

# Online Marketing: How it all fits together...

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# Introduction

This ebook has been prepared with one simple objective in mind - to explain the best methods & approach to using the internet for marketing and communication purposes.

After years of experience working with a wide range of different size companies, agencies, service providers and other consultancies, we have come to one conclusion - when it comes to achieving greater levels of return of investment in the digital world: 'Use' the best specialists in each discipline, listen to their advice, expect to pay them fairly, and make sure you are in control of your project throughout.

Too often we've encountered clients who have been given either bad or average, advice. This lack of quality is a real problem for any business, as being just slightly different does not differentiate you or your business from your competitors. To excel beyond your competitors you need to deliver exceptional results.

It is common for less experienced decision makers to appoint one single agency, or consultant, to guide their whole marketing approach. And although this may seem like a sensible approach it often leads to a lackluster poorly executed approach, that fails to deliver the promised returns.

Within the digital arena there are simply too many different perspectives, based upon systems that are continually changing, for a 'generalist' approach to succeed. Real specialists are at the cutting edge of developments within their area and will often report changes to an approach that may even conflict with other areas in this arena.

Conflicts or issues may be awkward, inconvenient, or require a complete change of approach part way through a project however, it is in these conflicts that the client gets the very best for their project. Any single 'expert' will find it difficult to manage these competing ideas and in most cases they will choose a compromise solution over a best case one, damaging the overall chance of earning returns from your investment.

Through listening to the views of a range of specialists you will find synergy between each of them and can be assured that you are getting the most up to date advice available. Of course, some people may find this advice contrary to their previous experience, or slightly inconvenient compared to their current working models. Challenging existing models are none-the-less healthy for your business and keep you at the forefront!

**This ebook has been prepared with one simple objective in mind - to explain the best methods & approach to using the Internet for marketing and communication purposes.**

As mentioned previously this ebook is the culmination of years of experience, and brings together the authors' latest advice on what they feel produces the best results for today's clients.

## The historical perspective

Looking back over the past 18 years there have been many changes to how the Internet has been used. It's been an interesting growth period for everyone who's been involved in this growing and vibrant area of communication enabled by the Internet.

The acceleration has been phenomenal, especially since the late 90s, but it's not been without its natural growing pains. As organisations have seized on emerging media, using it to the best of their abilities, the available resources have also changed and developed. The best approach has evolved, and this has caused difficulties and had an effect on the benefits to be had.

## So how did we get to where we are now?

Well in the beginning, businesses started building websites and people started looking at them. As the Internet population grew the importance of having a good looking website also grew. Budgets invariably increased alongside the business need to impress an ever increasing number of visitors.

As businesses were spending larger sums of money on their websites they were also asking questions about how effective their sites were. How many visitors were actually getting to their website? and if a website had twice as many people visiting it, was it twice as effective?

Businesses were spending lots of money with clever web designers, producing visually impressive looking websites with good looking features. But when the review of their website's effectiveness occurred, the results seemed a whole lot less impressive than the budget had lead them to imagine.

It is at this stage that the marketing of websites became important, and search engine optimisation (SEO) in particular, became a hot topic. A gold rush of SEO companies sprung up to offering services to help company executives retrospectively add extra visitors to their website statistics.

People also started to realise that they could email their past customers, or try and collect email addresses to contact them encouraging purchase. This approach could work well, if it was managed correctly, although much use of email was carried out through low quality distribution systems that didn't maximise the conversion rate. The relative poor understanding of how to source data for effective email marketing meant that often campaigns had very low returns.

In summary, these approaches to the build, and subsequent marketing of websites, were often nothing more than a disjointed after thought which produced average results.

## What is the future?

This will not win a noble prize but one of our key messages is simple: Understand, plan & execute continuously to stay ahead of the competition.

Getting a complete understanding of how you might implement a full online marketing strategy is not straight forward, but we hope with the advice contained within this ebook, combined with high quality advice from specialists, you can achieve far greater results than you may have done in the past.

Each individual case requires a unique approach and it's important to consider carefully how you put together your strategy. If you follow the principles of research first through Search Marketing, Social Media Marketing and Email Marketing then you will equip yourself with the knowledge to create a far better website and get more success from your overall digital strategy.

Spend time with your key online marketing partners and work up a list of requirements for your website. Once you have your list, consider how each element fits together and start working with your website development partner to plan the site structure and key functional roles.

For example, part of your search strategy may require certain important phrases to each have their own page. This will mean that the site may have additional pages which will be reflected in the navigation architecture in order to ensure the site is usable.

By carrying out the research first you will be able to make the right decisions throughout the design and build process, incorporating all the requirements of each discipline.

With regard to who designs and builds the site for you, just choose people who understand the importance of each specialism, but do not pretend to be experts in them all. They should understand how to put the pieces of the jigsaw together and have high technical standards. Look at what they have achieved before – this will allow you to judge what level they will be able to accomplish on your behalf.

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# Social media & Social Media Marketing

# Social media & Social Media Marketing

You've probably found it difficult over the past few years to ignore the rise of social media. It seems as if the whole world is talking about Facebook, Twitter, or the latest in a long line of strangely named, and sometimes inappropriate sounding sites.

The following few pages are designed to help you establish the key facts, help you make the decision on whether social media is something worth looking at for your business and show how it works with other forms of online marketing.

## What is social media?

The term Social Media is often applied to a range of websites, or web-based services, which allow users to publish and share content with their network of friends, colleagues and other connections on a large scale. It can also refer to the style in which a business communicates and the overall strategy that the business employs. It often incorporates aspects of digital marketing, customer service, customer relationship management (CRM), research and development, search marketing and the information architecture of your website.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a term given to the use of social media to engage with online communities to generate opportunity, exposure or sales for a business.

**If you're anything like us, you're too busy getting on with the nuts and bolts of running your business to invest valuable time in finding out if this latest marketing innovation is really for you.**

## How big is it?

**At the time of writing, there are over 133m blogs in operation, an estimated 672m people on Facebook, 200m on Twitter, 100m on LinkedIn and 24 hours of video uploaded to You Tube every minute of the day (and night). A recent report shows that more than 73% of businesses are planning to increase their use of social media sites in 2011, with 64% of companies reporting that have already begun experimenting.**

# Elements of social media

## Social networks

In the same way that you might maintain a network of friends, colleagues and other acquaintances in the 'real world' it is possible to do so online via social networks. Social networks offer a valuable opportunity for a business to generate word of mouth recommendation, as customers recommend products or services to their own 'social network'.

## Content libraries and blogs

There are a range of services that allow individuals and companies to make content available online. These services offer the ability to upload audio, video and visual content, among other types of media, for access by others online. Sites include; AudioBoo, YouTube and Flickr. In addition to content libraries, it is possible to upload written content to a blogging platform, such as Wordpress, where a series of articles are uploaded over time, displayed with the most recently posted article at the top. Sharing content online can be valuable in building credibility, market position and can aid a search marketing strategy.

## Product and service reviews

Sites like Amazon and Argos offer their customers the opportunity to review a product or service on their sites for others to read. Similarly, services such as TripAdvisor, offer customers the chance to leave a review on a third-party system. Impartial reviews can help a business demonstrate credibility, identify potential issues early-on and create opportunities to up-sell or cross-sell other product or service alternatives.

## Forums and discussions

Forums have been around longer than many other social platforms, they allow their users to post a question or topic for discussion online, inviting others to contribute to it. They can be a powerful tool for generating consumer interest, as users become engaged in discussions, often leading to the creation of powerful online communities around a company's products or services.

## Geo-Location or geo-tagging

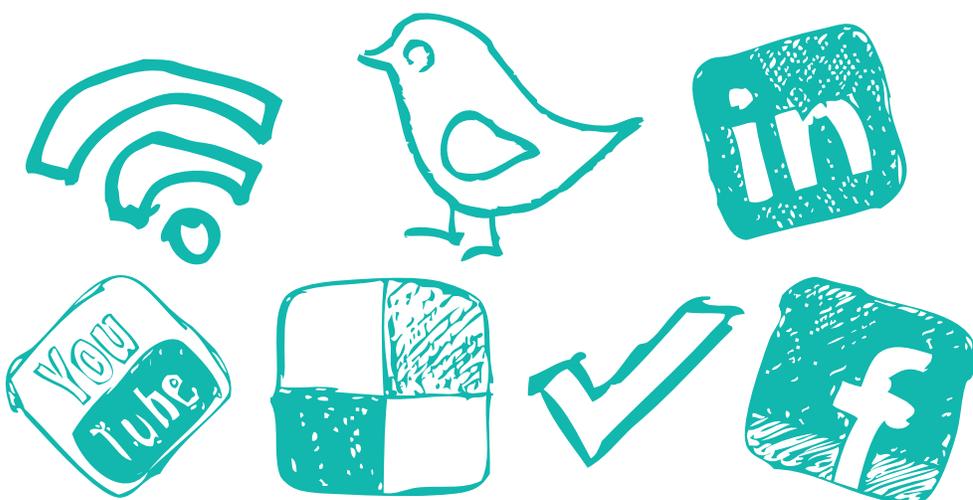
A relatively new addition to social media, geo-locating or geo-tagging offers users the ability to share their physical location with their connections online. Popular services include FourSquare and Gowalla, as well as Facebook's own system, Facebook Places. They offer businesses, especially those in retail or hospitality, with opportunities to target users with special offers and to track new or returning customers.

## Where do I start?

At the start it is a good idea to conduct some research to establish how your customers are already using these services, if they are at all. In undertaking your research you should speak to your current customers and ask them how they use it, and perhaps most importantly, whether they would want to interact with you on those platforms. Do some research online, take keywords related to your business, products or service and look at what is already being said on social platforms.

## My customers don't use social media

You might be thinking your customers don't use social media sites, and potentially they're not. So you don't really need to spend any more time looking at it, right? Wrong, just because your customers aren't using social media doesn't mean that you can't benefit from it. Your business may rely on influencers or partners to generate work e.g. family members, journalists or employees that 'influence' a decision maker or strategic partners who 'refer' work to you – so how are they using it? It may be that your customers interact with content on social media sites, such as blogs and video content, without realising that this content is anything other than standard web content. And, it may be that the reason they're not using social sites at this stage is because you and your competitors haven't led the way yet. Consider each of these aspects before ruling out social media.



Here are some useful tools which will help you carry out your research:

### Google

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

*Google can search for content on blogs, video sites, forums and on Twitter itself through the standard search engine service, with the option to filter results by each of those mediums. To look at one particular type of content, carry out your search as normal and then use the options that appear to the left of your screen, just under the Google logo on the page that appears. The options include; images, video, news, shopping, at a first glance; However, by pressing 'More' you will reveal options for books, places, blogs, realtime (Twitter & Facebook) and discussions (forums).*

### SocialMention

[www.socialmention.com](http://www.socialmention.com)

*SocialMention operates very similarly to Google Search, with the added advantage of searching a wider range of social sites, and offering more targeted filtering options. To search specific networks or services, type your search into the main search box and opt to 'select social media sources' or use the dropdown to the right of the box for particular types of content.*

# What do I do now?

Should you decide to move ahead with a social media approach it is best to develop a strategy. This strategy should detail how you plan to achieve a series of defined objectives using the technology and techniques available to you. The following 'CARAT' model should provide a rough structure for researching and documenting your idea:

## Community

It is important to establish who your customers, influencers and partners are. It may be that you operate in a business to business (B2B) environment where other members of staff affect purchasing decisions or a business to consumer one (B2C), where other family members do. Think at this stage about how you might target traditional and new media influencers, such as journalists or bloggers.

## Aims

What do you hope to achieve? Define your objectives and establish how you will measure your success. Don't forget to consider opportunities to gain more business from existing customers or to cut costs through new processes.

## Resources

Consider what resources you are willing to invest before you start thinking about your campaigns or approaches. You'll need to identify what money, time, skills etc. you are willing to invest, against the potential returns.

## Approach

Armed with your research and decisions in the previous steps you are in a position to define the general approach, or set of campaigns, you will use. Consider how you will build-in visibility, credibility, value (to your customer), responsiveness, and what personality your business will project in these spaces.

## Technology

Start to think about how your approach will be implemented. Identify any technical work that will need to be carried out to an existing site or speak to a developer about how you will integrate your approach into a new website build.

## How does it all fit together?

A good social media approach will integrate fully with your wider marketing and communications strategy, search and email marketing approach, and your website. Look for opportunities to pull them all together and get more returns for your investment in each area, consider:

- Consider how content produced for use on your websites, emails or printed literature may be reused or adapted for use on social media sites.

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- Identify any routes to automate or integrate processes in order to save money or time – perhaps by making better use of your website to selectively 'push' content on to social media sites.

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- Highlight or promote social media accounts in emails, on printed literature, or within PR campaigns in order to boost your results from each.

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- Consider screening any in-house databases of clients or customers on social media platforms – identifying customers using these platforms and connecting with them will give you a stronger starting position.

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## Best practice

- Social media needs to be 'social' – somewhere within your approach you should define how you will be responsive to comments or interactions over the web.

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- In most cases, the customer needs to make a decision to interact with or receive your content – broadcasting sales messages or pitches over social sites is ineffective.

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- Your content should have some value to the audience – consider how you might provide direction or answers to popular questions as part of your approach.

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- Demonstrate you, or your company's, credibility rather than telling people how credible you are ("Don't tell me you're funny, tell me a joke").

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- Understand how you are measuring success at the start, and benchmark current performance for future comparisons.

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- Remember that social media is about building relationships with your community, it takes time and effort to build trust, but you will own a very valuable asset at the end.

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## Moving things forward

It may be that you decide to bring in professional support to help develop your strategy, campaigns or approach. In selecting an appropriate partner you should consider:

### Knowledge & experience

Does the supplier have a proven track record in business? How long has the supplier been working in this arena? Who are they currently working with? Just because someone knows how to use Facebook, it doesn't follow that they will understand how to generate results for a business.

### Results

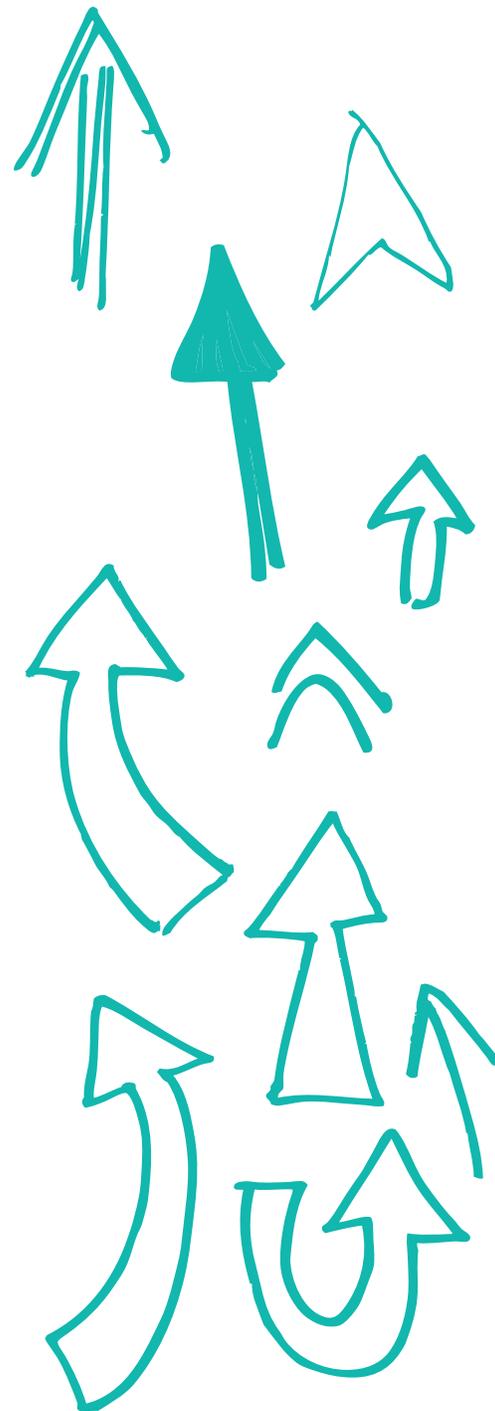
Does the supplier understand and have a methodology to demonstrate results? Can they point to successes and demonstrate how they have helped another business in a similar position to your own? Be wary of suppliers who try to cover over the issue of results, suggesting that it is impossible to measure them!

### Specialism

Does the supplier offer a range of other services such as email marketing, websites, copywriting, video and search marketing – if so, they're probably 'generalists'. It is better to invest in getting someone who understands each of these areas at a high level, but specialises specifically within the area of social media.

### Presence

How are they using social media themselves? Do they have a strong presence online? Are they part of a wider community or do they appear 'isolated' online – i.e. lack of any conversations, comments or other interactions? Take time to evaluate any content they have produced and ensure that they appear credible online.



# Search Marketing

# Search Marketing

Like most online marketing approaches, use of Search Marketing has exploded over the past decade. The continuous and ongoing development of search engines, combined with industry specific jargon, and conflicting information, has made this into one of the more complex and confusing areas. As such, you're probably in one of two camps when it comes to Search Marketing; either it's a dark art that you dare not touch, or something you think you have a pretty good handle on, having sprinkled an adequate number of keywords onto your website and linked to a few others.

Search Marketing can be a time consuming effort, but those who invest wisely at the outset often benefit from a very generous return on their investment. The following section has been designed to help you establish the key facts about Search Marketing, the options available to you, guidance on making those first, and all important steps, towards a Search Marketing approach that works for your business.

## What is Search Marketing?

The term Search Marketing refers to a range of tactics designed to improve your online visibility. Tactics employed as part of a Search Marketing approach may include; Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Display Advertising, Pay Per Click (PPC) and Mobile marketing.

**Search Marketing can be a time consuming effort, but those who invest wisely at the outset often benefit from a very generous return on their investment.**

## How big is it?

**Each month Google, the largest and most popular search engine, processes an average of 10.3 billion searches with consumers spending a combined 31 billion hours on search engines. The vast majority of companies (83%) carry out some form of search marketing and 83% of UK online shoppers admit to using search engines to research a purchase.**

# Elements of Search Marketing

## Keyphrase research

At the heart of a successful Search Marketing approach are the keywords, or key-phrases, you want to be found for. The words or phrases relate to the those that consumers will use themselves in order to locate your business through a search engine. These words or phrases need to match the words or phrases that your customers and potential customers are most likely to be searching for, rather than those you might think you need to be found for.

## Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO refers to the efforts made in order to improve the “organic” or “natural” search results for your website. It is the aim to get your business’ website as high up the search engines’ lists as possible, for the search term you want to be found for. Tactics employed as part of this process may include improvements to your website structure, content and links (both inbound and outbound).

## Pay Per Click (PPC)

Realising the success of your SEO efforts can take time and is only part of the equation in driving relevant traffic to your website. Paid search systems can help improve web traffic when it is difficult to be “at the top” for organic results. The systems in place are tried and tested and fairly easy to use, resulting in high quality and targeted traffic to your website. Google AdWords is Google’s paid search platform and is by far the most advanced and established system available.

## Mobile marketing

A fast growing area of the Search Marketing industry is the use of Mobile marketing. Paid Search System, Google AdWords, can now specifically target mobile users with exceptional geographic detail. These ads are attractive to advertisers as they offer the potential to display a “click to call” option which allows a consumer to connect with you directly via a phone call triggered through the Ad.



## Where do I start?

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It is absolutely essential to begin your Search Marketing approach by getting a thorough understanding of your keywords and phrases. You should start by preparing a list of phrases that are commonly used already on your website. Widen your research by looking at industry publications and think about how people refer to your products or services. If you have Google Analytics on your site (a free service from Google which measures traffic to your site), it can be useful to take a look at your past web statistics, paying particular notice to the words or phrases you've already been found for.

Once you have for a good idea of what you think you want to be found for, you can then use a key phrase research tool (see tools below) to identify the exact phrases people are actually searching for. You can also check the volume of people searching for any given term and examine search trends on a monthly and annual basis.

Look for keywords that are very relevant to the products or services that you offer which also achieve a good number of search queries. Once you have your list of target key phrases you can begin the process of "optimising" your site by integrating these into the content of the pages of your website.

(Be careful: improper use of keywords can result in a negative impact on your ranking.)

Google's keyword research tool can also be used to find phrases that are specifically being searched for on mobile devices. Mobile searches tend to be shorter, more general phrases than those searched for on a desktop or laptop computer.

Some useful tools to help carry out your research include:

**Google Keyword Research Tool**  
<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

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*Google's own key phrase research tool which reports average monthly and annual number of searches for specific keywords or phrases.*

**Google Wonder Wheel**

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*Google's Wonder wheel can be found in the "more search tools" section of Google on the search results page. It is useful in determining associated words or phrases to the one entered.*

**Google Insights for Search** [www.google.co.uk/insights/search/](http://www.google.co.uk/insights/search/)

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*Google Insights enables you to compare search volume patterns across specific regions, categories, time frames and properties.*

You will also find more useful information at:

[www.google.co.uk/adwords](http://www.google.co.uk/adwords)

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[adcenter.microsoft.com](http://adcenter.microsoft.com)

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## But I already know what my customers are searching for

As much as you may feel you know your business, understanding how your customers search and behave online can be a different matter entirely. Taking the time to do some proper keyword research will ensure you get the most out of your Search Marketing and will help you avoid losing money through optimising for phrases that no one is really searching for. In short, the benefits of proper keyphrase research include:

- Accurate knowledge of what brings visitors to your site (not what you think brings them to the site).

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- Deeper understanding of your visitors (and customers).

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- Understanding of the kind of content you need.

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- Avoiding costly mistakes.

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- Laying solid foundations for everything else you do online.

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## What do I do now?

In order to get the most from your Search Marketing approach you will need to develop a strategy. The process begins with evaluation of your current site and ranking, the results of your keyword research and defining your objectives. It is extremely important to research fully what your customers are looking for before any link building or content writing begins, without this specialist knowledge you may find your site is optimised for terms that no one is searching for.

Getting started with online marketing can be a minefield, you need to spend a great deal of time and in some cases money too. It's usually best to make a start with a simple but targeted Google AdWords campaign, this will allow you to discover which key phrases work well for your business and can then assist with choice of target key phrases for Search Engine Optimisation at a later date.

## How does it all fit together?

A good Search Marketing approach will integrate fully with your wider online and offline marketing activity. In order to get a better return on your investment through bringing it all together consider:

- Using your keyword research to inform other content, perhaps for your email newsletters or blog posts.

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- Understanding your web statistics, particularly those related to website visitors, could allow you to find and interact with those customers on social networks.

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- Greater website visibility will mean more traffic to your website – try and keep them engaged by encouraging them to subscribe to emails or connect on social networks.

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- Sharing your content on social media platforms will create valuable links into to your site, and in some cases, influential and related users on social networks posting your content can add a further boost to your rankings.

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- Advertising on mobile devices is still fairly cheap (as it's still relatively new to most advertisers) and typically mobile search users convert at a much higher rate.

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## Best practice

We've briefly discussed the key points of Search Marketing within this section. There are other aspects that could be equally important to your business. Google Places or Bing for Business for example can help your "bricks and mortar" business be found for local searches and Google Merchant Center is an important source of traffic for online shops.

- Well informed is well armed – the more time you invest in research at the start, the more successful your approach is likely to be.

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- Understand your options and make use of the best tactics for your business, making use of SEO, PPC and Mobile marketing.

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- Ensure you have Google Analytics installed on your website from the start. Your developer can advise you on how best to do this

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- Monitor and improve – Monitor your progress and set aside time to regularly review your performance, making any alterations to your approach as necessary. Remember your Search Marketing approach is never truly finished.

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# Moving things forward

You will find a wealth of information online to help with your Search marketing, however, with such an array of constantly changing information, you will need to ensure you are up-to-date with the latest information in order to make the most of your investment. Selecting a dedicated Search Marketing professional will increase your effectiveness, in choosing the right partner you should consider:

## Knowledge & experience

Does the supplier have a good reputation? Do they carry current and appropriate Google certifications? Are they well informed on the latest developments within the industry?

## Plain English

Is the supplier able to coach you to manage your own Search Marketing efforts in the long term? Can they communicate all the key aspects in plain English? Failure to impart their knowledge can leave you with a hefty bill and no real insight, forcing you to repeat the exercise year on year.

## Results

Does the supplier understand and have a methodology to demonstrate results? Can they give specific results-driven examples across the breadth of Search Marketing? Some suppliers might be brilliant at link builders but lack the ability to translate these successes into tangible returns for the business.

## Specialism

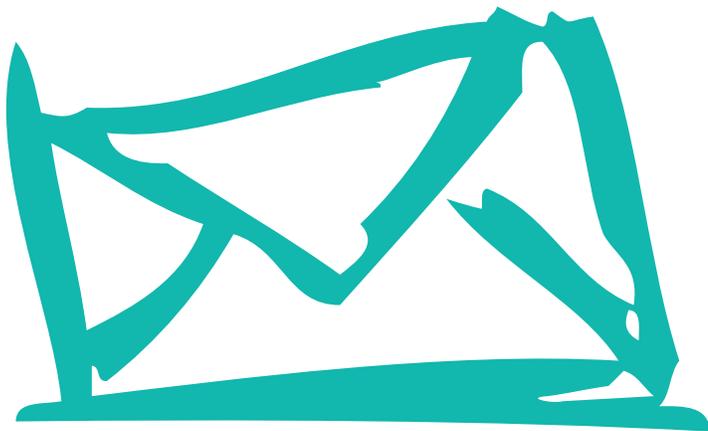
Does the supplier offer a range of other services such as email marketing, websites, copywriting, video and search marketing – if so, they're probably 'generalists'. It is better to invest in getting someone who understands each of these areas at a high level but specialises within the area of Search Marketing

# Email Marketing

# Email Marketing

## What is Email Marketing?

Put simply, Email Marketing is about using email as part of a direct marketing approach, where the email is used to communicate a commercial message to an audience. The purpose of this activity may be to enhance the relationship between your organisation and your contacts, encouraging customer loyalty and repeat business. Although the act of actually sending an email to a customer is relatively simple, making sure you get a return from your activity requires understanding of the law, content strategies, timing, and other factors which can affect the success of your efforts.



**Contrary to the opinion that social media is “killing” email, Email Marketing has seen continued year on year growth.**

## How big is it?

Email Marketing is relatively mature as an online marketing method compared to, say Social Media Marketing and contrary to the opinion that social media is “killing” email, Email Marketing has seen continued year on year growth.

There are estimated to be nearly 3 billion email accounts in the world (with that number forecast to rise to 3.8bn by 2014) compared to just 672 million Facebook users.

On average 18% of marketing budgets are allocated to email marketing; the highest after website spend (24%) and significant to just 6% spend on social media. Email offers one of the best returns on investment at an estimated £28 per £1 spent, where traditional direct mail can only reach £12 per £1 spent.

# Elements of Email Marketing

## Data collection

Refers to the methods used to gain email addresses (and other information) to enable organisations to send marketing messages. It is vital that robust collection methods are in place to ensure accurate and useful data.

## Laws

There are laws governing the use of email for marketing purposes; they are simple yet important to remember. Simply put, anyone receiving your email marketing messages must have previously opted in to hear from you.

This means they must have explicitly stated that they would like you to contact them by email for marketing purposes. There is a useful caveat to this directive, which states that organisations can send without specific opt-in permission as long as they can prove there is an existing relationship between them (the organisation) and the individual (e.g they have made an enquiry or already purchased something from you in the past and in the course of that transaction they have shared their email address with you).

However, the product or service being promoted must be of a similar nature to the original transaction or enquiry and there must always be a valid and simple way to opt out from future mailings (meaning you must have a clear and simple “unsubscribe” link).

## Deliverability

Unfortunately over 80% of all emails sent daily around the globe are unsolicited “SPAM” messages (around 3 billion emails!). This means Internet Service Providers (ISPs) e.g. Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL, do all they can to guard their users from receiving Spam, which means that legitimate email marketers have to do all they can to avoid being falsely identified as a spammer. Deliverability is affected by online reputation, email structure and content.

## Relevance

The more relevant your content is to your recipients, the more likely they are going to read your email and respond to it. This has driven the need for segmentation, targeting and advanced technological features instead of simply blasting out mass messaging in a ‘one size fits all’ manner.

## Where do I start?

Most importantly before embarking on any email campaigns, you should ensure you understand the capabilities of email and how they apply to your business. Also, in order to get the most from your efforts you should select a professional Email Service Provider (ESP).

The ESP market can be incredibly confusing, with alien pricing structures and detailed technical specifications compounding the issue. It's a good idea to get some professional advice at this stage to ensure you select the most appropriate service for your business.

Registering to receive regular email updates from a range of ESPs will not only mean you get some great tips delivered to your inbox, but you'll also be able to gauge them as a business for a time when you are ready to select your vendor.

## Why can't I just send emails from my domestic email account?

One of the main issues around email marketing is the concept of deliverability. This refers to actually getting IN the inbox. Sending emails from your own domestic account (such as Hotmail or Outlook) can harm your deliverability as these are not designed to adequately handle the demands of sending bulk emails.

### Also consider:

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- Your brand - do plain text emails really send out the right impression?
  - Reporting - Domestic email clients can't offer the same level of reporting that professional software provides as standard. "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!"
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Some useful places to start your research include:

### Econsultancy

<http://www.econsultancy.com/uk>

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*Has a wealth of digital marketing knowledge as well as an active forum and great newsletters.*

### MailAway blog

[www.mail-away.co.uk/blog](http://www.mail-away.co.uk/blog)

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A blog dedicated to email marketing best practice and advice. You will find guidance on anything email specific here.

**"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!"**

## What do I do now?

Think about your aims and objectives and implement a strategy that fits with the rest of your online plans (as well as your overall business plan). The most basic email objectives are to drive direct responses (converted sales) and to develop on-going relationships (customer retention and loyalty).

Campaign planning should be in line with the organisation's wider marketing and communications strategy.

You should ensure each of your emails:

- Identifies with your target audience

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- Defines what you want to say, when and why

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- Has a clear Call to Action – e.g. click through, purchase, contact

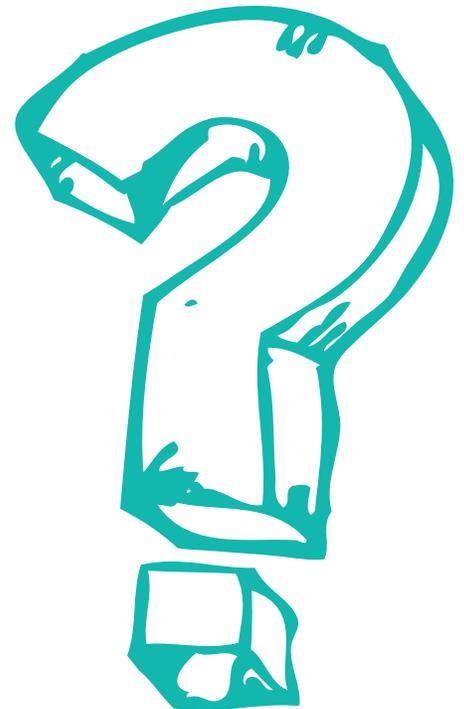
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- Has measurable outcomes and objectives

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Next, start collecting data, without it, you have no one to email. Always plan for and allow data collection both on and off line, using opt in collection methods. You will end up with a smaller but more engaged mailing list.

**Think about your aims and objectives and implement a strategy that fits with the rest of your online plans (as well as your overall business plan).**



# How does it all fit together?

- If data collection is one of your main priorities, you can link with your Search Marketing activity to drive visitors to the sign up page. See the example to the right from Coca Cola showing how they turned just a generic search for “coca cola” into an action to sign up – allowing them to gain valuable information and insight on their potential customers.



- AdWords and email marketing can work well in coordinating a particular promotion. For example “20% off in store and online for 24 hours only” - Perfect for a joint Adwords and email campaign.



- Email sign up should sit alongside your social media credentials, allowing website visitors to choose how they’d like you to communicate with you.



- Use email as a signpost to your blog. Many people create beautiful blogs and post regularly, but getting people to come back and read them is another matter. Adding blog content to your email marketing ensures that those most engaged with your brand (who are then also likely to read your posts) keep returning.

- Share email content via social media channels, either as a link to the whole piece, or to the individual articles highlighted within the email itself.

- Remember that email marketing and social media work very well alongside each other, driving interaction back and forth; they are complementary not competitive.

## Best practice

Many of the best practice guidelines for Social Media Marketing also stand true for email.

- Use opt-in data collection methods
- Combine sales offers with useful, relevant content to bring balance to your emails
- Encourage interaction with your subscribers
- Monitor, analyse and improve your approach over time

# Moving things forward

When you decide to take email marketing further, there is a wealth of Email Service Providers (ESPs) to choose from. You should take time to evaluate each ESP's abilities and consider the following factors.

## Knowledge & experience

Does the supplier have evidence of a good track record with proof of dedicated Email Marketing experience? Do they have the time and forethought to understand how Email Marketing can work for your business and can they give examples? Just because someone can design a pretty email doesn't mean they know how to create results from campaigns.

## The right platform and reputation

Does the supplier understand the difference between desktop, hosted and web-based services, can they explain what is best for your business and why? Can they demonstrate online reputation and what it means to your business? Reputation is vital to delivery of email campaigns, using suppliers who do not understand the technicalities behind email deliverability could harm your online brand.

## Growth opportunities

Ensure whichever ESP you choose has the ability to offer more than just a basic broadcast service. As your business grows, so too will your Email Marketing needs. You want to be safe in the knowledge that the partner you choose is robust enough to deal with your demands of future growth.

## Specialism

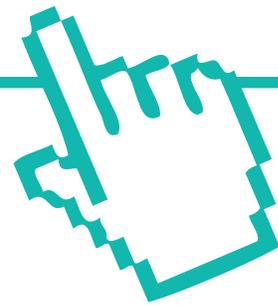
Email Marketing may only be one small aspect of your entire marketing strategy however to your supplier it must be their world. If suppliers offer Email Marketing as a "bolt on" to their core competency it is likely they are not immersed in the subject well enough to fully understand all the aspects that deliver results. It is better to invest in someone who understands all areas of business consultancy to a high level but specialises within the area of Email Marketing.

# Next steps

All of this works best when marketers really know how to use it. Get some expert advice:

- Ask us about future talks
- Join us on social networks
- Visit our websites
- View the slides on slideshare
- Sign up to our newsletters
- Contact us for specific questions

# Get me started



# Contact us

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