Internet Marketing

ONLINE MARKETING
FUNDAMENTALS

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Internet Marketing: Online Marketing Fundamentals

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The Basics of Internet Marketing

1. The Basics of Internet Marketing

Introduction

In a world where every business has to fight for a share of the customers' attention, marketing plays a huge role in boosting the number and interest of a company's clientele. With the gradual increase in the number of small and large businesses that have sprung up in the last two decades, domestic and international markets have become saturated with suppliers, manufacturers and intermediaries, all striving to be the first ones to make it to the end of the chain.

Until only a few years ago, marketing itself was a highly criticized concept. For many, it was nothing more than a waste of resources that could be spent better if they were invested in manufacturing and building of sales force. This sales-oriented approach makes businesses push products and services into the market, rather than creating a pull that customers would not be able to resist.

Marketing manages to do just that. With creatively designed strategies and concepts, the promotional campaigns of goods and services slowly began to play an important role in the overall mission of a business, achieving sales targets as well as creating much needed awareness. Thus, the role of physical marketing became clearer and more defined. Today, a successful business cannot even think about producing goods and services without having an authentic marketing strategy in place.

Therefore, marketing is a business's ammunition in front of a market that is full of choosy, precise and curious customers. It helps the business to answer questions, solve problems, present solutions and build long-term associations with the customers. A similar concept that has surfaced in the 21st century is that of online marketing.

The move to a virtual world has been the result of the saturation of the market that has been mentioned here. With more and more businesses looking to attract customers, the internet became an efficient way to reach a large audience and to market one product or service on different vehicles and through different perspectives. Online marketing soon turned out to be a massive industry that today deals in billions of dollars' worth of advertisements.

However, just like many struggled to understand the importance and need for physical marketing strategies, adopting online marketing as a norm has not been easy for many old-school businesses. Since they have been functioning just fine with a brick and mortar presence, for them, online marketing might seem quite unnecessary. How can this perception be changed? What is it that marketers can do to create and increase awareness about online marketing?

The answer is quite simple. Ask an average individual about online marketing; they may stop for a second or two to collect their thoughts before giving an answer. The concept of online marketing is not quite clear to people yet. While millions of businesses worldwide have jumped on the bandwagon of online marketing, not to mention the early adopters of this practice, a million others are still contemplating whether it is worth adopting.

This e-book will prove how useful understanding what online marketing actually is, and it will look at how this modern technique can help to spring a business up from being average to extraordinary.

What is internet marketing?

Internet marketing, or online marketing, refers to the promotion of goods and services on the internet. The online world acts as a medium to communicate messages that a business drafts for its audience. Online marketing is also synonymous with online advertising.

It is essential to understand that online marketing is not second to traditional marketing. Nor is it a complimentary service that you can use to boost your marketing efforts on other mediums. Instead, online marketing is a hardcore way to promote a business and make it known to an audience that is bombarded with tons of similar stimuli every minute of the day.

Perhaps the very foundation of online marketing lies in finding newer ways to reach customers and markets that would be interested in what a business has to offer. Since traditional mediums like newspaper, prints and TVs have been tried over and over again, a new and creative internet marketing idea seems to be the fresh start that modern businesses so desperately need.

Another reason why internet marketing has gained so much momentum in the last few years is that, by using this method, many companies and business owners aim to break the clutter that has piled up because of nonstop marketing efforts. Every company and every business, in an attempt to attract customers, indulge in various marketing tactics, like an ad in the local newspaper or a TVs campaign that can be viewed on various channels.

When combined, all these campaigns lead to an overload and customers usually become resistant to such attempts. Internet marketing provides a different way to do the same activities, and cash in on high consumer interest as well. Coupled with this, increased internet usage is another factor that has made this marketing alternative quite a hit.

According to statistics, 80% of the people in the United States use the internet regularly. Out of these, 97% use it to search for products that they eventually end up buying. Google research reveals that 10.3 billion searches are conducted online result in nine out of 10 product/business follow-ups. With such high rates of internet usage and the possibility of customers getting back to you, wouldn't you want your small business to have a face in the realm of the World Wide Web?

However, the dilemma comes in when owners of small business, who rightly play the part of marketer, administrator and finance office as well, voice that they do not have time to keep their online presence updated. With such a bleak outlook of even trying to take advantage of the internet, these companies often ignore one of the biggest consumer touch points of the 21st century.

Not only does such a business let go of an opportunity to grow and mature with the market, it also sets itself up to lose to the competition. Businesses that compete with you, directly or indirectly, can make tremendous profits and convert potential sales leads into loyal customers by taking advantage of being present on the internet.

Therefore, it is essential for a small business working in the global economy to make use of internet marketing. Even if you do not have the resources to spend on an e-commerce website, at least make sure you are listed in the online yellow pages directory. When customers conduct a quick search for the product they want, your company name will be displayed.

Approximately 48% of all customers using the internet to search for businesses use the Yellow Pages Directory, which is available online. As it will be discussed in later sections, there are

many ways to market your business on the internet, using either free or paid solutions depending on the budget you have to assign to internet marketing. Using these methods is an excellent way to make sure you are heard and seen on the internet.

Types of online marketing

Online marketing has become a mandatory part of a business's promotional strategy. No campaign is complete without a representation on the internet. Leaving out this medium means giving up your customers to the competitor!

Being a primary source of information for millions of people, the internet opens up avenues to look for products and businesses by breaking geographic boundaries. No longer does a user have to be physically present in a locality to make use of the products sold by a local business. Tapping into newer markets is one of the biggest advantages of internet marketing.

Therefore, making sure that an online promotional campaign is thorough and appealing is essential. Sending across the same message via various techniques and channels on the internet is a must. There are many types of online marketing that have evolved and developed over the years, keeping in mind the way this medium is used by consumers.

For instance, when the internet was a basic tool that was used by only a handful of people with access to it, online marketing was one-dimensional, meaning, one long advertisement about a product would be put up on a single website or search engine for visitors to see. As usage increased, so did the complexity associated with the internet marketing.

Today, a single advert hardly suffices for the many sub-mediums that have sprung up on the internet. Social media, websites, search engines, yellow pages, and website directories are some of the many channels on which a business needs to advertise in a creative manner, keeping in mind the kind of audience that visits them.

Hence, online marketing consists out of the following subtypes of online marketing:

- Email marketing

This refers to marketing that is done by sending advertisements and promotional content through emails. Businesses usually maintain email directories for email marketing.

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

This refers to increasing the visibility of a website, its content or the words within the content so that they appear in search results. This is done using on-page and off-page optimization.
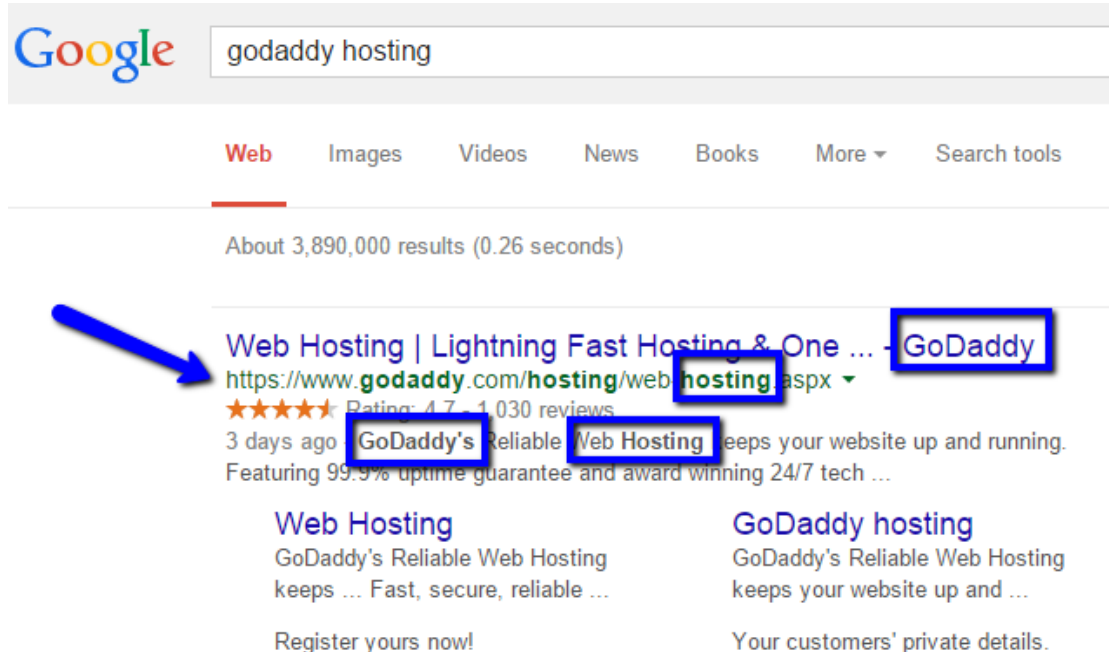
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

This refers to the increasing website's visibility in the search engines using paid reach (paid advertising) and organic reach (SEO).
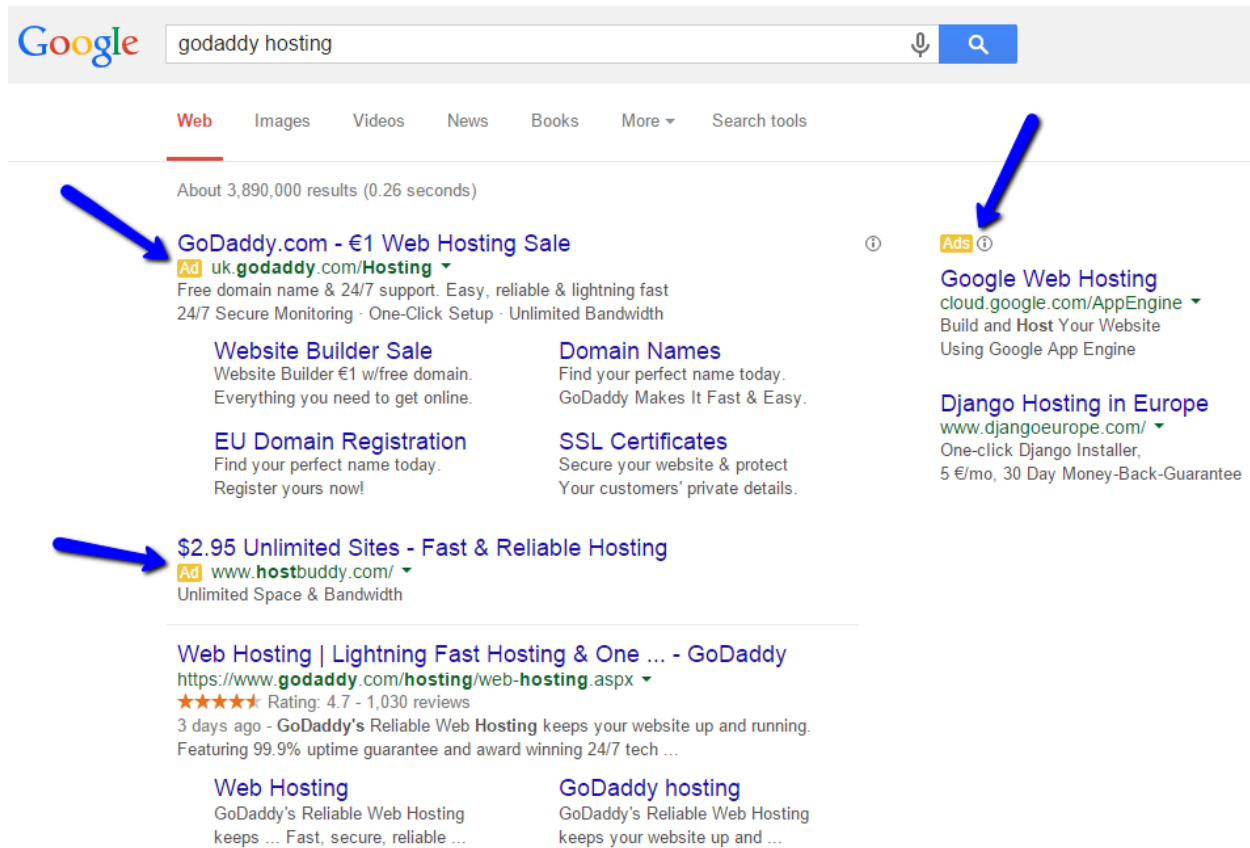
- Social Media Marketing

This refers to promoting a business on social media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
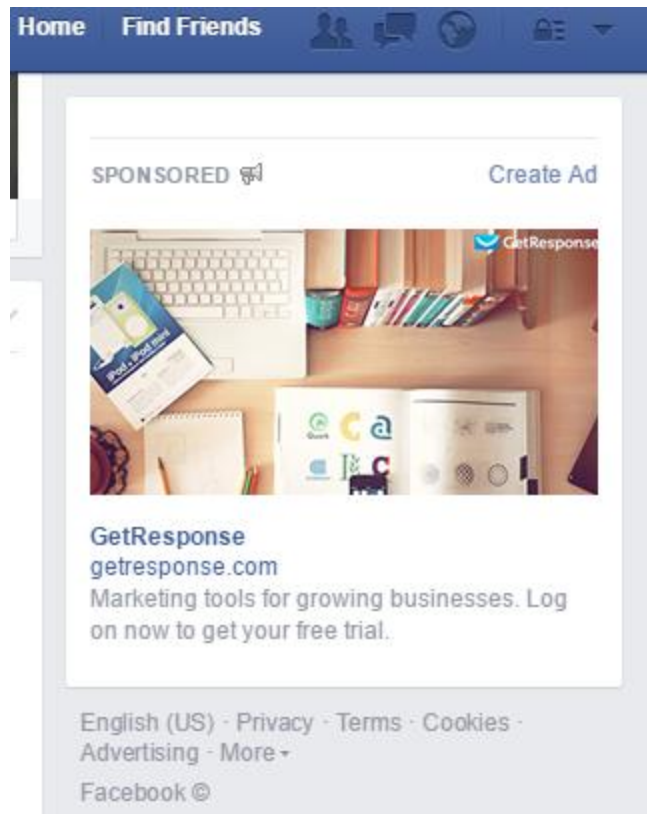
- Affiliate Marketing

It refers to the hiring of third parties, also called affiliates, who market a business's content online.
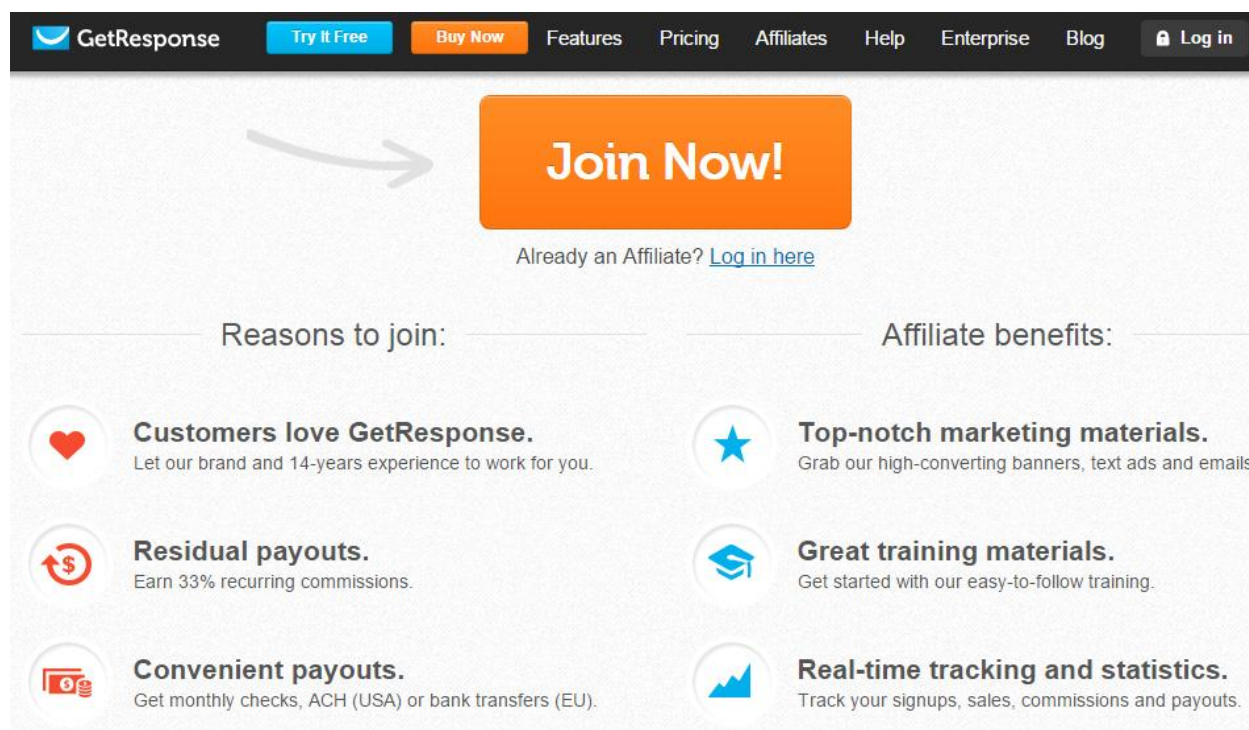
The details of these types of marketing will be discussed thoroughly in separate chapters of this book.

Online marketing trends

One of the biggest advantages of online marketing is the flexibility it offers to businesses. Unlike the high cost and complex process typical for traditional marketing efforts, internet marketing can be cheaper and easily accessible to most web owners, who are skilled enough to take advantage of different techniques of online marketing. While TVs and outdoor campaigns are somewhat standardized, online promotion strategies can be adjusted according to customers' reactions and responses.

Depending on what generates the best results, online advertising follows certain patterns. While these patterns may remain the same for an indefinite period of time, usually they change and fluctuate based on how the market for particular goods and services is performing and on the way consumers behave in general. For instance, if customers buying online diet packages are satisfied with their purchases that they made after watching videos, the trend for visuals and presentations will be at an all-time high.

Therefore, just like any other business, online marketing also experiences shifts in what is needed and what should be antiquated. Some of the most popular online marketing trends at this point, that have been highlighted by experts, based on the current developments in the online world, are the following:

- Mobile-friendly content will become a basic requirement

One of the most prominent shifts in online marketing has been from desktops and laptops to mobile devices. No longer do people sit in front of computers all day long to search for products or read reviews about a business. In fact, the year 2016 brought a new milestone - the number of mobile users has finally surpassed the number of desktop users. Successful online businesses have foreseen this trend and have launched websites that are compatible for mobile phones.

Similarly, customizing content for smartphones and tablets is also a new trend that has been initiated by the popularity and preference for integrated device purchases in the last few years. Whatever content it may be, if it is available for your customers to view and enjoy on the go, it will be enough to sustain their interest. If, on the other hand, your small business is not on-board for this change, it is likely to lose key customers and markets. Additionally, Google now takes *"mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal on mobile searches"*, which is yet another reason why mobile friendly website is a must in online market nowadays.

- Less is more

Gone are the days when the quantity of advertisements and promotions signified strength and a solid market standing. The same applies to in-depth and comprehensive advertisement campaigns that would just go on and on! Simplicity is the key to make online marketing work for your brand. Customers are now looking for quick and short ads that are attractive and alluring at the same time.

Look at some of the most famous everyday brands that advertise online. Do they have never-ending campaigns that bore you so much that you feel like skipping the promotional message altogether?

Brands like Apple and Google create simple, straightforward ads. However, they are designed creatively, with an allure that catches customer attention. The "more is less" slogan also works so well because customers are already overwhelmed with a lot of promotional information day in and day out. If your message stands out with simplicity and creativity, it will get the most attention.

- Integrated imaging and content publication

A combination of content and images is an important shift from content-only online advertising. Placing emphasis on certain points within the content is intelligently done by breaking it up with images. Image marketing has always been a useful way to attract attention from customers who do not like to read too much content. Using this strategy in a creative manner will definitely optimize the promotional campaigns for success. In general, websites that have a blog and publish content regularly receive more links, traffic and leads, which all together adds up to better performance.

- Evolution of video format

During the past couple of years, video as a format of content reached its peak, shifting the focus of online marketers again. Development of technology and the need for visualization, together with the evolution of social media platforms, and their live video feature enabled this trend to become dominant trend in online marketing.

Summary

Online marketing is a necessity. In a world where e-commerce has become the single biggest reason for businesses to build an online presence, the need to market products and services online is paramount. However, it should be remembered at all times that the internet is a product of modernization and change. For this reason, it does not take long for new trends and shifts to materialize.

Being a business that markets online, you have to make sure that you innovate constantly, without letting your online presence become outdated. Since millions of businesses have made the move to the virtual world, internet marketing has started to become cluttered, just like traditional marketing. Therefore, if you want your business to stand out amongst a million others, you will have to be at the top of your game.

What businesses need to master to make sure their online marketing efforts reap results include:

- Creativity
- Out of the box ideas

- Constant planning

- High degree of flexibility

- Keeping up with the current trends

- Constant research and analysis

In the same breath, also keep in mind that using the many channels of online marketing is not an option. In fact, cashing in on the different dynamics, workings, and characteristics of each is essential to make sure you build an impressive reputation for the business and loyalty amongst the customers.

Lastly, being educated about the latest trends of online marketing keeps a business up-to-date with how its market thinks, reacts and responds to various campaigns. Online marketing departs from traditional marketing in that the former is geared towards not only creating hype, but also being available whenever and wherever customers need you.

2

Web Analytics

2. Web Analytics

Introduction

The proliferation of internet usage and the upsurge in the creation of so many websites has led to the development of an entire science devoted to the understanding of the patterns online. Most users are comfortable with the idea of interacting with a non-human structure, the website, which is giving them access to information and allowing them to conduct different operations.

The website is like a portal that opens up a range of possibilities for the users. There are a lot of different kinds of static and dynamic websites, which allow varying ranges of interaction and entertainment. Usually people do not realize that at the backend of their internet usage and browsing is being recorded in different statistical forms so that the website owner could know more about the visitors on the website.

This systematic approach to finding out more about users of your website is broadly known as web analytics. Through web analytics there is an attempt to gauge how the website content affects the users and how the users respond to different types of stimuli on the web page. Monitoring the users' activity and the site's performance are some of the most important functions of web analytics. In order to find out about the online activity of the users, their preferences and their tastes, web analytic tools are extensively used. Market research is another area where this data is extremely relevant.

What is web analytics?

Web analytics basically refers to the usage of web data for analysis and understanding of online patterns. For web analytics, the data is collected, measured and then interpreted. Web traffic is gauged and measured by using different types of instruments. The number of people who visit a website and the type of activity they conduct while using that website is recorded consistently so that the website developers can analyze which aspects are interesting and which ones need to be modified. Web analytics is used to assess the effectiveness of the content placed online.

An area where this study of web traffic is gaining widespread popularity is that of e-commerce. Businesses use this information as an easy and cost effective way to conduct large-scale market research without directly bothering their existing or potential customers. Advertising is another area where this data becomes extremely relevant because a business can assess and measure user response directly after the introduction of a new ad or offer.

The data also provides gainful information about the demographics of the users and this information can be used to inform the operational decisions of the firm. Such type of a research has implications for what the business produces, what it sells, how it sells and to whom it sells. Broadly, the types of metrics measured by web analytic instruments include the number of people who visit a website, number of pages viewed, number of clicks, etc.

Off-site web analytics

This type of collection and assessment of data measures the general online performance of a website regardless of whether one owns or maintains it. The popularity and the attention the website gathers on the internet outside the sphere of the website's own operations is measured by off-site web analytics. This information provides a guideline regarding the status of the website on the internet, its audience, visibility and buzz.

On-site web analytics

This type of data strictly deals with the information that is collected when users visit a site and how they interact with different elements present on the web pages. The duration of their stay and the translation of their interest into purchases or subscription can also be measured. One can also find out about the landing pages, which entice the buyer into making a purchase. On-site web analytics are particularly important for commercial purposes where businesses want to know exactly the worth of their investment. The most widely used tool for measuring on-site response of users is Google Analytics.

Two methods are used for managing on-site analytics. Firstly, the log file method was used in which the server records the requests of the visitors in a log file and then these can be read. Another method known as page tagging is used more often at present. In page tagging, when a page loads and when something is clicked on the website, this is registered in the web analytics by embedding JavaScript in the code.

Reasons for using web analytics

Websites that deal with the provision of a lot of content, textual or otherwise, did not have a clear-cut means of finding or knowing how much the discourse available on their website was worth. In business terms, measuring the return on investment of content has been made possible by using sophisticated web analytics. In order to gauge the worth of your website content, qualitative and quantitative analysis are both important.

- Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Quantitative analysis gives information regarding the numerical and statistical value of the content by telling the business what the users do, while qualitative analysis will help the business see how the users engage with the content. It can tell you about the purpose of the user's visit and the effectiveness of your content. Web analytics allow website content developers to get great insights into what to present to the users in order to increase their web traffic.

- Content planning

Web analytics can be used in the realm of content planning in order to find out which type of items or elements might be problematic or redundant. Using this data, it becomes easy to compare and review one's own performance with the performance of a past period. It becomes easy to use these numbers in order to sketch out a trend of growth for your business. If the website is not getting enough traffic and your business is considering a serious remodeling, web analytics can help you understand whether this might be a viable investment or not.

Websites can also find out whether their users are satisfied or not. Those who create the content will obviously be interested in knowing how successful it is because they can use this knowledge to make decisions about the future content they produce.

- Influence on marketing decisions

Marketing is an important area that is affected by the results of web analysis. Website owners can clearly find out how users are reaching their website, i.e. through another website or a different link. This way, they can use these channels to market their products and services. For

instance, if a clothes retailer gets most of its users redirected from its Facebook page, then it is safe to assume that marketing on the Facebook page should be more rigorous.

In order to calculate whether an advertising campaign was successful or not, websites can make good use of insightful data from web analytics. Websites usually function as international portals of information and they can discover the geographical location of their visitors by analyzing data. This way their strategies and content can be modified to suit the cultural, ethical or personal characteristics of the users it attracts.

Various subtopics of web analytics: methods of measuring web traffic

Basic metrics

Table 1. Metrics Categories (Jacka, n.d.)

Site Usage	Referrers	Site Content Analysis	Quality Assurance
• Numbers of visitors and sessions • How many people repeatedly visit the site • Geographic information • Search Engine Activity	• Which websites are sending visitors to your site • The search terms people used to find your site • How many people place bookmarks to the site	• Top entry pages • Most popular pages • Top pages for single page view sessions • Top exit pages • Top paths through the site • Effectiveness of key content	• Broken pages or server errors • Visitor response to errors

FIGURE 1: TAKEN FROM HTTP://FACULTY.IST.PSU.EDU/JJANSEN/ACADEMIC/JANSEN_WEBSITE_ANALYSIS.PDF

It is imperative for website owners to gauge the performance of their website based on the metrics displayed in the table above. Knowing the visitor type is significant because there are some people who visit your site for the first time while others are regular. Calculating unique visitors and unique sessions is equally important for the website. The unique visitors were calculated by using cookies and this helped analysts to trace individual consumer behavior. However, the second approach in which unique sessions are calculated is more suitable for commercial needs because in each new session a business can market its product or service to the users, whether those are new or a regular visitors.

There are eight common metrics for website analysis and these are displayed in the table below:

Table 2. Eight common metrics of website analysis

Metric	Description	Category
Visitor Type	Who is accessing the Website (returning, unique, etc.)	Site Usage
Visit Length	The total amount of time a visitor spends on the Website	Site Usage
Demographics and System Statistics	The physical location and information of the system used to access the Website	Site Usage
Internal Search Information	Information on keywords and results pages viewed using a search engine embedded in the Website	Site Usage
Visitor Path	The route a visitor uses to navigate through the Website	Site Content Analysis
Top Pages	The pages that receive the most traffic	Site Content Analysis
Referrering URL and Keyword Analysis	Which sites have directed traffic to the Website and which keywords visitors are using to find the Website	Referrers
Errors	Any errors that occurred while attempting to retrieve the page	Quality Assurance

Average Time On Site (ATOS)

Average time on site is another way of measuring the amount of time visitors spend viewing the site content. The measurements used include finding out about users who stay for less than 5 seconds and those who spend more time. Different intervals are used, but the basic aim is to ensure the duration of the site visit is long. If the visitor has spent a short period of time on the site, it means that the user did not find relevant content or reached the site by accident. This can then be traced back to the sites that referred the user to your website and you can easily tell which sites are referring irrelevant traffic.

Internal search

Internal search is another way that websites try to find out more about their visitors. Internal search is basically the facility offered to users to allow for site specific searches, i.e. you can search for the content by typing your query. This data can be used to tell websites about what products/services to offer, which products should be made more accessible, what most customers prefer, what issues they face, etc. The website can make personalized offers and even use the exact words of the customers/users in its titles.

Visitor path

Here is another significant tool for understanding how users reach your website and what they do once they reach it. It is important for e-commerce firms to know about possible problems in the path of a user selecting an item, placing it in the cart and making the final purchase. Another approach to understanding this is to have in mind that the users' actions are not all logical and they can be random. The only way to understand the visitor path is to trace it back to the last page the person was viewing. On different websites, people at present usually go through a number of articles or items before clicking on something. This understanding of the visitor path allows the content developers to present better material to the users.

Top pages

Top pages are another metric, which include top entry pages, top exit pages and most popular pages on the site. It is intuitively easy to understand why optimizing content on top entry pages and most popular pages is essential, while the top exit pages allow the content developers to identify and eliminate the problems users are facing. The analysts can also align the business goals with the top pages, i.e. if the top pages are the secondary pages on a website and they do not really help increase the sales then the purpose of the business is not being achieved.

Other metrics

Other significant metrics include referrers, which help a user reach the website. This can include search engine results, a link on another website, a link on a blog, through social media sites, personal bookmarks, etc. If the referrer is not bringing in enough traffic then perhaps you need to think about the placement of the link. Keywords are another very important tool that helps content developers find out about the most searched words and phrases, which they can then include in their own content in order to get more traffic. Lastly, identifying errors is extremely significant in ironing out the problems or flaws of your site because otherwise people will be discouraged from using it if they frequently get errors when the page loads.

Using log files

Log-file analysis was the earliest type of web analysis, which stemmed from finding out about the number of hits a webpage received. During the mid-1990s page views, request for viewing a page and visits/session, i.e. requests from a unique user after every 30 minutes period of

inactivity, were also used as measuring instruments. Web counters were also extensively used on websites, which showed the number of times the website had been visited.

In the log-files method tracking, files were saved on the webhost's server, which helped in collection of the user data such as time spent on a site, number of pages visited, the last viewed page or exit page etc. The log-file method was common because it was cost-effective and affordable for companies to extract information in this manner. Log files exist regardless of their usage for web analytics so nothing has to be modified or added on the website to record information in this way. The software needed to read these log files is merely a one-off expense and there are no additional costs of web analysis.

Page tagging

The idea of using web counters was further developed and by the late 1990s JavaScript was embedded in the page as an invisible image, which gave information about the visitor. Other types of information can also be extracted, such as the user's screen size and the price of items bought. Each webpage has the JavaScript code, which relays the information about the visitor to the web analytics service provider, who is usually a third party.

Page tagging in this manner can be expensive because the company would need to pay the service provider for details about viewership information. The web developers also have to make changes to each page in order to add the JavaScript, but the accuracy of the results compared to the log files is high in this method, therefore more companies prefer to solicit expert services. The JavaScript method is also more popular because it allows content developers to make changes to the page in real-time in order to record user behavior. The site can be adjusted and the keywords can be modified instantly to get more views, whereas with the log-files technique the delay in access to information was a serious problem.

Cookies were also assigned to users and the website could gain valuable information about unique visits to their site. However, this method has had serious issues related to user privacy because the unsuspecting visitor unknowingly agrees to the use of his personal information without consent. Companies use this information for research and but occasionally the information is sold to other commercial giants for advertising purposes. This approach therefore has gathered negative publicity. Typically, there are two types of cookies used, first party cookies and third party cookies; the former are used by the website itself to record user

behavior, while in the latter case another external company is collecting and collating this data for analysis.

Other techniques include the usage of Ajax code, which relays information about the user to the web analytics company. Third parties can also analyze web traffic and this would require the user's computer to conduct a Domain Name Server look-up. Page tagging is beneficial in an additional way because it gives information regarding incomplete forms, video viewership and usage of mouse on the website.

Determining geographical location

Geolocation determination is increasing in importance because websites want to tailor their content to meet the needs of their users. Even though a globalized world has led to an increased similarity in tastes, there are still vast differences and cultures, economic backgrounds and lifestyles that need to be accommodated by businesses. If a firm receives most of its visitors from a particular region then it will be intelligent to design its content and offers to cater to the customer base.

Internet Protocol Intelligence technology is used to find out about the visitor's country, region, city and postal code. The type of connection, identity of the Internet Service Provider and proxy information can also be deciphered from this technology. Using this information, it has become easy for businesses to do market segmentation and behavioral targeting. For businesses that have a local presence geolocation analysis is a great tool because they can redirect the website users to their physical outlet.
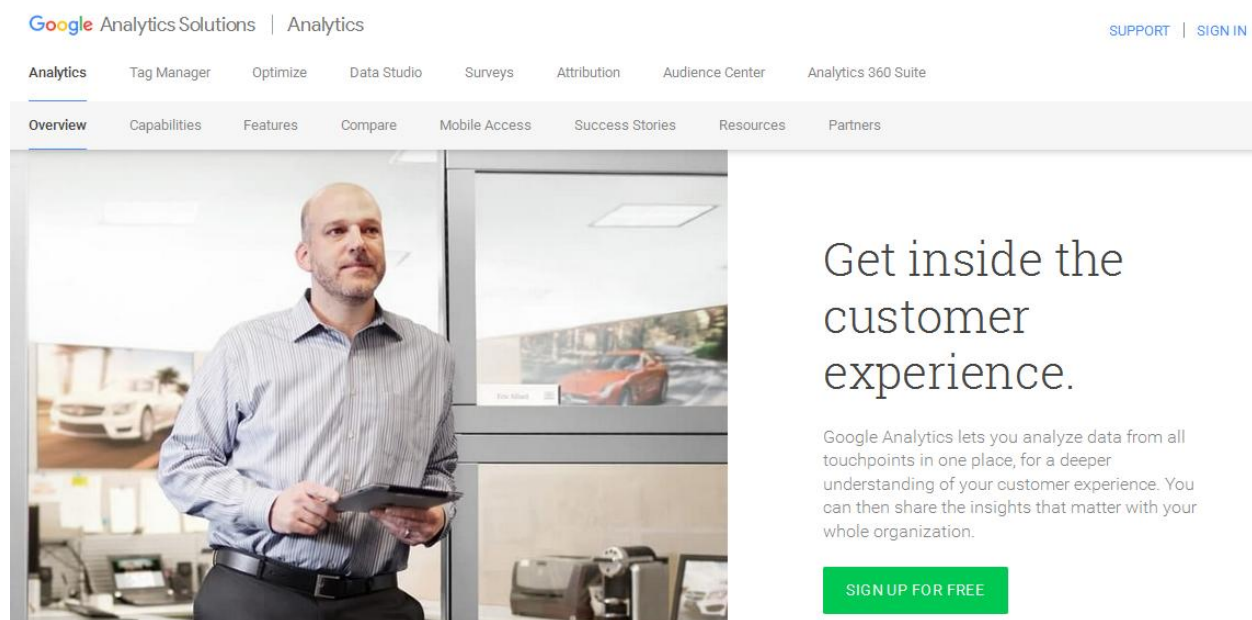
Click analytics

The patterns of a user's clicks on a website are measured within this category. Websites at present are not just static HTML pages. They consist of images, galleries, videos, multiple links and several sets of pages with varying levels of interactive elements. Website owners are interested in knowing what users commonly click on, so they can then probe into the reasons behind greater attention being given to some elements over the other. Things like placement of objects, sequences, navigation, text style and visibility, color and design can all be assessed by these metrics. If more users tend to click on something, it is obviously representative of their interest in that item.

The click analytics process can happen in real time where editors tailor the content of the website immediately to garner more clicks. This can happen if there is a discount or sales offer on a website and editors manage the content in real time to attract as many customers as possible. Click analysis can also be done in unreal time, which gives a general picture of the performance of different elements on the website. Clicks are collected at the backend by logging the click when it happens or by considering that every page view is the result of a click.

Google Analytics

One of the most popular tools used by different websites and businesses for analyzing the web traffic is Google Analytics, a free service, using which websites can get insights about their users. One can find out about their traffic sources, conversation rate, etc. The return on advertisement, performance of referrers and success of email marketing can also be seen. It provides in-depth reports and motion charts for about 50 sites per user profile. Commerce related metrics such as revenue and sales are also presented. In addition, it provides tools for search engine optimization (SEO).

Summary

In essence, web analytics is about collating and interpreting website traffic, which is receiving widespread attention from different circles. As more websites spring up, people want to know the return on their investment and they want to tailor their content to gather more online attention, which would obviously increase their sales or subscriptions.

Marketing, advertising and e-commerce are some of the areas where the reports from web analysts are used. Web analytics is of two types, off-site and on-site. There are four basic metric categories known as site usage, referrers, site content analysis and quality assurance.

These metrics are used to evaluate and record the performance of a website in order to create a comprehensive report focused on some of the following goals:

- Efficiency of website content
- Site usability
- Learning about the target audience
- Quality traffic
- Referrals
- Conversion rate
- Social reports
- E-commerce reporting

3

The Basics of Conversion Optimization

3. The Basics of Conversion Optimization

Introduction

The concept of conversion optimization is very valuable to online marketers. To understand what this term means, let us first discuss the importance of online touchpoints. A touchpoint, in business terms, is a medium where the customer first engages with a business, gets to know about it or explores its product offering.

The importance of a touchpoint is paramount because it gives the audience a first impression about a business – how well it receives, engages and attracts them to take action. One of the most primary consumer touchpoints is a business's website. Every online business first develops a website that gives information about the business to those who are interested. A fully functional business website is an interactive channel that lets customers explore the business and get in touch with it.

Therefore, a website is the face of a business in the virtual world and the better it looks, the more it attracts. Conversion optimization or conversion rate optimization (CRO) has to do with corporate websites. How well these websites are geared to attract customers is what CRO determines in a very unique manner.

What is CRO and how does it work? These details will be discussed next. However, do remember that CRO is a well-balanced qualitative and quantitative assessment that is used by expert online marketers to make sure their promotional efforts yield positive results.

What is conversion optimization?

Conversion optimization is a process particularly used by websites, forums and landing pages. To define this term fully, let us break it down. Firstly, conversion is the specific action you want your web visitors/browsers to take. What kind of action could this be?

Action refers to what you ideally want your customers to do when they visit your website. It may be:

- Calling your customer service department

- Clicking on 'purchase'

- Downloading the displayed program

- Registering for a newsletter

- Referring a friend

- Registering with an email and password

Next, conversion rate optimization refers to the rate at which visitors, browsing your website, convert to customers. In other words, CRO aims to bring about required action as a result of passive web browsing. Therefore, CRO is a systematic method to improve the performance of your website to increase the rate at which action is taken.

Website performance is an accumulation of many factors, called key performance indicators. These indicators are responsible for attracting traffic to the webpage and interesting visitors enough so that they browse through. CRO can be applied to all or any one KPI that is determined to be underperforming.

From the customer's point of view, CRO is used to figure out what users and customer want to see on the webpage, what entices them to take action and what they believe is lacking on it. The carefully calculated and analyzed results of CRO are then implemented to make these changes.

CRO is a structured approach that takes into account a number of things to achieve desired results. The majority of the findings derived in the conversion rate optimization process come from:

- Consumer and expert insights

- User feedback

- An impartial analysis of the website by a professional

- Web analytics tools

Using information from these sources, CRO brings about required changes by keeping in mind the objectives you have set for the website. For instance, if all you want users to do is create an account, CRO will aim to increase the chances of it happening, instead of introducing a completely new objective.

Conversion rate optimization is then a strategy, a plan of action that changes the perceptions of the audience about a website by giving it what it needs to take action. In this light, CRO is a very comprehensive approach that includes even the smallest alterations made to a webpage. It can be either the positioning of the call-to-action button or completing restructuring the steps of a recruitment process.

CRO comes in play when a business feels that something is stopping potential sales leads from converting. Such a situation arises when you record heavy traffic flow on your forum, but only a handful take an action. Moreover, behavior patterns of consumer groups vary widely from one channel to the other. Online marketing response rates fluctuate one hour to the next and most of the times, from one offer to the other.

Very aptly put, CRO is a combination of art and science. The science comes from knowing which changes to initiate, which KPIs to measure and how to run tests to see the effect of a particular change. On the other hand, the art comes from making the website aesthetically appealing to visitors, designing attractive call-to-action buttons and the best feedback routes to engage customers.

What conversion optimization is not

There are many things that do not define CRO, but are wrongly affixed with its definition and understanding. As mentioned previously, CRO is an analytical process that takes into account solid feedback and important details of KPIs of the website and the business.

Therefore, CRO is not about:

- Guesses, hopes and hunches

- What others might be doing

- What the CEO thinks about the website

- Increasing the number of visitors without paying attention to quality of engagement

Some important terms to remember

Since conversion optimization is a combination of science and art, there are many jargons related to this online marketing assessment methodology that need to be understood to make sense of CRO. Most of these terms are a repeated occurrence in CRO related discussions because without them, the process of conversion optimization may be rendered incomplete.

- Call-to-action buttons

If you were familiar with how websites are created, you would know what CTA buttons are. As the name suggests, call-to-action buttons are the highlighted buttons or links on a webpage that let you perform an action. For instance, a 'Buy Now' button on an e-commerce website that converts you from a surfer to a customer falls under this category. CTA buttons are of all shapes, colors and sizes, depending on what the need is, and depending on the nature of the market the website is targeted towards. Some popular examples are 'Register Now' buttons, 'Sign Up' buttons, 'Book Now' buttons and 'Download Now' buttons.

- Conversion funnel

The conversion flow is the path taken by visitors from when they visit your website until the action is taken, i.e. conversion takes place. For an e-commerce website the conversion funnel will be the following path: homepage - search product - product page – checkout - payment. Knowing the conversion funnel for an action is very important because all changes and improvements are then made to the various elements of the funnel during the CRO process.
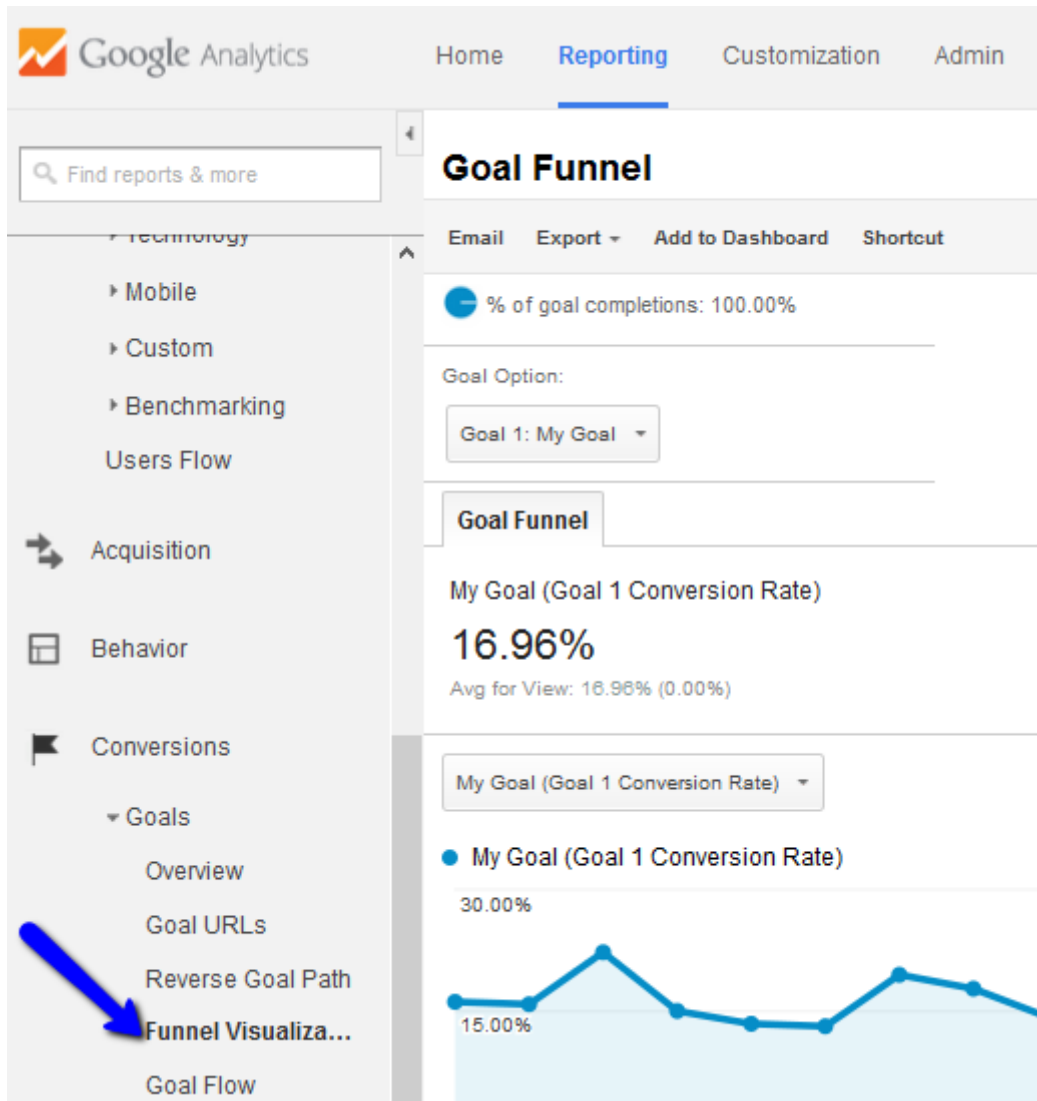
- A/B Tests

A/B testing is a statistical approach to CRO that takes into account two variables at one point in time. The effectiveness of both, A and B, is then gauged when customers respond to online marketing tactics and conversion occurs on the website. Here, A and B are two versions of the same design, with slight changes to determine their effect. A/B testing is usually done in a controlled environment, with one variable being the control. A very simple example of A/B or split testing is to see the response and conversion rates when the call-to-action button is changed from red to green or vice versa.

- Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing is an essential component of CRO. A test that is applied to the various Key Performance Indicators, multivariate testing analyzes various elements by suggesting a number of variations and combinations. It determines which of these combinations would work best for a website and increases the conversion rate.

MVT uses statistical hypothesis testing on websites to make CRO authentic and reliable. With this technique, more than two variables of a website can be tested at once on the same page. Everything from landing page images, content and checkout forms to the font and color of texts can be tested with MVT. In short, it would be correct to say the MVT is synonymous to running multiple A/B tests at the same time.

- Landing page

Landing page is an entry point for the visitors. It is the page, which is shown in the search engine results when the user performs a search query. Once the user clicks on this page, the user enters the website and lands to the page called a landing page. This term refers for both organic and paid searches. In addition, other sources may direct visitors to the landing page, such as social media updates, emails, event invitations, etc.

The importance of landing page is that it has great possibility of generating conversions. If your landing page resonates well with website visitors, it will result in inspiring interest in your business and it will engage the visitors. Otherwise, poorly designed landing page will result in high bounce rate, and the visitors will unlikely return to your website.

Landing page has to be clear and direct in order to quickly engage the visitors. You should also carefully choose design layout, with company logo available. The information should be clearly visible, with call-to-action button placed in a prominent place so that it attracts the attention of the visitor. Other recommendations when it comes to optimizing your landing page include:

- ✓ Write a great headline

- ✓ Use bullets or headers to highlight the most important points

- ✓ Include relevant visuals (for example, an image of the offer that can be claimed through the landing page)

- ✓ Provide a link to the website's home page

Here is an example of a great landing page:

Calculating conversion rate optimization

Once you have the background knowledge about CRO, the next step is to go in detail about the elements that make up this concept and the calculations/statistics that are involved. Being an essential barometer of online marketing success, conversion rate optimization is taken to the next level by expert analysts who want to yield as much information as possible from this metric.

Therefore, though simple, the CRO assessment is combined with various other measures, making the entire process one that can only be tackled and understood by experienced professionals. For the purpose of basics, we will study the CRO calculation in its simplest form so that readers can grasp this idea easily.

Elements of the CRO process

As mentioned previously, conversion optimization is not a random assessment, nor is it all guesswork. This metric is based on statistical analysis, and thus, it follows a structured pattern. Some of the most important elements of the CRO Process are:

- Data collection and processing

The presence of a data warehouse is necessary for CRO. The platform that conducts this assessment first gathers data provided by customers and third party representatives. Once this data is gathered, it is processed to make sense. Relationships between variables on a website are developed and the strength of each is measured. A screening method is also used to drop irrelevant data before A/B testing and multivariate testing are used.

- Hypothesis

After adequate data is collected, a hypothesis is to be made. This hypothesis justifies why the change is needed and what the result of the change will be. Before starting this step, it should be kept in mind that the hypothesis must be measurable so that conclusions can be drawn.

- Optimization goals

How much optimization do you want? What is the time duration for this improvement? How will it be tracked and measured? These are some important questions that website owners need to answer. Optimization goals lay the foundation of the CRO strategy. It should be remembered that optimization goals should strictly be in line with business goals because the former help in achieving the latter. The most basic optimization goal is to increase conversions. Later, this goal can be expanded to increase revenue and viewership.

- Optimization strategy

Next, an optimization strategy is put into effect. Once all the groundwork is done, this strategy will focus on achieving the goals set, and making the online marketing efforts of the company worthwhile.

The numbers

Now for the quantitative part. The numbers related to CRO are derived by website analytics that are used on the internet. These analytical tools monitor traffic on the website and keep a track of how many customers report an action and those that only browse passively.

Therefore, to calculate the CRO, we will assume that the website is functioning normally and has all the necessary tools in place.

To make use of the optimization strategy, you first need to know what the current conversion rate on your website is. Your current rate can be calculated using the following figures.

- Total Conversions: This number is the actual quantity of customers who visited your website and recorded whatever action was required of them.

- Total Views: The total views is the number of people who have landed on your website, regardless of whether they took an action or not. This statistic would ideally be a bigger number than total conversions.

Using these figures, the conversion rate can be calculated using the formula:

CRO= (Total Conversions/Total Views) x100

So for instance, if the number of total views is 5000 and the number of total conversions is 50, the CRO turns out to be 1%.

While the calculation for CRO is simple, and so is the resulting answer, what does this number mean? What is the ideal CRO? How does this CRO compare to industry average? Is it enough to have a CRO of 1%? If not, how can this be improved?

Making sense of the CRO

Like any other metric, the CRO percentage alone does not make much sense, nor is it useful to a business. Only when this number is compared, contrasted and gauged, against an ideal or a benchmark, does CRO start making some sense for online marketers.

Within this topic, two of the most important concepts related to CRO will be discussed. Without these, your website's CRO is only a figure that can neither be improved nor put to use.

The ideal CRO

Expert analysts are often hired to work on increasing a website's CRO to attract more business. When these experts compute the forum's conversion rate, the first question managers ask is whether this CRO is the best in the industry. How do you tell if it is?

The best or ideal percentage of conversion rate is often considered to be nonexistent. Since CRO varies from website to website, offer to offer and business to business, there really is not a benchmark to look at when it comes to improving this rate until a fixed point. The biggest reason why such a standard is an illusion lies within the formula used to calculate CRO.

Take a look at the equation again. Now consider this: If you are using pay per click as an online marketing technique to promote your website, and for every click, you pay $1 in expenses, you could be recording an impressive CRO of 10%. However, if every action only leads to a profit of $2, the high CRO is not of much value, is it?

This is the reason why the CRO measure is relative for every industry and highly depends on the cost and profit structure your business follows.

Consider another example. For instance, you have the following three scenarios in front of you:

- 100 visitors/day converting at 5%

- 500 visitors/day converting at 1%

- 5,000 visitors/day converting at 1%

Which one do you prefer? From the look of it, the first choice yields the highest CRO so it should definitely be the winner. However, according to experts, the third option is the one that is likely to reap the most results in terms of online marketing because having 5000 visitors daily and a 1% CRO means getting 50 conversions.

However, with 100 visitors a day, as in the first option, only 5 sales are recorded. Therefore, it is obvious that defining the best or the ideal CRO is rather hard. It depends on various factors that are different for every website and every industry. Nonetheless, for comparison's sake, an average of 2%-3% CRO is often considered good for a company that is looked upon as reasonable by the market.

Metrics to help you understand CRO

Many rates and measures should be considered in conjunction to CRO when the time comes to analyze and draw a conclusion. Since these metrics support and clarify the conversion rate, they help in making sense of a percentage that would otherwise be hard to decipher.

The following four measures are all concerned with increasing viewership and revenue on websites. Hence, they help analysts in understanding what the CRO represents.

- The bounce rate

The bounce rate is a percentage representing the number of people who leave a website after viewing one page. This means that when passive surfers land on your home page, they do not find it attractive enough to go through in it detail. They leave immediately, resulting in a high bounce rate – something that is highly important to address if you are to improve the CRO.

- Exit rate

While the bounce rate is for the entire website, the exit rate is particular for each page. A high exit rate for one page signifies the percentage of people who leave after viewing this page. This indicator gives analysts an insight into the last page a visitor viewed before leaving.

- Average time on site

Average time on site is the opposite of bounce rate. This metric represents how long viewers stay on your website on average. If the bounce rate is high, then the average time on site will be quite low, meaning that visitors are not staying long enough to perform an action. The measure of the average time on site is part of engagement metric.
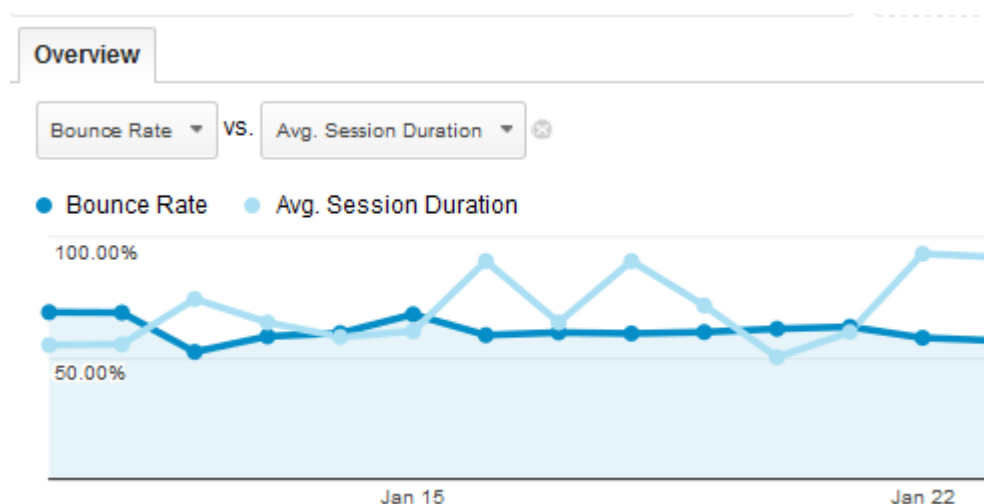
- Average page views

The average page view indicates the number of pages viewed by browsers on average. This measure needs to be kept under check because a high average page view can signify two things. One, that visitors are engaged and find your website attractive, and second, that there is too much confusion in the conversion funnel on your webpage, which is why viewers are roaming around the forum without registering any action.
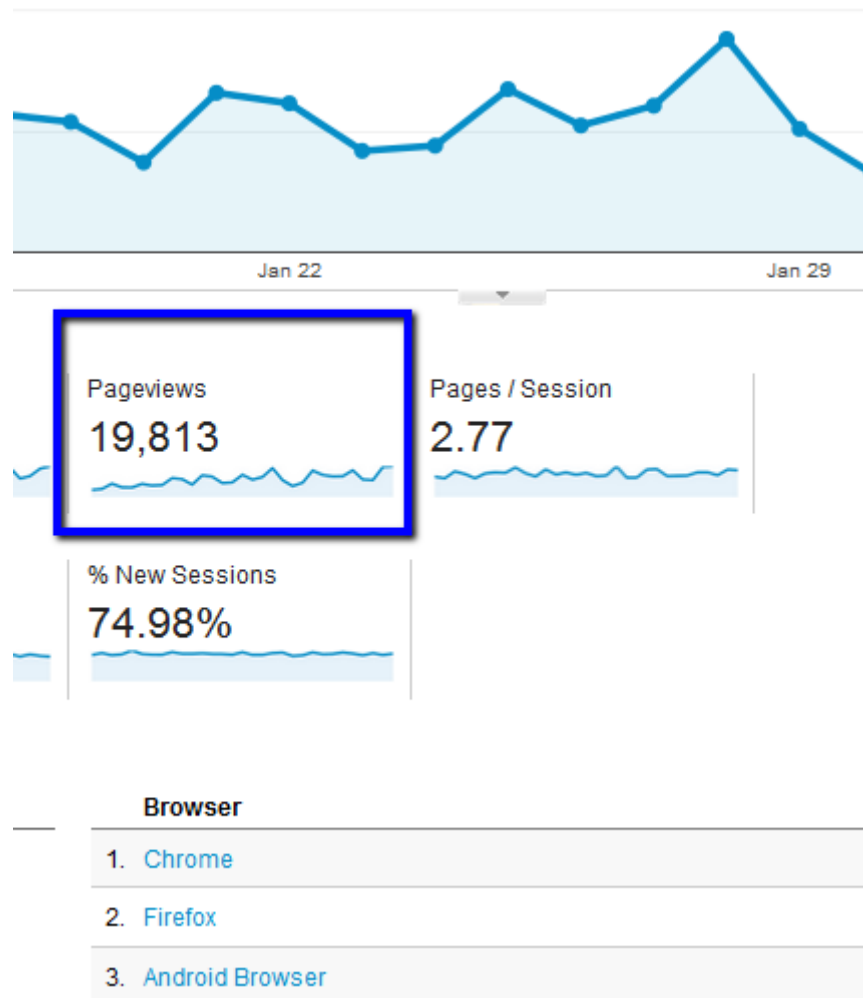
Summary

Learning the basics about CRO demands that you understand its importance completely. Until you do, implementing strategies for conversion rate optimization will only be halfhearted. Website owners should pay attention to CRO for a number of reasons. Let us summarize these in three points:

✓ A high CRO results in better return on investment (ROI). Let us not forget that you are paying a hefty amount for large-scale internet advertising and for the upkeep of your website. If this investment yields low return, you are essential incurring a low on marketing expenses. With a high CRO comes a possibility of higher sales, which make for an acceptable ROI.

✓ A high CRO is better than finding more viewers. While it may be easy to increase CRO, it is certainly an uphill task to get more viewers on your page because intense marketing needs to be done for the latter. Therefore, working on improving CRO is more cost-effective than increasing visitors to your page.

✓ A high CRO gives customers what they want. Remember, from the customer's perspective, a high CRO means finding the exact buttons, links, images, and content they want to see on their favorite website. Therefore, CRO is directly linked to customer loyalty and repeat purchases.

4

The Basics of Search Engine Marketing

4. The Basics of Search Engine Marketing

Introduction

If information is the superhighway then, the king of the road is the search engine. The short time in which the internet has become immensely accessible, search engines have become a useful tool. In fact, in the lives of the people, the idea of referring to a reference book or making phone calls to gather information is an anathema. Therefore, the present and the coming generations rely on Bing, Yahoo!, Google, or any other search engine websites to collect knowledge and information. What happens is that the users enter any word in the search bar and the website returns with numerous search results almost instantly. Since this technology is now easily available, the library and the Yellow Page books are starting to look prehistoric.

The giant of the internet, Google, is presently so dominated that it performs more 3.5 billion searches per day. Bing and Yahoo! are the next to follow this giant search engine. It is the dream of every business that it shows up on top of the search result so that it gets the highest marketing through the internet. This is being done nowadays by promoting on Google and other search engines and in return, these businesses get closer to the top result.

If you are looking for a way to rank your webpage higher in the search result, the most basic thing you should do is to increase the number of websites that are connected to your web page. It is crucial to learn about the procedure to analyze the internet traffic via various ways. One way is that you open the website's log files to find out how the viewer found your web page or website. It is important to know the significance of analyzing log files and traffic as these tools can help your webpage reach the top.

What is Search Engine Marketing (SEM)?

If the search engine marketing is done properly and regularly, it can be among the best ways to market your website and attract huge traffic towards it. It is common among the people to ignore the significance of a proper marketing strategy and executing the strategy regularly. This is an avoidable situation and must not be ignored as it holds huge benefits for your business.

To ignore the planning of a marketing strategy means that you are delaying the success of your business and certainly preventing it as well. Therefore, it is vital that you have the understanding and the knowledge of the search engine marketing (SEM) and the different ways of using it. Basically, these methods provide much needed traffic to your business and promote it so that you earn a huge profit.

The definition

Search engine marketing is the process of promoting your website, business or any content by using either paid methods, free methods or a combination of joining both the methods of the search engine optimization (SEO). This result in the increase of your content's ranking in the search engine result pages (SERPs). Short, yet really accurate, this is the basic job of search engine marketers.

Advantages of SEM

Among the many benefits that search engine marketing can provide, cost effectiveness is the major one. This can be demonstrated by using the pay-per-click methods. This method only charges you if a user clicks on your advertisement. Not only does this method let you feature the ads in the search engine result pages, where people can read the ad, but you only have to pay when the user clicks the ad.

Next, if you learn the basics of the SEM, you will start looking for proven techniques and methods to increase your traffic. Every company has a longing for a huge traffic coming to their website. By properly using the SEM methods, you can increase the number of visits to your website so that your business flourishes.

With the passage of time, SEM has out-struck almost every other method used for marketing and promotion. One of the biggest advantages SEM offers is that the costs and expenses applied through the marketing are comparatively less than other means and methods of marketing. There are different SEM offering companies, which have different clients. Whichever company you choose, their costs would be less than what the other modes of marketing offer.

Another big advantage of SEM is that your advertisement would run twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. All you have to do is choose the websites on the internet that you want to have your advertisement. If you wish to have the same days and hourly exposure through the other ways of marketing, your budget would easily be blown out of the window.

Search engine marketing also allows a complete control over your campaign, your audience, and the campaign costs.

Finally, increased traffic means increased promotions, which further means increased sales. When an increased number of people start getting to know about your company or any content on the website, many of these people will start converting into customers and clients. It is highly effective if you execute an email list building strategy.

It is important that whatever you decide should be friendly to your budget at hand. What this means is that if you do not have a large sum of money available, paid advertisement methods should not be considered as an option. Rather the less expensive method, SEO, should be considered. However, search engine optimization has disadvantages as well. Conclusively, after filtering out the techniques that fall under your budget, the pros and cons of each method should be weighed and the best one should be chosen so that you are comfortable with.

Internet marketing: search engine marketing

As mentioned above, search engine marketing is a type of internet marketing that promotes websites by enhancing their visibility in the search result of the search engines (Google, Yahoo!, etc.). The search engine marketing has two categories

- Paid advertising

This type of search engine marketing uses paid reach to attract the visitors. The paid marketing methods (such as the pay-per-click method) provide fast results. However, they are expensive and one must always take a look at the budget before choosing any method.

- Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) uses so-called organic reach so that the website or any content of the client is adjusted and rewritten in order to increase the visibility of that content in the search engine search results.

Paid advertising results are displayed at the top of the SERP, above the organic search results. Paid results can also be displayed on the side, and in the bottom of SERP.

The workings of internet marketing can be summarized into four categories through which the websites get optimized:

Keyword analysis and its research

This step is further categorized into three steps. First, you need to make sure that the website can be included in the search engines according to the proper order. Next step is finding the most relevant and accurate keyword of the website that can sum up the content of the website in just a single word or a phrase. Finally, use that keyword on the website in such a way that it will show up high in the search result and attract an increased amount of internet user traffic.

Progress on the effect on keyword research and analysis is known as the search perception impact. This describes the known impact of a search result, of any brand, on the perception of the consumer. This includes site indexing, meta tags, titles, and the focused keyword. Since searching online for something is the first step to becoming a customer, the search perception impact carves the impression of a brand for each person.

Popularity of the website and saturation

Also known as the amount of website's visibility in the search engines, website saturation can be examined by the number of pages of the website available in the search engines and the number of backlinks that the website has. In this method, it is a requirement that a keyword should be present in the pages, which the people can search for, as this would ensure a high rank in the search result. Many of the search engines make use of the link popularity to rank the different results.

Back-end tools

These tools give data on the visitors of the website and the site itself measures the success of that website. HTML validators and web analytic tools are the common tools used in this step. These tools can be as simple as counting the traffic that is arriving at a website, to tools that deal with log files and to complex tools that are based upon page tagging. These back-end tools deliver the information related to conversions as well. Large companies often combine the usage of several types of tools, so they could be using tools that analyze log files, tag-based investigative tools, and transition-based tools.

The validators check for any invisible parts of the sites, highlight the possible problems and usage issues and then ensure that the site meets the requirements of the W3C. It is a good idea to use more than one spider simulator or HTML validator for these purposes, as each of these reports highlight and test different areas of the website.

Who is tool

This tool discloses the owners of the website. These tools play an important role in providing valuable information regarding the copyright issues and trademark issues of the website.

Paid methods

This is a method that involves the search engine companies to charge fees for including the website on their top search results. This method is also known as paid inclusion and sponsored listing. The products, that are to be advertised, show up on the separate ad-bar of the search engine, or show up at the top of the pages of the search engine results.

With search engine website allowing paid inclusions only, they benefit a little from success. Search engines like Yahoo! support the stance of providing mix paid inclusions to the SEO and SEMs.

The paid method used in search engine marketing includes advertising with search engine advertising programs, that allow users to create sponsored results that are to be displayed in the search engine result pages.

Each search engine has some sort of advertising program, with [Google AdWords](#) and [Bing Ads](#) being the two most commonly used, due to a large number of searches conducted through these two search engines.

When it comes to paid advertising, search engines offer several types of ads, which often include:

Pay-per-click advertising (PPC)

This type of advertising is also called cost-per-click (CPC) advertising and it means that you pay any time someone clicks on your ad shown in the search engine result pages. This type of advertising is most commonly used by the advertisers as it requires payment only after your ad has been able to attract visitors to click on it.

Cost-per-thousand impressions (CPM)

This advertising model is focused on the number of impressions, i.e. the number of times that your ad has been shown. Using this type of advertising you pay for each set of one thousand impressions.

Ad formats

While the text ads appearing in the search engines result pages are the most common type of search engine advertising, there are other ad formats available, which might help you with different types of campaign goals. These include:

- Text ads

- Ad extensions

- Images

- Mobile text or image ads

- App promotion ads

- Videos

- Product listing ads

The position of search engine marketing today

Every business believes and trusts in the potential of SEM. Since the previous decade, growth in search engine marketing has been immense, beating every other industry. As a large number of internet users keep utilizing the internet as their primary option, in finding the right company for their needs and wants, SEM will continue to prevail as the forefront leaders of marketing.

Businesses have realized that the acquisition of cost is acceptable through SEM, causing an effective increase in the resources through savings in the marketing budgets.

In case you have missed out in making a proper and formal search engine marketing strategy in the first place, or you have left some filler in the marketing budget used for SEM purpose, it is suggested that you rethink the strategy and consider the benefits that would lead your business and company on the mountains of success. All of this is essential, as the business needs to create a strong effective presence in the eyes of the search engines, especially Google. Carefully look into all the requirements and updates given by the search engines and organize a strategy accordingly.

Paid reach is a frequently used method in the marketing strategy by a lot of companies nowadays. However, the search engine advertising programs are available to anyone, and they have become an important tool in developing and growing small businesses as well. In a modern business world where being positioned at the top of the result pages has become a signal of success, you need to do your best to increase the visibility of your website in relation to the keywords that are associated with your business.

Since using organic reach, i.e. SEO, can be long-term effort with lots of obstacles on the way, paid reach has become a simple alternative, an easy solution to get at the top instantly. Besides being ranked at the top of the search results, paid advertising also has other benefits, which include:

Attract more clients

The main benefit of search engine advertising is the possibility to reach more clients, which are the users you would not be able to attract using organic reach only. This helps you expand your market as your business becomes visible to the new customers.

Target the ads

The possibility of targeting the users is a huge benefit of advertising program, as you will be able to completely set the criteria according to which the ads will be displayed in the search engines. Google AdWords allows the following targeting options:

- Keyword targeting

- Location and language targeting

- Device targeting

Manage the budget

Using paid advertising program allows you to be in charge of your campaign, by setting up the budget and the time period that budget is to be spent. This way, you will only spend the budget you have planned to assign to this type of campaign. As the campaign runs, you will be able to analyze the budget spending, and to adjust it accordingly.

Track conversions

Each advertising program offers a platform for managing the campaign, which also provides the features for evaluating the performance of the campaign. Therefore, you can track conversions and make sure that your campaign is really successful. You can also monitor traffic and analyze how you can improve the strategy to yield best results.

Search engine optimization and search engine marketing

On a broader perspective, search engine marketing is a wider category that includes search engine optimization as well. As mentioned earlier, SEM includes both, organic search results and paid search results. Organic results are entirely based on search engine optimization, whereas paid search results include using advertising programs, such as Google AdWords and Bing Ads.

Most of the time, SEM goes with paid advertisement with Bing Ads or Google AdWords. Pay-per-click advertising benefits the advertisers as potential customers can directly reach the company through one simple click. Advertising, article submissions and SEO are important factors when talking about paid advertisements. For both, SEM and SEO, a keyword analysis is conducted. However, it is not important that they have to be done at the same time.

SEO and SEM require different ways of monitoring and upgrading. Upgrading should be done on a frequent basis, in order to be able to perform an analysis on the previous practices.

In some cases, SEM term is used to denote PPC advertisement, so some advertisers identify SEM with PPC, with SEO being a separate type of marketing.

The importance of SEM

It is a known fact that search engine traffic is highly targeted. This is primarily because of the potential loyal buyers who consider your B2B offerings through different search engines. Since consumers are hunting for services and products on their own, they are fully predisposed to consider your marketing ads and messages, which meet their views on the Internet. Currently,

no other marketing type can offer a qualified and effective prospect than this. Conclusively, here is what differentiates search engine marketing from the different types of promotion and advertisement:

User-originated behaviors

Search engine marketing is an overall result of what is concluded from the users. The visitors from different directories and search engines voluntarily checked your business rather than considering any other competitors. One of the reasons why the internet users landed on your website was primarily because they were impressed by the offerings they saw.

Non-intrusive behaviors

Always keep in mind: SEM is a non-intrusive approach used in marketing. Most of the advertisements, offline and online, always interrupt the consumer behavior. For example, when the users are surfing across the internet, they may encounter different pop-ups that are used as ads. On the other hand, reading a newspaper, the ads section dominates the mind of the users, forcing them to leave their reading in order to look at the ad. Through SEM, the users on the internet actively search for your information, services and products that were mentioned in the ad they saw. The ads they see in the search engines are relevant to the search query and their goal is to satisfy the need of the user. Therefore, instead of being intrusive and presenting a distraction, search engine ads are helpful and provide relevant information.

Summary

The internet has rapidly developed since the past decade. From e-commerce shopping to connecting to people across the shores, everything is done under the blessing of the internet. As a vital part of the internet, search engines have allowed businesses to do wonders in their niche industry through essential factors like search engine optimization and search engine marketing. Search engine marketing (SEM) is the profound way of promoting and advertising businesses over the internet. Through different techniques and tricks, it is important for businesses to adopt this in order to add success in their business. SEM comes with mainly advantages, if the marketing is done in the right manner.

One must never delay a marketing strategy, as it is a known fact that right marketing brings much needed success for every business. Every search engine has its own requirements when speaking about SEM. Google is the current king of search engines, leaving Bing and Yahoo! behind. There are different methods and ways to earn high ranks in search engines. Every search engine requires different SEM techniques as well. You should follow all the guidelines and recommendations in order to ensure success for your business.

5

The Basics of Social Media Marketing

5. The Basics of Social Media Marketing

Introduction

Until just a few years ago, social media was known as a domain for school-going kids. It was looked upon as a set of forums that were used by youngsters to socialize, share personal details, and discus the topics of their interest. With parents wary and instructors strict about its usage, what we today proudly call our business partners, were previously considered a nuisance.

The sudden rise to power of social media had every business and for that matter, adult, taken aback. With a successful business website, most online companies were happily dealing with customers on a daily basis from a single touchpoint. However, when social media roared its head high, the possibility of unlimited touchpoints baffled even the most expert of businessmen.

Today, business without social media is not even an option. The effect this channel has on how information is received, perceived and shared is profound. So much so, that even if a business wants to stay out of social media, it just cannot bear the risk of losing all those customers who are present on it. This move, however, has not taken the channels themselves by surprise.

Over the years leading up to this change, social media companies made sure they provide everything on their websites that was desired by people. Meeting friends, engaging in conversations, looking for businesses, finding restaurants or even recommendations for the best products, you name it and it is there. Therefore, the pull towards social media increased tremendously when the services they offered started to expand.

One such service that channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn started to provide was customized and intimate pages to represent a business and connect with its customers. Using this as a springboard, early adopters of social media started promoting their products, engaged customers in lively discussions, built a brand and perception and even scored orders and repeat purchases.

Since social media offer a direct and personal platform to connect with a company, customers are more keen on seeing a business on these forums rather than visiting a website which is why social media has allowed so many benefits to modern businesses, regardless the type of the activity and the target audience in question.

It is estimated that over 70% of internet users are present on at least one social network, which means that a majority of users can in fact be reached through social media.

What is Social Media Marketing (SMM)?

Social media marketing (SMM) has become a buzzword in today's world. With the usage of social media at an all-time high, successful businesses have shifted quite a chunk of their promotional load to online platforms that are visited by thousands of users on a daily basis. No marketing and promotional strategy is now complete without a sizeable budget and room for social media marketing. What is SMM?

Social media marketing is a type on online marketing that is geared towards social websites and forums. Such marketing efforts are made to achieve communication and branding goals because each of these is at the heart of a promotional campaign. In other words, when a business has set up a page on social websites with all its details and products, it wants to attract attention and traffic to it. SMM is the method employed to do so.

Social media marketing has many similarities with search marketing. The defining factor about search marketing is the discovery and realization of new stories, ideas and news. With SMM in full swing, the same can be achieved when businesses put up new and interesting stories, catchy images and content that is full of needed information.

Hence, SMM is only another form of search marketing that has been introduced ever since social media appeared. With a refreshing take on the latter, SMM has developed new ways to market the same products, using channels of communication that are visited by the audience more than any search engine website.

Therefore, content creation is at the heart of every SMM campaign. Companies looking to market themselves on social media create interesting content that they hope users will like and share, generating a stream of communication. This results in, what experts call, the electronic

word of mouth (eWoM). The eWoM includes any statement, perception, comment or like and dislike generated for the content posted on social forums. This is taken to be a signal of approval and recommendation, or disapproval in case the reaction to the product or service is negative. Social media enabled this comments to be widely accessible to social media users, which is why this can be both an advantage or a disadvantage for a business struggling to create its reputation.

Once the stream of communication has spread far and wide, a result that is imminent when using social media, the marketing efforts of the business are trusted by the audience because they seem to be coming from independent third parties instead of the business itself. Hence, such marketing becomes 'earned' and not 'paid', something that resonates very well with the ever-so-suspicious customer of today.

Social media platforms
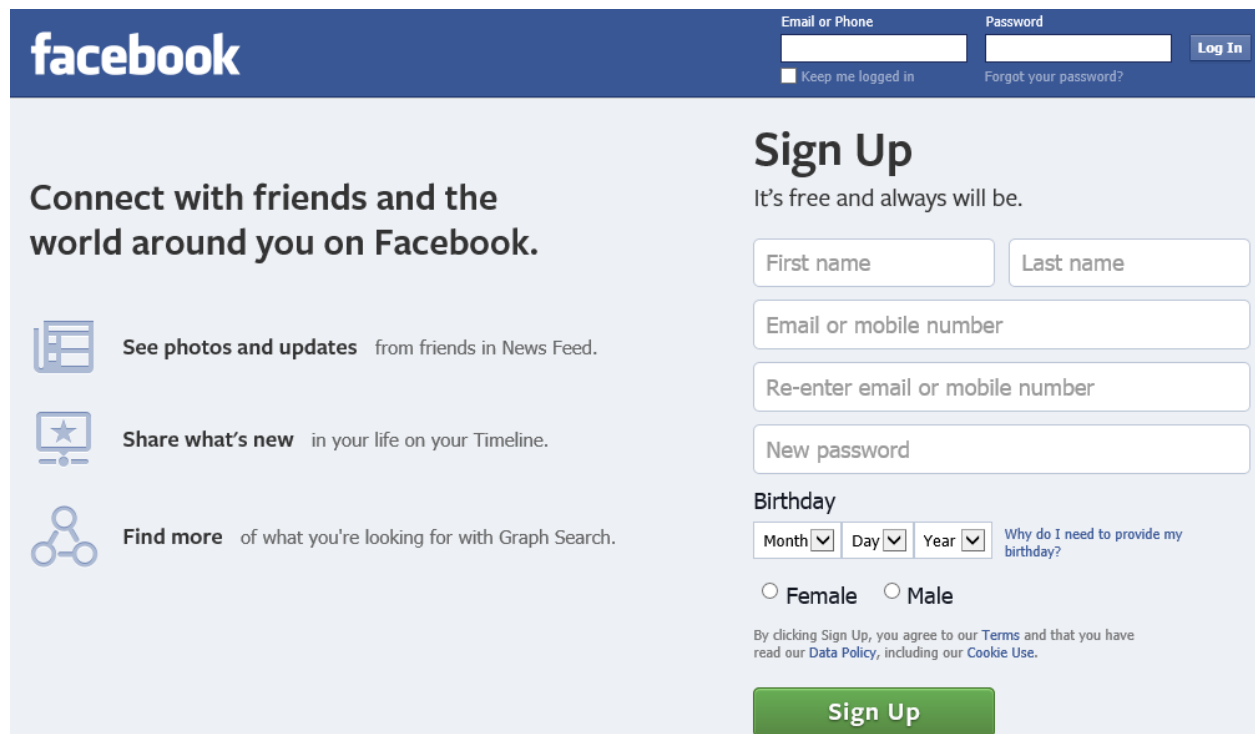
Social media is a broad term. Within this broad definition of social websites, we can distinguish social forums that are very different from each other, and so the way businesses are marketed on them is starkly different as well. SMM has two main outlets, one being social media websites and secondly we have smartphone devices.

The number of social media websites on the internet today is surprising. From several that existed some 10 years ago, hundreds have sprung up to attract viewers belonging to different lifestyles, having particular interests. Before a social media marketer targets marketing efforts on online forums, they need to be fully aware of the various platforms that exist in this category.

Some of the most famous ones are:

Facebook

Facebook is one of the oldest and the most popular social networks around. The platform has a very casual and upbeat feel to it, where users interact, look for products and services and recommend the same to the list of friends and family they have added.

Marketing on Facebook has proved to be quite effective. Over the years, many businesses have sprung up solely because they made a Facebook fan page and started to market their products and services. Therefore, SMM on Facebook has led to the growth of online businesses that have become successful even without any brick and mortar presence.

On a particular Facebook fan page, a business can use different techniques to optimize the page in order to appease visitors and create a fan following. Facebook also offers a paid advertising service to businesses that allow them to choose the image and text that goes in the advertisement. Using the pay-per-click strategy, a business is charged whenever the ad is clicked on.

Twitter

This social media marketing platform is all about gaining a solid base of followers. Twitter is a social website that lets users post or 'tweet' small updates related to new product launches, sales, and upcoming events or simply wish followers a good day to ignite a thread of conversation. The 're-tweet' option is the perfect excuse to share a positive review from a customer.
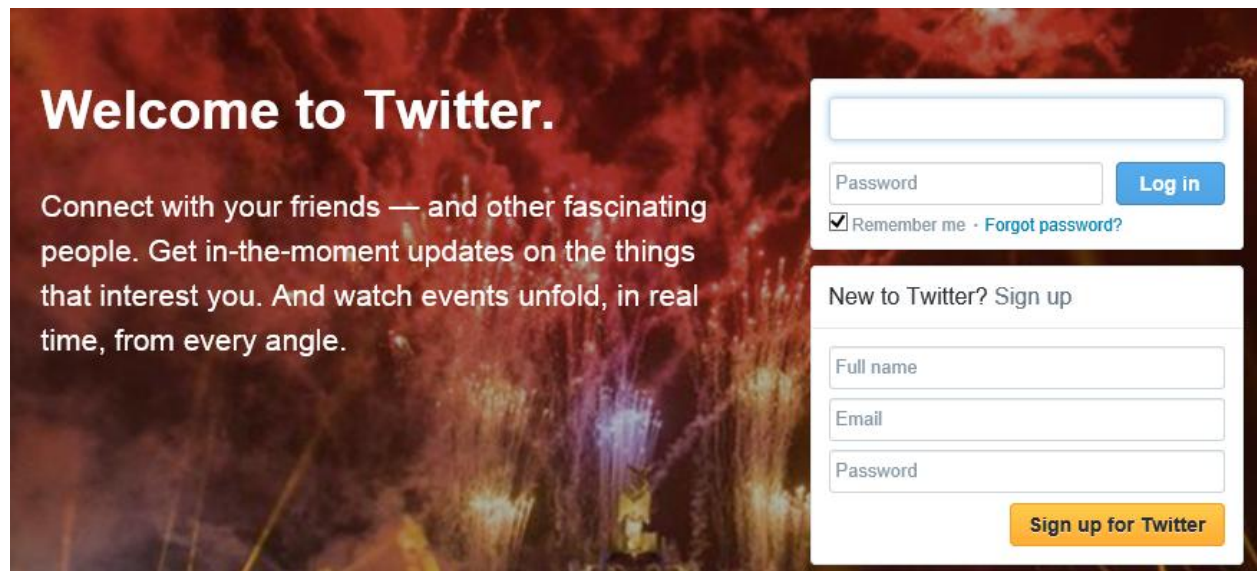
The entire purpose behind social media marketing with Twitter is to initiate dialogue with your fans. Because many businesses become alienated from their market, Twitter is present to counter just that. The more you communicate, the better you will connect with the market. In addition, Twitter helps you provide quick replies, which can help you improve you customer support. Like Facebook, Twitter also allows companies to advertise through this social media platform.

Google+

A strong competitor in the social media market, Google+ has been customized so that it provides many new features for SMM that other websites do not. The possibility to integrate several Google services, such as Google Maps, is perfect for integrating those into the promotion of your business. Google+ also has a fun and casual approach to sharing pictures, videos and links. The website also has a feature called Google+ circles that lets businesses segment their entire market into various groups.
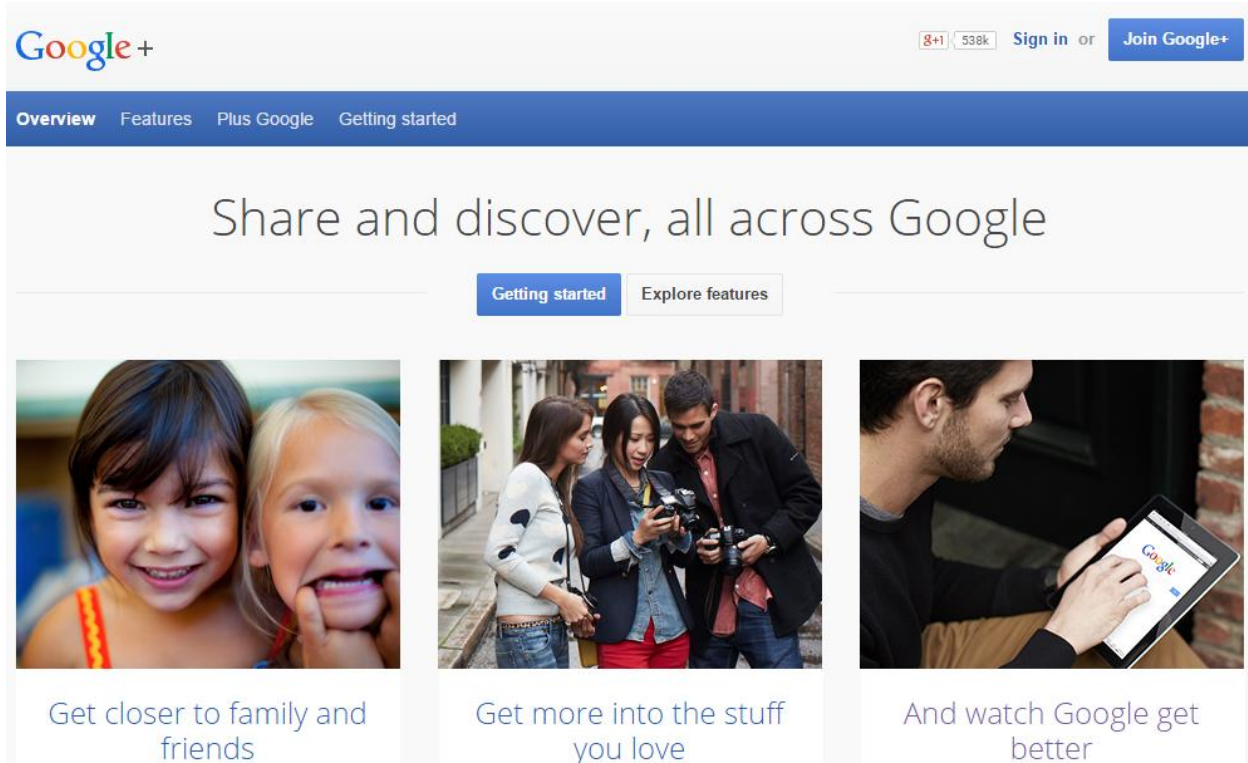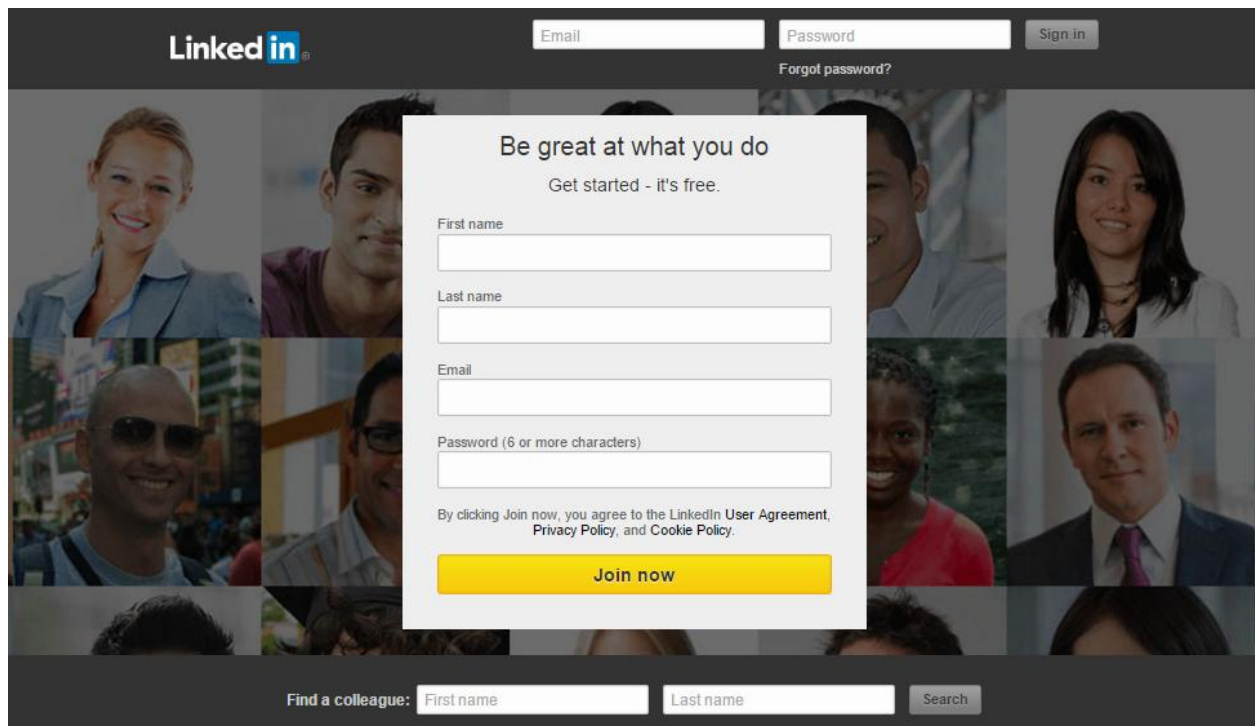
SMM can then be targeted to each group separately. For instance, if you want to offer discounts only to selected fans, who have made the most purchases, Google+ circles will be useful to you. Similarly, Google+ communities allow groups of people to communicate and interact through a single community focused on particular interest.

Hangout is another versatile feature of this website. With Hangout, a business can host online video conferences and tutorials to keep users interested, to introduce or promote a new product or service, to announce events, etc.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social website that attracts business people from various industries. This forum is perfect for initiating a conversation with people from the same industry and post content rich articles that will be understood by like-minded people. There are many features like LinkedIn groups, that help you segment the target market and attract them with different content, and LinkedIn profile, where customers can give testimonials and in effect, recommend your business to others.

YouTube

YouTube needs no introduction. Being the number one channel for video communication, businesses have taken advantage of the various audio and visual features of YouTube to create content rich videos and target them at customers and fans. YouTube videos can also be posted on Facebook and Twitter to double the SMM effect.

'How-to' videos are a tried and trusted way to gain following and appear in the top ranks on the website.

Foursquare

Foursquare is a location based social media website. It is an ideal way for local businesses to register and claim a location spot, where customers can later check in, when they visit this restaurant, café, salon etc. The check in status is then visible to friends and family who find this enough encouragement to try the new service.

Moreover, these businesses can offer discounts and reward points for a certain number of check ins. Being available as an app on smartphones, customers can post real-time reviews if they like the services, thus spreading positive word of mouth.
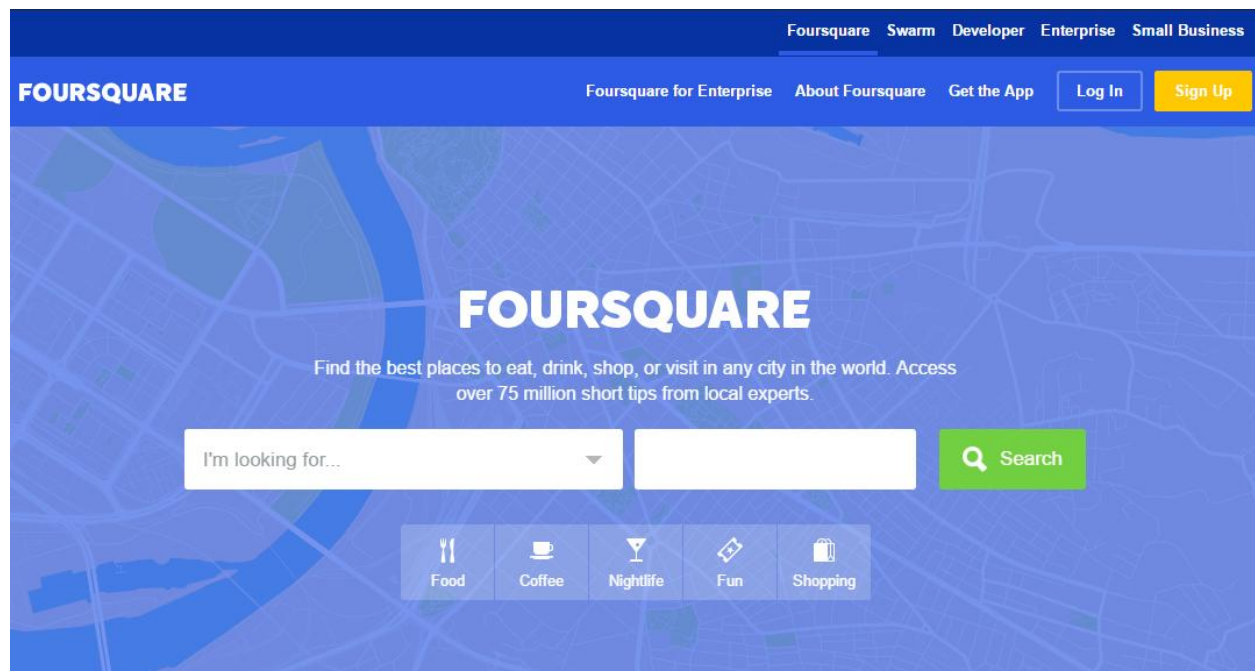
The usage of platforms is also affected by their compatibility on mobile devices. Smartphones and tablets have replaced the traditional desktops and laptops in the last decade or so. These mobile devices are now fitted with technologies that enable users to browse through the internet, look through social content, pick advertisements and communicate with friends on various forums. With these devices, social media marketing has definitely found an avenue to attract attention and retain it using efforts that are customized and tailored for smart phones and tablets.

New applications are available every few months that let smartphone users explore social media content with a lot of convenience.

Social media marketing strategy

Defining social media strategy is a process that is quite unique for each company, as each company has distinctive goals and the methods that are to be used in the realization of those goals. There are many steps in a social media marketing strategy that need to be followed in order to ensure the success of the strategy.

While every social website has a plan of its own when it comes to using its space, the general process followed by online marketers remains the same.

In terms of these steps, traditional marketing and online marketing, both may have a lot of commonalities. However, in no way is one exchangeable for the other because the dynamics of marketing changes as soon as it is taken to the virtual world.

Step 1: Have a plan

You must have an idea by now that social media is an expansive field. No longer does this term refer to only Facebook and Twitter. A lot of other websites have entered the market, making marketing rather challenging. Therefore, it is imperative that an online marketer starts with a plan in mind.

Some basic elements of planning include answering these questions: Who is my audience? What do I want to promote? How will I promote it? What tools will I use? How long will the campaign be active? What does the market prefer to see in terms of advertising?

When you answer all of these questions, you will have a list of goals, tasks and resources you are going to use when developing a social media marketing strategy.

Step 2: Develop goals

Without having concrete goals, a social media marketing campaign will be incomplete, indecisive and highly vague. The goals vary depending on the type of business you want to promote, but there are some goals that are commonly defined by online marketers, and those include:

- Increasing conversions

- Raising the levels of brand awareness

- Increasing website traffic

- Initiating dialogue to bridge the communication gap between the company and customers

- Building positive associations with the brand

- Imparting a sense of belonging with excellent customer service

- Improving the return on investment for every dollar spent on SMM

Step 3: Choose a platform

As said, there are numerous social networks, that are available to the online marketers, but it is neither possible nor cost-effective to be present on all of them. You have to choose among the available platforms those that will help you reach your target audience, and thus be most productive and effective when conducting social media marketing strategy. The most popular social platforms available for SMM have been discussed in detail above. Various others are also present online such as Yelp, Instagram, Reddit, Pinterest, etc.

Each of these platforms has different features to offer, and each of these features fulfill a specific marketing goal. Therefore, the platform you choose for your social media campaign will depend on what your goals are and how much of your target market uses the particular social website. For instance, if all you want to do is alert the target market with regular updates about discounts, sales and events, Twitter is your best bet to do so.

However, if on the other hand, you want to do large scale SMM with images, video clips and content optimization, then Facebook and Google+ will be the best picks.

Step 4: Implement the plan

Once you have picked one or several platforms to which you are going to focus your social media activity, the next step is to implement the plan you have already made. If your strategy is based on paid advertisements, create a short and interesting ad, that will go viral. If you want

to do content optimization, get interest by creating quality articles and promoting them on social media.

Also, remember no matter which platform you use, being present and involved in the target audience's life is what makes them remember you. Hence, always stay in touch with regular posts even if there is nothing new happening on your end. Moreover, making use of free, as well as paid marketing techniques, is the best way to make sure word of your campaign reaches far and wide.

Step 5: Monitor and control

When you advertise on Facebook, the website gives you access to monitor the success of the campaign with the help of bar charts, pie graphs and line graphs. You are told how many people viewed your advertisement, how many clicked on it and who shared your status update with others. Such insights make monitoring and controlling the various aspects of SMM quite easy.

Changes to the campaign can also be made if you know how well social media users are receiving it. For instance, if you observe that your page likes were more with your previous ad, it is a clear sign that the new one needs some improvement. Changing small aspects like placement and airtime can significantly alter results.

Besides monitoring paid social media campaigns, you can use web analytics tools to monitor traffic from social media, or you can use tools that record your social media activity, and enable you to evaluate the performance of your strategy.

Some social networks, such as Facebook, provide their own insights, which enable page owners to assess the performance of the activity on the page. Some of the data included in the Facebook insights are page likes, post reach, engagement, etc.
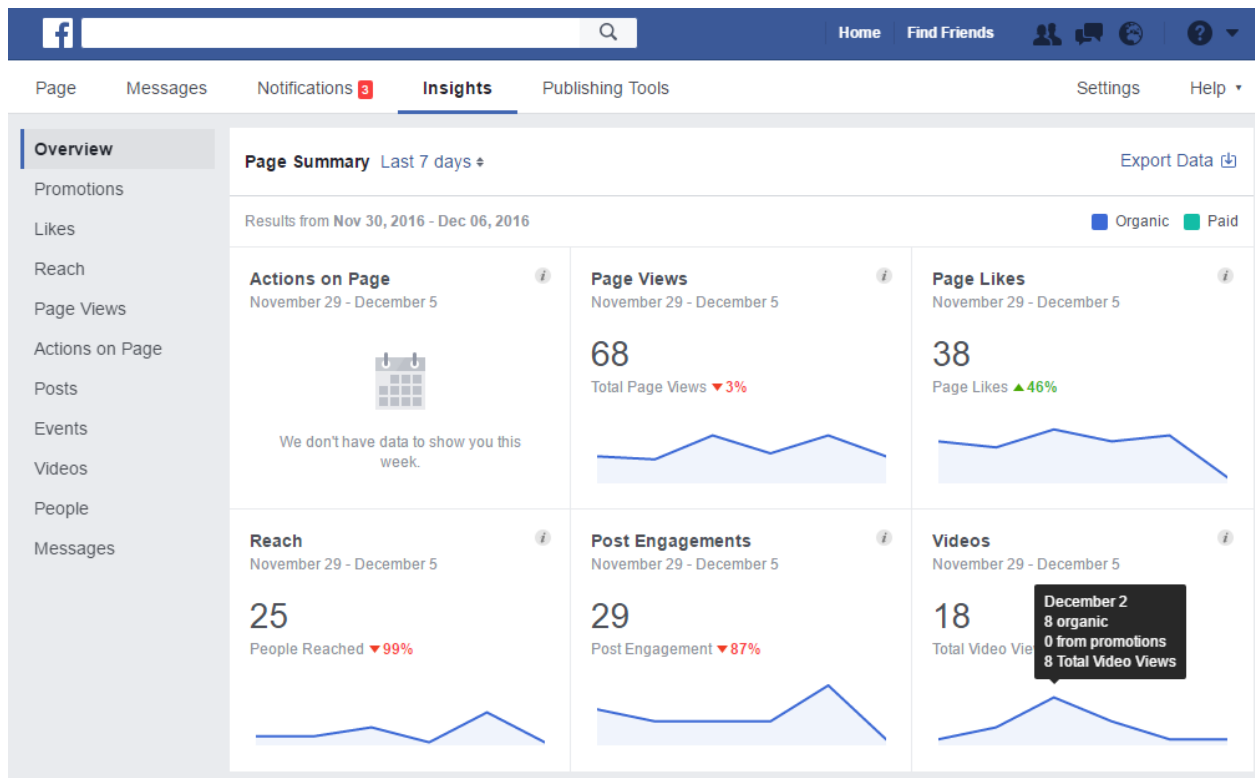
Google+ also offers insights. Although there is less data, it still helps you evaluate the visibility and engagement on your Google+ page.
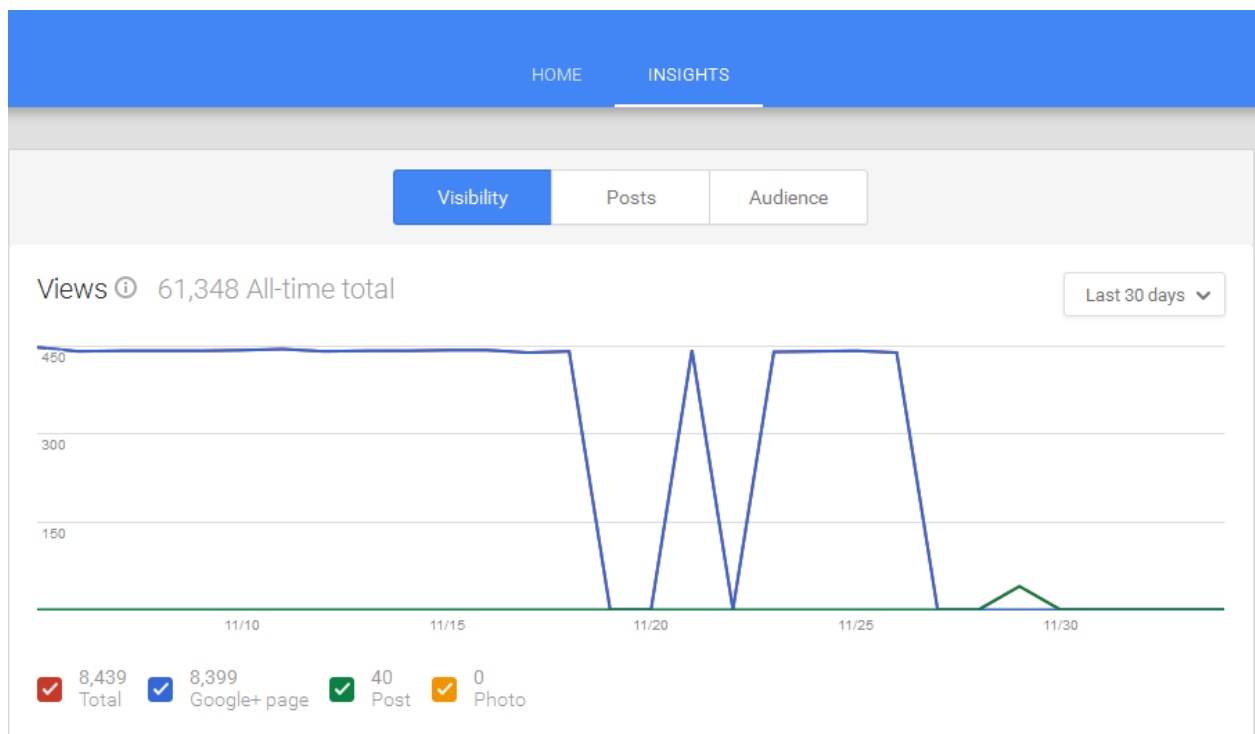
Benefits of social media marketing

There are many perceptions and schools of thought regarding social media marketing. For some it is a fad that they hope will 'die' down soon, while others feel it is a learning curve, of which you should be taking advantage. Nonetheless, it is unanimously agreed that social media marketing is in the spotlight, and it has become a part of modern business. Hence, it makes sense to benefit from it.

Compared to traditional marketing, SMM yields many benefits that should be cashed in on because marketing is a constant, no matter which industry, field or business you belong to.

Extensive surveys and studies carried out by experts in SMM, like Hubspot and Social Media Examiner, reveal some convincing statistics about online marketing in general and social media marketing in particular. One set of results showed that a significant 90% of marketers said that social media is important to their businesses. 63% of marketers are using social media for 6 hours or more and 39% for 11 or more hours weekly.

Therefore, social media marketing is an effort that will result in multiple benefits for your business, and some of those benefits include the following:

Increase brand recognition and loyalty

When marketers pitch their ideas and products on social media websites, they expose their business to an audience that they would have otherwise missed. From the young to the old, every age group is now on social websites and prefers to do product searches on these platforms.

Hence, when this audience sees your services and marketing efforts, it starts to recognize you. Eventually, by interacting with your social followers, you establish a relationship of recognition and loyalty, and this will have a positive influence on your branding and promotion.

Make use of the reach of the internet

There is no other marketplace as resourceful and expansive as the internet. Moreover, there are hardly any websites, that are more visited than social ones, which is why you will benefit from such exposure.

Increase conversion

With every post, picture and update, you increase the chance of converting more passive viewers to active customers. In the physical world, getting in touch with your market every few minutes is not only costly, it is literally impossible.

Reach more people

Without SMM, the people visiting your website are either those who have repeatedly purchased from you before or those who manage to find your website in the search engine result pages. On social media, however, every new update is liked or shared, which increases the chances of attracting those who had never even heard about your business and who would not be able to find your business on their own.

Reduced cost of marketing

SMM is cheaper compared to traditional means of promotion. Where it takes more than a few hundred dollars to erect a billboard with your products on it, it only takes $10-$15 for a small business to create an advertisement on Facebook and no charge at all for creating a business page.

Take advantage of different formats

Social networks allow the usage of different formats of content, which allow you to create different and unique strategies to promote your company. You can share text posts, images, videos, you can organize online promotions, competitions, you can ask questions or get feedback, etc. There are lots of different opportunities to shape your approach to get the most out of your social media activity.

Available to everyone

Social networks are available to every business, regardless the size and the industry. Social networks are also free to use, to create profiles or pages and all you need is time to invest into managing social media accounts and implementing social media marketing strategy you have planned.

Summary

Social media marketing is definitely a creative and out-of-the box alternative to physical and traditional marketing of a business. Be it an infant business, or one that has been around for

decades, an efficient and effective SMM strategy can do wonders to increase fan following and the conversion rate for your website.

Therefore, if your business has still not taken the social leap, it is high time that it did. Keeping in mind the rules and determinants of this marketing tactic, your business can be given a new and refreshed feel, an opportunity to explore the benefits of social interaction and communication for your business promotion.

6

The Basics of Search Engine Optimization

6. The Basics of Search Engine Optimization

Introduction

There is nothing worse than creating a website but failing to reach its potential users and customers. This dilemma plagues a large chunk of website search marketing industry today; this is where SEO comes in. SEO is the essential practice of drastically improving the performance of your website by attracting increased inbound traffic from organic, non-paid search engine result pages or SERPs.

SEO, in today's world, is a vital concept. However, it is often subjected to various misconceptions, and unrealistic ideas about what it can and cannot achieve. There are various forms of SEO that are in practice today and these include white hat, black hat and grey hat search engine optimization. These primarily differentiate based on the kind of techniques that are used. Some are used while functioning within the bounds of permissible rules and regulations while others work by being in direct conflict with the given guidelines.

It is very important to realize that real-time results of SEO and not to be confused or swayed by unrealistic ideas of gains. SEO requires a great deal of investment and time. It is a lengthy and an expensive process and it is not suitable for all websites. This is of great significance, knowing when to use SEO and when to use other mediums for rankings.

SEO industry is extremely competitive today. Search engines, owing to the past manipulations, have now resorted to using extensively complex and strict algorithms for ranking, and for effective SEO, it is important to conform to these algorithms. Significant search engines like Google, Yahoo! and Bing now incorporate these algorithms and work along the strict rules of non-disclosure in order to avoid breaches in the security and manipulation of loopholes by webmasters.

Essentials of search engine optimization

Search Engine Optimization or SEO refers to the most essential and the most crucial aspect of establishing your website's visibility on significant search engines, which function along the

lines of non-payment, natural search results. This is in contrast to the paid-for ads that show up under search listings. With the advent of time, search engines are becoming increasingly sensitive to content quality and relevance of the information provided. Unethical stuffing of keywords, plagiarism, and buying links is rigorously barred and penalized.

Search engine optimization is based on a few, specifically required elements, which should, under all circumstances, be taken care of in order to achieve true SEO. SEO includes the four-tier concept of, on-page SEO, SEO content writing, and code optimization, and link building. It boils down to providing a good user experience, natural and well-written content, natural inclusion of keywords in the main body of the text and the overall provision of relevant, original information.

Search engine optimization elements

Search engine optimization, or SEO, functions along four vital processes or elements:

- On-page/On-site SEO

- SEO Content Writing

- Code Optimizing

- Inbound Links

On-page SEO

This is also sometimes known as on-site SEO. This essentially consists of techniques related to the improvement of the layout of the homepage and other important pages of the website. The central concerns that are dealt with in on-page SEO or on-site SEO include headings, subheadings, page titles, content display, organization of the written content, and internal link configuration. This process also includes the usage of keywords, optimization of written content, optimization of images, etc.

The goal of on-page SEO is to improve the on-site elements that are important for ranking, as those are taken into account by search engines when they index and rank websites that are to be displayed in the search engine result pages.

SEO content writing

Content has become the central aspect of SEO, as search engines want to provide only the best results to the search engine users, and they have come to conclusion that having amazing and original content is one of the aspects to prove website's quality. It is, quite literally, the most stressed-over factor of the SEO industry nowadays.

There are so many myths regarding this rather simple concept of writing natural and relevant content. These myths include a mythical word count, the phantom keyword density and many more. SEO content writing is so often, and so conveniently marred, by unethical practices of immoral stuffing of keywords to gain higher visibility on search engines that the entire concept of SEO crumbles. So often, the merit of an original, well-written content is tainted by these practices, it has become almost a novelty to find good, well-written content.

Content is the foundation of search engine optimization, as well as of lead generation and email marketing. Content helps you enhance your campaign and use a subtle approach to address to your potential customers. Unlike promotional campaigns, content writing is focused on the readers and the possibility of solving a problem by providing relevant information.

There are many different content formats. The choice of type of content to implement in your internet marketing strategy depends on your business needs and on your target audience, as you want to produce content that will generate best outcome among your target group. Here are some ideas on types of content that are available to you:

- Articles
- Case studies
- Checklists
- E-books
- Infographics
- Podcasts
- Slideshares
- Surveys
- Templates

- Videos

- Webinars

Here are some tips to help you in creating quality website content:

- ✓ Provide attention-grabbing headlines

- ✓ Use consistent voice

- ✓ Keep the writing mistakes free

- ✓ Pay attention to the formatting

- ✓ Add call-to-action buttons on prominent places on the page

Having great content helps you improve you search engine optimization efforts and appeal to your customers. This will help you generate quality leads and improve the reputation among the website visitors. Great content should fulfill a need, answer a question, inform and educate. Content writing is also an excellent foundation for social media marketing, which will result in increase in shares, leading to higher traffic volume. Ultimately, your efforts will result in increasing brand awareness on the online market, which is an amazing way to boost your business and dominate search results.

Code optimization

Code optimization refers to re-setting of your website HTML. The benefits of code optimization lead to a two-fold benefit system. Firstly, the website takes less long to load. This is often the biggest factor, which affects the performance and the incoming traffic on a website.

Secondly, code optimization enables search engines to easily understand and comprehend the content given on your website. The higher understandability and accessibility rate of the content leads to better visibility on search engines. The search engines can easily adapt and apply the algorithms on the given content, as there is no hindrance caused by useless code cluttering.

Inbound links

Websites thrive on link building and/or link development. This is important part of SEO, as links are considered to be a vote of trust, which means that a website that has a lot of links pointing to it must have done something to deserve those links.

Yet, there are similarities to the dilemma of SEO content writing, torn between quantity and quality. The best link development is based on good quality, informative content. In direct contrast to this is the onslaught of useless, inexpensive links, which offer little or no relevance to the website. Their only purpose is to clutter the website with several links, giving the false impression of authority and short-lived relevance.

Good, relevant content leads to establishing the true authority of your website, which ultimately leads to obtaining a good position on the search engines listings and other websites naturally want to link back to you. Earning natural, non-paid links is the goal of true search engine optimization. An effective SEO will lead to inbound links who have an editorial right to be there.

Origin and history of search engine optimization

The basic, underlying concept of SEO, or search engine optimization, began tentatively in the mid-1990s. The very first search engines, after the webmasters submitted the names and the URLs of their websites, began scanning and indexing the websites with the help of 'spiders', which served the purpose of 'crawling' a page. These essentially worked like scanning agent. The spiders skimmed through the content of the website and scanned the links given on the website. All this information was stored and submitted for indexing.

Once the spider downloaded the essentials of any given webpage, it was sorted and analyzed on the search engine's own server. This sorting and analysis was then forwarded to the indexer, which, in turn, extracted and focused on the important details of the content, like word count, keyword density, quality of the links provided, etc.

First ever algorithms used by search engines

Today, search engines incorporate and use sophisticated, highly sensitive algorithms to identify and screen the best, high quality content and links given on the websites. The early versions of algorithms, though, functioned primarily based on the data provided by webmasters. This information included Meta tags, which often led to the inaccurate representation of the actual content of the website. This often led to misconstrued results. Therefore, in the beginning, search engines system was often breached due to these weaknesses and, therefore, irrelevant links were added to the search pages listings as a result. Back then, it was much easier to manipulate the search engines algorithms to obtain higher search engine rankings.

Present-day algorithms: Non-disclosure

The constant manipulation, as expected, hit the quality of the search engines. Search engines relied on webmasters to provide truthful representation of their content. However, it only led to a great level of link manipulation. This eventually created the need to develop stricter, more refined mathematical algorithms. The search engines strove to eliminate the need to rely on thinly veiled concepts like keyword density, which could be easily manipulated and used against the policies of search engine listings.

Search engines now function on extremely complex ranking systems and work along strict rules of keeping the algorithms under wraps. Google, Bing, and Yahoo! are known for not revealing the specifics of their current algorithms. By the year 2004, several search engines adopted a number of undisclosed complex factors to their ranking systems in order to avoid link and rank manipulation and false representation.

Three types of SEO

Based on the different approaches and results, there are three different types of SEO. These include:

- White hat SEO

- Black hat SEO

- Grey hat SEO

White hat SEO

White hat SEO relates to the use of techniques and approaches, which are within the acceptable bounds of search engine rules and regulation. White hat SEO, as the name suggests, functions along purely the rightful means and do not over-step the confines of search engine algorithms, guidelines and policies.

The techniques used in white hat SEO include writing high quality, informative and original content. The content is well written, lucid, and interesting, and it avoids shortcuts like plagiarism. The keywords are used naturally and wherever required. There is no haphazard throwing-around of keywords and irregular high keyword density. Other techniques used include HTML code optimization, better structuring of the content and good, quality link building based on content and relevance.

White hat SEO leads to a gradual but steady and a permanent standing in the search engine rankings, while strictly following guidelines and recommendations provided by search engines.

Black hat SEO

Black hat SEO, as the name suggests quite clearly, refers to the use of conflicting techniques, which are quick shortcuts to gaining high search rankings and links. Black hat SEO thrives on misrepresentation and manipulation, as it mainly targets the weaknesses and the loopholes in the algorithms of search engines. These techniques and methods are in unswerving clash with the rules and regulations of free-and-fair search engine optimization.

The techniques used in black hat SEO include providing spam links, giving the false impression of a highly authoritative and highly relevant website. Black hat SEO amasses several useless links in order to build links, while no thought is given to the quality of the links. Other techniques employed in black hat SEO are high keyword density and keyword stuffing. The content quality is severely tampered with, keywords are interjected throughout the text leading to haphazard, choppy, and meaningless content.

Black hat SEO leads to quick but short-lived search engine rankings, and it can be penalized by search engines.

Grey hat SEO

Another interesting kind of SEO is the grey hat SEO. This occurs where the realms of white hat and black hat SEO overlap and merge. This type of SEO functions by incorporating techniques, which go undetected by search engine algorithms. However, they profusely focus on improving search engine listings and rankings only. The focus is not on producing well-written and original content at all.

Mistaken belief about SEO

There is often a lot of misunderstanding regarding what SEO can truly achieve. There are many unanswered questions, ambiguous hopes and, more often than not, unrealistic expectations attached to the results of SEO. There are limitations and gains in SEO and it is important to understand what they really mean and entail. It is necessary to realize that SEO can only achieve what is realistically possible. Attributing SEO and its results to unrealistic, magical proportions is often a recurrent problem.

There is a great level of subjectivity when it comes to SEO. Often webmasters and content developers complain that SEO does not deliver according to what it boasts of. SEO does not claim to be magic and it does not function in the concrete world of direct and equal action and reaction. That being said, it is vital to clear misconceptions about what SEO can truly achieve and what it cannot achieve.

What SEO can and cannot do

SEO can and will most assuredly lead to better user experience. It will increase the user-friendliness of your website. However, it will not make your website completely and undeniably irresistible to search engines, so you cannot pin unrealistic hopes of high ranks immediately.

SEO thrives on good and extensive research. If you have spent a considerable amount of time, researching and highlighting the most apt keywords, and you have used them intelligently and

naturally throughout the content body of your website, SEO will improve the rankings of your website slowly and steadily over the period of a few months, even a year. However, this will not lead to the immediate soaring of your website to the highest ranks within a few weeks. SEO will not lead to a sudden and drastic improvement.

SEO functions on extensive planning and it is a costly process. Do not be under the impression that SEO will be an inexpensive process, which will incorporate the use of regular, free directory submissions. Even though SEO is not part of paid advertising, it still requires assets to be invested in the realization of SEO strategy. You might need to hire experts or assistance to help you with content writing or code optimization, which will require payment. However, even if you implement SEO strategy on your own, you will need time to spend in performing different SEO tasks, which can again be costly.

SEO Disclaimers

There is no secret 'keyword density' that will alleviate all your problems and suddenly make your content visible in all search engines. There is no secret 'word count' that the search engines love and fall for every time.

All content structuring, keyword density and word count varies from one subject to the next. The only goal is to make the content sound interesting, readable, and understandable. The goal is to make the content likable by readers while also optimizing it for search engine robots.

Off-site SEO

There is more to SEO than just keyword density, word count, and inbound links. It is almost undeniable, the kind of power that social media now has over the entire web, the marketing industry today and the global population.

Effective SEO, in today's world, is literally impossible without the inclusion of social media channels and link building with off-site channels. These off-site channels include social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or content sharing platforms, such as Reddit, ScoopIt or StumbleUpon.

Keywords are often only used in the main body of the content displayed on the website. It is important to realize that branding and marketing has now transcended the realm of one single page. You can still market and effectively optimize your website on search engines or platforms other than your website. Keywords can be used effectively on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to gain popularity and to establish optimization for your selected keywords.

Tips and tricks of SEO

Besides understanding the essentials of SEO, in order to be able to successful implement SEO strategy, you should follow some tips that will help you create an approach that is focused on getting the most out of your online activity.

Writer for the readers first

Some of the basic, most important tips of SEO include, first and foremost, writing excellent content. Your focus should be on writing and formulating content, which is liked by the readers. It should be relevant and understandable. Your aim should be to satisfy the readers first and then focus your attention towards satisfying the search engines.

Get your readers to re-post

Your content should be so good that the readers feel compelled to share it on their personal social profiles, such as on Facebook and Twitter. In the case of really well-written content, readers actually aid in search engine optimization by sharing and re-posting.

Earn natural links

You should strive to earn links from other, authoritative, and trusted websites. The more natural links that you can acquire the better for search engine optimization. The best way to earn links is again to have great content and to create respectful and trustworthy authority.

Images and image characteristics

It is also vital to give importance to images. It is not just about great written content. Your website should have excellent images with all the necessary features of the image attributes filled out. These include titles, descriptions, and captions. Images are also helpful when it comes to social media sharing, as visual aspect can highlight the content of the web page.

Text length

Make sure your text is long enough to have an impact. Long, rambling pieces of text are not advisable. However, the body of the text should be long enough to hold some meaning. Again, this is in no way an implication to conform to a certain word count. The text should make sense and cover all the necessary information.

No plagiarism

Under all circumstances, you must ensure that the content on your website is not plagiarized. Nothing kills the credibility of a website like duplicity in content quality.

Page formatting

Formatting your pages is also very important in SEO. Your page titles should contain your most important keywords. However, the keywords should be placed intelligently, in order for title to make sense and be related to the content of the article.

Navigation

The navigation tools on your website should be in order and work effectively. This is especially important while search engines are scanning your website for indexing and ranking. You should allow users to search your website, to use navigation buttons to go back to the home page, access different section of the website, etc.

SEO suitability

SEO is not the answer every time. Sometimes, certain websites are better suited to the medium of paid advertisements, for example, pay-per-click promotions. In this case, SEO is not the most preferred method of marketing strategy and the benefits that a business can have are gained through paid reach.

Summary

SEO is the overall practice of improving website content for readers as well as optimizing search engine rankings. SEO leads to slow and steady results and maintains excellent ranking for a longer period of time, if employed correctly. SEO aims at providing a good user experience and improves the functionality and the performance of any given website in terms of its traffic, page loading, better titles, and good quality content.

It is vital to understand the difference between what SEO can truly achieve and what it cannot accomplish. It is also essential to know when SEO is applicable and when it is not. The different forms of SEO must be understood clearly and applied wherever appropriate.

SEO is extremely important for websites today as it is a vital marketing strategy and it goes beyond the idea of just optimizing content for certain keywords usage. Modern day networking now thrives on social media platforms, which greatly aid in the process of search engine optimization. SEO is extremely effective today and the concept has become much easier with the innovation of social networks and active users, who are constantly and unknowingly aiding in the process of search engine optimization by reposting and highlighting websites and their content.

This makes up for virtually free promotion and marketing. The global networking world is built in a way that SEO has become exceptionally do-able and has far-reaching results now, more than ever before.

7

Email Marketing

7. Email Marketing

Introduction

Email marketing is a widely used technique by companies and firms who want to reach out to their audience. It is a simple and highly effective technique, which is why it has become so very popular in the business world today. Research and statistics show that the number of people who use this method is increasing day by day, and that it is indeed one of the fastest growing techniques being used by online marketers.

Email marketing is basically the process of getting in touch with previous, existing as well as potential clients and customers via the modern facility of electronic mail, which is commonly referred to as email. There are many reasons why people prefer this mode of communication over other outlets that are available to them. This segment of the book will be discussing all of this in much more detail. We will also be looking at the many different ways in which this procedure can be carried out, and the pros and cons of each of them.

We will also be taking into account a few facts and figures, in order to view the scope of the technique and analyze those statistics to reveal what implications they hold in the present and in the future. By the end, you will be fully acquainted with the basics and fundamentals of email marketing, how it works and why and when it should be used.

What is email marketing?

Before we get into the details of how it works and why it is so important, we must first define what email marketing actually is. Only by having a clear concept regarding this, will we be able to understand fully all other aspects that are attached to it.

Email marketing, is an internet based strategy that aims to build a bridge between companies and general public. It is a relatively new technique so to say, because it came into being after the advent of the internet and the World Wide Web. The strategy is heavily reliant upon carriers that allow people to send and receive electronic mail, which is typically called email.

What happens is that these firms and companies come up with marketing plans, which they then share with people through emails. These emails can contain things such as the concession bundles and promotional packages such as buy one get one free. They can also offer things such as free memberships for a limited time to people by following directions provided in the email. These were just a few of the possibilities hence one can clearly see now that email marketing can be used to serve a lot of different and diverse purposes.

Sometimes people may opt to get these mails while at other times companies may get your email information from elsewhere and then mail you directly. Either way the main purpose is to establish a friendly and mutually beneficial relationship between producers and consumers.

The point is to constantly keep people up-to-date with all the latest happenings so that they do not start becoming detached from you or your product or services. It acts as a reminder for all current customers where as for those who are not yet a part of your existing customer base, it acts much like a consistent advertisement. This way, the person may eventually hop on board as well if they come across something of interest in those advertisements.

Email marketing tends to be slightly more personalized as compared to other kinds of campaigns and this is because of the fact that emails are shared directly between the user and the company. People who receive such emails tend to feel special as the company chose to contact them directly and share exciting news and offers with them.

Overall, email marketing is a very useful tool and more and more companies are taking note of this. It has changed the way people have traditionally thought about marketing and advertising and opened up new avenues for creating awareness, which can help raise the revenues of firms by quite a significant margin.

Just as we have already discussed, email marketing is an internet dependent strategy that aims to create a long lasting relationship between consumers and producers of a good or a service. The idea is to remain in contact with existing, as well as all potential, customers by regularly sending them emails regarding one's products or services and keep them updated with all the latest news and offers.

Debunking the myth

It is quite a common perception these days that emails have become obsolete as means of communication in today's world. Many people seem to be of the opinion that technology has advanced so rapidly within the last ten years or so that, other newer forms of communication have now replaced electronic mail, which used to be popular once upon a time.

There is also a second school of thought, that differs slightly in opinion. This group feels like emails are still very much amongst the most favored forms of maintaining contact but, they are no longer effective for marketing purposes as there are several other avenues, which can get the job done.

Before we move onto anything else, it is important to debunk these myths if we want to understand just how powerful tool email marketing really is. The truth is that email marketing is one of the leading ways in which firms and people like to get in touch with their respective and prospective clients. Not only that, but email marketing can be seen as a trend which happens to be on the rise with many new members joining the bandwagon every single day. These companies are devoting more and more resources, including time and money, on a daily basis to craft an intelligent email based marketing strategy. It is assumed that 122 billion emails are sent out on average every single hour. Thus, emails should not be taken lightly as there is far too much to gain from this mechanism.

Why is email marketing one of the most preferred ways to contact people?

The reasons for this are quite simple. Whenever something succeeds on a scale as large as the global mailing network, then obviously there have got to be some pivotal features behind it which have made that possible.

One of the primary reasons for this is that emails are easy to send out. Sending out a marketing related email does not require any lengthy or complicated processes regardless of whether the email is being sent to one person or to hundreds of people. All that is needed is just one simple

email account. This account of course requires registration but once it has been made, then there are no other in between steps that need being taken.

Secondly, this is a very cost effective method. There is such a negligible cost associated with sending and receiving emails that they can practically be said to be free. The only thing that one needs to maintain an efficient mailing network is a fast and reliable internet connection especially if the total incoming and outgoing email volume is massive. Of course, firms will also need to hire someone who is capable of formulating and running the entire email marketing strategy but that is a cost that would be associated with almost any other marketing methodology as well.

Thirdly, email marketing is unbelievably fast. Though it has been in use for decades now, it still remains the front runner in this category despite all kinds of mind blowing technological advancements. Within a matter of few seconds, the email gets delivered and recipient can view it. Similarly, the recipient too can reply just as quickly, which drastically reduces the total time of correspondence. Regular mail could take days and even longer if the recipients are away or unable to respond.

Thus, email marketing has changed the face of communication for the better significantly. An added bonus is that there is also no risk of the mail getting lost if sent over the internet. There is very little chance that the email will not reach the person it is meant to and even in the rare case that does somehow happen, once can simply go back and check the records to see if it was sent to the correct email address or not. Hence, it is a very easy process to monitor overall.

This particular point is very important because if the time taken was longer, then this would create a lot of problems for the company especially, where limited time offers are concerned and if the number of clients is too large.

Email marketing is also a highly preferred method of communication because almost everyone today has access to the internet. Furthermore, it is safe to assume that almost all of these users have at least one email address that they use for all kinds of professional as well as non-professional dealings.

In addition to that, studies also suggest that a vast majority of these individuals check their emails regularly and almost on a daily basis. The percentage of those who check emails daily has also increased due to the vast usage of mobile devices, which have apps to quickly check

emails and to notify the users each time they receive a new one. This directly translates into an efficient readership, which is the main target of an email marketing strategy to begin with.

Due to all these reasons, email marketing has carved a special place for itself in the otherwise highly competitive and ever evolving world of marketing and advertising.

The different ways in which email marketing works

As we have already mentioned, email marketing can work in several different ways. It can be used to convey a range of messages depending on what companies do and what they want to achieve from such a strategy. However, there are two main branches, that email marketing can be split into. The first is known as transactional emails while the second is known as direct emails.

The former refers to those emails, which are sent as a response to actions that have already been taken by the recipient. For example, this includes all emails such as customer care follow-ups or sign up confirmation emails. These are sent only when the person has been in contact with the company for some purpose. These emails are classified as a distinct category because they are meant to sustain a relationship that already exists between the producer and the customer.

The latter refers to all those emails, which are sent randomly by the companies to people regardless of whether they have been in touch with them before or not. These emails are sent in order to highlight ongoing offers and to simply create awareness regarding their products and services. These emails contain promotional characteristics, which seeks to spread the word as quickly as possible and as far and wide as is feasible.

This distinction must be understood because the material that both kind of emails carry tends to be very different and the sender must keep this in mind while creating the content, which is to be sent. Transactional emails are supposed to be to the point and must contain only things that the reader has already shown an interest in. Direct emails on the other hand can afford to be much more detailed in comparison and one can add several things within such emails. This is because the client is not waiting for these emails and thus has no specific expectations from the content, which is included in these emails.

Tips, tricks and things to keep in mind when implementing an email marketing strategy

Preparing and writing emails with the aim of marketing one's goods can be quite a technical task and it is always a good idea to plan ahead. Therefore, it is important to conduct a research beforehand, to see what kinds of emails receive the most attention and consequently generate the highest response rate.

Planning

The one thing, which you should be very clear on, is what you expect to get in return from implementing such a strategy. This is vital because a confused perspective will most definitely lead to a less than desirable outcome.

Think about why this strategy is important to you and your company. Begin by identifying areas of improvement in your general marketing plan. Ask yourself all the necessary questions such as the following:

- Who are you writing to?

- Who do you need to be writing to?

- Are you reaching out to everyone that you need to get in touch with?

- If not, who else should be included?

- Do the emails convey the exact message you want to transmit?

- Are the emails effective enough?

- How can you further improve?

- What do you want to achieve with the email?

- What kind of response do you expect from the recipient?

These are just a few examples of the many questions that should be kept in mind when addressing the issue. Once you have obtained clear goals and objectives by answering these questions, move forward to identify areas of weakness.

Scheduling

Make sure that all your marketing related emails, whether they are direct or transitional in nature, are being sent on schedule. Never miss out on an opportunity to strike while the iron is hot because time really is of the essence when it comes to marketing. Also keep in mind the fact that overdoing things is going to have the opposite effect. Thus, be careful to limit your emails in number so that they do not start irritating the reader. No one likes their inboxes to be flooded by unnecessary emails by the same sender over and over again. Hence, optimize by planning ahead, and sending out emails only when you have something significant to communicate.

Likewise, make sure that you respond to all queries and questions that you receive in a timely fashion. Otherwise, this could reflect badly on the reputation that a company works so hard to build.

Styling

Keep the tone of the emails friendly, but remain professional. This is a must, because it is human nature to pick up on these things. Everyone who reads these mails is not only going to be influenced by what is written in the email, but the recipient will also be influenced by how it is written. This brings us to the next point, which is to focus on the actual content.

Writing

The email should be well written in simple words so that the viewer does not have any problems trying to understand it. Jargon should only be used where needed and the content should ideally be such that it does not leave any questions in the mind of the reader. The trick is to make the email as self-explanatory as it can be.

Proofreading

The next point on the agenda should be to read and re-read. Proofreading is important, if one wants to send out flawless emails. Sometimes it happens that we realize something integral is missing only after we have reviewed the rough draft.

Optimizing

Optimization of an email includes thinking about subject line, sender's name, the entire body of the email, images and links. Think about formatting and the outline that looks attractive and coherent. Also, have in mind that over 55% of emails are now opened on a mobile device which means that email optimization for mobile devices is necessary.

Personalizing

The best thing about email marketing though is the option to personalize emails. Try to take full advantage of this and make small changes wherever you can to make the recipient feel as if they are on your priority list. Modify the emails to include things, which you think the client will be drawn towards.

A good tactic is to ask your recipients if they wish to continue receiving updates from you. This will also benefit you in the sense that you will be able to separate the serious clients from those who are not interested or not reading your emails.

Email marketing is as simple as it is useful and it really does not require the person to have a great deal of background knowledge. Anyone can become an expert by following these tips, which can help with taking the business to an infinite number of people.

Email marketing services

Since sending emails can be a significant part of your online marketing, there are services that can help you with conducting this task. The major benefits of using email marketing services include:

- Custom email designs
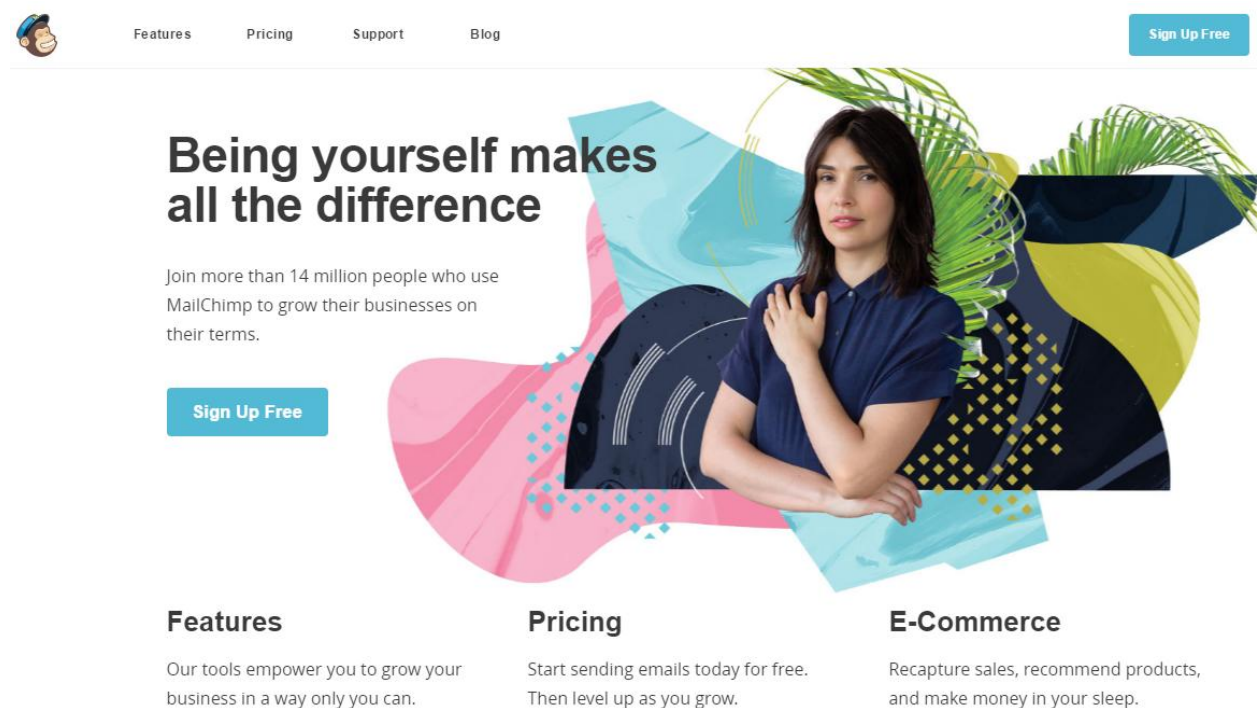
- Automation based on the customer behavior

- Personalization and user profiles

- Send time optimization

- Targeting options

- A/B testing

- Analytics and reporting

All of these features can help you improve your relationship with the customers and analyze customer behavior in order to learn more about your business and efficiency of your strategy. There are many different email marketing tools you can use, including both free and paid, but we will recommend two of them:
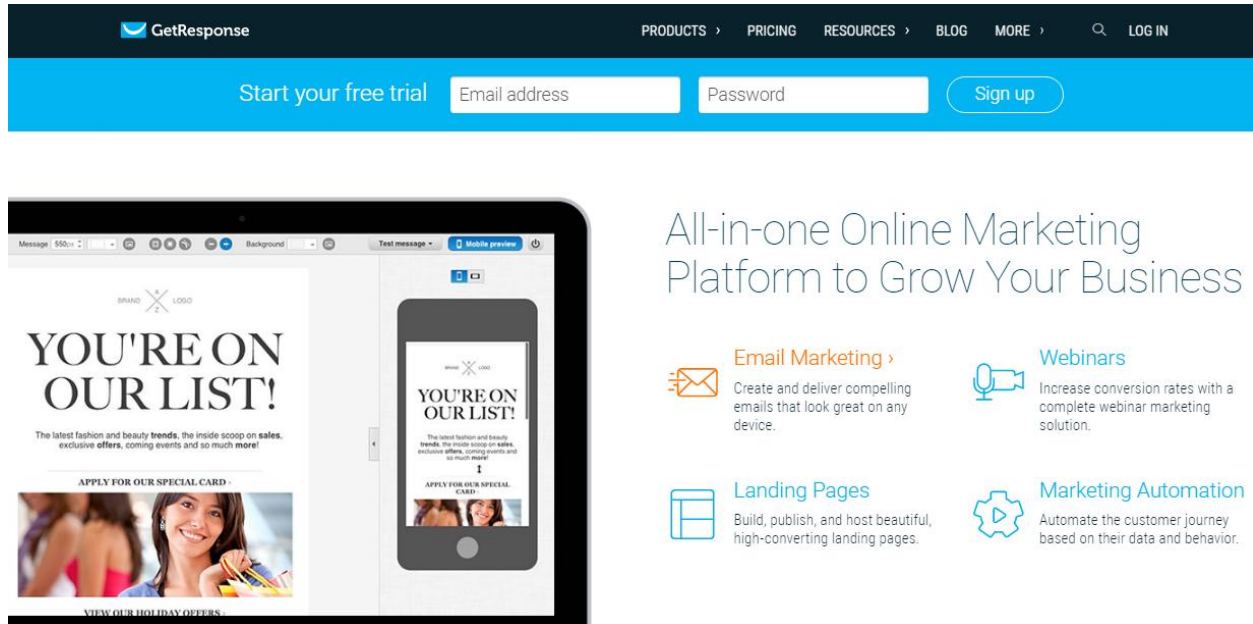
MailChimp

The free plan comes with the limit of 2,000 email contact and 12,000 emails sent per month. There are paid plans that offer more flexibility and additional features.

[**GetResponse**](#)

There are seven payment plans to choose from, depending on what your business need.

Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed in detail what the term email marketing conveys and what all falls under its umbrella. The chapter seeks to empower people with the knowledge that can help them understand why email marketing is critical to their business and why they need to be using it.

It also seeks to educate them regarding the dos and don'ts of email marketing. The chapter begins by making the reader recall what email marketing is and then proceeds to make a case for why it is a growing trend even today, decades after it was first introduced.

The chapter also helps people learn about the different sub categories of such emails, and why each of them is so influential. Readers are taught how to differentiate between the two branches so that they may realize what purpose is served by both of them.

We then move onto perhaps the most important part of this section, which highlights ways in which people and firms can fine-tune their email marketing strategies in order to extract the

maximum amount of gains from implementing it. Towards the end, they will have a sound knowledge regarding email marketing, which they can then fit into their business models, no matter what kind of industry they are a part of.

8

Affiliate Marketing

8. Affiliate Marketing

Introduction

With an increase in technology, having websites for businesses is vital now. Since the majority of the consumers are found online, it is essential for businesses to use the online space in creating customers for their products or services.

It is extremely easy for anyone to set their own website. Using a computer with the internet connection, you can easily visit the platforms, which provide readily made templates and designs that allow one to make a simple webpage. Within a few hours, you can have a URL, content page, and completely ready website right in front of you.
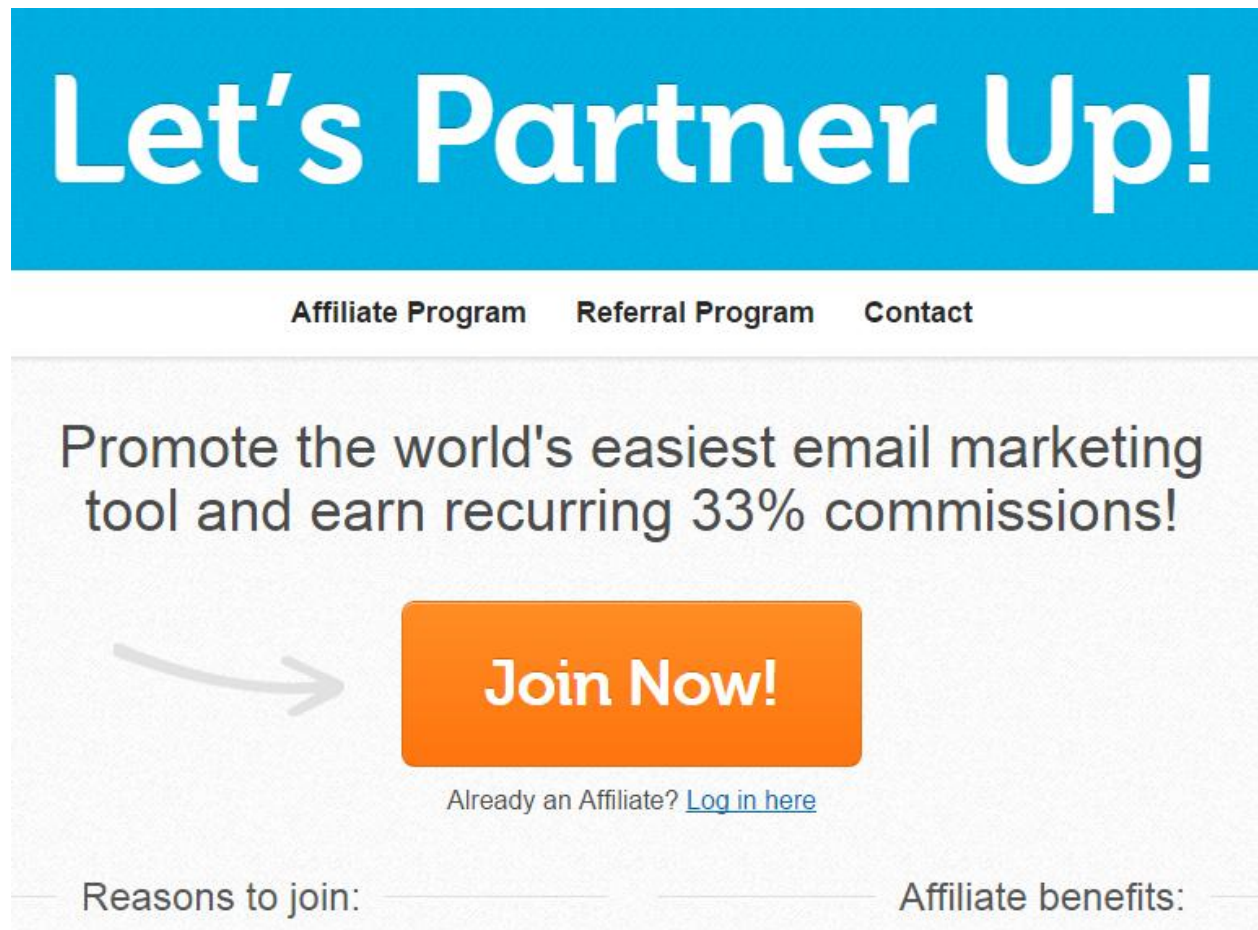
On the contrary, having a website is a common fact, now, since most of the businesses deal with social media and search engines as well. For every business, it is important it seek ways that will take its website to a whole new level. For the content-driven website owners, the frequent question they have is how to make money from the amount of traffic you receive? Alternatively, for the online retailers, what could be the possible ways of attracting traffic to your website, which will buy your services or products?

All of these questions are important as they determine the success of the business. One of the most effective solutions to such questions is affiliate marketing. Affiliate marketing is a very broad and extensive term when one wishes to use it for success in their online business website.

What is affiliate marketing?

Affiliate marketing is known as a marketing technique and practice in which a single business rewards single or more affiliates for bringing customers or visitors through the affiliate marketing ways. In other words, as a publisher, you would be rewarded when you support another business by promoting their services or products.

For example, if you sign up for any online business's affiliate program, you will earn commission when you promote the business. The promotion of the business is determined by the number of visitors they will receive from your website. Moreover, when the business makes a sale from the customer that reached their business through your website, you will be entitled to commission as well.

By far, affiliate marketing is one of the favorites of the marketers as it is the cheapest and quickest way of making money online. The detailing of the practice may not be easy, but the benefits are countless when the marketing is done. Conclusively, one needs to link up a seller and a buyer and earn the commission on the sales that were made after referred by your website.

Since the past few years, the affiliate marketing and its programs have immensely grown in popularity. It has been one of the major interests of the people developing their business online. Even for the websites that do not deal with the selling of services and products online,

linking as the affiliate is a decent way of participating in the e-commerce business trade. With the help of affiliate marketing programs, businesses can earn big through the affiliated websites.

How does affiliate marketing work?

Now that you know what affiliate marketing is, it is time you understand how it works. When you join any affiliate marketing program and select the products you wish to sell, the sellers will provide you with an affiliate code. The affiliate code is used to consult traffic towards the targeted website. Most of the affiliated programs will offer pre-made banners, text links and other creative copies on which you just need to copy the provided code. When the interested buyers click on the provided links present on your website, they will be directed to the product site. Once the customer subscribes to the service or purchase a product through your referring website, you will earn a commission.

The sellers, on the other hand, can easily track down the performance of the affiliate through the affiliate ID and the affiliate software they use. The companies would also gain real time and complete access to the commissions and sales stats.

Marketing techniques

One of the perks of using the affiliate marketing programs is that you may not need to sell the services or products all the time to earn some commission. There are various different affiliate programs, which can be used for different payment ways such as:

Pay per sale

In this affiliate program, the merchant pays the percentage of the sales price when the purchase is fully done.

Pay per lead

You will be paid just once and that too when the referred customers or visitors will provide the target site their contact information by filling the contact form.

Pay per click

This is the most common program in affiliate marketing. With this type of affiliate marketing, you will be paid based on the number of visitors you send to the merchant's website. In this case, making a sale or generating a leads is not important for earning commission.

Why become an affiliate marketer?

By far, affiliate marketing is said to be the best and the fastest growing internet marketing technique that can lead to online money making. Here is why:

Cost effective

Marketing over the internet is extremely cheap and one does not need to worry about any cost, as the product or service is already a development of the seller. There is also no need of hiring employees or getting a business location.

Global market

Through online and affiliate marketing, it is possible to reach people all around the world.

No fees needed

You do not need to pay a single penny in order to join different affiliate programs.

No shipping and storage required

As the one providing the affiliate services, there is no need to worry about the shipping, packing and storage of the product, as it all comes under the services of the seller.

Work from home

If you think you are making the amount of money you need, there is no need to go to another office then. When done right, affiliate marketing provides the benefits of working while you are not leaving your home.

The benefits of affiliate marketing

Several benefits of having affiliate marketing have come forth now that it is becoming increasingly popular. Affiliate marketing reverses the general trend of the out-bound marketing figure of casting a wide message and then waiting and hoping for local people or clients to get attracted, into an in-bound model where intrigued customers are attracted to make a purchase.

Since the internet has spread all around the globe, this means that your message can spread internationally by a large number of potential affiliates while they are using the internet. Other benefits are also present, which the affiliate marketing can bring along. Consideration should be given to the following:

Since the internet is active every second of the day, your message or advertisement is available all the time. Hence, widening your affiliate program would mean that there is a high chance that somebody would be reading your message and probably thinking about making a purchase.

With software tools now available, it is now easy to automate your management, sales process and tracking the affiliate program. This effectively reduces the sales cost.

An affiliate program can be used to save money as compared to any other forms of promotion done. The affiliate marketing programs are based on a contract that lets the content producer to pay only when the required results were met. That means that apart from the advanced

payment to the marketing program, the content producers will only pay after the results that they required are achieved. If an affiliate program does not meet the required goals, there is no need to pay for it.

If your company is promoting a product that is something worth the promotion, it is important that its promotion must be aimed towards the right population. If it is appealing to that demographic and if you have an expert affiliate program, then there is a high chance that your revenue can grow exponentially and your online presence will also be increased. If one affiliate program can provide such a huge profit, you can imagine how much success numerous people bring by promoting your product.

Moreover, even if a random user who once checked your product through one of your affiliate marketing program leaves without making any purchase, there is a high chance that the same user will return someday to buy something.

If you are using affiliate marketing, it becomes easy to examine the new advertising campaign of any product. New advertisements can be developed and messages can be sent out by using these programs to check if they are enticing the required number of people to pass the product checking. Also, by this method, you can conclude whether the new advertisement is as good as the previous ones. Better number of feedbacks and metrics can be collected as well.

Different affiliate marketing programs

There are about two different types of affiliate marketing programs. Each of the types is described in detail:

In-house hosting

This sort of affiliate marketing is done by using a widely available software program to manage a huge number of marketing affiliates. The usual requirement is that the affiliate manager is asked to oversee the marketing program, even though the software is also made to do this.

The major advantage of launching and managing your own affiliate program is that you can plan exactly the way you thought. Moreover, planning your own affiliate marketing program

means that you save up on your expenses, as you would not have to spend on commissions and there would not be any middle party to pay for.

Third-party hosting

Most of the affiliate marketing programs are set up and managed by third-party companies that specialize in this field. These are the companies, that provide the necessary infrastructure in order to meet the demands of, both, the affiliates and the merchants. By doing this, the merchants benefit themselves, as the third party would now be in charge of hiring and managing the affiliates. Payment information collection, technical support providence and tracking referrals are a few of the jobs that the third party host can do to benefit you.

In a few cases, the hired third party may gather and offer nearly the same themed programs and hand them out as an affiliate network. An affiliate network is a combination of different affiliate marketing programs arranged together around a known theme.

Summary

The progress of technology has made it compulsory for every company to find quicker and easier methods of promoting its business. Since technology is now so advanced, these methods can be simple. Affiliate marketing is one such method.

Affiliate marketing is a business promotion technique in which a company hires affiliates who are given the task to promote the company's product(s). When these affiliates meet the requirements of the company, they are rewarded with a commission. Even today, affiliate marketing is known to be the cheapest and quickest way of marketing. Efficient in generating revenues for a company, this method of marketing is now very famous.

Pay per sale, pay per click and pay per lead are a few of the paying categories of the affiliate marketing. Affiliate marketing is especially helpful if you need to save on your expenses, through preventing any ordinary advertisement campaigns.

Cost effectiveness and the possibility of working and managing the job from home are great reasons that may convince you into signing up for an affiliate marketing program. Moreover, it

is not always compulsory to pay for the affiliate program, unless you hire a company that would do this marketing for you.

Using affiliate marketing has many benefits that may be enough to convince you to launch an affiliate program. Furthermore, it is not always necessary that you would have to hire a company to this job for you. You can also start this by forming a team from your company. This form of affiliate program would be called an "in-house program".

9

Steps to Develop Internet Marketing Strategy

9. Steps to Develop Internet Marketing Strategy

Every successful strategy in business starts with planning. Developing a plan on how to achieve your goal is the most important task in the process of improving your business. You need to set up a plan of actions in order to determine what you want to achieve and where you want to get with your internet marketing campaign.

Internet marketing is a very vast area, and thus it requires quite detailed planning and dedicated effort to conduct the strategy. There are several types of internet marketing, and each of them requires a distinctive approach and different set of tasks to be conducted in order for the goals to be achieved. The ideal case is to use all the opportunities available inside internet marketing as this maximizes the influence of your business and exposure you get online.

However, using all types of internet marketing can be quite a challenge, as it requires a lot of time, and a lot of assets to be invested into the realization of the goals. You have to evaluate whether you are ready for such challenge before you start planning. In case you believe that it would be impossible for you to take advantage of all types of internet marketing at the same time, choose those that would be the most suitable for your company and focus on those. For example, SEM and SMM marketing could be a starting point. Later on, as you get more experienced, you will be able to concentrate on other types of marketing as well.

Build your marketing framework

Developing your marketing framework means developing a plan of action for your internet marketing campaign, which includes goals and the processes necessary for those goals to be achieved. Marketing framework needs to contain everything that will be included as a part of marketing strategy, which means you need to present:

- Marketing goals
- Tools that will be used in the campaign
- Approach that will be used in the campaign

- Campaign costs

- Revenue that can be obtained from the campaign

- Tracking and measuring process

Focus on your customers

This is an inseparable part of online marketing, because your goal as a marketer is to attract and engage your audience, and the best way to do so is by focusing on studying their behavior and satisfying their needs. Focusing on customers, you are able to provide personalized feedback and establish loyal relationship, regardless of the medium you use to do this.

Develop your own story

Storytelling is one of the techniques often applied in the process of establishing relationship with the consumers. The goal of storytelling is to develop stories to transmit a message, to share your own promotional campaign inside a well-designed and well-presented story that will attract the attention of the viewers more successfully than traditional ad would. Another benefit of storytelling is the possibility to convey a message inside of a story. The story is easier to remember, and it makes it easier for viewers to identify it with your brand. This way you are working on branding and raising awareness about your company, by introducing the viewers to a memorable story, they will recollect each time they see your product in a shop or on a website.

Take advantage of SEM

Positioning a website is very important in order to gain exposure on the online market, which is why you need to take advantage of search engine marketing, both paid and organic reach, in order to improve the position of your website and ensure that the potential customers find you instead of your competitors.

Develop a strategy that uses different techniques of search engine optimization, and enhance this strategy with online advertising. Both types of search engine marketing are helpful when it

comes to gaining exposure in search engines, so think about using SEM as a tool for promoting your website.

Launch social strategy

Current trends and situation on the online market have imposed social aspect as an inseparable part of online activity, regardless if you are an international brand, a local fitness coach, or an online store. Being social has become a mandatory task if you want to connect with the online users.

Social strategy is also important for developing successful relationship with you customers, which is why you need to embrace this social aspect of internet marketing as something that will ultimately help you improve the influence and the position of your brand in the eyes of consumers.

Build your community

Being a member of a community has always been an important part of people's lives, who have always been striving to be a part of a group. This tendency transferred to the online world, with social networks slowly becoming an inseparable part of our lives. Today, it is unlikely that you will meet anyone who is not using at least one social network, and a lot of people are active on several networks.

Companies use this situation in their own advantage, to establish a relationship with online user, and in order to do so, they usually use several social networks, as this way they maximize social media exposure and target different groups on different social networks.

Building your online community means that you are creating a base of loyal customers, by interacting with them, satisfying their need to be informed about your business, rewarding them, etc. This is very important on the online market, when you aim to stay competitive. You need a good relationship with your customers, as this will also help you with building your influence in the online community.

Increase traffic

The following step in the process of developing your internet marketing strategy consists of actions that will help you generate more traffic on your website. Since your website is a place where you convert the visitors, where they choose to buy from you or sign up for your newsletter, you need to direct as much traffic as possible to the website in order to achieve this goal.

Obviously, using SEM is a starting point, as you want to increase both organic and paid reach, which will allow you to reach customers who are conducting search queries related to your business. These visits are more likely to result in conversions, which is why this type of traffic is very important.

Besides search engines, you should use other media to generate traffic, such as social media (which is part of social media marketing), emails (part of email marketing campaign), external links (links posted on other websites in the process of off-site search engine optimization), etc. All of these sources can generate quite amount of traffic, leading to more conversions and increased profit, which is why you must include this task into the process of developing and implementing internet marketing strategy.

Increase conversions

Although increasing traffic is very important, it will not improve you business unless you are able to convert those visitors into your customers. Having a lot of traffic without generating any revenue will not be beneficial for your business and you need to face the challenge of converting the visitors using different methods. It is not possible for everyone to become your customer, because not every visit will result in conversion, but you need to focus on increasing the percentage of those visitors that do convert.

The first thing you should do in order to increase conversions is to improve your landing page. Think about the first page the users will see on your website and analyze whether it is effective enough to attract the attention of the users. Effective description of your services, mobile accessibility, and links to home page are all necessary aspects of a good landing page.

Website analytics can also help with increasing conversions, because you will see the data about current conversion level and you will be able to explore the paths that lead to those conversions. This will show you the pages users visit that lead to the greatest number of conversion, and you should use this to improve other aspects of the website.

Analyze and get feedback from the community

Finally, if you want to be better in internet marketing, you need to know what kind of impression you leave, how much of the influence you have managed to obtain inside the online community. There are numerous ways to get feedback, with social media interaction being one of the easiest. You could also analyze the reviews on social media websites, which feature reviews posted by other users.
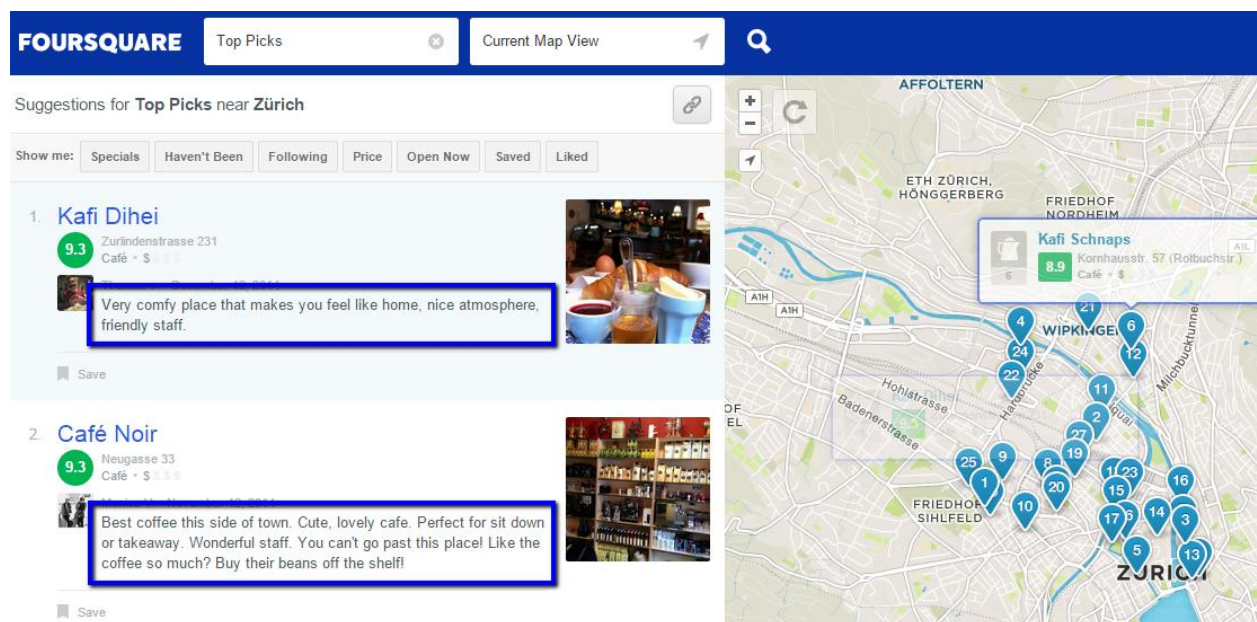
Feedback can also be obtained by sending emails and asking for a questionnaire to be filled out, where you would ask email subscribers about their experience with your business. You can also use your own website to post such questionnaire in order to get feedback from the website visitors.

Once you have information about what the community thinks about your business, you can analyze the information in order to find ways to improve the user experience. Analyze positive reviews to see what you are doing good, which aspects of your business have positive effect on the user experience, as this is something you should try to implement into all aspects of your business. Negative reviews are helpful with analyzing what you are doing wrong, and these issues are something you should address as soon as possible.

Summary

Following the steps mentioned above will help you focus on developing your brand influence and exposure on the online market through different methods of optimization, promotion and interaction. In the end, you have to analyze the performance of the internet marketing strategy in order to make sure that your strategy is really as productive and as effective as you planned it to be.

10

Lead Generation

10. Lead Generation

Lead generation represents the consumers interested in the product or service of a business. The term is used in marketing to signify the group of consumers that can be converted into customers. While the term lead generation usually refers to online advertising, it can be applied to the process of gathering contacts from non-paid sources, which include organic results and referrals.

The main goal of lead generation is to acquire a list of contacts that are most likely to result in desired outcome, which usually represent sale, as sale is set to be a conversion.

What is a lead?

Lead is a contact that can be used to achieve a conversion. Lead is a contact email of a person that is interested and in need of products or services, you provide. Unlike regular contacts and email subscribers, leads are email contacts of the users who are most likely to become your customer. Therefore, a lead is a contact from your target group, the person you want to reach through internet marketing in order to establish a relationship and eventually convert into your customer. As a result, the best way to increase conversions is by generating leads.

Leads can be gathered in the purpose of building a list for various purposes, such as newsletter list, sale leads, etc. The goal of obtaining leads is specific for your company and the goals you have planned to achieve through internet marketing.

Generating leads

Various activities conducted as a part of internet marketing may result in generating leads such as the following:

- Direct traffic

- Search engine ads

- Social media activity

- Increasing traffic on your blog

- Email marketing

- Offering a gift in exchange for an email

- Generating contacts through social bookmarking websites

Additionally, leads can be generated through telemarketing, or by organizing an offline event for your target group. Based on the studies, which were focused on how marketers generate leads, most marketers claim that they generate leads through email marketing, as well as through direct traffic.

Lead generation process

The process of generating leads involves gathering the most relevant emails from your contact list, in order to establish communication with the leads. You basically need to determine which contacts are the most valuable ones, as those are worth the time you need to invest into building a relationship.

Generating leads is an important task for online marketers, and the following activities can help you in that process:

Host a survey

Hosting a survey is a great way to generate leads, as the users who are interested in your business will choose to take part. Based on the data acquired from the survey, you will be able to determine if the contact is your lead, your potential client. The survey results will also help you approach the client in a personalized way, which is much more effective type of communication than reaching out to random people, who may not even know how you are.

Hi,   !

Thank you for telling me a little bit about you .
Your thoughts are greatly appreciated!

First Name

Last Name

Email

Do you have a "morning ritual"?

Select...

If no, do you want one?

Select...

Check all that apply to your morning ritual –

Yoga
Meditation
Prayer
Coffee/Tea
Hot Bath
Moment of Regret (heh)
Other Quiet Time
Reading
Singing or Other Artistic Time
Playing With Your Kids

Refine your approach

Instead of reaching out with a promotional message, use a refined approach where you would try to attract people to be interested in your business. Your goal is to naturally get them interested in your company, your products or services, and how they can benefit from you.

Interaction based on this approach is much more valuable, as you already have a potential website visitor who is actually interested in becoming your client. All you need to do now is build a relationship by communicating with the client.

Share a coupon

One of the best approaches in the process of attracting leads is to share a coupon. This guarantees that you attract the people who are interested in becoming your customers, and thus the contact acquired through a coupon is considered to be a lead. You should require an email address in exchange for a coupon, and you will use this email to reach out to the potential customer and try to establish loyal business to customer relationship.

Content

Content is thought to be valuable and educational information you offer to the website visitors. The form of content may be different from company to company, as you might want to use blog articles, e-books, infographics, videos, etc. However, the goal is the same. You want to build trust and interest. You want to persuade people to become your customers using non-intrusive way of promoting your product and services.

Unlike with sharing coupons, where you know that a contact is a lead, obtaining contacts through content is not as specific. Your content may attract people who are not directly interested in your product and services, which is why those contact cannot be considered leads.

In order to overcome this problem, you might want to ask for more information when giving access to the content. For example, if you allow users to subscribe to your blog, you could ask them about their interest.

HubSpot blog, a blog about inbound marketing, focuses on two major topics on its blog, marketing and sales, so when subscribing, you are given an option to choose the topic of you interest. This will help the company to send personalized and relevant emails to the subscribers, based on the topic they have chosen.
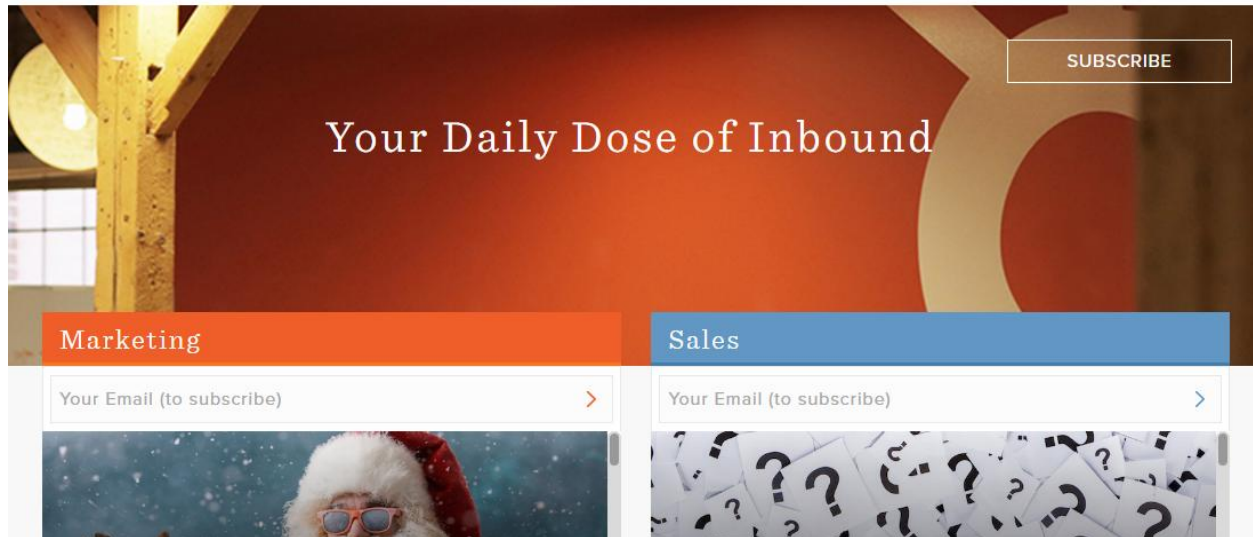
HubSpot blog shows another great example of how to find out more about your email contacts in order to be able to determine whether those are leads.

If you create content that is available only through claiming the offer by providing an email address, you should add additional fields into the form, in order to find out more about the person claiming the offer. The content in this case may include e-books, templates, access to webinars, etc.

The questions in the form should be adapted to your company needs, and they should be about something you need to learn about the visitors in order to qualify them as potential customers. Here are some of the things you could ask in the form.

For individual users:

- Name

- Email

- Phone number

- Age

- Interests

For companies:

- Website

- Phone number

- Name of the company

- The number of employees

- The type of business

For example, the following forms requires first and last name, email, phone number, website URL, company name and other information about the company. All of the fields are marked mandatory, which means that the potential client will have to provide the information in order to get access to the e-book.

Download Your
Free Copy

age of visual content resources. Here's what this

If Design

g Visuals on a Budget (Without Photoshop)

Creating Social Media Images

grab your free guide, as well as a folder with the
ke your own.

age with them.

Using the information from this form, the company is then able to determine if the contact is really somebody who would be interested in using their software in business.

Summary

Here is why generating leads is so important in internet marketing. If you generate quality leads, your job as an online marketer will be more successful. You will increase sales, and thus

increase the revenue of your company. Here are two main reasons why lead generation is important part of marketing:

- Spend less time on selling – Quality leads reduce the time you would invest into converting website visitors into customers. Sales productivity results in higher revenue.

- Improve the results of your email marketing – If you are communicating with the people who are interested in your product or services (i.e. leads), you are more likely to establish successful communication, which will not only result in sales increase, but it will also help you promote your brand through recommendations.

11

Internet Marketing for Mobile Devices

11. Internet Marketing for Mobile Devices

The trend of mobile marketing has become an integrated part of internet marketing, due to such fast development of mobile technology and the growing usage of mobile devices for searching information online, as well as for social interaction.

It is estimated that more than half of users accessing the internet are doing so via mobile devices. This trend has been increasing for the past few years, and the experts predict that it will increase even further in the following years, as mobile technology is developing constantly to enable a huge range of services and opportunities for online users. The goal is to enable smooth mobile experience for the users who choose these types of devices instead of using computers.

Therefore, mobile optimization is one of the highest priorities for webmasters, who have to be aware that mobile-friendly website is appreciated by the users. The mobile users are more likely to revisit and recommend a website that is well designed and responsive on mobile devices.
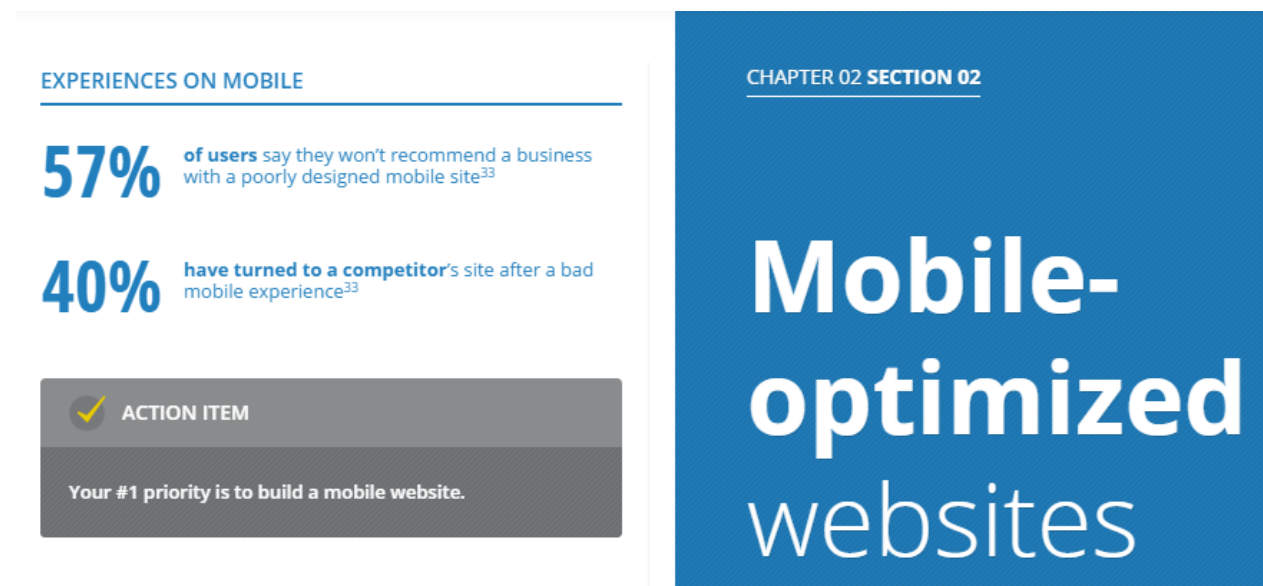
How to optimize your website for mobile devices?

Having in mind the importance of mobile optimization, here is how you can optimize your website in order to provide best experience to the mobile users.

Use responsive design

Responsive design allows you to optimize the website for multiple devices, which makes optimization process much easier. Instead of creating separate websites for mobile devices, using responsive design will enable your website loading on different devices.

In fact, according to the Google's guidelines, it is recommended that you use responsive web design, as otherwise, your website might lose ranking due to the fact that it is not accessible via mobile devices. Since Google strives to provide perfect user experience, and mobile users are part of those who use Google regularly, Google needs to address this issue and promote only those websites that allow users to access them via mobile devices. This way Google keeps its results relevant and trustworthy.

Separate pages or URLs for mobile

The second option for solving the problem of mobile optimization is to provide different pages or URLs in order to provide mobile-optimized version of web pages available on your website. This way you provide customized user experience to the users based on the device they are using to access the website. Your server will have to detect the device that is being used to access the website, and based on that, the server will present the adequate version of the website.

Mobile marketing in local searches

Location-based services are integrated into a lot of websites and social networks nowadays, which makes local aspect very important part of mobile marketing. Since most users use mobile phones to access social networks, you should integrate the local aspect of social networks into your internet marketing strategy, as this can help you get exposure through local searches.

This means that online users are looking for local information using their mobile device, and if you optimize your website for mobile devices, you increase your chances of them finding you. Not only will this approach help you generate more traffic on your website, but it will help you with branding and acquiring customers. In addition, usage of social profiles, where users can

check in and review locations, is an excellent way to improve your visibility on social networks and improve the influence of social media marketing on your overall business strategy.

According to the data from Google's 'The Mobile Playbook', which features the recommendations and the results of several researches about mobile aspect of online marketing, 94% of smartphone users search for local information online. Based on the same report, 51% of those users visited the store they found online.

Google THE MOBILE PLAYBOOK

RESULTS OF LOCAL SEARCHES

94% of smartphone users search for location info[13]

51% visited a store[13]

48% called a store[13]

29% made a purchase in-store and did so quickly[13]

Retailers are waking up to the power of capturing mobile demand. A recent Digby analysis indicates that 70% of top

retailers now offer mobile apps. Further research indicates that 78% of fast food chains, 75% of casual dining brands, 77% of big box retailers, 59% of specialty stores, and 58% of grocery stores have mobile apps.[15]

80% of mobile search triggered store visits happen within 5 hours of initial search[14]

85% of mobile search triggered calls to stores happen within 5 hours of initial search[14]

Here are examples of companies that are capturing local demand to grow their businesses.

Why is this important?

The main reason, why optimizing internet marketing for mobile devices is so important, is the users. Having in mind that the percentage of mobile users increases constantly, you have to be aware that your target audience is going mobile, and you have to do so as well.

If you want to reach mobile users, you need to be able to meet them on mobile platforms, regardless if you use social media accounts, mobile-friendly website or your own app. All of these are platforms typically launched for mobile devices, and in order to stay competitive on the online market, you need to be able to connect through these modern media of communication.

Secondly, the latest algorithm update of Google search engine, introduced in April 2015, reduces the ranking of the websites without mobile-friendly design. Mobile-friendly update is going to boost the ranking of mobile-friendly pages in the search engine results. This type of websites allow easier browsing via mobile devices, as the text is readable without tapping or zooming. It is also important to avoid having unplayable content and horizontal scrolling, while tap targets should be spaced so that they are easily noticed by the users and so that the users can easily tap on them.
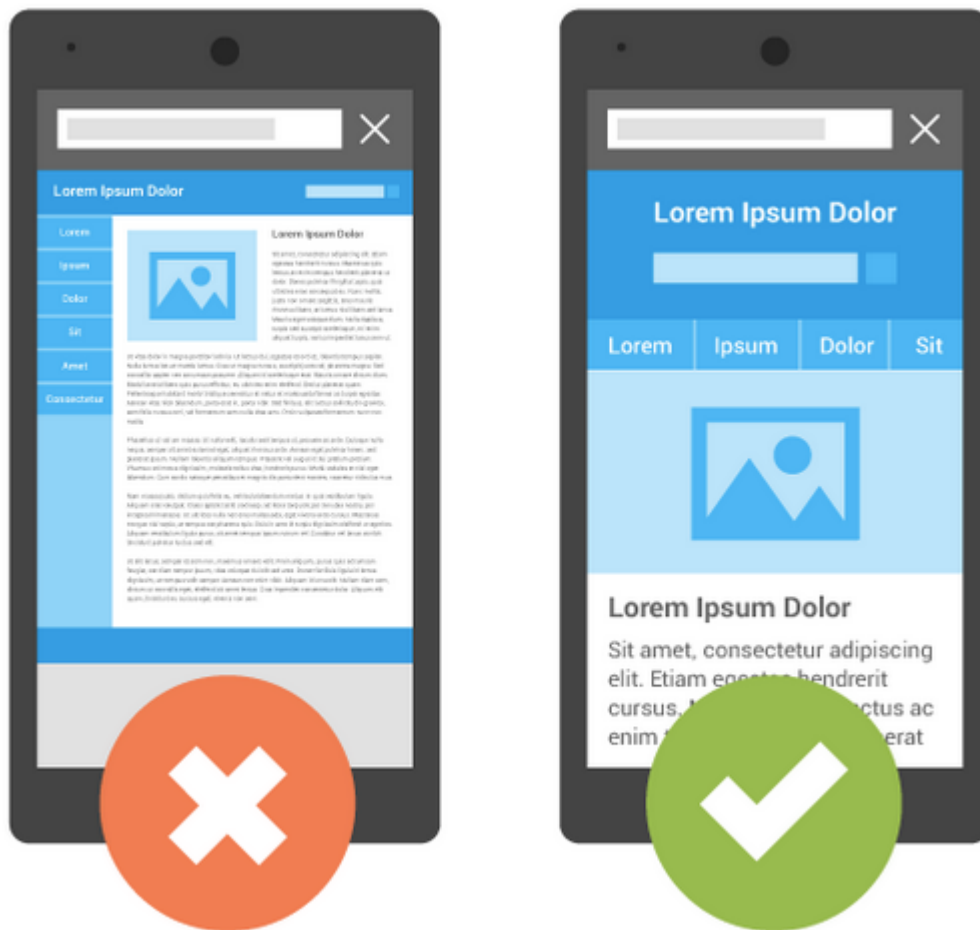
As of November, 2016, Google has begun experimenting to making their index mobile-first. This means that eventually they want the algorithm to primarily use mobile version of the website for ranking.

If you want to test if your website is mobile-friendly, use the following option:

https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/

The test will show you whether your website is mobile-friendly, and if you get negative results you should address this issue, as it will have negative impact on the performance of your website.

Summary

The statistics are supporting the fact that the users are using mobile devices increasingly, which is why you need to focus on mobile optimization and mobile analytics in your internet marketing strategy. You want to leverage the mobile platforms into expanding the influence of your business, rather than investing into your website exclusively and neglecting the huge potential of mobile marketing.

12

Internet Marketing

Glossary

12. Internet Marketing Glossary

1. A/B testing – Also called split testing, A/B testing is the process of comparing two versions of a web page in order to evaluate and compare the performance of both pages.

2. Affiliate – An affiliate is an entity with a relationship with other larger entity. This term is usually used in affiliate marketing, where individual publishes affiliate links that usually earn them commission from the company that is linked to.

3. Algorithm – An algorithm is a computer program used by search engines to look for clues or signals, which enable them to deliver relevant search results to the users.

4. Algorithm update – Search engines regularly update their algorithm in order to adapt it, to ensure the relevance of the search engine results and to implement new technologies to index and rank websites.

5. Application – Application is software or technology, also called application program, which is designed to perform a certain function.

6. B2B – In internet marketing, B2B (short for business-to-business) refers to the exchange of information, products or services between businesses.

7. Back-end tool – Back-end tool is an application or program used to manage back-end of the website. Changes done this way then reflect to the front-end of a website.

8. Benchmark – Benchmark is a point of reference against something that is measured and compared.

9. Bounce rate – This metric represents the number of people who have left the website after visiting only one page. Based on Google's recommendations, bounce rate below 40% is acceptable.

10. Branding – Branding is one of the marketing tasks that is done in the purpose of establishing an image or an association with a product in the minds of the consumers and potential consumers through different types of marketing campaigns.

11. Call-to-action button (CTA) – It is a button posted on the website that encourages visitors to do the action promoted by the button, such as call, sign up, register, etc.

12. Code – In computing, a code is a set of instructions that are written to enable a program to perform the task assigned by the instructions.

13. Content – Content is information that conveys a story, shares relevant data and explains something to an online users. Different types of content, such as written content, images and videos, are created to attract, engage and convert website visitors, social media followers, email subscribers, etc.

14. Conversion – In online marketing, a sale is usually considered a conversion. When you achieve a conversion, it means that you have managed to convert website visitors into paying customers. Depending on the website, different action can also be considered a conversion, such as sign up for a newsletter, downloading a file, becoming a social follower, etc.

15. Convert – To convert a visitors is a term usually used for the act of turning a visitor into a paying customer.

16. Cookies – Pieces of data that are sent and stored to your computer when you use a browser to visit a website are called cookies. The purpose of the cookies is to record user's browsing activity and to adapt the website so that it matches the interests of the user.

17. Copyright – Copyright is an exclusive legal right given to the owner of content that is created.

18. CPM – CPM stand for cost-per-mile and it represents cost per thousand impressions. It is one of the advertising payment plans, where you pay the price per thousands views.

19. CRO – CRO stands for conversion rate optimization and it represents the rate at which visitors, browsing your website, convert to customers.

20. DNS – Data sour name is a data structure containing information about a certain database. DNS allows connection to this database.

21. Email marketing – Email marketing is a type of internet marketing where the process of promoting a website is conducted through email campaign.

22. Engagement – This term refers to the possibility of connecting with customers in order to establish long-term connection and to increase the influence.

23. Entry page – An entry page is one of the pages on a website that the visitors first see once they arrive to your website. It is also called a landing page.

24. eWoM – Electronic word of mouth is the online version of traditional word of mouth marketing. In this form, marketing relies on the positive or negative statement about the company, which is provided by the customers, and shared via online media, such as social networks, email, etc.

25. Exit page – Exit page is the last page the users access, before they leave the website.

26. Google penalty – Google penalty has a negative impact on your website ranking, as Google lowers the ranking on your website due to penalty. Penalty can be unfortunate due to an algorithm update, or your website can be penalized due to the usage of manipulative and misleading techniques, which are called black hat SEO.

27. HTML page – HTML stands for Hypertext Markup Language and it represents the standardized system for tagging text files. HTML page is a web page that uses HTML to tag the content, which allows search engines to identify different parts of the text.

28. HTML validator – HTML validator is a program used to check markup elements of HTML in order to detect any potential errors.

29. Impression – In internet marketing, impression, also called view, is achieved each time an online visitor sees the information, without the need to click on it.

30. Inbound marketing – Inbound marketing refers to the activities done by marketers in the purpose of producing interest, and attracting the visitors to the website, where you have the opportunity to convert those visitors.

31. JavaScript – JavaScript is a scripting language used in the HTML file of a website.

32. Keyword – Keyword is a word or phrase that is used to describe the content of the web page. Keywords are used in different types of internet marketing, such as SEO, paid advertising, etc.

33. Keyword density – Keyword density is the percentage of usage of the keyword or keyword phrase on the web page.

34. Keyword research – This refers to the process of finding the most relevant keywords you should use on your website, when it comes to content optimization. Since search engine results are categorized based on the keywords, you need to use only relevant keywords in order to make sure that you attract relevant traffic.

35. Keyword stuffing – Keyword stuffing is the process of adding too many keywords to the content. The purpose of this activity is to manipulate search engine algorithm in ranking a website better, but this practice is penalized by search engines, which is why it is not recommended to apply keyword stuffing in content optimization.

36. KPI – Key performance indicator is a type of measurement used to evaluate the performance of the website.

37. Landing page – A landing page, also called a lead capture page or a lander, is a single page that appears after the user has clicked on the link in the search engine result, search engine ad, the link posted on social media, link included in the email campaign, etc.

38. Lead – In online marketing, a lead is a potential sale contact. This means that only those contacts that are most likely to become your customers, due to their interests, needs, etc. are called leads. Different strategies in internet marketing are used to generate leads.

39. Meta tag – This is the coding system used in HTML to mark the content of the website in order to allow search engines to understand the data. The meta tags provide the meta data about the HTML document.

40. Metric – Metric is a measure that is used to track and monitor a specific element of a website in order to evaluate the website performance.

41. Mobile device – A mobile device is a small portable computing device, such as a smart phone or a tablet.

42. Mobile-friendly – This term is usually used for website design. Mobile-friendly website is the website that users can access using any mobile device, without this impairing user experience.

43. Multivariate testing – Multivariate testing refers to the process of testing a web page where multiple variables are modified, in order to determine the combination of the variables that gives best results.

44. Off-page – The factors that affect ranking, which are not available on the actual website include external links.

45. Online advertising – Online advertising, also called internet advertising, is the form of marketing that uses internet to promote a business and distribute promotional messages.

46. On-page – The factors that affect ranking, which are available on the actual website include tags, keywords, content, etc.

47. Optimization – Optimization is the process of improving different on-site and off-site elements according to SEO guidelines, in order to improve the positioning of the website in the search engine results pages. Various aspects of a website can be optimized, such as content optimization, title optimization, image optimization, video optimization, etc.

48. Optimization – Optimization is the process of improving something, in order to increase its functionality and efficiency. In terms of internet marketing, optimization is usually the process of improving the website in order to improve ranking and increase the traffic obtained through organic results.

49. Organic reach – The total number of unique people who saw your website or post through unpaid distribution.

50. Outbound marketing – Outbound marketing refers to using external sources to spread the word of your website. Unlike inbound marketing, outbound methods use external sources, both paid and unpaid to generate leads and improve website performance.

51. Paid reach – The total number of unique people who saw your website or post through paid distribution.

52. Personalization – This refers to the process of tailoring something according to specific needs. Personalization is an approach especially recommended in social media marketing, as well as in email marketing, as it allows you to establish connection with social followers or email subscribers.

53. Platform – A platform is a computer system on which application is run.

54. Positioning – In internet marketing, positioning refers to the position of the website in the search engine results pages. Since pages positioned at the top of the results get more visits, positioning is an important activity of internet marketing.

55. PPC – PPC, short for pay-per-click, is a type of paid advertising used in online marketing, where advertisers pay each time a user clicks on the ad, that can be shown in the search engine result pages as sponsored results, or on social networks.

56. Proxy – A proxy or proxy server is another computer through which communication between the client and the resource is established.

57. Ranking – Ranking refers to the position of a website in search engine result pages. As search engine position websites based on different criteria that affect ranking, it is important to follow search engine guidelines in order to improve ranking and thus promote your website.

58. Reach – Reach is the total number of people who are able to see you message or internet marketing campaign.

59. Referral – This refers to the page that is linking to another page.

60. ROI – Return on investment, commonly known as profitability ratio, is the benefit the investor achieved through its investment. ROI is a comparison of the profit you were able to achieve and the initial investment.

61. Search query – Search query is a term a user types into the search engine. There are different types of search queries, depending on what kind of information users search for using search engines.

62. SEM – Search engine marketing is a type of internet marketing where the website is promoted through search engines, using both unpaid (SEO) and paid (PPC) methods.

63. SEO – Search engine optimization is a type of internet marketing where the ranking of the website is improved using unpaid methods.

64. SERP – SERP stands for search engine results page, and it is the page, which is shown to the users after they type a search query into the search engine. The search engine

results page shows the results that are related to the query, including both sponsored (paid) results, as well as organic results.

65. Session – A session is a presence of specific IP address that has not visited website within past 30 minutes. In terms of website, a session is occasionally defined as a visit.

66. SMM – Social media marketing is a type of online marketing that uses social media websites to promote a business, increase traffic and generate leads.

67. Strategy – Strategy is a well-developed business plan that involves the plan and the analysis of the current situation, the goals that should be achieved by implementation of the strategy, the set of actions to be performed, as well as ways to monitor and measure the efficiency of the strategy. In terms of internet marketing, internet marketing strategy involves planning and tasks to be performed as a part of internet marketing.

68. Target audience – Target audience is the group of online users you want to reach. You should optimize your internet marketing strategy in order to maximize the chances of reaching your target audience, as those users are more likely to become your customers, subscribers, followers, etc.

69. Targeting – Targeting is the process of selecting. It usually refers to the selection of potential customers, in order to establish a group, often called a target group, of those who are most likely to become your customers.

70. Trademark – Trademark is a design, which is recognizable and it represents an image of a company, business or individual.

71. Traffic – In the online world, traffic refers to the flow of data. When it comes to websites, traffic represents the amount of data sent and received by the visitors of that website, regardless if the paid or unpaid method was used.

72. URL – Uniform Resource Locator refers to the location of the file on the internet. It is the address of the website, which you type into the browser in order to find a particular website.

73. User – In terms of online world, a user is a person who uses internet to find information or to establish contact.

74. Visibility – Visibility is the chance of your website appearing in the search engine results pages. Internet marketing is supposed to increase the visibility of your website, and thus increase the possibility of your website appearing in the organic results.

75. Visit – Visit, also called a session, is the measurement used to signify user's action happening in a particular period.

76. W3C – W3C stand for the World Wide Web Consortium and it represents the community working together to develop and improve web standards.

77. Web analytics tool – These tools are used as a part of web analytics, in the purpose of monitoring and analyzing the performance of the website.

78. Web browsing – Web browsing is the process of using a web browser, a software application, in order to search for information online.

79. Webmaster – Webmaster is the person who creates and manages a website.

80. Website analytics – The collection of different metrics, such as website visits, bounce rate, session duration, referrals, etc. represents website analytics. These data about the website are used to analyze and monitor the performance of the website.

81. Website directory – A website directory, also called a link directory, is a website that specializes in featuring links to other websites, which are divided based on the categories.

82. Website navigation – Website navigation represents the structure of the website that is used to direct users to different parts of the website.

83. Website saturation – This term refers to the number of web pages from a single domain, that are indexed by search engines.

84. Who is tool – This is an online tool, which allows you to type the URL you want to check and to see who owns the website. Additional information includes owner's email, hosting company, the domain expiring date, etc. When you register a domain, you can choose to hide this information, in which case Who is tool will not show this results when your website is analyzed.

13

Questionnaire

13. Questionnaire

Questions

1. What is internet marketing?

a) Promotion of goods and services through the internet

b) Promotion of goods and services through social media

c) Promotion of goods and services through search engine ads

d) Promotion of goods and services through newsletters

2. Besides having a website, what are other media that can be used for internet marketing?

a) Social media accounts

b) Social media accounts and emails

c) Social media accounts, blogs and emails

d) Emails and ads

3. Internet marketing became an inseparable part of a modern business due to _____.

a) The saturation of traditional advertising

b) The increased usage of the internet

c) The development of many online tools

d) The expansion of the market

4. Apart from SEO, SEM and SMM, internet marketing also includes:

a) SERP

b) Google Analytics

c) Email marketing and affiliate marketing

d) Content writing

5. One of the biggest advantages of internet marketing is:

a) Customized strategy that can be applied to any business (large or small)

b) Ability to use a lot of free platforms

c) A lot of online tutorials

d) Simplicity of the strategy

6. Content publication is important part of internet marketing because it helps you with _____.

a) Statistics

b) Sharing

c) Attracting and engaging visitors

d) Ads

7. Being a primary source of information for millions of people, _____ is a medium enabling you to promote your business and stay competitive.

a) Internet

b) Web analytics

c) Website

d) HTML

8. Which one of these is not a type of internet marketing?

a) Email marketing

b) Search engine marketing

c) Search engine optimization

d) Search engine result page

9. _____ is one of the online marketing trends.

a) Affiliate marketing

b) Mobile-friendly content

c) Social analytics

d) SEO

10. Successful online marketing strategy demands _____.

a) Creativity, planning, research and flexibility

b) Analysis of traditional marketing approach

c) Being restrictive towards changes

d) Imitating the approach your competitors use

11. Web analytics refers to the usage of _____.

a) Social media to promote product pages

b) Web data to conduct analysis

c) Different tools to optimize the website

d) Paid ads to promote content

12. Web analytics helps you assess efficiency of _____.

a) SEM strategy

b) Content on social media

c) Content posted on the website

d) Paid advertising methods

13. Off-site web analytics collects the data about _____.

a) General performance, regardless if one owns a website or not

b) Visits, duration, interaction, and other data available only to the website owners

c) The data about clicks on external links

d) The data about social media promotion

14. On-site web analytics collects the data about _____.

a) General performance, regardless if one owns a website or not

b) Visits, duration, interaction, and other data available only to the website owners

c) The data about clicks on external links

d) The data about social media promotion

15. Web analytics can provide the data about website's performance, which can help with _____.

a) Content planning

b) SMM strategy

c) Optimization tools

d) Affiliate marketing

16. Which of these metrics provides data about how users reach the website and what they look for?

a) Average time on site

b) Visitor path

c) Top pages

d) Demographics

17. What is a conversion?

a) Any sale

b) A click

c) A specific action a visitor does

d) Page tagging

18. Which of these can be a conversion?

a) Registering for a newsletter

b) Having mobile-friendly content

c) Sending a newsletter

d) Comparing the website with competitors

19. Which of these cannot be a conversion?

a) Clicking on 'purchase'

b) Registering with an email or password

c) Downloading a file

d) Receiving a newsletter

20. What is conversion rate optimization (CRO)?

a) The rate at which internet users visit the website

b) The rate at which visitors convert into customers

c) The rate at which people leave the website

d) The rate at which people visit the landing page

21. Increasing CRO helps you _____.

a) Learn more about the website

b) Learn more about optimization of the website

c) Improve the performance of the website

d) Optimize visual content

22. The data for CRO process come from _____.

a) User feedback

b) Social insights

c) Optimization

d) Planning

23. The data about conversion funnel help you _____.

a) Install call-to-action button

b) Visualize the path visitors take from the point they visit the website, until they leave

c) Analyze variables as a part of A/B testing

b) Analyze variables from multivariate testing

24. Which of these is not an element of CRO process?

a) Data collection and processing

b) Optimization of goals

c) Optimization of strategy

d) Social media activity

25. Which of these is the correct formula for calculating CRO?

a) (Total views / Total conversions) X 100

b) (Total conversions / Total views) X 100

c) (Total visits / Total sales) X 100

d) (Total sales / Total visits) X 100

26. SEM is the process of promoting your website through _____.

a) Paid methods only

b) Free methods only

c) Either paid or free methods

d) Social media

27. Which of these is a great benefit of SEM?

a) Your campaign can run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

b) Optimization of social media

c) CRO

d) Web analytics

28. Which of these is not an optimization element of internet marketing?

a) Keyword analysis and research

b) Determining visibility

c) Total conversions

d) Using back-end tools

29. Sponsored results are _____ and they show up at the top of the search results.

a) Separated from organic reach

b) Invisible to the users

c) Larger than organic results

d) Shown on a separate page

30. CPC advertising means that you pay each time _____.

a) A user clicks on your ad

b) A user sees your ad

c) Your ad is shown

d) You achieve a conversion on your website

31. Which of these is not an ad format?

a) Product listing

b) Text ad

c) App promotion

d) Advertising

32. Paid reach helps you:

a) Attract more clients

b) Optimize your website

c) Calculate CRO

d) Improve ranking in organic reach

33. Which of the targeting options is not part of Google AdWords?

a) Keyword targeting

b) Location and language targeting

c) Device targeting

d) Interests targeting

34. Paid advertising allows you full control over the campaign, by setting up _____.

a) Descriptive ads

b) The budget and time period during which it is going to be spent

c) Social media accounts on different websites

d) A landing page

35. Social media marketing is a type of online marketing _____ social websites.

a) Geared towards

b) Different from

c) Which does not focus on

d) That uses email marketing on

36. Website saturation represents _____.

a) The number of external links

b) The number of pages of the website indexed by the search engines

c) The number of social media accounts

d) The number of websites with the similar topics

37. Electronic word of mouth (eWoM) includes:

a) Any online comments posted on the company blog

b) The number of users who signed up for a newsletter

c) Any statement, perception, comment and like or dislike generated by online users

d) The number of affiliate links

38. Which of the following social networks allow you to create pages to promote a brand or a company?

a) YouTube

b) Facebook

c) Twitter

d) Foursquare

39. Which one of these goals can be achieved through SMM strategy?

a) Decrease the bounce rate

b) Optimization of website content

c) Raising the level of brand awareness

d) Gaining customers through email campaign

40. In contrast to the paid-for ads, search engine optimization does not require _____.

a) Payment

b) Effort

c) Analysis

d) Monitoring

41. White hat SEO relates to the use of _____.

a) Conflicting techniques, which are quick shortcuts to gaining high search rankings and links

b) Paid methods to gain links from other websites

c) Spammy content published on the website

d) Techniques and approaches, which are within the acceptable bounds of search engine rules and regulation

42. Which of these is recommended when working on SEO strategy?

a) Earn natural links

b) Pay for links

c) Avoid formatting the pages

d) Avoid using keyword in the title

43. The goal of email marketing is to _____.

a) Ask users to follow you on social media

b) Ask users to subscribe

c) Get in touch with previous or potential customers

d) Get in touch with competitors

44. There are two types of email marketing, depending on the type of email used in the strategy. Those are:

a) Paid and organic emails

b) Transactional and direct emails

c) Long and short emails

d) Optimized and non-optimized emails

45. What are the marketing techniques used in affiliate marketing?

a) Cost per click

b) Pay per click and cost per thousand impressions

c) Pay per sale and pay per lead

d) Pay per impression

46. Transactional emails strategy refers to the emails that are:

a) Sent as a response to action that has already been taken by the recipient

b) Randomly sent by companies to all subscribers

c) Sent as a part of promotion of new product

d) Welcome emails sent to the new subscribers

47. Leads are gathered in the purpose of _____ .

a) Increasing links

b) Building a list

c) Creating a sitemap

d) Improving organic reach

48. _____ represents the consumers interested in the product or service of a business.

a) Email marketing

b) New generation

c) Lead generation

d) Social media marketing

49. The main different between search engine marketing and other types of marketing is _____ .

a) Optimization

b) No costs

c) Non-intrusive approach

d) Intrusive approach

50. Which of these tools can be used in email marketing?

a) LinkedIn

b) Google AdWords

c) Google Analytics

d) MailChimp

Answers

1. a	18. a	35. a
2. c	19. d	36. b
3. b	20. b	37. c
4. c	21. c	38. b
5. a	22. a	39. c
6. c	23. b	40. a
7. a	24. d	41. d
8. d	25. b	42. a
9. b	26. c	43. c
10. a	27. a	44. b
11. b	28. c	45. c
12. c	29. a	46. a
13. a	30. a	47. b
14. b	31. d	48. c
15. a	32. a	49. c
16. b	33. d	50. d
17. c	34. b	

14

Conclusion

14. Conclusion

As generations evolve and technology develops, the advancement in the field of marketing and advertisements has been immense. No longer are businesses bound by the limitations of traditional marketing techniques. The old has been heavily replaced by the new. One of the newest and most effective strategies has been of online marketing, which is the topic that this whole e-book was centered on. Online marketing utilizes the internet and its wealth of resources for promotional, profile-raising purposes.

After covering some types of online marketing, which included email marketing and social media marketing, we reviewed some of the common trends and shifts that resulted from this advancement. The main point that was highlighted was how unique modern internet advertising is, as compared to its traditional counterparts. Internet marketing is all about being available whenever and wherever customers may need you, rather than just popping up once in a while for attention.

The e-book then moved on to the topic of web analytics, which is the usage and analysis of website information in order to gain a better understanding of patterns that materialize online. Web analytics helps businesses to get the most out of their websites. They can work out how effective their content is and what their most provocative stimuli are, while getting an idea of their users' online activities and preferences. The two main types of web analytics that we covered were off-site and on-site web analytics. We then looked at some different tools and resources that aid businesses in this area.

The third chapter moved on to the basics of conversion optimization and online touchpoints. While the touchpoint acts as a first impression of businesses for its clientele, the concept of conversion optimization is related to corporate websites. The term "conversion rate optimization" was also discussed, and it was defined as the rate at which browsing visitors converted into customers on a business's website. Other important terms included call-to-action buttons, conversion funnels, A-B tests, and multi-variant testing. Chapter three closed after the calculation of conversion rate optimization.

The remaining chapters discussed some types of internet marketing in more detail. The chapter on search engine marketing was focused on promoting a business or its website content by using different paid and free-of-cost methods for search engine optimization. The goal of these

methods is to increase the ranking of your website in search engines. We all know that people are more likely to click on the first or second-most highly ranked link that their search engines dig up. Social media marketing is one of the most popular techniques that involves using social media to spread and increase businesses' online platforms. The most common social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn, due to the popularity of these networks and the large number of users.

We then reviewed email marketing, which is all about using emails for promotional means. Companies may send out a series of emails to their customers and clients each day, whether it is about deals or data. Finally, affiliate marketing is the strategy that uses rewards in exchange for bringing in new customers or visitors through affiliations. We saw that this was closely linked to the world of referral-based marketing.

For businesses and entrepreneurs who want to stay on top of the freshest and most attractive deals and sales going on in the world, internet marketing is a necessity, not a choice. This method of marketing has lifted the business domain to new heights. The limitations of internet marketing are few in number, while the advantages are sure to boost any business up towards the most fantastic and profitable opportunities. This e-book details all the basics, details, advantages and disadvantages of the massive internet marketing sphere. As it was highlighted continuously throughout this e-book, online marketing is one of the newest and most effective techniques to employ in the modern world, where great majority of people is online already.

Modern market has transferred to the online world where companies can now reach customers worldwide, using different forms of online marketing. Not only does this increase the potential market and the number of potential customers, but it also provides companies with the chances of establishing the position on global market and thus reaching for greater success and achievement of long-term goals.