ROI ONLINE

an internet marketing agency

DIGITAL MARKETING CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGY IN 8 STEPS

WONDERING WHAT TO FOCUS ON IN YOUR MARKETING?
HERE IS A CHECKLIST THAT WILL GIVE YOU AN INTERNET
MARKETING PLAN FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

We're going to get right down to business. Here are 8 key steps to establishing a
successful digital marketing strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STEP 1: MY WEBSITE HAS A STRONG KEYWORD STRATEGY

Polish Your Business's Content & Voice

It doesn't matter how fancy your site looks. If you don't have clear, concise, and consistent messaging, your customers are going to get lost.

The average person spends **15 seconds** on a web page.

One of Donald Miller's best-known quotes is, "If you confuse, you lose." This is never more apparent than in your online marketing. If your content isn't clear and easy to digest, your customers will have to devote more brainpower to figure out what you want them to know. That causes frustration and a high bounce rate.

The average person spends **15 seconds** on a web page. That's all the time you have to catch someone's attention and sell them on your business. So how can you keep them wanting more? Think about the three most common reasons people leave a webpage:

1. They didn't get what they expected: The content was misleading in some way, or they couldn't find the information they needed.

2. The site isn't user-friendly: If your site takes too long to load, has dozens of confusing pages, or is difficult to navigate, visitors won't stick around.

3. They don't know what to do: Without a clear call-to-action, even the most receptive customers will find themselves confused. How should they get in contact with you? Don't overwhelm them with too many options.

The best way to ensure your content passes the 15-second mark is by keeping it 1) simple, 2) clear, and 3) relevant.

What About An SEO Strategy?

For years, marketers relied on keywords – those words or phrases someone types into a search engine to find the information they want – when creating content for the web. They would stuff as many long-tail keywords into a webpage as possible, hoping to increase their SEO ranking and boost their traffic.

The result? Muddy, messy pages that read like a thesaurus. Let's say the keyword was "dog food." The text of the web site reads something like this: "Dog food is great. Dog food is nutritious. My dog loves dog food. Your dog will love dog food."

With keyword stuffing, customers click on a high ranking page and bounce within five seconds. Search engines, like Google, penalize these sites and rank them site lower if they use black hat techniques. Today, what matters isn't how many keywords your site includes. It's how useful viewers find your content.

It's for this reason that storytelling marketing is putting SEO out of business. When you transform your content into a clear, engaging story, you make it easier for customers to digest and more enjoyable for them to consume. As a result, they stay on your site longer, and your ranking increases.

Create a story first, and then incorporate **long-tail keywords** into the content **naturally**.

This isn't to say that you should ignore keywords entirely. Search engines will still refer to keywords when sorting webpages. However, instead of needlessly stuffing keywords, subtly work them into your existing content. Create a story first, and then incorporate long-tail keywords into the content naturally.

How To Clean Up Your Business's Messaging

At ROI Online, we follow Donald Miller's **StoryBrand Framework** when creating content for clients to ensure every piece of content:

- Resonates with customers
- Maintains a consistent voice
- Tells an easy-to-understand story
- Guides leads further down the buyer's journey

The process can take some time, but it always begins with creating a polished BrandScript. The BrandScript contains seven buckets that help tell your customer's story. By positioning the customer as the hero of your messaging (as opposed to your business), you can make your content more persuasive, connect with potential clients, and boost your sales. Your BrandScript will become the blueprint for all content creation, creating harmony and clarity throughout your website and marketing materials.

Once you've developed a strong content blueprint, you'll need to refer to it for every piece of content you create. Every landing page, email, blog post, web page, and video should reflect the core of your BrandScript. While you don't want to use the same phrases again and again, you'll want to capture the main themes from your content blueprint so that every piece you create feels cohesive.

Get your "Building a StoryBrand" book from Amazon, **HERE**.

STEP 2: YOUR WEBSITE IS OPTIMIZED FOR SEARCH ENGINES

Create A Positive User Experience

Remember the second most popular reason people leave a website? It's a poor user experience.

Several factors can contribute to a poor user experience. Videos and images that don't load. A navigation overflowing with pages. Broken links. When something doesn't work the way it should on your site, it makes for a frustrating experience for your visitors. This, in turn, increases bounce-rate and can damage your reputation.
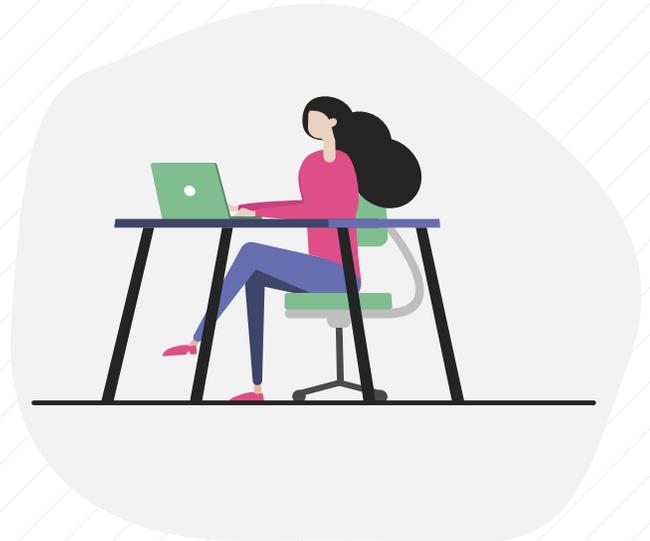
There are five aspects to user experience, and they're all a crucial part of an easy-to-navigate site.

1. A strong user design
2. A single, clear focus
3. Clear direction for users
4. Responsive design
5. Relevant supporting graphics

It's important to note, however, that due to semantic search, results vary for each user. In a few words, the goal of semantic search is to provide more accurate, relevant results for the user. A user's search history and location will affect the way results appear on the page.

When developing your website, always keep the end user in mind. What would be most beneficial for them? What content is the most important? Do the visuals add to the page or detract from it?

Website analytics tools like **HotJar** can be essential for determining what customers engage with on your current site and what needs improvement.

STEP 3: YOU HAVE A BLOG (AND ACTUALLY USE IT)

Build a Blog and Premium Content Offers
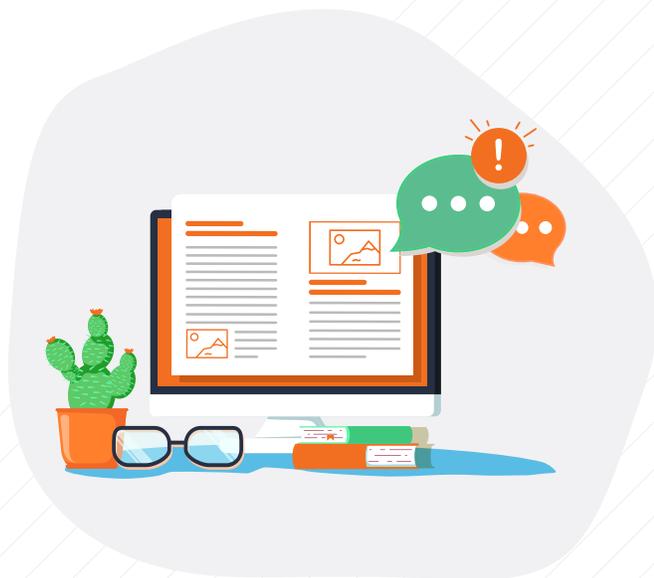
Blogs are a powerful internet marketing tool. They attract people interested in what you are talking about. They also give the perfect introduction to your company, your services and your products. When paired with other content (e.g. eBooks, infographics and videos), you have the start of a powerful marketing machine.

Today, with platforms like Wordpress, Weebly and Blogger, publishing a blog is easier than ever. Even in most custom designed sites, adding a blog feature is as easy as clicking a button. There is really no excuse for a company not to have an active blog.

But having a blog isn't enough. You have to actually post on it. You should aim to post at least twice a month. If your blog is just starting out, you should post 1-2 times a week to start building traffic. And remember, when you blog, you must have a purpose: to attract potential customers and to keep current customers engaged.

Choosing your words carefully is the best approach to business blogging. You are familiar with the way your customers view your company, its products and its services. You need to use your customers' language in your blog instead of industry jargon.

Integrating Your Blog Into Your Website

Many companies make the mistake of using a blog that sits on someone else's site. Instead of having a URL like Blog.MyCompany.com, they may have a URL like MyCompanyBlog.OtherSite.com that they link to from the company site, MyCompany.com. This shift of URL is a mistake. Put your blog on your site and have it use your company's domain name. Additionally, your blog should complement your website. Its layout, format and design should match the rest of your site.

Doing the above keeps visitors in one place, creates a semblance for your brand and generates fresh content on your site.

How To Create A Read-worthy Blog

Every one of your blogs should have each and every one of these elements:

- Compelling article title
- Well-written, formatted text
- Graphics (e.g. images, videos, infographics)
- Inbound links
- CTA (call to action)

What Should You Blog About?

You need to start your business blog with a purpose in mind. What do you want to educate your audience about?

Do not solely tout your products or services. A blog should provide useful information to the visitor that goes beyond your products or services. You can write about common industry issues, problems your customers may be facing, and the solutions your product or service can offer to handle those problems. Your products and services get mentioned but in the context of solving a problem.

> A blog should provide **useful information** to the **visitor** that goes beyond **your products or services.**

A great way to get started blogging is to tackle common questions customers ask in your industry. Share some of their stories. Create videos and give customers a behind-the-scenes look at your services.

What Is The Goal Of Blogging?

Lead generation.

You have a fantastic opportunity to generate leads through your blog. **A blog** allows you

to attract organic traffic while engaging your audience with quality content. However, the focus of your blog is to generate leads and drive conversions.

That is why all posts need a CTA that links to landing pages. (A CTA encourages a visitor to take action.) On the landing page, you can give the visitor access to in-depth materials and marketing offers in exchange for becoming a lead.

Your CTA should appear in the post. You can include CTAs with images, buttons and text in the blog itself.

A CTA can include any of the following:

- Downloading content
- Following the business on social media
- Subscribing to the blog or newsletter
- Downloading coupons

When placing your CTAs, make sure they resonate with the content in your blog post. If your blog focuses on nutritional foods, your CTA could encourage the reader to download a free eBook of healthy recipes.

Creating Premium Content

Blogging is valuable. However, producing longer-form or premium content is a useful lead generation activity. These can include research reports, white papers and ebooks. Adding non-text content like podcasts, videos and webinars offer even more choices.

Longer-form content will feed your lead generation and conversion efforts. The content can educate on basic concepts, enrich existing knowledge or just entertain. The richness of this content is powerful. It can help achieve the information exchange of having a visitor filling out a lead capture form to get the resource. That is critical in the sales cycle.

Do not offer content randomly, though. Based on marketing analytics, select your

rich content carefully. Reporting insights will help you select the content to get your target audience in place. Plus, on-going analytics will help you refine your offerings. For example, if more people chose to download a white paper than to view your webinar, you need to put more effort into text-based content than video-based.

The goal of this content is to push leads down the sales funnel, so don't just offer top-of-the-funnel content, like infographics and brochures. Always think about the next step in the buying cycle.

STEP 4: YOU SHARE VALUABLE CONTENT ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Promote Offers & Generate Leads Through Social Media

Social media plays a major role in successful internet marketing. Leveraging social networks can spread business content and increase inbound links to your website. As your network grows, it increases the number of people listening to what you have to say. All of this can help your business revenue grow. Social media allows for direct communication between you and your customers, prospects and employees. You can use it to drive brand visibility and recognition online.

While there are dozens of social media channels out there, the top players are: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. SnapChat and Pinterest are also big hitters, but only for certain business types. Before you run out and open up your social media accounts, though, check marketing analytics and create a plan.

Marketing Analytics Begin With Monitoring Social Media

In order to use social media for your company, you need to tap into industry-related conversations already happening. This offers you vital information and the opportunity to respond. Certain tools can help with these efforts:

Google Alerts - Set up Google alerts for your company, your brand, your products, your company leaders, top industry terms, your competition and anything else that will help you tap into industry conversations.

Hootsuite - This social media management tool allows you to save keyword searches in a live stream so you won't miss what people are saying about your brand, your industry and your products on social media.

Twitter - On Twitter, see what's trending and use hashtags to tap into hot topics.

Reddit or Quora - See what people are talking about and stay up to date on current trends.

RSS Feed - By subscribing to an RSS feed, you can get the news you want, where you want, when you want it.

IFTTT - An If This Then That recipe gives you unlimited possibilities for reporting, analytics, and social media automation. You can learn more **HERE**.

When you have your business's social media accounts in place and optimized, take a step that many companies fail to do or only partially do: Integrate those accounts into your marketing efforts and start using them by including links to your accounts on your website and blog, and posting to them regularly.

STEP 5: YOUR WEBSITE ACTIVELY COLLECTS LEADS FOR NURTURING

Convert Website Traffic into Leads

If you have been at this for a few weeks, your traffic numbers should already be on the rise. You have a growing number of people visiting your website every day.

Yet, you still have a problem. Your new traffic is not generating any business. Why go to all that effort to have no increase in sales? Take heart, the process is not done yet. You have set the stage to take the next step: converting website traffic into quality leads.

All that traffic is poised to enter your sales funnel. Now you will start moving those visitors further into the sales funnel by converting them to leads.

How Do You Convert Traffic To Leads?

- Create a compelling offer
- Create a CTA to promote the offer
- Make a landing page where visitors will give their information in exchange for the offering
- Make a thank you page
- Test and measure the results and repeat

STEP 6: YOUR MARKETING MACHINE NURTURES LEADS INTO CUSTOMERS

Nurture Leads Through Targeted Messages

Lead nurturing involves building a relationship with a potential customer. You do this by sending targeted, relevant messages to your leads in a timely manner. The goal of this effort is to get them to convert from being a lead into a paying customer. It also lays the foundation for them to become repeat customers.

The Concept Of Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing is a plan and a system you put into place to pre-qualify an early stage lead. Most internet marketers use an automated series of email messages to do this.

Getting leads is fantastic. Not all leads are ready to become paying customers when they visit your site though. In fact, the vast majority of visitors are not ready to make a purchase; they are just in research mode. It's your job to "nurture" them so they do make a commitment.

Find out how much time it takes your sales funnel to move a lead from the first inquiry to becoming a paying customer. Does this time vary based on what product or service they ultimately buy? This is information that can help you in establishing working lead nurturing plans. You can create campaigns designed to maximize this marketing channel, to find quality leads and to enhance your sales effort.

Two ways you can easily jumpstart your lead nurturing efforts is through **email marketing** and **social media** using a platform like **HubSpot**.

With email marketing, you can :

- Present relevant information or offers
- Create targeted messages
- Send newsletters

With social media, you can:

- Stay in contact with customers
- Comment and respond to followers
- Start conversations

STEP 7: YOUR WEBSITE IS OPTIMIZED FOR MOBILE

Optimize Your Web Presence for Mobile Viewing

Mobile devices are a major player when it comes to digital marketing. Need to see some statistics?

- 77% of Americans own a smartphone. (Pew Research)
- 52% of web pages are viewed on a smartphone. (Statistica)
- 64% of Google searches come from mobile devices. (Statistica)
- 50% of mobile searches are aimed at local businesses. (Search Engine Watch)
- 57% of customers won't recommend a company after a poor mobile website experience. (Google)

What does all this mean? Mobile is a must! This is why it is imperative you may your website responsive. Here's one last stat to sum it all up:

If an e-commerce site makes $100,000 per day, a 1-second page delay could potentially cost that business 2.5 million in lost sales each year. (Kissmetrics)

Make Your Website Responsive And Mobile-Friendly

With this option, your website rearranges the images and text based on the screen size of the device being used. This option only requires a single version of the website. The downside is that the coding for this is a bit more complicated than the other option. However, most web designers know how to handle this.

52% of web pages are viewed on a smartphone.

Remember that many mobile device users use their fingers for navigating. Buttons should be easy to press with the fingertip. Font sizes may be different for easy viewing on a mobile device.

Thanks to Siri and Google Assist, voice search is also an emerging technology, which is just another reason you should have a mobile-friendly site.

Optimizing Local Search Listings

Local listings, aka mobile search directories/business listings, make up a big piece of the pie when it comes to mobile marketing. Here are some of the most popular ones:

- Yellow Pages
- Yelp
- Yahoo
- Google Places

The conversion rate for local searches is astounding: nearly 80% of local mobile searches result in a direct purchase, according to KISSmetrics.

Don't underestimate the power of local listings.

STEP 8: YOUR ANALYTICS SHOW YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE IS GROWING

Analyze and Refine Strategies

You have all the pieces in place. You have people coming to your site. This shows up as increased web traffic. You have people becoming leads. The lead count keeps climbing. You have people going further down the sales funnel and showing more interest by re-converting for more offers. Now is the time to start making adjustments to find what is working and what is not.

Let's look at some metrics you should be monitoring and get some suggestions on how to refine your internet marketing strategy.

Measure, Rinse, Repeat

Here are a few suggestions to improve the results you have seen so far:

A/B Test CTAs - Test out a new CTA design or description to see if you get more clicks. Landing Pages And Forms - Make a change to a landing page. Try a new image on a form.

Content - Add more web pages, landing pages, videos, and downloadable offers and see which resonate the best with your audience.

Social Media - Which social media channels are giving you the most visitors? Which ones are getting you leads and customers? Spend more time with the successful channels, and change and monitor your performance in others.

Email Marketing - Experiment by sending emails more often or less often and change your CTAs.

KICK YOUR MARKETING MACHINE INTO HYPERDRIVE

When you think about creating a fully functional marketing machine, it can be overwhelming. A lot goes into a lead-converting website. By following these tips, you can see results. The information provided here will give you a solid foundation on which to build your business.

For more digital marketing tips and tricks, be sure to check out the **ROI Online blog**.

If you're interested in learning more about what digital marketing can do for your business, contact ROI Online for a free strategy session. In just 30 minutes, we'll provide you with valuable feedback and a free marketing evaluation — no strings attached!

Schedule Your Free Strategy Session

ROIONLINE
an internet marketing agency®