

DO YOU HAVE A DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN IN YOUR ARSENAL?

So, the question is, what are the broad elements you must include in your Digital Marketing Plan? **Website:** Anyone can build a website, but only a person who balances the need of the audience, search engine spiders and the company objective builds a website that does the job. Have good content on the site without limiting yourself to talking about how good your product is. Buyers don't always come to your site only when they want to make a purchase. Sometimes, they are researching and if you provide them with helpful information, you gain their mindshare. **Search Engine Optimization:** When you build the website, make sure that the structure and the text is SEO-friendly. Keep updating the content. The aim is to be among the top 10 listings on Google, Yahoo and other search engines. Without that, you would not leverage the enormous potential that search engine visibility brings. If you don't have the budget for an SEO expert, focus on a couple of really relevant keywords to make sure your site goes up in ranking for these keywords. **Search Engine Marketing:** SEM includes pay-per-click advertising and paid inclusion, that is sponsored links. You can be creative with the keywords and your messaging, but don't go too far. Decide beforehand how SEM complements your SEO efforts. It doesn't make sense to repeat the same keywords in both. You are paying good money with SEM, so use Search Analytics like Google Analytics, Compete, Alexa or others to monitor and improve your SEM performance. **Web 2.0 Strategy:** While websites, email marketing, SEO and SEM are all about one way communication, Web 2.0 is driven by collaboration and two-way traffic that brings the customer or partner voice to you. It may be Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or the industry forums where you can run your campaigns and post company news but more importantly, listen to the members, gaining an invaluable feedback mechanism. **Mobile Marketing:** With cell phones being the devices that are closest in reach with all the relevant target segments, mobile marketing - from promotion messages to reminders for expiry dates and conferences - has become an inherent part of marketing programs. It's great for viral marketing, complementing your other marketing vehicles. **Email Direct Marketing:** Also called EDM, it has become a very basic element of Internet marketing. Practically, every company implements it, but do it with opt-in and unsubscribe options. Use both offline and online methods to create a mailing list. More important than all these elements put together is measuring the performance of your digital marketing plan. Whether it is the website, SEO, SEM, Web 2.0, mobile or email marketing campaigns, deploy the tools to measure the performance of each. Correct the gaps and move on. Connect it with your offline marketing programs. An online marketing plan isn't just an offline message that has moved online. It is an integral part of your marketing plan. Eg., Publish a dealer promotion code over Twitter. Create a customer support group over discussion boards or Facebook to respond to key issues that customers face. Give continuous updates about a conference, road show or keynote you are hosting. As you see, your digital marketing plan is an evolving plan with some basic elements and a lot of moving elements to be integrated with your offline programs. Plan your calendar at the beginning of the year in tune with your offline marketing calendar. Be ready to tweak the plan when the results start pouring in because, in the digital world, the time to respond is now, during the program, not after.

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