

# E-GUIDE

ONLINE MARKETING FUNDAMENTALS EVERY  
BUSINESS OWNER SHOULD KNOW



A publication of



**QUIKSTONE**  
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# INTRODUCTION

Less time, fewer staff and tight budgets mean small business owners wear a lot of hats. One of the most important is that of the marketer – after all, it's how you generate customers!

It's no secret that social media has changed the way you communicate with potential and existing customers and is one of the most effective ways of promoting your business.

A properly optimized website will not only get your business found online, it will generate customers and create return business.

Online marketing is evolving at a pace with which few business owners can keep up. Your online presence can make or break your sales so let's explore the deeper aspects of two fundamentals in online marketing – social media marketing and website optimization.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Analytics**

The discovery and communication of meaningful patterns in data.

## **Blog**

A regularly updated website or part of a website that consists of articles and relates to topics or subjects, and personal commentary usually run by one or a small group of people.

## **Calls to Action (CTAs)**

A text link, button, image, or some type of web link that encourages a website visitor to visit a landing page and become of lead.

## **Closed-Loop Marketing**

The ability to execute, track and show how marketing efforts have impacted bottom-line business growth. This includes tracking a website visitor through the whole process of becoming a lead to closing as a customer.

## **Engagement**

Engagement is the use of strategic, resourceful content to create meaningful, lasting interactions.

## **Inbound Link**

A link directing to your website from a third-party website. In general, the more inbound links you have, the better your website will rank in search engine results.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Inbound Marketing**

Attracting prospects and customers to your website and blog through relevant and helpful content, rather than by advertising and other traditional outbound methods. Once they arrive, you engage with them using conversational tools like email and chat and lead-conversion tools like calls to action and landing pages. And finally, you delight them by continuing to act as an advisor and expert.

## **Infographics**

Visual content popular among digital marketers as a way of relaying complex concepts in a simple way.

## **Landing Pages**

A website page with a form for capturing lead information. Landing pages are often used for sales offers, ebooks or webinars, and will capture information in exchange for the offer.

## **Lead Nurturing**

The practice of developing a series of communications to qualify a lead, keep it engaged, and gradually push it through the sales funnel.

## **Online Payments and Ecommerce**

Money that is exchanged electronically. Typically, this involves use of computer networks, the internet and digital stored value systems. Accepting online payments is something that will help to draw more business to your organization.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## Online Presence

Online presence is the overall existence of an individual or business on the internet via websites and social media. A strong online presence makes it easier to find a person or business online.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The process of affecting the online visibility of a website or a web page in a web search engine's unpaid results.

## Social Media

Anything disseminated through online social interaction, and is created using accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Some of the top social media networks used today are LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

## Social Media Influencer

A user on social media who has established a large audience and credibility in a specific industry. An influencer can persuade followers by virtue of their authenticity and reach.

## Social Reach

Social reach is the total number of people you are able to reach across all of your social media networks.

## Traffic

Traffic is the number of visitors to your website, mobile site or mobile application from sources such as search engines, social networks, other websites, online advertising, emails and direct visits.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Visual Content**

Visual content is using images and video to convey valuable information in an engaging visual format.

## **Website optimization**

The process of using controlled experimentation to improve a website's ability to drive business goals.

## **Word-of-Mouth**

The passing of useful information from person to person. Usually word-of-mouth would refer to physical oral communication but it also includes online communication.

## **Workflow**

The sequence of industrial, administrative, or other processes in which a piece of work passes from initiation to completion.

Workflows serve purposes such as adjusting contact properties on a lead record based on certain conditions, or by adding contact records to marketing lists segments.

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## Why Social Matters

Eighty percent of adults under 50 are using social media daily! Even 64 percent of senior citizens are using social media regularly. This means that basically no matter what your business or service is, that there is an audience online for you to reach through social media marketing. Building an online presence and connecting with your customers is vital to survive in the digital age.

## Knowing Your Social Objectives

Make sure your social media objectives are aligned with your business goals. You need to set measurable objectives to gauge how well your efforts are performing. The best way to set social media objectives is to be **SMART** about it.





### *Specific*

When defining your objectives, the more detail you include the better. It's best to work towards a well-defined objective.

### *Measurable*

For each social objective, make sure you can measure results and your objectives include quantifiable results.

### *Attainable*

Keep objectives realistic. You want to be able to reach your objectives so keep that in mind while you are setting them.

### *Relevant*

Make sure your objectives are relevant to social and aim to improve your business. Objectives should align with your business' mission, vision and values.

### *Time-bound*

You want the pressure of firm deadlines. Make weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly objectives for your business.





## Create a Voice

Creating a unique voice is crucial to a social media presence and brand for a business. You want your brand to be personable and cohesive across all platforms.

In a recent study it was found that 42 percent of people distrust brands, mainly because they consider them to be part of the establishment. This means that consumers see brands as having excessive power and influence and that they are therefore remote and unreachable. For this reason, among others, the personality you create should come across as human and relatable, but should also align with your company image and values. You want your followers and connections to relate to what you are sharing and look forward to hearing from you again.



## Be Consistent

Post regularly in order to keep your audience's attention, and make sure your posts are with the same voice. Timing is everything. You've probably heard this in many facets of your life and marketing is no different. With certain social media platforms, such as HootSuite, it is possible to schedule social media posts to several networks in advance so you do not have to constantly be dedicated to posting. There are a lot of great tools to help you decide when to post to each network, however here is a basic guideline.

- Facebook – 1-4 p.m. and 2-5 p.m. weekdays
- Twitter – 1-3 p.m. weekdays
- LinkedIn – 7-8:30 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- Tumblr – 7-10 p.m. weekdays and 4 p.m. on Fridays
- Instagram – 5-6 p.m. weekdays and 8 p.m. on Mondays
- Pinterest – 2-4 p.m. and 8-11 p.m. weekdays with weekends being the best



## Be Relatable

Knowing that there is a real person on the other end of the screen goes a long way in making connections. Social posts that are all business and no engagement can damage your brand and lessen your reach.

## Be Responsive

The entire point of being on a social media network as a business is to connect with potential customers. If you are simply posting and not engaging, your reach will not grow and your network will not be built. Respond to people, share their content, answer questions and establish genuine connections.

## Connect with Industry Influencers

Connecting with like-minded business owners can help in many ways. For starters, connecting with them can provide new perspective and a platform for knowledge sharing. You can also benefit from their already established network.

Find influencers and get them to share your content. Getting a mention from a well-respected influencer, tells their followers that you are valuable and trustworthy.

Here are 3 ways to find and connect with influencers in your industry:

1. Follow as many experts as you can: Finding people who already have a well-established voice and audience ensures you will stay up to date on trends and what is new in your industry.
2. Build relationships that are mutually beneficial: Do more than post promotions and engage in relevant topics to build solid relationships. Bring your experience to the table by commenting on popular discussion threads. And remember to share influencers' content.
3. Make sure they actually influence their audience: A lot of followers does not make an influencer, although it's a huge factor. Make sure they are connecting and building trust with their audience so they have the power and authority to influence.



## Create or Revamp Your Blog

Having a great blog is the best way to reach a large audience and establish credibility with your audience. If you already have a blog, revamping it and building up what you have is essential. It is recommended to blog at least 16 times a month. Companies that blog the recommended amount gain at least 3x more traffic than those who do not. It's important to remember when blogging, that you should not just strive for quantity, but quality as well. Your blog should tell your story and be relevant, helpful and interesting to your ideal customers.

## Repurpose Content

If you have old content that performed really well, reuse it! Bring it up to date and revitalize it with a new title and repost it. Repurposing content can improve your SEO ranking for the topic and reinforce your authority on the subject.

Another way you can repurpose your content is by turning it into a visual piece. Not everyone responds well to blogs and white papers, so if you take a well performing piece and turn it into an infographic you can reach a larger audience with the great content you already have.





## Use Visuals

Sharing visual posts such as photographs, infographics, and videos on social platforms is a great way to grab the attention of many internet users. According to Zabisco, the information that is transmitted to the brain comprises of 90 percent visual and 10 percent non-visual. When creating your visual content, make sure you're using the right colors and appropriate images for your brand and your message. Another great visual aid is videos. You can make "How-to" videos, funny engaging videos, informative videos etc. The possibilities are endless. Make sure your images are personable and relatable.

## Use the Right Tools

When it comes to fixing anything, including your social media strategy, it takes tools. Not just any tools, but the right tools. Finding the right platform for your social media marketing efforts is the key to social success. Outline what your company needs and expects from a social media platform and base your decision off of those needs and expectations.

# WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION



Website optimization is essentially a process used to make your website easier to find online and improve its ability to be used as a lead generation tool, all while delivering an enjoyable customer experience.

## DESIGN

Keep your website simple and responsive. Responsive design adapts to different devices such as mobile, tablet or desktop to ensure a similar experience. According to Statista, 52.2% of website visits come through mobile devices, making it essential that your website be optimized for mobile.

In addition to responsive design your website should be simple and easy to navigate. Keep your primary navigation concise to provide clear direction to sub-pages. Limit the number of images and stick to your brand's color scheme. Simple design strips out the unnecessary items, leaving only what is most important.



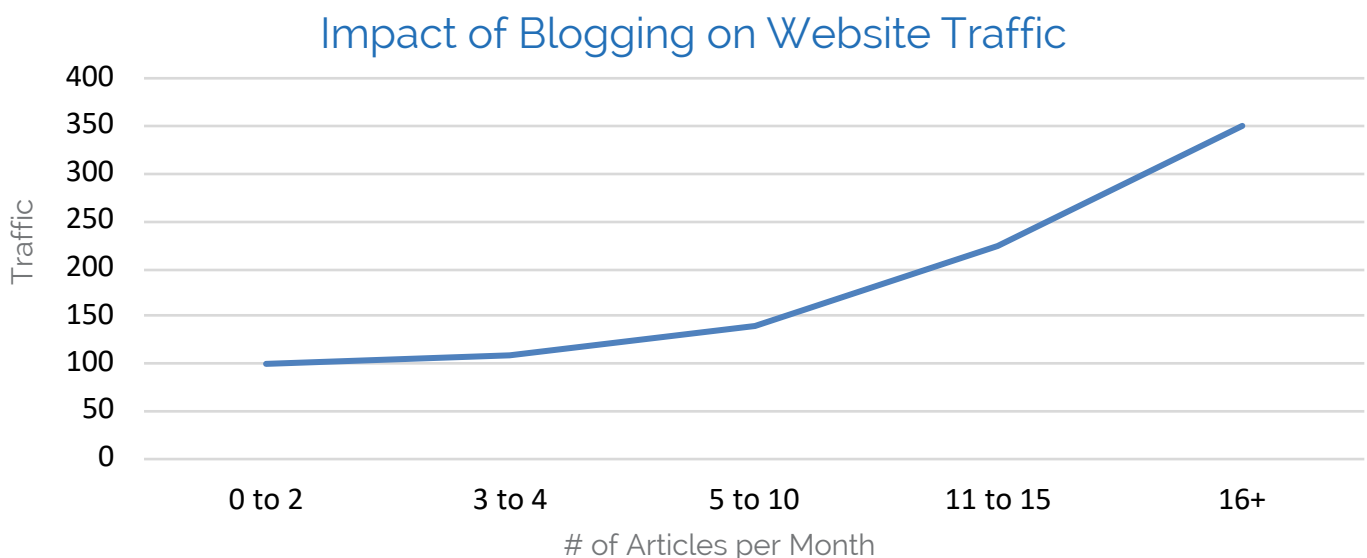


# CONTENT

The content of your website should be focused on educating and entertaining your target buyer personas. Your company blog will house the majority of your content and will be your most powerful tool for driving website visitors and leads.

According to HubSpot, "B2C companies that blogged 11+ times per month got more than four times as many leads than those that blog only four to five times per month."

Developing a content calendar will help you to organize your articles so you remain consistent with your posting schedule while avoiding becoming repetitive. Visual content also plays a major role in your ability to reach your audience. Articles with an image tend to perform better than those without one. Video has also become an essential tool to reach potential customers. According to Google, nearly 50 percent of consumers search for a video on a product before visiting a store. Including social sharing buttons on your site will make it easy for your website visitors to share your content with their social networks.







## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Your ability to be found online will have a significant impact on your business. Optimize sections such as title tags, heading tags and meta descriptions to reflect your target topics and keywords. Your URL structure also plays a role in your search rankings. Instead of your URLs containing query strings with a bunch of special characters, you will want them to reflect the name of that particular page.

Your static website pages and blog articles should also be molded around a single topic or keyword phrase. This makes it easier for Google's algorithm to decipher the relevance of each page.

Another major factor in your page rankings come in the form of backlinks. These are links from other pages that lead to your website and are perhaps the most important aspect of SEO. There are several ways to build links such as guest blogging, promoting content through social media and collaborating with influencers. The most effective way to increase your number of backlinks is to create and promote valuable content.

# ACT NOW!



## CALLS TO ACTION AND LANDING PAGES

Calls to action (CTAs) and landing pages are how you convert website visitors into prospects and leads.

A call to action is a button that gives a visitor direction on the next steps to take to learn more about a topic, product or service. CTAs should be placed on each static website page as well as at the bottom of every blog post. They should be clear and have a different color scheme than the rest of the page in order to stand out. They may include an image or text or both but should all clearly depict the offer being made.

Landing pages are meant to deliver on the promise of the CTA. They can give a brief description of the offer or content your visitor is trying to acquire and include a form to capture prospecting information. The number of fields and type of information required on your form should match the value of your offer. Removing your website navigation and focusing on a single offer will eliminate distractions and help to increase your conversion rates.



## ONLINE PAYMENTS AND ECOMMERCE

Whether you operate under an ecommerce business model or not, the ability to accept online payments is a big draw for customers. Making payments and ordering easy contributes greatly to a positive customer experience.

Security and usability should be the focus of any payment system. If your business model involves retail sales an ecommerce page is a must have in order to compete with larger box stores.

Ecommerce can help increase the reach of your business, and even the smallest companies can become global with the right products and marketing.

According to research data provided by Square and Mercury Analytics, 51 percent of shoppers prefer doing so online. Also, 67 percent of millennials and 56 percent of Gen Xers prefer to forgo the shops and place online orders."

With more than half of your potential customers looking to make purchases online, ecommerce is a worthy investment, especially in the retail space.

Quikstone Capital Solutions has been providing small business owners with merchant cash advances to stabilize and improve businesses for more than 10 years.

If you are in need of a cash to invest in the marketing techniques in this guide, a merchant cash advance could kickstart your efforts. You can quickly qualify and get your money in a timely fashion, there is no more convenient option.

## WE'RE YOUR FUNDING PARTNER.

Learn more about how Quikstone Capital Solutions can provide the cash needed to make smart investments and help your business grow.

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