



20 Ways to Maximize Digital Marketing Effectiveness

How to Market Efficiently through the Five Digital Marketing Topics



Introduction

Trying to wrap your head around what you need to focus on when it comes to digital marketing can be quite the task — especially when the digital landscape is constantly and quickly changing. In today's increasingly social and mobile world, reaching and converting customers can be time-consuming and hard to measure.

To be effective and efficient with your time and money these days, we suggest focusing on five key digital marketing topics: Sites, Search, Social, Advocacy, & Analytics. This white paper walks through each topic and how each one has its own distinctive role. We'll also address the complex ways in which they all impact one another, what to prioritize first, and how to maximize effectiveness. Below are our 20 tips to maximize digital marketing effectiveness.



Sites

How to Maximize Leads from Your Website

Analyze Your Website

The first place to start is your website, which should be your most visited touchpoint because it showcases everything about your locations: amenities, customer reviews, photos, rents, and other important factors your prospects are considering. It should also be created with the user in mind for optimal conversion and have a clear Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy to help make it your largest driver of leads. On top of that, those leads should have conversion rates significantly higher than those from lead aggregators and Internet Listing Services. If your site isn't delivering the volume of leads you require, you can improve its effectiveness by:

- 1 Optimizing mobile user experiences
- 2 Creating consumer-centric content
- 3 Telling a (good) story



#1 Optimize Mobile User Experience

The smartphone is the epicenter of the digital marketing landscape, especially among younger people. As of Q3 2015, 80% of American mobile subscribers access mobile internet services on their smartphones (source: Nielsen). Because of this, your site should be optimized for mobile users. Designing your site with a responsive code base will improve your prospects' experience with your website, enabling seamless interactions.

Here are a few simple rules to follow. First, be sure that your calls to action are clear and concise and that you limit the number of fields in "Contact Us" forms. Second, when a user wants to engage and respond, ensure your button sizes (i.e., touch targets) are large and draw the user's eye. Third, when you ask for information, you may turn away a user if you're asking for too much. Following these simple rules will help you increase the leads coming through your website.



#2 Create Consumer-Centric Content

Get to the point and stay there. Your prospects are coming to your website for information, so be sure your content is clear and concise: and if you know your audience well enough you should be able to present them with what they find most valuable. Lists of amenities are important, but representing your amenities through captioned high-quality photos and videos is better. Presenting your brand in a clear manner will leave your prospects with the impression that you are authentically customer-centric.



#3 Tell a Story

You don't have to begin with "once upon a time," but it helps to create a narrative where your end users can get a sense of what it would be like if they were to choose your property. You know what your brand is all about; so communicate that to your prospects in a way that will truly connect on an emotional level. A great example is to show your prospects what a day in the life would be if they chose your offering. End your story with your prospects envisioning a happy future with your business.



Search

How to Maximize Search Traffic to Your Website

How Do People Get to Your Website?

There are six main ways that potential customers will find your website: Organic, Paid, Referral, Direct, Display, and Social (which can also be grouped in with referral sites).

Organic traffic is when someone makes a query in a search engine such as Google or Bing and then clicks on a link in the search engine results page that then takes you to your site.

Paid search traffic is when someone comes to your site from an ad, such as the ads you might see in Google at the top of the page or along the side of the Google search engine results page.

Referral traffic is when someone comes to your site from another site, such as someone reading a blog and clicking on a link to your site from that blog.

Direct traffic is when someone types in your url and goes there directly or has your site bookmarked.

Display advertising can be used to drive traffic to your site from an ad displayed online like a banner ad or rich media.

Social traffic is when someone comes to your site from a Social site such as Facebook or Twitter.

The effectiveness of search as part of your digital marketing strategy is ever-changing because it's at the mercy of search engine algorithm changes. These changes are made to improve the experience of the searcher, so that they can find the most relevant information as quickly as possible.



#4 Tune Up Your SEO

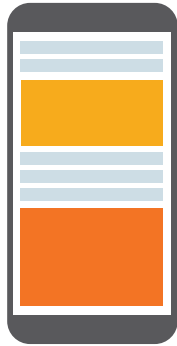
When trying to improve the effectiveness of your Search strategy, start with an SEO strategy that is capable of generating quality visitors and leads. Then, tune it up to increase the volume of qualified visitors with the highest likelihood of converting to leads. To do this, you'll need to:

- ✓ Set up your Google+ page for each property so that you can appear in Google's Map Pack
- ✓ Install Google Search Console to gather some degree of Search query information
- ✓ Install Google Analytics and monitor website traffic and visitors' paths to conversion
- ✓ Research and implement a keyword strategy for each page
- ✓ Make sure you have consistent Name, Address, Phone Number (NAP) Citations across the web



#5 Don't "Set and Forget" Your SEO Strategy

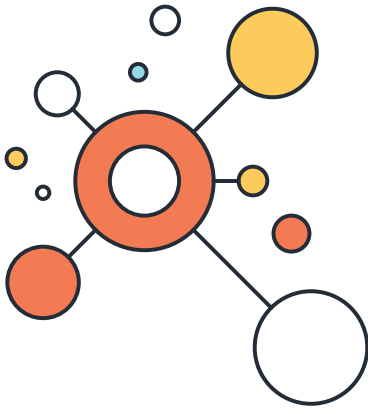
Once you've tuned up the effectiveness of your SEO strategy, don't lose momentum. Never "set and forget" an SEO strategy. Maintain your SEO strategy by actively monitoring search algorithm changes and updating your website in response to them. Google is constantly changing how it decides when to show your website on the search engine results page. Driving a constant stream of qualified leads to your locations requires vigilance and adaptability.



#6 Use Mobile Paid Search

The next step to creating an effective Search strategy is to use mobile paid search. Up to 70% of a smartphone screen in a Google search is taken up by paid search ads. If you want to encroach on your competitors' space in paid search, do it with mobile. In Multifamily, Self Storage, Senior Living, and Student Housing markets, more than 50% of searchers use mobile phones to find your business — depending on the geographic area, that number can be even higher.

Lead generators and Internet Listing Services (ILSs) are often very prominent in mobile paid search listings, but they don't have to be. Currently, mobile clicks are less expensive than standard desktop clicks. Since a plethora of your prospects are searching on mobile, it's very possible to outrank your competitors and your ILSs using mobile paid search.



#7 Online Outreach Marketing

Online outreach marketing is a term used to describe showcasing community involvement in online channels such as social and your website. Online outreach marketing can go to great lengths to improve the frequency and quality of social engagement with your prospects, customers, and community. There is a strong correlation between organic search rankings and social media engagement, because social engagement demonstrates to search engines that your company is promoting content that people like and find helpful. Post this content on your primary social media platforms and invite your followers to like it, share it, and comment on it. You can also promote content with native advertising on Facebook and Twitter.



Social

How to Maximize Your Social Strategy

Engagement on social channels is closely related to improved search engine results. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and other social platform pages appear regularly in search results and have quickly become a main source of referral traffic for property websites.

Many marketers think that what matters most to Google is the relevance of a site's content. While this is important, it misses the complete picture: All social interactions — including those between your prospects and their friends — influence search results as well. So what are the best ways to take advantage of this opportunity?

#8 Plan for Social Before You Get Started

Companies and individual properties often make the mistake of creating social media profiles without a concerted plan of action or idea of what they want to achieve with them.

Before you get started with social, you'll want to answer these questions:

- ✓ **What are your overall objectives?** Create a plan to summarize your social media strategy for the next 12 months — complete with methods to measure success, budget, resources, audience identification, and tactics for each channel. Content deserves its own strategy, and developing a calendar will help you get there.
- ✓ **Do you have a social media champion?** A point person needs to be in charge of driving the social media strategy and managing the company's accounts.
- ✓ **How often will you post content?** Frequency and scheduling should be determined by leveraging the analytics tools of each social platform to help determine ideal times based on your content's engagement metrics. These metrics will also help you understand what type of content to post based on what's getting the best results. Remember to be consistent with your posting schedule (but only if you have something useful to say).



Once you know why and how you'll use Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and others, then you can commit the human resources to engaging, managing, and monitoring engagement with prospects and customers on those platforms. You can then set realistic goals and implement methods to measure results — tracking interactions such as views and referral traffic to your website is an ideal place to start.



#9 Set Up a Facebook for Business Page

A Facebook for Business page instantly makes you more discoverable, creates new pathways to connect with prospects and customers, and provides analytics for a better understanding of your customers and your digital marketing effectiveness.

Facebook makes it very easy to set up your own page. Once you're up and running, you can easily customize it with call-to-action buttons and native video hosting, giving you convenient opportunities to effectively engage with your prospects.

Not only can you create a vibrant online community, your Facebook page can help push lead aggregators and ILSs to the second page of search results by giving your business more first-page real estate.



#10 Provide Compelling Social Content

Once you've set up your pages, be sure to provide consistently compelling social content. Post content that helps educate your prospects, demonstrates your commitment to local businesses, and highlights the charitable causes important to you. Provide examples of thought leadership that set you apart from your competition — such as green living initiatives. These are all powerful ways to build positive perceptions of your company.

Be enthusiastic and authentic, and your customers will trust your site as a reputable spot to get information. They will come back for more and even share it with others.

#11 Start Using Native Advertising

Social media platforms provide an excellent forum to deliver your advertising message in a way that benefits the user. One highly effective method is native advertising, which exposes your target audience to your message within the native user experience. This could be promoted posts on Facebook or sponsored tweets on Twitter. In fact, Twitter allows you to create audiences based on keywords or hashtags, followers, interests, and behaviors — enabling you to better craft your ads and place them right in front of your target audience.

facebook®

twitter®



Advocacy

How to Tap into the Selling Power of Your Fans

The rapid adoption of smartphones and social media has changed the way your brand reputation is built. You're no longer in control of the messages that people see. Today, your current and prospective customers can instantly post reviews on Yelp!, Google+, and Facebook that will immediately change how people think about you. And because research tells us that peer reviews are far more trusted than what you publish, that puts your customers and prospects in control. Your brand marketing strategy needs to address this new reality.

Every social review affects your reputation and, without a formal Advocacy Program in place that enables you to aggregate, respond to, invite, and promote reviews, you'll surrender your message to the masses. You can't control what people say about your brand, but there are steps you can take to assure that you are positioned in the best possible light. Instead of being held hostage to reviews, try tapping into the selling power of your fans.



#12 Monitor Social Media Conversations

Since you know that your potential and current customers are out there writing reviews on your business, the first step in your Advocacy Program should be to aggregate and monitor those conversations. Be sure to listen to what they're saying — what is affecting the lives of your customers and your community? Social monitoring provides great insights into hot-button topics and illuminates ways to communicate with your prospects and customers in the future.



#13 Respond to Online Reviews Within 24 Hours

Once you're aggregating and monitoring social conversations, you'll want to respond to negative reviews while you promote the positive ones. Your Advocacy Program should include these steps:

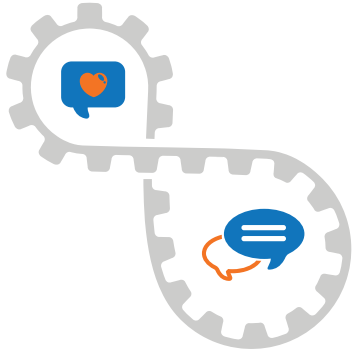
Promote the positive reviews and make them work for you by linking to them on your site. Not only will that have a positive impact on site visitors, it will also boost your Google search results.

Minimize the negative reviews by responding to them within 24 hours. Leaving a poor review with no response will compound the damage and give the impression that your business is unprepared, unprofessional, and unsympathetic.



#14 Invite All New Customers within 72 Hours

People trust properties with many reviews and high-star ratings, so your Advocacy Program should help you bring in as many positive ratings as possible. An important thing to keep in mind is that timing is everything: Your newest customers are often your greatest fan base. Tap into them in the first 72 hours while they are excited and happy about their move. When you send an immediate invitation for a review, more often than not your fans will be happy to help out.



#15 Lower the Cost of Managing Your Online Reputation through Automation

Managing your Advocacy Program can be extremely difficult and time consuming. Rather than dedicating a full-time person at each community for this task, find a technology partner who will help you automate the management of online reputation across your entire portfolio. The partner should have a set of tools that will help you aggregate, respond to, invite, and promote reviews. By consolidating your online reputation management into a single dashboard with the ability to assign tasks to others, your on-site staff will be able to spend more time where it matters: with your customers.



#16 Include Star Ratings in Search Results

Online searchers pay attention to stars in search results. The more high-star ratings you have in multiple places, the more likely consumers are to engage with you. We've talked about the importance of aggregating reviews and posting them on your site. But it's also important to recognize that building up the number of reviews on every major third-party review site will infuse your properties' organic and paid search results with star ratings.



Analytics

How to Measure the Effectiveness of Your Digital Marketing Strategy

With a website that showcases your business, an optimized search strategy, focused and dedicated social tactics, and a dialed-in advocacy program, you may think you're doing all you can do to maximize your digital marketing effectiveness. Almost.

Implement data-driven marketing so that you will know if all these things are working, whether your message is reaching your intended audience, and if your investment is leading to conversions. By analyzing metrics such as cost-per-lead, cost-per-lease, and lead source performance, you'll be able to measure the effectiveness of your campaigns, spot the weaknesses and strengths of key digital touchpoints, and ultimately maximize each property's profitability.



#17 Measure What Matters

Two of the most sought-after marketing metrics in property management are cost-per-lead and cost-per-lease. These metrics give you great insight into your marketing efficiency, but they don't paint the whole picture. To allocate your budget in the most efficient way possible, you need to also understand the performance of your lead sources. But how should you assign credit to conversions? Attribution models help you spend marketing dollars wisely by giving you a framework to evaluate marketing efforts. Attribution models help you understand what combination of events (even in what particular order) influences your prospects to become converted leads.

A first-click attribution model provides a simple and broad perspective to understand the initial source. First click gives 100% credit to the first marketing touchpoint a prospect experienced for your brand — even if a separate touchpoint later converts that prospect. After you've become comfortable understanding the initial source, you can move on to substituting other attribution models and determining how various touchpoints and channels contribute throughout the customer's decision journey. Find an attribution model that works best with your unique marketing campaigns and methods. A first-click attribution model may not line up with your business model, but a last-interaction (giving 100% credit to the final click before conversion) or linear model (spreading credit across each assist in the conversion process) might give you better insight.



#18 Invest in What Works

Now that you can measure performance by lead source, you can take steps to focus your dollars where they'll bring the greatest return on investment. If you're allocating a portion of your marketing spend to lead generation sites, for example, analytics will demonstrate that lead-to-lease conversion rates are much lower when you get your leads from a lead generation site versus when you get them from your own website.

Lead generation sites are in business to grow revenue and provide shareholder value each quarter at your expense. They want to outrank you in Google, Bing, and Yahoo, as well as outperform you in social media. The more traffic they take away from your websites, the more leads they can provide back to you at a higher cost-per-lead and significantly lower conversion rate than if the traffic flowed directly through your website.

How do you decrease dependency on lead generation sites? Integrate your sites, search, social, and advocacy digital strategies into a powerful lead generation engine. With a website that showcases your business and utilizes conversion rate optimization, an optimized and integrated search strategy, focused and dedicated social tactics, a dialed-in advocacy program, and comprehensive analytics to gain actionable insights, you're able to drive qualified leads to your site without the "help" of lead generation sites. Don't give your marketing dollars away. Take your leads back.



#19 Use Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

Strictly speaking, CRO is the practice of scientifically testing alternatives to increase conversions (or the percentage of digital prospects that convert to customers). But it's more than that: It gives you the ability to adjust your marketing design and message so that you're resonating with your target audience.

As with any methodical testing, the real value comes from identifying and building strong hypotheses about user behaviors and then testing them (the bulk of CRO efforts happens during this early planning stage). This begins with research to identify "what" users are doing on the site today through quantitative analysis, using tools such as Google Analytics. Next, dive into "how" and "why" users are doing it through a range of methods, including user testing, session recordings, and surveys. Once you have "what," "how," and "why," you can develop hypotheses with the intent to improve user experience and business outcomes based on data.

Start by ensuring that Google Analytics is correctly configured to track the user actions on your website that are aligned with your business objectives (i.e., assuring you're tracking the "what"). Next, consider additional tracking tools that give you insight into the "how" and "why." For example, a heat-mapping tool will show you which elements users are engaging with the most (so you can assess if your website design is attracting users to the elements to drive them to convert). These types of tools will give you more qualitative information about your website prospects.

Think of CRO as your lab. There are many types of tests you can run to determine which design elements are impacting your metrics positively. The two most common are A/B testing and multivariate testing. Typically, you'll need to partner with a vendor who can conduct these types of CRO-testing methodologies.

A/B testing — also known as split testing — compares two versions of a web page to see which one performs better with live traffic. By showing the two versions to similar visitors, you'll be able to determine which design elements or messages are most effective for converting visitors to leads.

Multivariate testing is also split between different versions of the design, but compares a higher number of variables and how they interact with one another. The purpose of a multivariate test is to measure the effectiveness of different design combinations and/or messages, as opposed to a single element.

To learn more about this, check out our blog on [The Basics of Conversion Rate Optimization](#).



#20 Factor in the Value of Your Customers

The phrase “knowledge is power” is undeniably true — but, in today’s big data world, it’s only true if you can sift through an enormous amount of data to get to actionable insights. With that in mind, you need to determine the key performance indicators (KPIs) that matter most to you (cost-per-lead and cost-per-lease, for example) and balance that with the value your customers bring to your business over time.

The lifetime value of a customer is a way to forecast the revenue that a customer will generate during the entire time they use your product or service. Start by calculating the average time a customer is with your business multiplied by the average monthly spend for that customer (minus the cost of the product or service). In other words, how much profit do you make on average with a customer? Further, segment your customers by personas to calculate the average lifetime value of your ideal audience to better measure the impact of your marketing efforts.

Understanding the lifetime value of your customers can help provide thresholds for how much you want to spend to obtain those customers. This could be a dollar amount or even a percentage of the profit. It may also help drive your product or service direction to better meet the needs of existing customers and increase their average duration with your company. Knowing this lifetime value will allow your team the freedom to make solid decisions around customer acquisition spend and move nimbly through the many marketing spend decisions to reach prospects and convert them to customers.



Maximize digital marketing effectiveness.

Learn more at GetG5.com

G5 is the leading provider of digital marketing effectiveness in the property management sector. In today's increasingly mobile and social world, reaching and converting prospects is more complex than ever before. G5 simplifies the complexity of digital marketing with an innovative cloud-based platform that creates, measures, and optimizes the entire customer experience — from awareness to advocacy — for a fraction of the cost of traditional marketing approaches. The G5 Marketing Cloud delivers best-in-class experiences across search, sites, and social, as well as tools that measure and optimize results.

Founded in 2005, G5 was recently named one of the fastest growing private US companies by *Inc.* magazine (4th year), one of North America's fastest growing technology companies by *Deloitte* (5th consecutive year), and one of Oregon's fastest growing private companies by *Portland Business Journal* (4th year). The Bend, Oregon-based company is backed by private equity investor Peak Equity Partners. To learn how to maximize digital marketing effectiveness, please visit GetG5.com.