

9 Useless Things

TO CUT FROM YOUR MARKETING

Introduction

The fast-paced world of digital marketing - with all its technological advancements and iterative improvements to our marketing processes - has theoretically made marketers' lives easier. We have more options, tools, and resources to be better, faster, and stronger.

But the flip side of the coin - and probably the more realistic manifestation of all these advancements - is that marketers are overwhelmed. It seems like every week there's something new we absolutely must be doing, lest we get left behind. Problem is, a lot of this new "stuff" is now outdated and an inefficient use of a marketer's time and budget. Or worse, was never a good use of time and budget in the first place.

We'd like this year to be the year you clean up your marketing toolkit. What are you wasting time on? What tactics are you needlessly holding on to like a marketing security blanket? What can you eliminate from your budget? This ebook is going to outline what many marketers waste time on that's not going to help you move the needle—so you can eliminate it for good!

NUMBER ONE

The On-Page SEO Fixation

Most marketers are really comfortable with optimizing their web content for SEO, because they know it's something well within their control to do. They hit the biggies - H1, Page Title, Post Title, Image, URL, Content - with their keywords, and sit pretty thinking they totally nailed their SEO.

Unfortunately, what we're comfortable with isn't always the best use of our time. On-page SEO, while something you should certainly spend a couple minutes checking out before you publish new web content, isn't something marketers should be obsessing over anymore. Google's algorithm is much more sophisticated than it was even a few years ago, so keyword optimization isn't going to cut it anymore.

AND START FOCUSING ON:

NUMBER TWO

The Firehose Blast of Blog Content

Much like the social media bandwagon we've all jumped on, most marketers know they need to be blogging for their business. Of late, some marketers have taken this concept to the extreme, pumping out content at assembly-line pace. More blogging is better blogging, right? Not necessarily. If you're trying to compensate for low quality with high quantity, you're doing yourself more harm than good - readers won't regard your content well, and as a result, Google won't hold your domain in high regard, either.

Additionally, if you're resource-strapped, there's a blogging volume sweet spot you can rest comfortably in. Studies show 92% of businesses that blog multiple times a day have acquired a customer from it. But 78% of businesses that blog on a daily basis have also acquired a customer from it. That differential isn't too big. And if we bring down the volume just a tad to 2-3 times per week, still, 70% of business acquire a customer from their blog.

NUMBER THREE

Your Go-To Marketing Offer

To generate leads, you need a blow-out marketing offer to convert your site visitors. But then you need another. And another. And another after that.

After a while, you'll start to realize some offers perform better than others for lead generation, so you start using that offer all the time. Problem is, that offer can get really over saturated really fast, and what once yielded your best clickthrough rate will end up being mediocre at best.

NUMBER FOUR

Those Millions of Microsites

To be great at SEO, you need inbound links. But to get inbound links, you need other sites to link to you. That doesn't give you much control. Oh, I know! I'll create my own little websites (many marketers have come to refer to these as "microsites")—and link to my domain from those!

Drop this. First of all, maintaining a bunch of websites takes a ridiculous amount of time and money. I mean, where are you getting all the content to keep them going? Plus, for your inbound links to mean anything, they need to be coming from a wide variety of high quality sites. Unless you plan on creating hundreds of microsites that have a ton of clout with the SERPs, this strategy is a waste of your time.

NUMBER FIVE

All That Over-Reporting

We're the last ones to say you shouldn't be reporting on your marketing, but with the Big Data explosion has also come a whole lot of time wasted interpreting numbers and analytics that don't really mean anything for you right now.

It's easy to spend an entire day just diving into, say, conversion reports, but what is all that information getting you? A lot of spreadsheets and numbers does not make a marketing strategy. Figure out exactly what numbers you need to know for your business' marketing, and do deeper dives into specific metrics as needed. It's a better use of your time, and frankly provides more actionable advice than running hours of reports at the end of each month that you never use.

NUMBER SIX

Pretty Much All of Your Press Releases

The thinking behind the millions of press releases businesses produce each year is that they'll get placed on an external site when picked up, and the coverage will come with an inbound link. Also, you know, getting press coverage.

Unfortunately, almost all of the press releases getting churned out of marketing departments is not landing any actual press coverage. And the releases that are picked up? Those aren't exactly valuable inbound links when they're getting funnelled out of low-quality sites.

Stop trying to weave an amazing story out of something relatively unamazing just so you have PR fodder. It'll just make journalists get really used to ignoring you, and your writing time is better spent on other types of content - like blog posts, for instance - that attract qualified readers and quality links.

NUMBER SEVEN

Your Untargeted Paid Media Spend

In 2012, we saw a ton of advancements in paid advertising targeting options. For instance, did you know that Twitter paid advertising now allows marketers to target their audience by interest or username? Did you know that Facebook paid advertising now lets marketers target their audience by desktop or mobile? If you're investing in PPC in any capacity and using targeting like this, congratulations, you're doing it right.

If, however, you're dumping money into completely untargeted PPC, it's kind of like emailing your entire contacts database without doing any segmentation. Turn off your paid media spend that isn't leveraging targeting functionality, otherwise you're throwing your marketing budget right out the window.

NUMBER EIGHT

That Mobile App You're Developing

You unequivocally should be investing in mobile marketing. Investing in mobile application development, however, is a distraction and resource sap for most marketers.

There are well over one million mobile apps on the market, and they're being released at rapidly increasing rates—not to mention 25% of apps are downloaded only once, and never used again after their initial download. With a cluttered market and stickiness challenge, unless your mobile app is going to drive some serious results for your business, reroute your efforts to something that will give you a bigger bang for your buck.

NUMBER NINE

Those Social Networks No One Uses

Do you remember around 2007 when a small handful of marketers started using social media as a marketing channel? Do you remember how almost everyone in the industry thought it was either

- 1 Ridiculous!
- 2 Not applicable to their business or industry?

Fast forward to today, and most marketers are really scared of being the equivalent of the one who said “Facebook is dumb” back in 2007. As a result, there’s a whole lot of time wasted on social networks that, frankly, don’t really work for you. But you keep using them out of fear of getting left behind.

If the social networks you’re using aren’t working, now is the time to stop using them. For example, if you gave Pinterest the old college try, and it simply is not driving any meaningful business results for you, let it go. Just make sure you’re making your decision based on analytics, not gut feelings.

Conclusion

There's no time like the present to take a look at your marketing activities and figure out what's working, and what isn't. And if you're setting aggressive marketing goals for yourself, cutting some of the time-wasters and ineffective tactics mentioned in this ebook will give you the bandwidth you need to pursue those new strategies.

Whatever it is you're resolving to do with your marketing strategy next year, make sure you resolve one extra thing: to constantly evaluate whether your activities are moving the needle. It's always a good idea to experiment with something new—as long as you know when to say “when” with the latest and greatest. This kind of self-analysis will keep you running an agile, up-to-date and efficient marketing machine!