clicks but a low conversion rate may need to clarify its call to action to help close sales or meet goals.

GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE

Google Search Console, formerly Webmaster Tools, surveys site health with regards to setup, crawl errors, and use of canonical domains. As an added bonus, it displays Search Analytics on specific keywords in more detail than Google Analytics. Its statistics on Google search term impressions vs. clicks makes it possible to understand what each page is really ranking for.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Google My Business is a free and easy-to-use tool for businesses and organizations to manage their online presence across Google, including Search and Maps. This is a great tool to use to both help customers find you and tell them your business story. Thirty percent of Google searches resolve in GMB, so make sure yours is up-to-date.

Customers don't just use GMB for directions, they also leave reviews and questions. Make sure to reply in a timely manner.

OTHER MARKETING ANALYSIS TOOLS

We recommend analytics tools from other sources based on their unique advantages.

SEMRUSH

SEMRush, an analytics dashboard similar to Google Analytics, gives more detailed information on your website ranking compared to others. It can help you identify relevant keywords that work well or need attention, as well as irrelevant ones to avoid. For example, you may login and discover your site is ranking #1 for "Amish dating sites." This may be a problem.

SEMRush has separate reports for paid and unpaid searches. Its backlink portfolio lists the number of backlinks and domains, which can show you which audiences to target.

MAJESTIC SEO

A thorough portfolio can be found in MajesticSEO, another program providing data on external backlinks and domain authority. Most uniquely, it ranks Citation Flow and Trust Flow on a scale of 0 to 100. Flow Metrics score a site's influence by total number of backlinks, and trustworthiness by backlinks from trustworthy sites.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Leading social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat and YouTube have built-in analytics. These Social Metrics vary greatly by platform but generally help with tracking the leads and conversions from your social campaigns.

SPEED TESTS

Finally, site performance and speed in particular can be audited by either Webpagetest.org or Lighthouse. Both suggest improvements for faster webpage loading that prevents users from leaving. Suggestions include limiting the number of files on a page, optimizing image sizes, and lazy-loading static content. The programs mostly differ in the mobile-optimization of Lighthouse, a built-in Google Chrome tool.

WHAT TO DO WITH THESE

Market analysis tools provide valuable insight into actions of site audiences, competitors, and your own business. With the right combination, you can recognize areas for improvement in your site's performance and place on the web.

After taking this first step, you can focus your efforts on creating a web presence that is truly off the charts.

PPC *insights*

Pay per click (PPC) advertising refers to ad campaigns that companies run on websites and social media platforms besides their own. Search engine marketing (SEM), a type of PPC, refers to paid ads that appear among organic results in search engines.

PPC works by paying ad publishers (e.g. Google Ads, Facebook, LinkedIn) to display your text or visual ads. When users search for keywords you've bid on via PPC services, your ads appear and link to selected landing pages.

A few things to consider about PPC services provided by search engines with the largest market shares:

- **Google**: Uses Ads - being the most commonly used search engine, it's no surprise that Google Ads is the most commonly used PPC service.
- **Bing**: Uses Bing Ads, a service with a somewhat lower cost-per-click (CPC) that tends to represent an older demographic than Google Ads, but is also cheaper with fewer searches.
- **Yahoo:** Has Yahoo Gemini, which has a lower CPC than the most commonly used PPC platform.
- *Note: You can import and export campaigns from each of these platforms to any others*

Testing ad campaigns on each of these channels can reveal the ideal demographics, CPC, and ad rankings for your company.

Here's a hint for making your PPC campaign work: ideal demographics and CPC vary, but the ideal search ranking is at the top of the page. You'll find it easier to meet these ideals when you've analyzed your keywords, site content, audiences, competitors, and ad content. Social PPC usually follows the same steps as its SEM equivalent, but with different options for audience targeting and mobile ads.

"Testing ad campaigns on each of these channels can reveal the ideal demographics, CPC, and ad rankings for your company."

BALANCING PPC & SITE CONTENT

PPC marketing and site content mutually benefit each other because they both bring newer, broader audiences to your site. Additionally, it's generally accepted (but never explicitly stated by Google) that running an effective Google Ads campaign can contribute to an improved SEO ranking. Certain steps in creating PPC ad campaigns require special attention to content on websites and social media.

For starters, effective keyword research relies on a strong understanding of your company's priorities and service or product offerings. The most relevant thing to consider when choosing keywords is relevancy: the connection between keywords and your company's product. This means choosing words and phrases related to your company, and including them both on your website and in your ads. Use Google Ads Keyword Planner to select your keywords by high search volume and low competition. (If you have a low budget consider the estimated keyword costs.)

AUDIENCE PLANNING

Audience planning means developing personas based on demographic data such as gender, age, income range, and location. However, it doesn't stop there. Interests and likes (found on Facebook) and job position (found on Linkedin) can be equally if not more important. Sufficiently understanding your target audience makes sure your content is seen by the people most likely to convert.
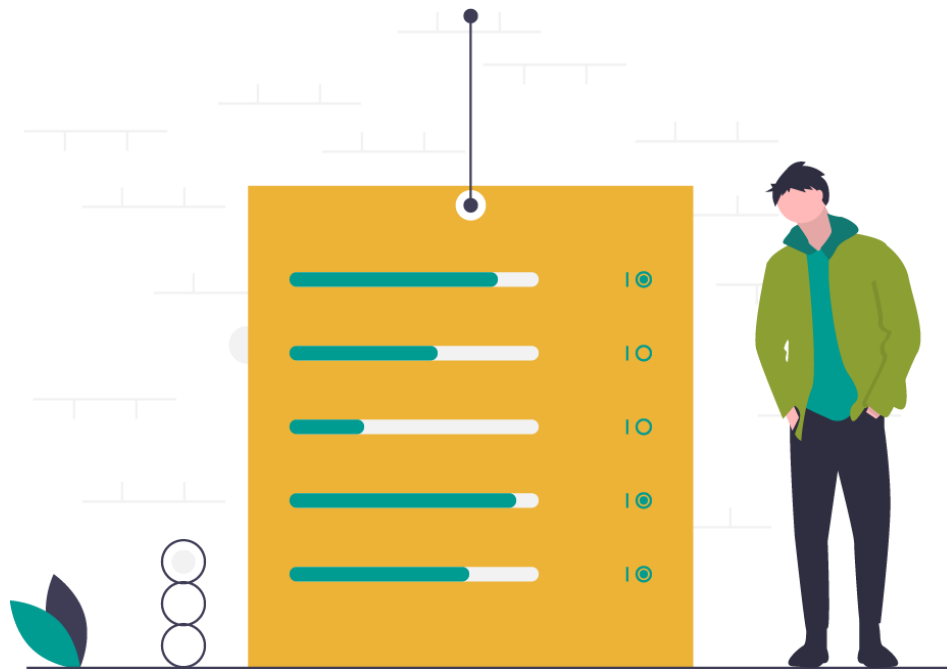
LANDING PAGES

As you plan your ads, also think about where on your website these ads should lead. Build pages with an attractive message and a strong CTA.

CREATING PPC ADS

When it comes to ad creation, keyword research comes first. Drafting ads should occur after creating Landing pages, taking audiences and competition into account.

Competitors exist. To recognize your top three to five competitors, look into the industry by location and your search ranking competition. You can find the latter in Google by searching "related:[your site URL]". You can find their site content and ads on your own, and their keyword rankings and backlinks through programs like MajesticSEO and SEMRush. Their backlink profiles can be your backlink profiles if you reach out to the same sites and people. If you know which channels they use to gain site traffic, consider sharing the most effective ones they use or dominating the most effective ones they don't use.

When drafting ad text, succinctness counts. Although your enthusiasm hopefully exceeds the level it indicates, one exclamation point works better than two or zero. Google Ads performs best when you Capitalize Every Word (with the exception of articles like "the" and "to" unless they start your sentence) and include keywords in the display URL paths and ad text to indicate relevance. Always have two slightly different ads running at once to A/B test. Regularly try out new approaches and slowly improve every facet of your ads.

"Besides bidding on less expensive keywords, good communication between landing pages and ads goes a long way in PPC marketing with budget constraints."

Bidding on clicks rather than impressions via Google Ads provides a clearer idea of your CPC and conversion costs versus value. Checking Google's suggested bid - $0.01 keywords are a beautiful thing! You can rank for multiple keywords on a low budget by bidding on less expensive ones.

Our chapter on Market Analysis elaborates on how PPC is also a source of valuable analytics. In short, analysis highlights areas for improvement in keywords, audience, CPC, and ads, allowing you to restart the process for new campaigns.

Ultimately, your PPC campaign ought to cycle through these steps to increase your CTR and conversion ratio. Besides bidding on less expensive keywords, good communication between landing pages and ads goes a long way. Clickers shouldn't be surprised when they get to the landing page - the ads should be relevant and lead you to additional information.
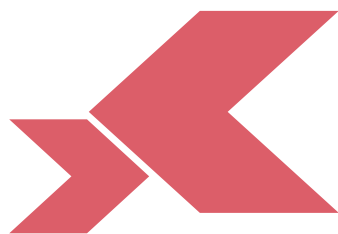
SEO *basics*
FROM FRIENDLY SOURCES

The many SEO beginners' guides tend to agree on what constitutes SEO basics, best practices for keyword research, link building, content, and HTML code. This section summarizes SEO beginners' guides from four different sources. Every source has a vested interest in SEO, whether they sell analytics software or share market news.

MOZ.COM

One "Beginner's Guide to SEO" comes from Moz.com, a Seattle-based company whose blog gives marketing advice to small businesses. They provide analytics tools of their own, and their blog frequently emphasizes user experience alongside SEO. Consequently, their guide informs us of user-centered marketing strategies in each of the following categories:

- **Search engine operation:** Besides crawling and indexing, search engine respond to user queries.
- **User-search engine interactions:** People search to learn or find something.
- **Necessity of SEO:** It makes sites compatible with the limits search engines face from crawling and indexing to determining relevance.
- **Search engine-friendliness:** Making your site indexable and crawlable, plus carefully using keywords, impacts its search ranking greatly.
- **Keyword research:** This involves finding relevant, narrow keywords from the "long tail" (specific three to five keyword phrases) of searches in order to gain the most conversions.
- **Content usability:** How much time users spend on your website affects your rankings, so pay attention to the end user experience.
- **Link building:** Quality links to your site.
- **Search engine tools/services:** These provide vital analytics on your site's operation and performance.
- **Misconceptions:** Today's search engines dislike spammers and keyword stuffers just as much as users do. If you have been penalized for being *that guy*, Moz has advice for discovering and possibly fixing this.
- **Success tracking:** Frequently evaluating site traffic by search engine will reveal areas for improvement. MozPro provides analytics for this.

KISSMETRICS

Kissmetrics, another provider of analytics tools, provided a one-post guide to SEO basics divided into the following categories:

- **SEO:** Your site must hone in on what searchers seek.
- **Keyword research:** SEO keywords should have a high search volume and low competition, except for your many "long tail" ones which have low search volumes and should be used to vary targeting.
- **Keyword research:** SEO keywords should have a high search volume and low competition, except for your many "long tail" ones which have low search volumes and should be used to vary targeting.
- **Code:** Title and meta tags, headings, sitemaps, domain names, alt tags, URL and site structure, must be optimized.
- **Link building:** Links should come from relevant and trustworthy websites for the best results.

As the shortest guide on this list, it makes the basics easily accessible.

SEARCH ENGINE JOURNAL

Search Engine Journal (SEJ), a source of digital marketing news and best practices, provided a 19-chapter guide on SEO. As the only guide on this list that covers advanced topics, they divided it into three major sections:

- **SEO basics:** SEJ describes content and link-building as the primary components of SEO. Google algorithms such as Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird, and RankBrain cooperate most when you do these components well and legitimately. PPC and local SEO benefit from niche keywords and backlinks.
- **SEO tactics:** Essentially a guide on "How to Win Audiences and Influence Influencers to link to you", this section emphasizes the content that matters more to users than search engines. Specific items to focus on are optimizing your meta descriptions, calls to action, appealing visuals, and social media content.
- **SEO campaigns:** Specific tools help you recover from penalties or evaluate your conversion rates, social media, links, and content. Newsletters and online communities will prepare you for the future of SEO, where new technologies will augment your reality and substitute their own.

WORDSTREAM

WordStream, a Boston-based PPC provider with a blog on various online marketing topics, created their own guide to SEO per user requests. It reminds you to consider how searchers think in each of the following sections:

- **SEO:** Target users' commercial intent, meaning their desire to buy what you offer.
- **Keyword research:** You can gauge relevancy using analytics tools with consideration for commercial intent.
- **On-Page optimization:** SEO applies to meta titles, meta descriptions, body content, alt text, H1s, and H2s
- **URLs, and schema markup:** Users and search engines favor usability alongside it.
- **Information architecture:** Prioritizing your pages with the most backlinks helps boost the others.
- **Link-building:** Starting points for this include good content, keyword research, and audience planning tools.
- **Technical issues:** Some tools fix speed, mobile-friendliness, and crawl errors.
- **Success tracking:** Keyword rankings and organic traffic indicate success.
- **Additional tips:** International and local SEO have specialized best practices.

The single page guide cuts to the chase with regards to how SEO and websites work. This allows it to focus on marketers' immediate concerns at the expense of answering less-pressing questions in detail. It also describes site design and identifying competitors in great detail, and links to many analytics tools.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

We recommend reading all of these guides to get multiple perspectives on SEO basics and some idea of advanced steps.

Ultimately, you want to optimize your site and social media for humans and search engines alike. When you appeal to both of these influences, good SEO can turn your site into something everyone visits.

LINK-*building*

Link-building broadly refers to the improvement of search ranking by encouraging links to your content from other reputable sources. In our chapter on the Best Beginners' Guides to SEO Basics, many of the guides described it as one of the most important components of SEO, and with good reason: it impacts website rankings, just as keywords do.

Users don't usually look past the first search engine result page. Effective link-building can get sites up there because search algorithms keep score on the attention you get. Because this score considers the trustworthiness and relevance of backlink sources, yours should follow the rules but set the trends. This guide will show you how.

HOW LINK BUILDING WORKS

Here's the who, what, and why of link-building: audiences and their influencers. Support from relevant and trustworthy sites tells search engines that your site is relevant and trustworthy, too.

Imagine that a hive mind of people follow you around, chanting in unison about your best qualities. If you'd distrust a sci-fi nightmare like that, you'll understand why search engines distrust websites that do the same. They now recognize, and often penalize, illegitimate link-building in the form of spammy websites and paid links. You'll only appear trustworthy with trustworthy backlinks, and these come from other people's established sites. Per the research advice we give to high school students, ".org", ".gov", and ".edu" addresses tend to work best, as well as longstanding websites with traffic and backlinks.

The relevance of these sites to yours can give search engines an accurate approximation of how to categorize your content. Relevance depends on the sites' place in the same industry as yours, and you'll benefit from getting them locally or from vendors you work with. Getting links from a variety of authoritative sources, especially in ways that draw users to your site, help the most. A few things within your control can get you quality links from these kinds of sites.

HOW TO GET BACKLINKS

Link building works in conjunction with keyword research: if you search for relevant keywords, you'll find sources for potential backlinks. Search for relevant businesses in your local area and start a conversation. Offer to trade different forms of web exposure to get your backlinks on their sites.

Befriending local entities you find through keyword searches involves mutual cooperation. Offer to write them reviews, guest blogs, and social media shout-outs, and they may do the same for you. (Link-building benefits you both, after all.) You can reach out to them directly or through any connections you have that already build links for you. Consider reaching out to the fine people who provide your company with products and services related to your own. You'll already have a lead into the conversation just by saying you use their product.

Keyword searches may also unearth leads that your competitors already found for new backlinks. Find your competitors backlink profiles using SEMRush, MajesticSEO, and SpyFu. Studying their sites can also help you understand the status of your industry locally. When you know that, you'll know what link vendors are looking for.

Appealing content and link building have a symbiotic relationship. No one links to poorly designed websites, and no one finds even the best of them without a web of links. In addition to straight-forward navigation and calls to action, site content benefits from taking local interests into account. For written site content, less is more; for the user engagement it produces, more is more.

"Think of link building as a rope thrown by a good Samaritan to help you in climb through SERPs."

HOW TO MEASURE PROGRESS

Link-building depends on keyword ranking, which, in turn, depends on link-building. It's like the chicken and the egg, or the snake, Ouroboros eating its own tail: simultaneous use of keyword research and link-building creates a cycle of progress and success.

If your referral traffic is on the rise, then your link-building campaign is working. After all, it means that the traffic came from another site's link. Besides analytics software, you can observe engagement in your increased number of calls, emails, form submissions, and other conversions.

MajesticSEO and SEMRush show your number of backlinks and referring domains; for more tools, see our discussion of Market Analysis. One blog recommending you 100 times would be generous, but remember that you'll want backlinks from a multitude of sites. This draws in a variety of audiences, including other potential link vendors.

If you have not seen an increase in referral traffic study the referring domains for red flags. These include untrustworthiness, irrelevance, and dead or no-follow links. No-follow links come from the "no-follow" HTML tag that prevents search engines from picking them up. Dead links come from deleted pages or the link to your site being moved or removed. You can find these by viewing the page source or Google Chrome's "Inspect Element" feature.

Think of link building as a rope that a good Samaritan throws to you in your climb through the SERPs. You'll need to use it correctly in order to make it, but their support already gives you leverage. Building links in conjunction with keyword research and local SEO will show you how each of these strategies are connected – allowing you to stay connected as well.

BLOG *writing*

Companies of all kinds use blogs to engage users, gain site traffic, and establish their reputation. Each new blog post is a page where users can land and learn something. Blogs are also a great way to improve your keyword rankings.

If you're starting a business, blogs are your key to setting yourself apart with new insights and personality. Blogs also allow you to explain your product or service in more detail than your main site would. If you have momentum already, blogs can both keep it up and ramp it up.

Link-building, the accumulation of reputable links back to your site, goes hand in hand with blogging. As two vital SEO strategies, blogs and link building mutually benefit each other: people who enjoy your original posts may link to them, and you can earn other backlinks by blogging on others' sites.

"The research process for blogs can give you up-to-date information on the industry and valuable community ties, including backlink vendors."

Blogging makes SEO both easier and more enjoyable. Search engines reward your site for consistently putting out new content –"consistently" being at least once a month, preferably more. It may depend on demand.

The research process for blogs doubles as a way to gather up-to-date information on the industry and valuable community ties, including backlink vendors. To stay relevant, we recommend a healthy combination of planning ahead and going with the flow of current events.

TIPS ON BLOG WRITING

When choosing a topic, consider your platform, audience, and objective. Writing for your own site requires keywords and at least one link to another page on your site.

Audience + Topic: Audience creation always relies on crafting personas from demographic information. However, blogging requires you to narrow it down to the portion most receptive of your post's objective. You'll create this objective based on the audience you have already created. Once you have that in mind, tailor the post's content to their interests and needs. And be sure to accompany the content with relevant images–they draw attention to both themselves and the words. Want to know why content with links to your site are so crucial? A self-referential link of ours, to our chapter on link-building, can explain why.

Content Length: As for the content itself, we advise a minimum of 250 words, and Buffer's post on content length identifies an ideal of 1,000-1,600 words. Wordier posts register well in search engines and keeps readers attention within a 7-minute reading window. Keep this in mind when reviewing average read time in Google Analytics.

Links: All of your links, especially self-referential ones, should have hyperlink text that clearly describes the linked page's purpose, e.g. "digital marketing tactics". As hyperlink text, the vague "Click here!" works better for the "Never Gonna Give You Up" music video than it will for your site.

Keywords: A blog posts success relies heavily on keyword research. You should select a focus keyword(s) that relates to the specific topic, with 3-5 others serving to prove relevance to the blog, your business and your location. Remember that keyword-stuffing doesn't work on search engines anymore, and cynical readers will notice if you call your business the k*eywordiest keyword in all of Keyword, Florida Keys*. You only need the focus keyword in the title, first sentence, alt text, meta description, URL, and one header. You only need to use the 3-5 others once as you see fit.

GET MORE VALUE FROM YOUR BLOG

Sharing blog posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram helps the post's performance, for starters.

Google Analytics provides campaign tracking tools that you should use before sharing. The Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) adds data parameters to URLs – typically specifying the platform from where users came. The URL might have "utm_source=facebook" at the end, for instance

This makes the data less Kafkaesque to segment and interpret when you evaluate your performance in Google Analytics. You can easily gauge your post's performance on different platforms after you've shared these custom URLs on each.

New audiences can hear about you through the grapevine if you grow that vine into other sites' backyards. Reaching out to other sites can earn you backlinks just as sharing your own posts on social media can. As an added bonus, this establishes your local reputation to complement the personality that blogs provide to your company.

Shed some light upon your site, and make the most of every post.

SOCIAL *media*

An active presence on social media benefits your website twofold by bringing in new users and improving your SEO metrics. Most social networking sites have built-in analytics for performance evaluation, and you can use them to study user behavior and draw attention to your blog posts. The question is not whether you should use social media platforms, but *which ones* you should use.

This choice depends on the platforms' applicability to your niche audience, and the content you post should meet platform-specific optimization standards. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube can all serve as primary platforms, and sundry others appeal to particular niches (e.g. Snapchat, Google+, and Pinterest).

FACEBOOK

Here's some wisdom about Facebook that we'd like to share: with 2.38 billion active users as of 2019, it stands as the most popular social network. This makes it ideal for Business to Consumer (B2C) ads, since you can find a niche for any business there. Whatever audience you're targeting is practically guaranteed to have a Facebook presence already. Of course, this also means that you'll have competitors on there from the start. Marketing well on Facebook requires good, standout content that gets users to stop scrolling and click.

Facebook users often scroll past videos without activating the audio, so yours ought to catch attention immediately via text overlay. Besides that, a Facebook page should keep users up to date on blog posts and events. Facebook's built-in analytics provide an in-depth look into demographic and psychographic data based on users and market sizes. They also provide stats on impressions, clicks, click through rate (CTR), cost, average cost per click (avg CPC), conversions, conversion rate, total conversion value, and cost per converted click.

INSTAGRAM

Facebook now owns this image-sharing platform, so you can use Facebook Ads Manager on it as well. This makes for ideal targeting, though it has a high CPC and lower conversion rates due to its younger demographic. Use it if you can creatively market to millennials and Gen Z. Instagram is all about the aesthetic - be sure to use quality images.

#SELFIE

LINKEDIN

If you're linked into LinkedIn, it's probably because you want to make business-to-business (B2B) ads. Sponsored content blends in on LinkedIn – just as well, since everyone goes there for business purposes already. This makes it a lower competition platform because there is less sponsored content for users to wade through.

However, this also means that companies with professional audiences and B2B emphasis make more progress with it. If you have these, plus a budget for the more expensive CPC, then you should seriously consider using it. LinkedIn allows you to post job offers, news, and other professional content such as article and blog links. Like Facebook, it also provides analytics on demographics, psychographics, and stats with an emphasis on job description, education, and skills.

TWITTER

Twitter appeals to ample demographics and has an effective system for targeting their interests. Hashtags and keywords allow your posts to appear on users' feeds with little indication of their status as ads. However, If you wish to gain any leverage on Twitter, make sure to flock with your birds of a feather: demonstrate a strong sense of character within the 280 characters they provide to you.

Twitter content should consist of time-sensitive news, blog links, and neat GIFs. Given Twitter's wealth of demographics, it has in-depth analytics as well.

YOUTUBE

We recommend YouTube, the largest video-sharing platform, to those committed to promoting quality videos. The videos ought to last between 20 seconds and 2 minutes to keep viewer attention. All demographics have a niche there, but you should only join if you know you can post regularly.

As our post on YouTube optimization describes, optimization relies on tags, transcriptions, and content relevance. The title, description, and tags should contain keywords that blend in well. Think of keywords as a dog whistle played at a frequency only search engines can hear.

You can create default tags for each video, ideally consisting of your brand name and keywords. It also helps to specify tags for events and optimize the first 130 characters of the description that viewers see. Closed captioning and transcriptions both aid hearing-impaired viewers and turn up in search engines, so you should definitely use them.

ADD'L SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- **Snapchat:** Snapchat stories exist within a limited timeframe and will disappear in 24 hours. In the meantime, Geofilters allow you to reach users within a target radius of your building and alert them to events. Use Snapchat if you have a younger demographic.
- **Pinterest:** This platform resembles a magpie's nest even more than Twitter does, for all the shiny things users collect. Try it if you have a B2C slant and an aesthetically pleasing product, such as jewelry or desserts.
- **Google+:** Besides its easy connectivity to YouTube, Google+ posts appear in Google's search index.

IN *conclusion*

This guide on digital marketing fundamentals hopefully provides a starting point to your own digital marketing ventures. You can find advanced information through many of the sites linked here or by contacting us at info@intellitonic.com.

If you've read through this entire guide, first of all, congratulations! Second of all, the next step is to decide whether you'll handle digital marketing in-house or with the help of specialists. If you choose the latter, you know where to find us! (OK, we'll remind you: sales@intellitonic.com)

THE AUTHOR

Anna became an intern with Intellitonic as an undergraduate at Western Washington University. With a major in Literature and minor in Writing Studies, Anna's interest in pursuing a technical writing career inspired the blog posts that would eventually become Intellitonic's eBook, "Digital Marketing Fundamentals". When appropriate, Anna enjoys peppering her writing with references to literature and her other nerdy interests: outdoor recreation, the weird parts of roadside America, and the Internet.

THE EDITORS

All of us at Intellitonic, and our many friends and colleagues who we could bribe for their honest feedback.

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