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Technology Times November 2022 Issue

“With over 20 years of experience providing remote support to clients that rely on technology, I know what it takes to deliver business continuity. Add to that another 20 years of support in the service industry you’ll not find another company that takes customer service to heart as I do. Find out for your business what a difference it makes.”



Dan Foote
Owner/President

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Why Digital Marketing Should Be A Top Priority For Small Businesses

By Joe Pascaretta
Forbes

The internet has become an indispensable tool for almost any consumer making a decision. Today’s internet users spend a daily average of **nearly three hours** on the internet, using it for communication, entertainment, research and information. In 2020, global retail e-commerce sales **surpassed 4.2 billion U.S. dollars**. One of the biggest fallacies I hear from small business owners is that they don’t need to worry about engaging with their customers digitally. So, what does this combination mean for small business owners and entrepreneurs?

First, if you’re selling something online, then it’s likely your target audience is online at some point during any given day. And second, even if you are not selling your product or service online, then you likely could still count on your target audience being on the internet at some point during any given day.

What does this mean for your small business?

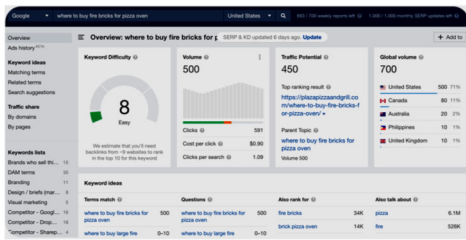
As a previous small business owner, I knew that being agile and updating my digital skill set and go-to-market strategies were a must, given the pace at which marketing technology was changing. In fact, in **our 2020 survey** of small business owners, 60% stated they had to pivot to a stronger online presence and offering because of the pandemic, and 24% shared they knew that acquiring new and emerging digital technologies would be required in 2021 and they intended to investigate how to advance in the digital space.

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Ahrefs - set your SEO strategy



Content is king but SEO is... important?

SEO (or rather 'search engine optimization') can be a bit of a dark art, but it's basically to do with how far up your web pages rank in search engine results. Using a variety of different factors, search engines try to match content they think best serves a user's search.

On average the **first result in a search** hooovers up about a **third of all clicks** for that search phrase. So the further you are up the rankings, the better you'll perform. Creating an SEO content strategy can help boost you up the search results for terms relevant to your brand. To help us out, we've been using [Ahrefs](#).

How does this work? Imagine you're a start-up pizza oven company. Ranking for obviously valuable search phrases like 'buy pizza ovens online' will be very difficult right out of the gate, as you'll be facing stiff competition from established brands. Instead, focusing on lower-volume, less-competitive keywords could unearth a load of opportunities your competitors might have overlooked.

Let's continue with this fictional pizza oven company example. According to Ahrefs' keywords explorer, 'buy pizza oven' has a keyword difficulty of 54 (1 being the easiest, 100 being the most difficult). It estimates you'll need backlinks from about 100 referring other sites to stand a chance of ranking in the top 10 results.

Using keywords explorer brings up a load of other opportunities which might be a good fit for your company - like 'where to buy fire bricks for pizza oven', which has an average monthly search volume of 700 and a keyword difficulty of 8! **Score.**

Google knows all, right?

By Dr. Mary M. Rydesky
SVP, DanTech Services Inc
Owner, [Transition Management](#)

Did you know Google is billing itself as 'the world's largest job exchange'? Are you using Google to its fullest when it comes to posting jobs and getting applicants for your positions? If you are not adapting to the Google influence, you may be missing the chance to connect with your next employee, intern, or apprentice.

You can go straight to the source (Google), an option that gives you maximum control over your listing. Google sells listings at a fee based on small-medium (\$59/month) or large business categories. If your company has ongoing hiring needs, consider opening an account.

You will miss the data reports (analytics) if you use Google Jobs free of charge, but the free approach may be useful, nonetheless.

Test it out. Open a browser and enter wording that describes your hiring needs, such as "customer service jobs near me" or "hot tub installer jobs near me." You could also try "receptionist jobs Palmer AK" if you want to specify an area.

Note under JOB HIGHLIGHTS how Google found you – for example, it may indicate that the ad was 'identified by Google from the original job post' – do you know where you posted it to determine where Google found it?

Learn about your competition by reading the listings you get. If they are numerous, try filtering for 'past 3 days' to see the newest listings. Competitor intelligence just became more comprehensive! (Note that companies that require job seekers to set up an account before seeing details of the jobs are not included.) Perhaps you need to consider the features people seek the most and add this information to your job ads. High on the list is your salary compared to others in the area, the potential for remote work, and work/life balance. Do you describe your company with truth and attractive features?



Note on Google's listing where (and how many) blue link buttons show on a job. For example, a Front Desk Receptionist Job in the MatSu has five links to sites such as Glassdoor and Salary – places you may not know your jobs are listed! Consider how that happens... And what happens when applicants go anywhere but to your company website to apply?

Just like Google, many third-party job boards now get your listings by crawling the web. You don't buy their services or even contact them in most cases. You should have a JOBS or CAREERS pages on your company website for job seekers to find your openings, and you may have your page linked to software known as an applicant tracking system (automation for managing your human resources from interest and application onward).

Next Steps

Your jobs may show in a Google search if your website is well-managed, you use keywords appropriately, and you monitor results (SEO) of the work your website is doing to attract customers... and now, to attract job seekers! Suggest that your web team visit "developers.google.com" for job posting information as a next step to improving how Google ads look to job seekers. Does your job ad stress the knowledge, skills, ability, and fit between personality and your company culture?

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Carbon Fiber Minimalist Wallet for Men - RFID Blocking Credit Card Holder Metal Wallet- Money Clip Slim Front Pocket

- **RFID blocking protection Wallet:** The wallet is made of carbon fiber material which better than alloy. A slim, light body, Fashionable and convenient appearance, RFID blocking protection design. Let everyone be free from the heavy purse strings and apply to everyone.
- **Money Clip & Elastic Band:** The classical carbon fiber money clip is made of spring steel, it can be used to hold cash handy. Flexible elastic webbing greatly improved the card holding capacity, it's just perfect for card carrier.
- **Slim & Ultra Light:** Minimalist wallets for men, thinner than traditional wallets, only weights 0.5 OZ and larger capacity storage design for up to 15 cards of this card case wallet with money clip, it can hold all your cards, clip money at the same time.
- **Excellent Quality:** Made of high-quality Carbon fiber shell, Anti-corrosion, Durable and Wear, ensures long service life. Premium fiber texture is not only a kind of touch feeling, but also a kind of sense of vision.



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"Why Digital Marketing Should Be A Top Priority For Small Businesses"
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There are likely hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs trying to leverage digital marketing and other key business strategies in this age of digital transformation, which can make the competition for audience attention fierce.

What might not be as obvious for small business owners and entrepreneurs is how to effectively implement and manage a digital marketing strategy that will reach their target audience at the right place and the right time with the right message. Marketing experts usually give guidance on deploying social media marketing, email marketing and digital display. That's sound advice; these channels are all effective. Yet, there is much more to consider when it comes to digital marketing, and not all small business owners have the same marketing knowledge base to work from. But there are also many self-service tools available that allow novice, small business owners to take advantage of some very powerful tools. How can you get started?

Meet the customer where they are.

I always say as a small business owner that it is important to meet the customer "where they are." There are five generations of customers out there, and they vary greatly as to how they make decisions. While social media is one of the most popular ways to use the internet, when it comes to digital marketing, it's important to be selective for the sake of clarity and effectiveness. Some social media platforms appeal to one demographic while other social channels appeal to an entirely different age or group, and still others effectively bridge the gaps and meet the needs of numerous groups simultaneously. In other words, not all social media channels are right for every business model because every business is trying to reach a different group of people. I have heard dozens of success stories from the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, when small business owners who had never used social media tried it for the first time and are now actively engaging with new and existing customers to this day.

Tailor your marketing efforts.

Other marketing channels — digital display advertising and SEO, for example — are intended to catch everybody's attention by casting a wider net; however, you can absolutely tailor them to meet specific needs. They are also only two of multiple marketing avenues that can require significant time and financial investments to implement effectively. And don't forget about a mobile strategy. At Dun & Bradstreet, we see more than 30% of our over 1.5 million small business subscribers log in through mobile platforms on a daily basis.

Lean on digital marketing tools.

Because there are so many digital marketing tactics to learn, each with its own strategy that requires a set budget and effort, it often can make more sense for an entrepreneur to keep their focus on the business. Turning to an agency isn't always affordable, either. For owners who know enough to self-direct with a digital marketing tool, a good option can be to lean on a tool that reduces time spent learning all the nuances and can fully automate critical pieces of the effort, such as audience targeting. This approach simplifies the digital marketing playing field while still deploying an effective, targeted digital marketing strategy across multiple channels. I learned this firsthand as a landscaper; I found I was able to significantly increase my sales pipeline through targeted digital campaigns toward driving marketing to the specific ideal customer persona and demographic.

As technology advances, artificial intelligence and machine learning are now being leveraged to understand what target audiences are doing online and how to turn their behaviors into insights that deploy messaging on sites "where they are." Such technology takes the guesswork out of choosing a social platform that your target audience is using and determining which websites they're visiting.

In today's world, it's no longer a question of whether digital marketing is necessary. The question is how you will make the internet work for and with you and your business to effectively reach your target audience. Whether you are a landscaper or a retail store owner or a sole proprietor, digital marketing is critical in today's environment. If you don't have the time or the desire to learn all the digital marketing platforms available and an agency seems out of reach, then consider taking advantage of the ability to self-direct your campaigns, messaging and budget. Your audience is out there waiting for you to reach them.

"Google Knows all, right?"- continued from page 2

Does your job ad stress the knowledge, skills, ability, and fit between personality and your company culture?

Do you make it easy for people to find your company website to apply directly instead of going through a third-party resource? And why does this matter? If the ad found by a potential applicant includes a link to your company website, and you are a free Google Jobs user, the link is buried at the bottom of the post.

Can you work it in early in the job ad? For example, could you list under QUALIFICATIONS "must complete the survey found on www.mycompany.com/pagename" and have potential candidates sign up for your newsletter? If you pay Google to list jobs, you will have a blue link – the first in line – at the top of the ad so that job seekers might easily go directly to your company.

Call DTS today for immediate aid at 907-885-0501

Note that people who apply on a third-party link (Indeed, GlassDoor, ZipRecruiter, etc.) have their data listed in that company's website. If that company forwards the data to you, the applicant has data listed in two sites. Security risks increase with each site on which applicants list their information, by the way. The security risk just doubled!

Google is the dominant source of answers these days, and Google staff recognize the business advantage of becoming the place to check for employment opportunities. Job seekers are gravitating to Google to find jobs due to ease. You can take advantage of this trend – just be smart about it so that you are getting applicants, managing the cost of advertising jobs, and staying alert to security of applicant information.



#ProtectTheClick!

3 Ways Small Businesses Can Grow Their Digital Marketing Strategy

Digital marketing is an essential tool for any small business looking to gain brand exposure, find new customers, and develop a loyal following. However, the idea of mastering social media, online video, email, and other platforms can be intimidating to small business owners also focusing on running a company.

Partner with Influencers to Expand Your Audience

Influencer marketing is a great way to partner with popular internet personalities on social media while exposing your brand to their audience. Influencers have a range of niche, loyal followers ranging from thousands to millions who trust them and their recommendations. Small businesses may think working with an influencer is out of reach, as many may be celebrities with an infinite amount of followers. However, the most successful partnerships are about working with the right influencer for your brand.

"You do not have to be famous to be an influencer and you don't have to work with someone who has a hundred thousand followers to have very tangible results from that partnership," said Gabby Beckford, travel influencer and Founder of Packs Light. Beckford stated that when she was first starting out with only a couple thousand followers, she had an intimate relationship with many of them and was able to make successful personal recommendations about her brand partnerships.



"You'll want to understand the KPIs that you're looking to achieve from the partnership first to decide what's best for you but ... don't cut out the little guys, they have a lot of value too," Beckford added.

Use Both Organic and Paid Social Media Posts

There are different schools of thought on using social media to market a business. Some entrepreneurs think the best results happen through organic social media posts, while others believe the way to exposure is by buying paid ads on the platform. Evan Horowitz, Co-founder and CEO of Movers+Shakers, stated that a posting strategy is more nuanced and entrepreneurs should be using both to expand their audience. "Organic is always on drumbeat and then you lean in with paid ad posts that are doing well and have an ongoing paid support behind it," said Horowitz. "I don't see it as an 'either, or' [situation] — it's probably both." When businesses implement an organic social media campaign, Horowitz said they don't need to post all the time, which could ultimately backfire. "For most platforms, three times a week is a great target to work towards," he explained.

Don't Be Afraid to Pivot Your Digital Marketing Strategy

When Griffin Thall, CEO and Co-Founder of Pura Vida Bracelets, started his business in 2010, the digital marketing landscape looked different. As a direct-to-consumer (DTC) brand, his business heavily relied on Facebook and later Instagram ads for marketing efforts. When asked what small businesses can do to succeed in the digital marketing space, Thall reflected on his own experience of having many eggs in one basket

"Now we're really trying to learn other channels and figure out podcasts, TikTok, and digging deeper into email and SMS," said Thall. By investing in more than one space, small businesses have the ability to pivot when a digital marketing strategy is no longer yielding the desired results.

"Having one acquisition channel is the biggest thing," said Thall. "And when it's easy, it's easy, but then when it gets more difficult, you don't really have the solution for the same strategy. [Our] strategy shifted over the past 10 years, and we've always been able to pivot well."

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