101 STEPS TO DIGITAL MARKETING

ASMM
ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS

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Every business needs to have an effective digital marketing plan in order to be successful. However, businesses may have difficulty determining what it is that they need to do when it comes to digital marketing. Sometimes a business will get to the point where they are focusing too much on one aspect of marketing and forget about the rest of the things that are necessary for the plan to succeed. When a business plans accordingly and keeps their focus on the big picture, then they will be taking the steps needed with an effective plan.

Here are the 101 steps that businesses need to follow when they are preparing a digital marketing plan.

Social Media

In order to reach an audience and have them engaged in the process, every company needs to utilize social media.

1. **Utilize multiple social media platforms**

   Businesses need to reach as many people as possible, so they should plan to market on as many social media sites. The main ones are Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and YouTube. Each social media platform will reach a new target audience and this is what every business wants.

2. **Keep your brand consistent**

   All of the information that you share amongst the social media platforms should be consistent. This will include the spelling of the name, contact information and descriptions. When your business is setting up the profiles on these platforms, make sure the image presented is professional. Photos that are blurry or incorrect information will make the company look like they are not experienced for any type of business.

3. Create engaging content

Any content that you share on the social media platforms should be engaging to the audience. The content can include links to blog posts, contests, promotions, new products or polls. All of this information will allow the readers to become engaged with your business and what you offer.

4. Post updates regularly

Businesses need to post regularly on social media sites in order for the profile to stay active. As long as posting is being done at least 3 times a week, then the profiles will stay active with your target audience.

5. Respond to customers

Social media is a way to connect with customers and potential customers. This connection not only means sharing information with them, but also responding to them. If a customer asks a question or comments on something, a business needs to respond quickly and professionally. This will allow the customers to see that the business cares about what they think.

6. Take advantage of ads

According to AdRoll, any ad on Facebook will receive 8 times more click through rates than any other web ad. This shows that social media advertising really works.

7. Use SEO content

Every business has keywords that are SEO friendly. While many businesses think that these keywords should only be used in blog posts, this is not the case. Use these keywords in your posts as long as they make sense. Using these keywords will also help increase your rank for searches.

8. **Customize your URL on Facebook**

A Facebook URL can be changed one time after your page has received 25 likes. The URL can then use your business name instead of the randomly generated one.

9. **Use appropriate profile descriptions**

On some social platforms, the “About Me” page will be used as the meta description for your page. Use relevant keywords in your profile descriptions as well as information that is relevant to your business. This should be worded in a way that a potential customer can decide that this is the business for them just from reading this description.

10. **Link the social media profiles**

Create buttons on the business website that will allow visitors to click on the social media platforms easily.

SEO Locally

SEO strategies for local marketing are helpful when a business is trying to target a specific audience. This is also good for when a business has multiple locations.

11. Define goals

The first step that businesses need to do when targeting a local audience is to define the SEO goals. Businesses will want to know who they are targeting and if the strategies will be different depending on the location. How will the business measure the success of the marketing?

12. Perform local SEO audits

A business can perform a local SEO audit in order to find the strengths and weaknesses of a marketing plan. The audit would look at the Google business page, the website, landing page, local social media and local competition. This audit will allow the business to see how they are doing in comparison to their competitors.

13. Create a Google My Business page

By creating a business profile on Google, you will be increasing your local rankings. However, make sure that you only have one business page and no duplicates, as this can affect your ranking in a negative way.

14. Increase your local online directory listings

Citations are when your company name, address and phone number are listed on other pages of the internet. The more citations that your business has, the higher your search engine rankings will be and the easier it will be for customers to find you. If at all possible, add a link to your business website to these citations.

15. Be consistent

The more time that you spend making sure that your business is easily found during searches, the more successful your business will be.

16. Allow customers to leave reviews

Potential customers are always looking to see what other people think of a business. Also, Google now has a feature that places reviews on local SERPs. The more reviews that your business has, the more likely it will be at the top of the results on Google's SERP page.

17. Target mobile users

At least 80% of local searches are done on a mobile device, so when devising a marketing plan, businesses need to take this information into account.

18. Each specific location needs a webpage

Create a specific webpage for each location your business has. When people are searching for your company name with the location, they will be able to be directed to that page easier. Each webpage can offer content that is for that specific location, which will be good for local customers.

19. Optimize content

Research what keywords and phrases that potential customers in the area are searching for. Implement these keywords and phrases into the content that you are placing on the businesses local pages in a similar way that you would for SEO rankings.

20. Local media coverage

Find a way to get covered by the local media, whether it is on the news, in a newspaper article or a local magazine. The more ways that people can hear about your business locally, the more your local rankings will increase.

Content Creativity

A business needs to have online content that is engaging and informative. When a business has the correct content available, they will rank higher and they attract more traffic to their site.

21. Blog posts of quality not quantity

Blogs are a great way to share information with an audience, but it is more difficult than just writing a few words. People who read blogs are looking for quality content that provides useful information that is interesting. Readers do not want to read advertisements or articles that have titles that don't reveal the true content of the post. To reach a larger audience, make sure that you are linking the blog posts to social media platforms.

22. Use informative infographics

Infographics are used in place of blogs on occasion, since they are not as long and they have a visual aspect. These infographics can show about a product or service that your business offers, but make sure it has enough useful information for the reader.

23. Whiteboard videos

Creating a whiteboard video is easy with the help of a voice over company and a program called Sparkol. The video can include custom graphics as well as a short advertisement of your services. They can be placed on a product page and they are always popular on social media pages.

24. Podcasts

Podcasts are an easy way to market to people who are on the go all of the time. These people may not read blogs, but they love listening to podcasts. Podcasts can allow your business to reach a new audience and share information about your business.

25. Use keywords and phrases

When creating content for web pages, blog posts and social media, use keywords and phrases that will allow your information to receive higher rankings. Make sure that the keywords are being used in a way that makes the information easy to understand and natural.

26. Link everything

When writing a blog post, you should use links on occasion. A business can link to social media, older blog posts, individual products or services and local pages. This will allow your pages to get more views with readers and they may interact more as well.

27. The power of Web 2.0s

Tumblr, Slideshare, Themefy and Weebly are sites that are Web 2.0s. They are considered external content platforms and with them a business can reach a larger audience.

28. Your company is an authority figure

Everything that your business posts online should make them sound like they are an authority in the business world. All posts should have content that allows the customers to see how knowledgeable the business is in their field of expertise.

29. Use outbound links

Using outbound links will allow your readers to see valuable resources outside of your business. As long as customers find the information your business is sharing useful, they will continue to return for more.

30. Use strategic schedules

Content does not just have to be published regularly, it also needs to be scheduled for specific times. The time will be dependent of the websites high traffic days and times. As long as the readers know that you publish new content at the same times each week, they will continue to return to read what has been added. If they are never sure when to look, they may become frustrated and they won't return to your website.

Search Engine Optimization On Your Website

Using search engine optimization on your website is key to your business becoming successful. Every other platform that your business posts on is directed back to the main website and this is when conversions come into play. Your business wants to make sure that they don't lose any potential customers, so this website needs to be optimized in the best way possible.

31. XML sitemap

An XML sitemap will include information about all of the pages on your website and can be submitted to all of the major search engines. This will allow your website to be search engine friendly and more people will have your website pop up in their search results. This can also give you a higher SERP ranking on Google.

32. Use strong meta tags

The information that appears below the link to your website on a search page is called a meta tag. The entire length of the meta tag should be no longer than 155 characters and it should include a brief description of what the website is about. The meta tags should include as many of the business's keywords or phrases as possible and it should also try to lure the reader to the website. If you need assistance with writing a meta tag, check out WebiMax SEO basic training resources.

33. Interlink your pages

Linking the pages of your website together is an effective way to keep readers on your website. While you are creating the links, plan on using keywords that are SEO optimized for the best results.

34. Use appropriate title tags and headings

Title tags should never be longer than 60 characters and they should always include the company name if possible. The heading should be informative but as short as possible and use SEO ranking keywords or phrases.

35. Optimize your graphics

Readers do not want to spend a lot of time waiting for a page to load on a website. If your website is loading too slowly, you will lose readers quite quickly. Check to see if the images are taking up too much space and if they are, reduce the size of the image or condense the files.

36. Use keywords in your website content

Writing content that is informative and uses keywords that rank higher in searches will produce a strong website. All of the content that is on your page should be at least 200-300 words and be original all of the time. If Google believes that your web page contains spam or too many keywords or phrases, it will place your website at the bottom of the search results. As a guideline, use only the keywords that are relevant to the page or other linking pages.

37. Use image alt tags

All of the images that you use on your website should include an alt tag that describes the image. This tag should only be a few words in length and may include a keyword. These tags are a necessity if you would like your page to be successful.

38. Research the web host that is best for your business

The web host that your business chooses is very important. You will want to choose a host that will optimize the speed and availability of your website. The web host can affect a reader's experience and how your website ranks in Google searches.

39. Use easy navigation

The ease of how a reader can navigate around your website will determine how much traffic your website receives. Your website should have between 5 and 10 main pages, with subpages that are more specific. The main pages will have the most traffic, so they should use higher ranking keywords. CMS and HTML are two options for web pages that are search engine friendly.

40. Monitor your analytics

Using a tool like Google Analytics, Open Tracker or Omniture can assist you with monitoring the analytics of your website. These tools will allow you to see how much traffic your site has as well as your conversion rates. This is where you can see if you are meeting your goals and you may want to consider A/B testing to figure how to improve your marketing campaign.

41. Fix all broken links

If you have any broken links that will take your visitors to a 404 page, you will want to remove or fix them quickly. If a search engine finds broken links on a website, it will rank the site lower in the search results. Google Webmasters is a good site to use in order to identify broken links.

42. What are your URLs

A URL is supposed to have no more than 256 characters of lower case words. There should be no numbers or spaces and the words need to be separated with a hyphen. The URL wording itself should include a description of the page and is designed to be effective for search engines. A quality URL will have higher rankings and will continuously have an increase in traffic than URLs of poor quality.

Offsite Links

Using other websites is a great way to generate traffic to your website. Every business should be networking with others in order to find ways to market effectively. Choose websites that have the target audience that you want and see if you can link your website to their page. Besides increasing your traffic, you will also be seen as a credible source, which Google takes into account when ranking websites.

43. Look for forums

Look for forums that are within your company's field of expertise and participate in the discussions. When you make a comment in a discussion, make sure that you leave a link to your website. After people read your comment, they may feel the need to investigate you or your website a little further. This can increase your website traffic and may give you some new potential customers.

44. Be a guest blogger

Network with other bloggers that have sites with your target audience as readers and see if you can write a guest post for them. This will give them an additional post without them doing any extra work and your company will be seen by a new group of readers. The posts that you write can include links to your site and social media platforms.

45. Use local directories

Research every local directory available to your business and make sure that there is a link to your website on all of them. It will be time consuming however it is pertinent for any local SEO marketing plan.

46. Take advantage of social media platforms

Since social media is a good way to direct traffic to your website, make sure that you are continuously including links in your posts. These links can be for a product, service or a recent blog post that is on your website.

47. Write multiple media pitches and a press release

The goal of a media pitch is to attract the media to your business. The pitch needs to be about a recent topic that is relevant to your business. The end result could be an article that is published on a media website or in print that has a link to your company's website. A press release should only be written when your business has something really important to share with your customers, potential customers and the media.

48. Create a few microsites

A microsite is basically a small website and is a supplement to the company's main website. It should contain basic information about the business and links for the main website.

49. Network

While every company thinks about the competition, they also need to think about networking with others in their field. Networking can start opportunities for guest blogging, links and promotions and is a good way to get the business talked about more.

50. Try co-marketing

Co-marketing is when two different companies advertise their products together. The product that they each advertise will compliment the other and each company will provide links to the other company's website.

AdWords

Google AdWords is an advertising service that allows companies to place ads on search engine page results. Over 80% of search engine pages have ads on them, so most companies are already utilizing this service.

51. Know your target audience

Research who your target audience is before placing a Google AdWords advertisement. This can be done by reviewing who purchased your products in the last quarter. After you know this information, you can customize your ad accordingly.

52. Find your relevant keywords

Access Google Webmaster to find out which keywords and phrases your target audience is searching for before placing your Google AdWords advertisement. This will allow you to customize your ad so it is seen when these keywords have been searched.

53. Pay per click

A benefit of using Google AdWords is that a company only pays for the ad if it is clicked on by a viewer. It is a cost effective way to advertise.

54. Have a daily budget

Even though your company is only paying per click, it still makes sense to have a daily budget. This will prevent you from paying more than necessary, especially if your ad is getting quite a few more clicks on certain days.

55. Make sure the ads are directing to your website

All ads that you place with Google AdWords should have a link that goes directly to a product or the home page of your website. If a link is not directing properly, then you will not make the conversions necessary for the marketing plan to be successful.

56. Make sure the ad is relevant

Make sure that the ad is relevant to the page the viewers are directed to. The page they are directed to should have all of the information about the product in order to have the highest conversion rate.

57. Get rewarded with a High Quality score

Your ad will score higher if it is relevant, has a high click through rate and if your business has had success in the past with ads. All of these things will place your ads in a better spot on the search engine page and you will then receive more views.

58. Call to action

Make sure that your ad is persuading the viewer to take action right away, so that they click to find out more information. The end of the ad should always encourage the viewer to take action immediately.

59. Have callout extensions

A callout extension will show additional information about your company. The extensions are added automatically if your Ad Rank is high enough and there is no additional cost for these extensions.

Public Relations Online

Media pitches and press releases are the two best ways to have online public relations. However, you will need to network and grow strong working relationships with sources and contacts in order to be successful with this strategy.

60. Use SEO keywords for public relations

Since media pitches and press releases can help increase your rankings online, they need to include SEO keywords and phrases. Just make sure that they are being used in the appropriate way and that they make sense with the information that you are trying to convey.

61. Provide media pitches that prove your company is a leader in the field

If you write a media pitch that shows that your company is an expert in the field, you will receive more interest and responses.

62. Use press releases for major announcements

Press releases are only used for major announcements and are approved by a source that the company works with. Press releases never receive approval for release if they do not have something worthwhile to announce.

63. Network for media contacts

Networking is a good way to develop strong relationships with media contacts. As long as communication is ongoing and the information you are providing is valuable, then the relationships will become stronger over time.

64. Links to your website

Anytime something is published online, there should be a link back to your website. It can be a hyperlink when the company name is mentioned or a hyperlink for something that the company offers.

65. Follow trending topics

Each topic that is provided for media pitches should be about current and trending topics. If you lead a pitch with a current news article, the media will realize that others are talking about this topic already.

66. Current company news on your website

Every website should have a page dedicated to the news of the company. This page can include all press releases and media releases that are related to the company. This will allow others to see that the company is a leader in the field.

Generate Leads

Generating leads is a way to find people who are interested in a product or service that your company has. A business needs to find multiple ways to generate leads in order to be successful.

67. Have people fill out their information

Ask people to fill out a form with their name, address and email information, so that you can have a way to contact them in the future.

68. Provide something for free or at a discount

Many times a business will offer a free e-book download when visitors provide their contact information. When visitors are offered something, they are more likely to interact with a website.

69. Have multiple calls of action

Make sure that there are multiple calls of action that your visitors are seeing when they go to your website or see one of your ads. The more there are and the easier they are to do, will keep the viewer engaged and bring them back to the website again.

70. Utilize pay per click advertising

Using Google AdWords is a great way to generate new leads for the business. The ads are only showing to the people that used the keywords that are relevant to the business, so you are reaching your target audience.

71. Email marketing

Anyone that visits your website and fills out contact information is giving your company permission to send them emails. This is a great way to share information about your products and services.

72. High quality content

Any material that your company uses for lead generation needs to have quality content. Make the consumer want to follow up and make a decision quickly.

Marketing by email

Email marketing is an easy way to get potential customers to purchase from your company. Since they have filled out a form and given permission to receive emails, you know that they are interested in the company already.

73. Email list

Compile a list of emails from people who have visited the site and who have purchased from the company. Every time you request an email from someone, make sure that they know how the company will be using the email. It is a good thing to assure them that you will not sell the email to other marketers and that it will only be used for promotional purposes. Also let them know that they can opt out at any time.

74. Be whitelisted

When sending an initial email to someone, give them instructions on how to add the business to their address book. This will prevent the emails from going into the spam folder.

75. Strategically send out emails

Let everyone know how often you will be sending emails and plan accordingly. Not everyone will want to receive emails too often.

76. Personalize your emails

It might be worthwhile to personalize your emails to smaller groups based on what they are buying or their demographic. This will allow you to tailor the emails according to each group instead of a larger group with one basic promotion.

77. Create a newsletter

Newsletters often encourage more people to sign up on an email list. The newsletters usually include announcements, updates and sale information and many people are always looking for deals.

78. Auto response systems

Auto response systems are an easy way to contact the recipients on your email list. As soon as someone signs up to receive emails from the company, they will start receiving short articles about topics related to your business. These will come out at intervals that the company decides on and are in addition to the other emails.

79. Check your analytics

Look at your analytics and see how many people have opened your emails and who clicked on the links that were provided. Find out how many people unsubscribed to your emails. All of these things can help you determine whether you need to make changes to your plans.

Offsite Marketing

Offsite marketing is networking with people who will eventually help you advertise your company. They will place links to your site on their website and tell their viewers about your company.

80. Find your target audience

Your company will want to network with people who already receive traffic from your target audience. If you are marketing to people ages 18-45, then you will not want to have a site geared towards senior citizens helping you market your site.

81. Open Site Explorer

Using an analytical tool like Open Site Explorer is a good way to see which pages are giving you the most offsite links. It will also let you know how your competitors are doing as well.

82. What links are you looking for

After looking at all of the information that Open Site Explorer gives you, you will now know what sources or categories are the best for your business. You will also know who your competitors are linked to and you can then try to get those same links.

83. Utilize nonprofit and educational sites

Google ranks sites according to how reputable they are. If you have links from nonprofits and educational sites, you will rank higher than if you were only on independent blogs.

84. Don't create too many links too quickly

If you create too many inbound links too quickly, then Google will penalize you and you will go further down in the rankings in search engines.

85. Request inbound links

As your business grows, you should continue to look for opportunities to create inbound links. The links that you started with may or may not continue to work and you want to have ones that will work the best for your business.

86. SERP rich snippets tool

The SERP rich snippets tool will let you customize your page titles and meta descriptions as well as add more detailed information about the company. It may allow your business to feature a positive customer review or the hours of operation and this information may attract more potential customers.

87. Have regular press releases

Press releases are just important for offsite marketing as they are for online marketing. The press releases will mean that the business is being mentioned on many other sites and will include links to your website.

88. Network with editors

Network with editors who have publications with information related to your field of expertise. You may be able to write a guest blog or at the very least have your business website link in the publication.

89. Include your site name in anchor texts

Include your site name in the anchor text that will appear in third party sources, since it is part of brand recognition.

Mobile Marketing

Customers are using mobile phones more often, so make sure that the content you are providing online is accessible by mobile users.

90. Web design

Responsive web design is important to have if you want mobile users to be able to use your site easily. These websites are optically formatted and easy to navigate and can be reorganized to fit any device.

91. Mobile friendly

Google now has rules that need to be followed when setting up your information on a business. The search results shown are different for desktop users in comparison to mobile users. In order to rank higher for mobile users, your site needs to have easy to click links, no horizontal scrolling and it doesn't need zoom in order to read.

92. Use mobile advertisements effectively

Mobile advertisements should be concise and only include one message that has an immediate call to action. These ads do not have the space that desktops do, so while they need to make a statement to the audience, they need to do it quickly.

93. Conversions

Set up a matching tool or fingerprinting tool so that you can see how many conversions are coming from your mobile marketing plan. These tools will allow you to see how effective your mobile ads are.

94. Location based advertising

Mobile ads are now able to target mobile users who are near your storefront. This audience can be targeted from their searches or from check-ins on Facebook or Foursquare. The benefit of this is that you will be targeting people who are already in the area and they are the ones who will be the most likely to go into the store.

Manage your reputation

Every business needs to worry about their reputation. It does not take too many negative reviews or poor comments for a business to decline.

95. Determine your online reputation

Research your company location, products and brands online and review the results that appear on the first two pages of each search. Create a list of where the negative, neutral and positive listings are.

96. Game plan

Develop a game plan in order to figure out a way to decrease some of your negative and neutral results. This plan is not something that can be done quickly, but it is something that can be done. Start with the results that are listed higher up in the search results.

97. Claim your business name

Make sure that you have claimed your business name on every online platform. This will include social media sites as well as local listings. This will prevent anyone else from creating an account with your information. It will also help with your SEO rankings.

98. Positive content

Even though the negative listings will not disappear, you will be able to get them further down the search result list by adding more positive content. Start by adding more blog and social media posts and slowly add inbound links.

99. Customer reviews

Allow customers to leave reviews of your products and services. It will show that you want to know about the customer's experience and the comments can be used as a free marketing tool. Many times people will buy something because someone else loved it. Someone may leave a negative review, but this is where your company can apologize to the customer and explain how you will prevent the problem from happening again. This will show potential customers that you address any problem that comes up.

Final Steps

100. Vigilance

No business is ever finished with digital marketing. Every business needs to continue to advertise so that they can be seen as a leader in their field.

101. Adaptive

Businesses need to know when to make changes in their digital marketing plan. There are always going to be new ideas and platforms that can change how things need to be done. Continuing to learn about these changes will allow your business to stay competitive.