

THE INS AND OUTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING:

What is digital marketing?

Digital marketing is the use of the internet, mobile devices, social media, or search engines to reach consumers. This is referring to all forms of marketing involving the internet, Artificial intelligence and other digital means to reach the consumer as opposed to the traditional way of marketing (cold calling, printing flyers and brochures etc)

Why digital marketing?

What is the first place you go to when you need to find something, a product or service? I use the internet, and Google to be specific. This is not far from reality because over 80% of people search for products and services online. Other reasons may also include:

- The average person spends at least 5 hours per day online.
- There are over 3.5 billion searches on Google every single day and traffic from Google is more likely to convert than any other form of advertising.
- Over 54% of consumers use social media to research a product.
- You have real-time responses and you can actually measure the effectiveness of your digital marketing strategy in real-time using various analytics tools (for example Google Analytics)
- Facebook Ads are three times cheaper and more targeted than television, print and radio adverts (Lyfe marketing)
- 91% of consumers check their emails on a daily basis and for every \$1 spent on email marketing, email marketing generates an ROI of \$38, that is about R722 for every R19 spent on email marketing. (Lyfe marketing)
- Companies that publish blogs see a 4 times increase in their traffic than websites that do not produce any blogs (Lyfe marketing).

Understand your audience:

Any successful digital marketing strategy starts with understanding your target audience (that is your ideal customer.) This is something that the likes of Facebook and Google do so well. They know you better than your parents and this is all just by analysing your behaviour online. Have you ever noticed that these platforms push adverts to you that speak to your preferences?

No digital marketing strategy will work if it is not tailored for your target audience. For example, I cannot be selling a Porch to middle-income earners. We spoke about the audience in our previous [blog article](#) when we pointed out the importance of understanding your audience in order to know which social media platform to use. **However, here knowing your audience involves having thorough research of your**

audience (target customer) to understand:

- Their goals or values.
- What drives them.
- Their pain points (fears and frustrations) or
- What keeps them awake at night or
- any other demographic characteristics.

What is your source for this information?

Last week we spoke of such tools as Google search (**People also ask**), and **Google trends**. The following can also be your sources:

- Books relating to your specific industry. Professor Kambizi touched on this subject of reading and he said that it is not about quantity but about the quality of books you read. Look for books that add value to your business in this area of
- Magazines, like above quality versus quantity.
- Blogs/Websites
- Conferences
- Influencers (micro-influencers are more effective)

- News articles
- Analyze your current customers
- Analyse feedback from your current customers
- Understand data that you collect from customers and analyse this to understand your customers
 - How old are your customers?
 - Where are they located?
 - What do they buy and when?
 - How do they find you?
 - What trends can you see?
- What are your competitors doing? What can you do to position yourself better?
 - What is your unique selling position? Where are you adding value?
 - How is their website designed?
 - What do your social media accounts look like?
 - How is their search engine presence like? Are they paying for Google Ads?
 - What are some of the industry best practices that you can emulate? You must be careful with this one because you do not want to end up looking exactly like your competitors (strategic convergence.)
- **Google Analytics** which analyses traffic to your website and tells you how your audience is behaving when they visit your website.
 - What is your bounce rate like? Can it be improved? A bounce rate is the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page. A good rate is between 20 and 40, anything above 70% should be a concern to you. There are various reasons why this rate can be high.
 - Your website takes too long to load.
 - Your landing page is not good enough and does not invite people to see other pages. This may just be because of the background colours.

- Not having the right content on the landing page.
- Too many adverts on your landing page. Yesterday, a friend of mine sent me a business website link that seemed to have an advert from a porn site. Do you think I went on reading what was on that website? I close it before finding out what it was about.
- **Make use of Facebook Audience insights (SKIP)**
 - This allows you to see trends associated with specific demographics
 - You will see the interests of the top of your audience, their ages, lifestyles, behaviours etc. You can then use this information on Facebook target marketing because you now know what your target audience is. If you are not yet using Facebook marketing use this tool to take a good guess at who you think is and use the information you get to develop an understanding of your target audience (ideal customer.)
- Social media platforms etc

It is important to understand your target audience (customer) because this is what will make your Ads successful. You will get good impressions, clicks and conversions. Conversions are what you really want to aim for. A conversion is when a potential customer becomes a paying customer.

WEBSITES:

1. What should a website do for you?

Some websites are designed to provide information to users. But, for most businesses websites are a tool that generates sales (leads) for that particular business. That is exactly what a business website should

be doing for you, generate leads. If your website is not generating leads for your business, ask yourself a few questions:

- Is my website responsive enough (can my users view my website from different devices, computers, tablets, cell phones without any problems?)
- Is my content addressing my target audience's pain points?
- Is there a strong call to action on my website? So, what is it that you want your audience to do when they get to your website?
- Is my website Search Engine Optimised? Optimising your website in simple terms means making search engines understand your website. Search engines automatically scan your website. Therefore, all you need to do is to make sure the search engines identify keywords that your target customers are searching for. Getting this right will get you organic (un-paid) traffic to your website from search engine results. Hire the work of professionals to make sure that your website SEO and ranking is good. This will get you good results.
- Is the content of my website at the right level. If you can, I would recommend that you hire a professional copywriter to look at the content to make sure that your content is what drives people into action and thus creating leads or conversions from your website. They will also make sure they use the right keywords that will give your website a good ranking and standing (SEO.)
- You need to make sure that your website appears everywhere. You can do this by:
 - Increasing backlinks (which is a link created when one website links to another). In simple terms, be featured on other websites (yellow pages etc)
 - Increase social media posts or signals (Likes, shares, votes, views)
 - Increase relevant content production. Some platforms allow you to promote your content. Do so if you have a budget for it.

2. Listing product or service price on your website?

Some people argue that you need to show value first before you can show the price. Some argue that it is just not a wise thing to do, that is showing your prices on your website. Well, it may be

true that some companies may need to show value before they show price otherwise their prices may just scare potential clients away.

Let's start with a question; What do you do if you visit a website to buy a product or service and there is no price there? Do you call the company to ask for the price or you move on to find another website where the price is listed?

Forbes argues that if your online presence demonstrates value or if you have "authority-building content to make the case for hiring you for you" putting a price on your website is one of the key elements that will drive the success of your business. In fact, some reports suggest that listing prices on your website saves a lot of trouble:

- It will weed out clients that you do not want to be serving
- You will give people what they want.
- You save a lot of time. No one is going to be emailing you asking you for your price. The only time they will call you is if listed packages do not meet their needs.
- Listing your price also says you know your value. And if you can, demonstrate or show where that value is when you list the price on your site.

3. Website or App?

Should you start with an App or a Website? I hear many people say I would like to develop an App to do this or that. But, Apps can be very expensive to design and set up and unless you have funded this can be a mountain to climb. Therefore, start with a functional website in order to get selling. Besides, sales are the best form of funding.

Digital marketing assets:

So, we just discussed one of them, which is the website. Let's now consider other digital marketing assets that one could tap into. This week I was chatting with a potential customer and

she said something powerful to me. She said, "Having many users on your platform is a currency for business." This is powerful because she understands the importance of meaningful traffic/users. I believe that businesses should be investing in assets that hand this currency to them on a silver platter.

The assets are:

- Top SEO rankings
- Social media followers (ones that engage with you, like and share your posts, not just followers that you can buy off a social media platform.) Why? People are 3 times more likely to buy from a brand they follow on social media.
- Email or newsletter subscribers

A business that has these assets is sitting on gold because they literally have thousands of free and organic results. The results manifest in the form of impressions, clicks to your website and ultimately convert into sales. Do not lose heart if you do not have these assets. It takes time to build them. Set short term goals to achieve in the next few months.

You can build this currency through paid advertising or by maximizing on your organic opportunities. If you can afford, hire an expert digital marketing professional to help you with this. This should be an ongoing process that covers the lifespan of your business.

Other ways to grow your "currency"

- Join groups and add value to the members
- Write blogs that add value to your audience (ideal clients.)
- Follow the pages that your customers are following. Follow people that fit your target audience.

Most people follow back. I do this on Twitter and it pays off.

- Post great content on your website, blog and social media platforms that your audience can share or like.

Email marketing:

Email marketing may not sound like the smartest thing to do. But, people still use email as a means of communication and people check their emails on a daily basis. If you have thousands of email contacts, this is exactly why you should be using email marketing. They are tools that can help you with this. I personally use [SendInBlue](#). It also gives me cool stats after my email campaign has been sent. I can see exactly how many people opened the campaign, how many clicked and went to my website, even how many got bored and unsubscribed. Again, if this is not an area you are comfortable with, hire a professional expert to help you out.

Touchpoints:

Touchpoints are areas/places where you interact with your existing or potential customers. You need to increase your touchpoints with your potential customers. Why? This is because the more you interact with your potential customers, the more likely they will convert into paying customers. You can do this through:

- Pre-made emails that are sent to specific customers on your mailing list or specific potential clients. This also saves you time in that you do not have to write a new email each time the same query comes through to your inbox. You can also use pre-made emails on email marketing by scheduling campaigns to be sent at specific times.
- WhatsApp for business linked to your website and where potential customers can send you direct messages using the WhatsApp tool.
- Automatic responses via WhatsApp for business.
- An online chat functionality on your website.
- As we mentioned earlier, generate great content that gets people to engage with you.

References:

Forbes

LYFE Marketing

About the author:

Lazarus Kasek Magora, CA (SA), is the CEO at Eva Financial Solutions (a digital accounting and consulting firm) and Co-founder and member of BCA (a group of CAs seeking to help each other solve real-life problems and to develop each other through information sharing.)

Contact details:

lazarus@evafinancialsolutions.co.za

021 823 9684

