

How to Make Your Website *Work For You!*

COMPETE NOW

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Profit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them.

W. Edwards Deming

Studies show that a staggering **81%** of consumers do online research before making a purchase. Many times your website is the first impression your potential clients have about your organization. When done right, your website backs up any word of mouth marketing that goes on, either on social media or from friends and clients.

Knowing this, you may have made a significant investment in a beautiful website for your business – the layout is just the way you want it, the photos of your products and staff are great, and your content is well-written and easy to read. It's easy to think that this is the end of things. Not so! Once you have a website, you need to make it work for you!

Being proactive with your web presence means keeping up with maintaining the website and utilizing the latest digital marketing strategies to maximize your qualified traffic.

It's easy to be overwhelmed by post-design options; this handy Guide will lay it out all it out in one place so you will be prepared when the time comes to choose Digital Marketing Strategies and Maintenance Plans.

Website Maintenance

Anything worth its money is worth maintaining. You've made a significant investment in your website, both in time and money. Think of a website like a fine sports car. It gets regular oil changes and tune-ups and breakdowns are fixed right away. No one scrimps on their Lamborghini. Why shouldn't your website be treated the same way?

Unfortunately, websites are under constant attack. There are new viruses and malware being written every day. People try to hack websites all the time to try and steal passwords and credit card information, even if you do not do e-commerce. Servers can crash and entire sites can be lost. These are real risks that can cause serious and lasting damage to your site if not dealt with promptly.

Website Maintenance is key to making sure that your site stays healthy. It's also a way to catch any important errors and negative changes as early in the game as possible.



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Maintenance & Security Details

It's important to mention to your web provider immediately if anyone reports any suspicious activity from your website.

It could be a sign of malware or a virus and a scan needs to be done right away.

There is a constant war between hackers and antivirus software; hackers are continuously coming up with new and sneakier malware and the software companies are consistently defending against them. Still, things get through from time to time. Even if you don't see any suspicious behavior, having a periodic scan is very important.

There are many checks that need to be done on a regular basis to make sure things are working correctly. All internal and external links need to be checked, as well as ensuring that all images are loading correctly. Is your site displaying any 404 errors (broken links)? Make sure you go through and check every link and make sure they're all working correctly. Is your domain status current? Do you need to renew it? Should you have any forms on your site, check to make sure all information is saved correctly and going to the right place.

Performance & Optimization

This is where the *Search Engine Optimization* happens. Staying on top of the analytics for your site is where you get all of the data on which to base your digital marketing plans and predictions. [Google Analytics](#) can be utilized to track all of that data. It's important to keep on top of your site's standing on the top 3 search engines – Google, Bing, and Yahoo. Is your site appearing on the first page of the SERPs (Search Engine Result Page)? Are all of the titles and meta data aligned with your site's goals?

- Visitor Stats (how many visited, how long they stayed, what pages they went to)
- Load times (how fast your website and images load)
- Inbound Links (other sites that have linked to your website and/or blog)
- How many people clicked through to your site from organic search (typed in one of your keywords and your site was found on a SERP)

If you have a CMS (Content Management System), it needs to be given a thorough regular checkup as well. Go through your blog as though you were a reader. Is everything easy to find? Are your key posts prominent? Is it easy to search by keyword or topic? Are your social media and RSS feed buttons prominently displayed? Are the Share links working?

Content Updates

Have you had a lot of changes in your business lately? Have you been in the news? These developments should all be on your website! Make a list of all the things you'd like to update – content, links, and pictures – and get started.

Required Maintenance: A Quick Review

Maintenance & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virus and Malware scans• Code updates• Plugin updates• 404 errors• Form checks
Performance & Optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site analytics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Visitors○ Clicks○ Search Engine standings○ Inbound links○ Load times• CMS check• Social Media check
Content Updates	Any updates that you or your designer think are necessary to bring your website to optimal functioning

Digital Marketing

Making your website work for you is key to getting the most out of your investment. There are lots of ways you can make your site more visible to search engines and more visible to your customers. Your website can serve as a portal for useful information for your current customers, keeping your company in the forefront of their mind.

Regular content creation through blogs and social media is key to keeping your website fresh and exciting. Creating new and interesting content is not as involved as creating content for your whole website, but it does have to be done on a regular basis. Many web design source offer “ghostwriting” services (writing blog services under your name) for a nominal fee for the busy entrepreneur.

OK, you know about the blog and the website. What next?

Organic Search vs. Paid Search

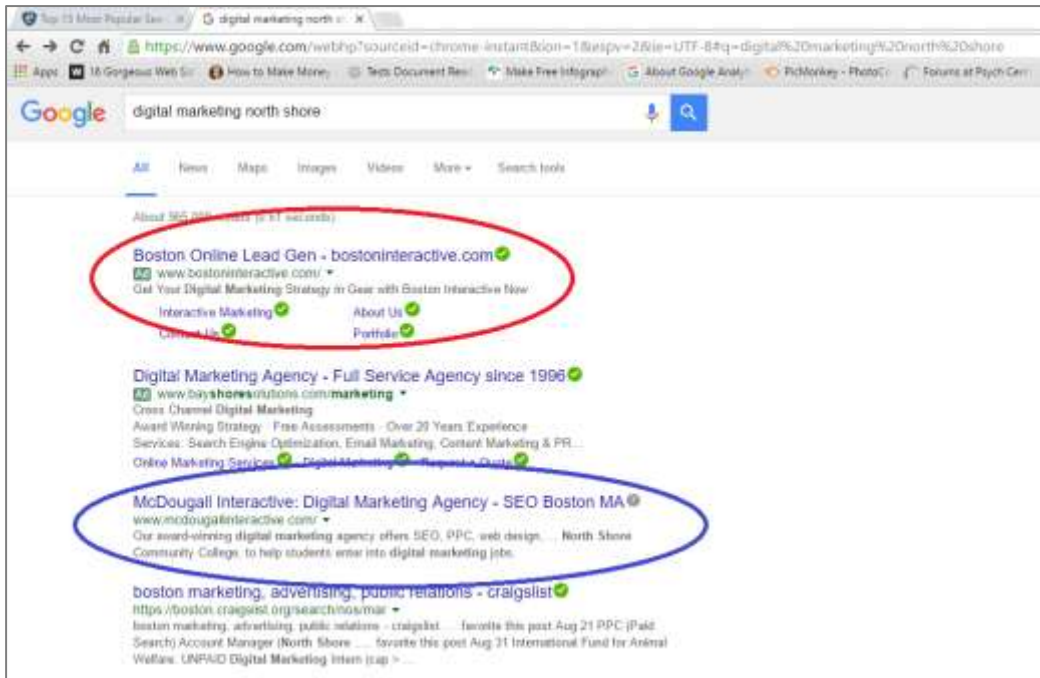
Google and Bing are the two biggest search engines, with **2 billion** combined monthly searches. There are two ways to appear on the SERPs (Search Engine Results Page): Organically and Paid.

Organic

Organic search is achieved through Search Engine Optimization, which is the use of certain Best Practices by your web design team to bring your page ranking into the top ten on the first page of results. An organic listing is found by matching the query keyword with the keywords in your website. Unfortunately, PPC ads will always show before organic search results. See the blue circle.

Paid

Paid search is just what it sounds like – purchased ad space at the top of the SERPs. You prepay a Pay-Per-Click (PPC) budget; your ad will show until your budget is exhausted and you re-up your budget. PPC ads have a little “ad” box in the beginning. See the red circle.



Social Media and Your Site

Social Media is the new word-of-mouth. Dave Rusenko said “Word-of-mouth marketing is a crucial component of organic growth for startups”. With the advent of News Feeds and Likes, people are able to spread their opinions and reviews farther than ever before. By making relevant content readily available on social media outlets that are appropriate to your business, you’re opening up a whole new world of engagement with both current and potential customers. In turn, this content will lead customers to your incredible website.

Which Social Media outlets to choose? How often to post? What to post? These are all important questions your digital marketing team can help you answer.

What Is Market Retargeting?

Simply put, Market Retargeting is the process of using a harmless file on a visitor’s computer that says they have visited your site. Therefore, when they visit other sites in an advertising network or are on social media, they see ads for your product or service. This is the other half of PPC advertising- ads that you see around the web that seem to follow you around.

Email Marketing: Tying It All Together

There are many who have said “Email is Dead”. On the contrary, email marketing has an average return of over **3500%**. When planned and handled appropriately, email can be a wonderful tool for keeping in touch with your customer base as well as reaching out to new leads.

By tagging contacts in your CRM with appropriate tags, you can segment your emails and personalize them for different types of contacts. Many email marketing companies (such as [Constant Contact](#), [Active Campaign](#), and [MailChimp](#)) offer automation options that allow you to reach out different contact segments at appropriate times with deals, acknowledgements, or anything else that would be relevant to your business.

While planning and programming an automation can be time consuming, you don’t have to do it alone. Your digital marketing team will meet with you to discuss your goals and will craft a plan that fits your needs.

Conclusion

Websites are an important part of any business. Like a car, proper maintenance is very important: oil changes and tune ups, as well as fixing anything that goes wrong. Do you just leave your everyday car in the garage to look at? No – you drive around town running errands and getting to and from work.

So it is with your website. It needs tune ups to make sure it works its best; problems need to be fixed quickly and thoroughly. Purchasing a maintenance plan is key to keeping your website in the best shape possible.

It also needs to be *used*, not just bought and looked at. Digital Marketing is the “driving” of your website – driving traffic, that is. By driving traffic to your website, you earn a return on the investment that you made in purchasing it in the first place.

Good Luck!