

Back to Basics - 5 Internet Marketing Essentials Your Business Needs to Succeed Online

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Internet marketing strategies can get complex fast, so it helps to take a few steps back to ensure all of the most vital components are in order.

Otherwise, you might get too focused on the details to see that your online marketing funnel as a whole is broken. Or, you might miss out on a key digital marketing practice that would be essential for earning you new leads and converting those leads to customers.

Of course, every business is different and has different needs. Some businesses may be in an industry where finding new leads through social media is nearly impossible, for instance.

Regardless of business variables like these, there are five internet marketing essentials *all* businesses should account for as part of their overall strategy. Even if you confidently decide that you don't need one of them, you should at least consider the benefits it brings other businesses that you might be giving up.

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A Mobile Friendly Business Website Optimized for Conversions and Easy Information



Your business website is the absolute foundation of your internet marketing strategy. You may think that your business model can do without a website because of all the services offered by platforms like Google, Facebook, and Yelp.

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The fact of the matter is that your website backs all of these other elements up. Your website is also one of the only internet marketing environments where you have complete control. Google or Facebook could decide to delete your business profile tomorrow with nary a warning, and you'd have to fight with them to find out why they did it and how to get it back.

Your business website also acts as a cornerstone that reinforces all of your marketing channels. If you want someone to discover your local business through a voice search, for instance, having detailed information about your hours, services, and products increases the chances that the searcher's voice assistant pulls up accurate information.

Most businesses also think of their website as the final point of conversion. You can create [landing pages](#) that people arrive at from your email marketing or social media campaigns. Since these pages are nearly 100% customizable, you get to control the impressions of your business the visitor gets and influence their desire to convert.

Tips for an Effective Website:

- Think carefully about how to make navigation intuitive. Google mentions site layout and your navigation hierarchy above keyword use [in their own SEO guide](#).
- Express your brand but don't make your website noisy or cluttered. Usability requires a layout that's easy to interpret visually and that doesn't cause eye strain or mental fatigue.
- Treat your home page like a landing page. Think about the absolute most important information a customer would want to know first then fill in details and support your claims efficiently with a few pieces of [social proof](#) as evidence.

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A Strategy for Ranking Your Website on Search Engines (SEO)



Search engine optimization (SEO) is the marketing practice of engineering your website content to increase your website's chances of appearing near the top of search results.

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According to a recent study, the number one search ranking position earns around twice as many clicks as the number two. Once you reach position six, you start receiving clicks from less than 3% of the people who see your search result listing.

Put even more bluntly: *People will have a really hard time finding your business if you aren't ranked near the top of search results.*

To rank more highly, you need a large volume of content and a well-made site. You can see if your current website has any red flags by using the [Fetch as Google](#) tool and then by using [Google's mobile friendly and page load speed tool](#).

[Over half \(63%\) of your website visitors are likely to be mobile device users](#), so a good mobile experience for users is important to Google and therefore important for your ranking.

Once you have your overall site in order, download [Google search console](#), [Google Analytics](#) and [Bing Webmaster Tools](#). These platforms will help you analyze your site and track metrics for stats like website visitors, how long they spend on certain pages, and other valuable decision-making data.

Only after these technical details have been dealt with should you start to worry about content and keywords. Your goal for using keywords is to signal to search engines and to audiences that your content is relevant to what they're looking for. So if you're a hardware store in Sacramento, your website should say phrases like "hardware store in Sacramento" or "Sacramento hardware store," and related phrases, at least a few times on each major page.

Don't overdo it! Spamming keywords is more likely to lead to a search penalty, pushing you further down the ranks. Write naturally and try to help guide people rather than trick search engines.

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A Social Media Presence

People spend a lot of their online time within social media apps. Businesses able to cultivate a community on these apps – or at the very least have a searchable presence – stand a better chance of being discovered by potential customers.

Just as important, many people may look on social media platforms to research your business. They may want to read reviews, look at other people's comments, or see something like your hours without having to leave their favorite social spaces.

Social media can also strengthen the backbone of your content marketing campaigns. Every article you write can be shared on social media, and you could also use social platforms to broadcast promotions, contests, or announcements.

When using social media as a marketing tool, we strongly suggest that you lead people who click on your links to a specialized landing page. This strategy ensures they won't get lost or forget where they were navigating after the click.

More Social Media Marketing Tips:

- Post on a regular schedule a few times a month so that people will come to depend on your content.
- Sign up for messenger alerts since [a third of people now say they prefer to contact businesses through social media](#) rather than a phone call.
- Interact with your followers and engage them when possible. For instance, you can ask a related question when posting new blog content to encourage responses.
- Set goals for social media marketing beyond likes and follows. For instance, track how many people click on your links to promotions or content.

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An Active Blog

Business blogs are a vital component of your SEO strategy. Search engines like to index fresh content, so if your home page was last updated in 2010, they may rank your site lower than a more recent one.

On the other hand, if you have an active blog that publishes weekly, you can send recurring signals to search engines that your content is current and relevant.

Avoid thinking about your blog as another advertising channel. Instead, it should be a helpful resource for visitors. Blog about topics that introduce them to important industry concepts. Or, give them a convenient list of tips. Always offer value, but follow your blog posts up with a strong call to action.

Email Marketing

Email marketing offers your business a reliable channel to stay in touch with customers and leads.

For instance, if you offer a really helpful and informative e-book, the typical person might download it and never think about your brand again. But if you ask them for their email to send it to them directly, you can also have the chance to follow up with a drip campaign that nurtures their interest in becoming a paying customer.

Using email campaigns can encourage a past customer to make repeat purchases. By sending them exclusive offers tailored to their interests and their purchase history, you can develop a relationship and inspire loyalty.

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Email Marketing Tips:

- Receiving too many promotions and messages is the #1 reason people unsubscribe. Try to limit your campaign emails to one to two times a month, not counting contacts like order confirmations.
- Think carefully about your subject lines. A good subject line can dramatically raise your open rate, while a bad one could get you flagged quickly as spam.
- Make your emails brief and to the point. If you have something more in-depth to say, direct them to a landing page.
- Try to make emails feel personal, as if they're sent from a specific business employee, not a faceless company brand.

Nice to Have: Video Marketing



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Video marketing requires a larger budget than most small businesses care to muster, but the results truly do speak for themselves. [81% of people say that they were convinced to purchase something](#) after watching a brand's video. Also, 95% of people say they have watched an explainer video to learn more about a business, product, or service.

Your video marketing strategy can start small with live Q&A sessions, short recaps of your most popular blog posts, or a quick explainer video of your most important products/services. You don't need a million dollar budget to make an impact! You just need to focus on meeting your audience's needs in a format that few people can resist.

Combine All of These Internet Marketing Essentials Into a Complete Package

Focus on strengthening each of the above components individually and then strategize for ways to tie them all together into one strong, effective package.

These days, people flock between more media channels than ever. By having a strong website, an engaging social media presence, an SEO ranking strategy, and a method for communicating effectively through email, you can catch people on any and all of the channels they inhabit.