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Five Things Small Business Owners Can Do To Improve Their Digital Marketing Strategy

By Adam Binder



Digital Marketing is a key factor in reaching your customers and expanding your business, going far beyond just having a beautiful website. Digital marketing is not only a way to promote your business, but can also act as a tool to forge meaningful connections with your customers and build your online presence. As a self-taught entrepreneur, here are some of the top tips I've learned to help any entrepreneur grow their business and build a successful digital marketing strategy:

Know Your Audience

In order to tailor your content for the types of clients you'd like to reach, you should first establish who your audience is and understand their needs. Knowing the types of products or services your target audience is looking for will help you create content that will be relevant to their interests. This will generate more high-quality leads, which could create some potential business endeavors down the line.

Go Social

Once you've established your target audience, the next step is to reach them online, and where better to start than on social media? With most internet users checking at least one of the many available social media platforms daily, this is a great place to share your content and make your business' digital presence known. However, it is important to keep in mind that not all social media is created equal; there are certain pros and cons to consider when choosing where to start building your social following. For instance, I have found Facebook and Twitter to be the most beneficial social media platforms for reaching our target audience of small business owners, while an artist might find it more beneficial to use a visual outlet like Instagram to show off their work.

Optimize for SEO

If a business makes a website and it doesn't rank on Google, does it really exist? This is where Search Engine Optimization (SEO) comes into play. SEO is a process that primes a website to rank well on a search engine query. This could include determining the focus keywords your audience is searching for, formatting your HTML to be Google-friendly, and creating a URL structure that fits commonly searched terms. SEO can be a tricky task without the knowledge and tracking processes necessary to see how your processes are paying off, so this might be better left to a professional.

Craft Quality Content

There is a long-held belief in the world of marketing that "content is king," and that notion doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon. Hosting great content on your website serves several purposes; first

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Employers Face Big Changes Under New OSHA Rules

By Joseph P. Paronac, Jr., Esq.



This year, OSHA has implemented a series of far-reaching regulatory changes – from increased fines to stepped-up inspections – that will affect countless numbers of companies of all sizes. Businesses that don't prepare for them now will face increased scrutiny and extra expenses.

One change has already hit some businesses in the wallet: the first increase in OSHA fines since 1990. Effective August 2, 2016, OSHA drastically raised fines. The maximum fine

for a serious violation has risen from \$7,000 to \$12,471. And the maximum fine for a willful violation has gone up from \$70,000 to \$124,709. Businesses that routinely use chemicals in the workplace, construction companies, and manufacturers of chemicals are most at risk for these new, higher fines.

Additionally, thanks to revisions in the way that OSHA inspectors are graded, we're seeing an increase in "complex" inspections, especially ones involving chemical manufacturing facilities and oil refineries where chemical exposure, or musculoskeletal accidents have occurred.

In light of the stepped-up OSHA investigation activity, companies may wish to consider conducting their own self-audits – using their own experts or retaining a consultant – so their house is clean when OSHA comes knocking at the door.

Further increases in OSHA site visits are also likely to stem from an increase in the agency's Rapid Response Investigation (RRI) requests. Following an accident, OSHA may contact the reporting employer to learn more about the root cause and how to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

We have seen a sizable increase in the issuance of RRI requests. If OSHA believes the reporting company is trying to whitewash the incident, perhaps by simply blaming the victim instead of thoroughly investigating the incident and documenting the findings, the agency may mount its own inspection of the incident, which can result in the uncovering of additional violations that could land the business in even hotter water. To minimize the likelihood of this, companies may consider working with outside advisors who offer OSHA and RRI seminars that focus on best reporting and other practices.

That's not all. On June 1, 2016, a phase-in of previously issued Hazard Communication Standards – which require employers to take measures to prevent illness or injury that could occur when working with hazardous materials – mandated enhanced labeling of additional employee training for hazardous materials, and training in handling them. Additionally, new regulations have been implemented regarding material safety

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Dangerous Devices: **Have You Looked at Your Neck in The Mirror?**

By Dr. Frank J. Mandarino



Technology is growing in epic proportions. It seems like every day, there's a new phone, tablet or other hand-held device. We spend more time on social media than we do recognizing how we are falling apart from our so-called 'Text Neck Syndrome' and associated failing posture. Look around at the adults with their head flexed down at their phones, or your kids and their collapsing chest and forward head flexion.

To better understand why some of these problems occur, consider the fact that your head weighs about 12 pounds. As the neck bends forward, the problems begin to escalate. With a 15-degree angle of flexion, the neck now weighs about 27 pounds; at a 30-degree angle it's about 40 pounds; at 45 degrees, it's 49 pounds; and, finally, at 60 degrees it's 60 pounds. For many women, at 60 degrees, that can amount to 50 percent of total body weight.

Let's now add the number of hours that forward head flexion is active throughout the day. It's estimated that phone and device users spend two to four hours a day in those positions. Translated spinal pressure and muscle strain can lead to headaches and neurological symptoms. The younger the individual, the sooner that problems will manifest. In addition to the neck problems there is the hunching of the mid back and forward roll of the shoulders. This will cause more pain and weakness, thus leading to spinal degeneration, early arthritis, disc issues, loss of vital lung capacity, and muscular dysfunction.

So, what's the answer to this malady? To begin, you need to see what you look like. Ask a family member or friend to take a side-view picture of you when you least expect it. This will show how your posture is without correcting it for the camera. Once you see how you're falling forward, the next step is to make some changes in how your device is held. Bring the device up to eye level, then lift your neck up to look as high as possible without causing pain, in an attempt to stretch. Of course, taking breaks from device use is also vital.

Should you find that there is pain associated with movement, seeking treatment may be your next step. However, it is important to recognize that there are no overnight corrections. Treatment should begin by obtaining a baseline of your posture in both the front and side views. Beyond the common pain problems associated with movement, some of the adult population have presented with more severe symptoms. Most commonly seen are numbness in the arms or hands and severe limitations in cervical motion. Left untreated, these more advanced problems will likely interfere with daily activities.

There are a variety of soft tissue techniques that are fantastic for correcting the muscular dysfunction. Graston Technique (an instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization) will help break up longstanding adhesions. Active Release Techniques provide another means of increasing mobility.

Finally, the last stage is exercise. This is important to do throughout the day. Chiropractic physicians and other qualified professionals can create a specialized program for you to help strengthen the muscles that will maintain stability and posture. Some of the exercises can be done at home or office.

If you think that the issues arising from mobile device use will not eventually become a problem, you're mistaken. Sooner or later, you're going to find that symptoms will creep up and start as something small. Eventually, it will become more prevalent.

Our population needs to be more aware of what we are doing with our mobile devices. Be smarter than your smartphone and start to be aware of how you can make a change before you become one of the many in today's society wondering how this problem ever began.

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NEW OSHA RULES (Con't)

data sheets that must be made available to workers, informing them of the properties and hazards of certain substances.

Employers should review the new standard, ensure they're in compliance, and can assume that there will be a big jump in OSHA compliance HazCom inspections.

Finally, we believe that OSHA, spurred by the Obama administration, is likely to press for reductions in the permissible level of exposure to beryllium – a strong, light but highly toxic metal used in aerospace, defense, computer, nuclear, and other applications.

In the final analysis, employers should keep up with these and other regulatory developments, as they can potentially impact a wide range of activities. The activist stands taken by OSHA are likely to place a significant burden on business' operating expenses, but the costs of non-compliance, or even being unprepared, are likely to be even greater.

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FIVE THINGS BUSINESSES CAN DO (Con't)

of all, it establishes you as a leader in your field, which will make potential customers more likely to reach out to you to learn more about your services. Additionally, blogging regularly will help your SEO by creating a steady stream of content for search engines to rank and archive. You could also create premium pieces of gated content, which might require readers to enter their email in order to gain access. Odds are, if they're willing to provide some personal information in order to read your content, they are a high-quality lead worth following up with in the future.

Make it Mobile

In this day and age, moving your website to a mobile platform is all but required. Keeping SEO in mind, Google's ranking algorithm has made mobile responsiveness a key ranking factor, so making the mobile-friendly shift will only help you reap the SEO benefits later on. On top of that, upwards of 80% of internet users access the web via smartphone. Much of digital marketing has to do with meeting the needs of your customers, and creating content that can be accessed from desktop to cell phone could be all it takes to create a positive customer experience.

I know first-hand that growing any small business can feel like an uphill battle, but implementing these small changes to your digital marketing strategy will be the key to generating interest in your business and building a strong repertoire of loyal customers.

Keyword-cruncher, customer-collector and web designer Adam Binder is the Founder of Manahawkin-based Creative Click Media, a digital agency specializing in website design, SEO, and internet marketing. Please visit creativeclickmedia.com to learn more, or tweet Adam at [@AdamBinder_](https://twitter.com/AdamBinder_)