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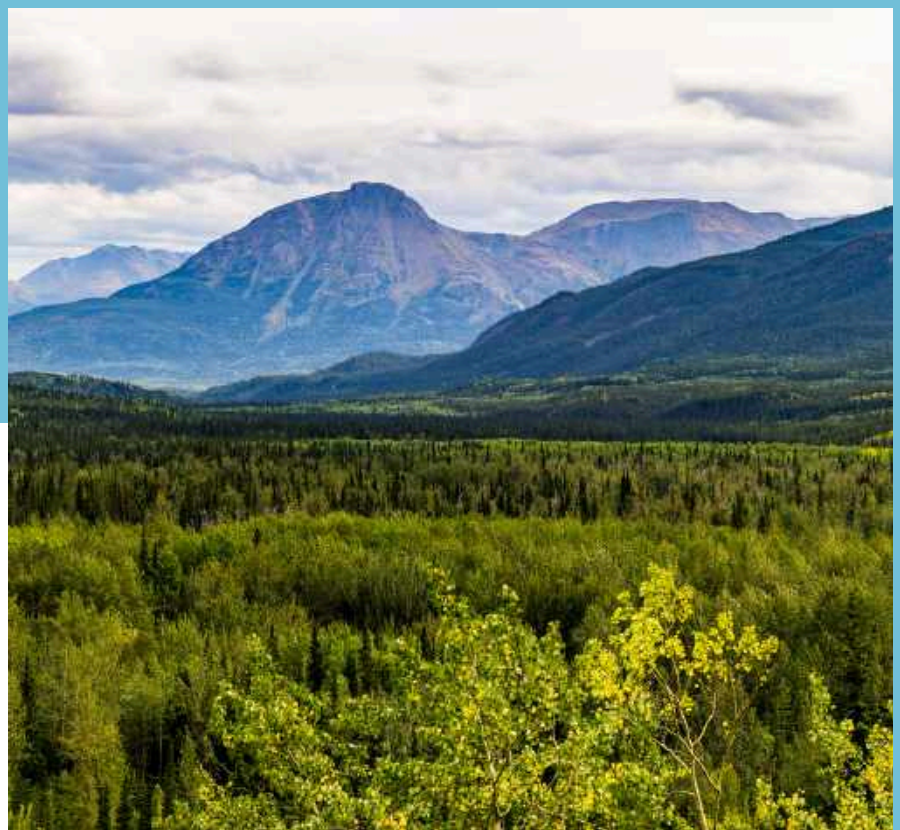
TOURISM & HOSPITALITY : 5 STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING STRATEGY IN 2023



INTRODUCTION

Approximately 40% of SMEs in British Columbia spend less than $99 per year on marketing due to lack of time or knowledge. Business owners have a deep understanding of their industry and product, but marketing is often outside their area of expertise, and they are not convinced of the return on investment. However, if you want to grow your business in today's world, skipping marketing, especially digital marketing, would be a big mistake. Digital marketing allows you to have unlimited visibility, achieve proven results, be more effective, and increase your return on investment while adapting to all budgets.

To ensure that you make the right decisions regarding your marketing, we have created this guide. In 5 steps, it will help you build and implement an effective marketing strategy.

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MARKETING FOUNDATIONS

DEVELOP YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

We often discuss with entrepreneurs about their strategy and marketing, but one thing we consistently observe is that they are missing a key step to their success: the foundations of their brand. Yet, it is crucial for achieving their goals.

What do we mean by brand foundations or brand identity? Regardless of the industry and marketing objectives, a brand identity will help answer the following questions: Who are we targeting, where, and how?

Below, you will find the steps that will help you clearly define your brand identity. Whether you are launching your business or already in operation, this will enable you to optimize your communication and results.

1. Audience

Who are you addressing? You probably already have an idea of your target audience, but are you sure you have defined it properly? A business can have multiple target audiences, and it's important to know them well because you won't address each target in the same way or on the same platforms. Therefore, you will need to define personas, which are typical profiles of your ideal consumers. To establish personas, you need to be able to answer the following questions:

- What is your persona's name?
- How old are they?
- What is their occupation and salary?
- What is their geographical location?
- Do they live in a relationship and have children?
- What are their hobbies and interests?
- What media do they consume?
- What are their values?
- What problems or challenges do they face?

This list can be modified if you operate in the B2B or B2C space, or if your ultimate target audience is different from the person who will purchase your product or service. For example, if you manufacture toys for children, your ultimate target audience will be "children," but you will also need to consider the parents who will be the potential buyers.

2. Vision, Mission, Values

Why do you do what you do and based on what values? It is important to know the direction you are heading in, and it's equally important for your consumers to know it too! To create a personality for your brand, you need to know what you do.

To define this, you should be able to answer the following questions: What are the values of your company? What do you want to be known for in your industry? Honesty, efficiency, results... It's up to you to determine the values that are unique to you and your company. It is important to define them clearly from the beginning to know how to address your customers and attract the right people.

What is the mission of your company? Think short-term and practical. Why did you start your business? Is it to solve a particular problem? What difference do you want to make in the industry?

What is your vision? A vision is long-term and aspirational. "Inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs," "a computer for everyone in the world," "peace in the world" are some examples of visions among many others.

3. Product or service

Let's talk about your product or service! Of course, you know what you sell, but have you defined its characteristics thoroughly?

You should be able to answer the following questions:

- What problem does your service/product aim to solve?
- How does your product or service help your target audience solve the problem?
- Why would your target audience want to buy your offering?
- What other products or services are already on the market?
- If you are entering a new market, what existing alternatives are available, and how do you differentiate yourself from them?

4. Competition and added value

Knowing the difference between you and the competition is crucial for developing a successful business. It's likely that other companies offer similar products or services to yours. So, how do you stand out? It could be through a more attractive price, better efficiency, or other factors. Identify what sets you apart from the competition, and turn it into a strength! Here are some questions to consider:

- What makes my company unique in its industry?
- What can I offer my target audience that the competition cannot?
- Who are the closest competitors, and how do I differentiate myself from them? Be specific.

A helpful exercise is to create a competitive mapping, which allows you to visualize the distinctive nature of your company compared to its competitors. The idea of the mapping is to position yourself based on two criteria, axes, or dimensions.

4. Competition and added value

The choice of images, fonts, colors... Your brand's personality will be conveyed through all these visual elements, which will evoke different images and emotions depending on the choices you make. Here are some questions to help you make your choices:

- If my brand were a person, how would I describe it?
- What would its personality be like?
- How does it communicate?

List adjectives and visuals that represent your brand. Analyze how other brands, whether in your industry or not, communicate their personality and the graphic choices they have made. This will help you make choices for your own brand.

CREATE PERSONAS

Persona, what now? Maybe you've never heard of this term before, but it is incredibly important for every entrepreneur.

1. What is a persona?

Originally created by a software engineer in the 1990s for software design, considering certain characteristics related to the end user, a persona, in the field of marketing, is a fictional person representing a segment or target group. It represents your ideal customer, in essence. A persona, or buyer persona, is assigned specific characteristics that define their target group and help you understand the logic of your consumers. Depending on your industry and what you sell, the number of personas you have may vary, but typically, you can have up to 6-7 different personas.

2. Why define personas?

Your business, its services, or products are aimed at a target audience. Many entrepreneurs make the mistake of limiting their target to something like "all Canadians, aged 20 to 70." However, defining a target that is too broad is equivalent to not defining a target at all. The risk is therefore designing a service or product that doesn't meet their needs, as well as not effectively communicating about your company, whether it's the wrong choice of channels and/or the wrong message.

Creating personas will allow you to understand the logic of your consumers. By accurately identifying the issues of your future clients, their consumption habits, and their thought processes, you can offer them the most relevant offer possible and optimize your results. All businesses go through this process, even the largest ones, as you can see with the example below from Lululemon, the famous sportswear brand. In an interview with the NYT, Chip Wilson, the brand's founder, revealed the following information about the "lulu" personas:

Persona 1: Océane, 32 years old, single, earning $100,000 per year. Océane is committed, owns her apartment, enjoys traveling, fashion, and spends 1.5 hours per day working out.

Persona 2: Duke is 35 years old, enjoys sports, surfs in the summer, and snowboards in the winter. Duke earns a better income than Océane. He doesn't mind paying more for better quality.

3. How to define a persona?

The first step is to ask the right questions. Here is a non-exhaustive list to help you get started, knowing that if your target is B2B or B2C, the questions may not be exactly the same. The same goes if your final target audience is not the same as the target audience that will make the purchasing decision (for example: a toy company targeting children but with parents as the buyers).

- What is your persona: male, female, average age, income, education, family situation, place of residence, consumption habits, level of digitalization...
- What is your target audience's job position? What are their goals, challenges, and issues to overcome?
- What media do they consume?
- Before making a purchasing decision, what does your target audience do? (e.g., internet research, seeking friends' opinions...)
- Are they the decision-maker? What tools do they use?
- What motivates them to purchase a product?
- What are their important values?

HubSpot, the CRM tool, has created a list of over 100 questions to ask when defining a persona. The goal is not to have an answer to all of these questions but to ensure that you have a sufficiently clear and detailed representation of your personas that you can use them on a daily basis.

4. How to shape a persona?

Once you have gathered useful information about your personas, it's time to humanize them by giving them a name and a photo. This will help you remember them. Tell their story in a few lines.

CREATE A MARKETING PLAN

In order to have effective marketing, a company must develop a solid strategy. A marketing plan is the roadmap that guides your choices and tactics to achieve predefined objectives, while ensuring that you don't waste time or money and make as few mistakes as possible. Typically, a marketing plan is created between September and December to prepare for the following year in a calm manner, but there's nothing stopping you from working on your marketing plan if you don't have one in place for this year.

1.Assessing your company and its environment

Before anything else, it's important to know where you stand before defining where you want to go. The first step of any marketing plan is to assess your current marketing situation in terms of the marketing funnel, which includes visibility, consideration, conversion, and loyalty. What is working, what is not working, what were the pleasant surprises or disappointments? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your company? What are the opportunities and threats in your market? What is your competitive landscape, and what are the new developments, successes, or challenges of your competitors? This is called a SWOT analysis.

2.Setting objectives

There are different types of objectives: quantitative and qualitative. It's up to you to determine which ones are most important for you once you have assessed your company and its market.

A good way to approach the exercise is to determine which stage of the marketing funnel you are in, keeping in mind that you may not be at the same stage for all your services or target audience. In the list below, we provide some examples of objectives specific to each stage of the funnel.

Awareness

- Increase brand awareness among a larger audience.
- Enhance the visibility of Service A.

Consideration

- Reduce the bounce rate on the website. Improve the perception of the product. Increase website traffic.

Conversion

- Generate more leads for the service.
- Increase sales by 10%. Gain market share.

Loyalty

- Encourage repeat customers.
- Improve customer satisfaction.

The objectives should be SMART:

- Specific: They should address a need of your company and its market.
- Measurable: You should be able to assess whether the objective has been achieved or not.
- Achievable: You must have the necessary resources to reach the objective.
- Realistic: Setting unreasonable objectives serves no purpose.
- Time-bound: You need to set a deadline to achieve the objective.

3. Define your marketing channels and tactics

, you need to consider various channels, both digital and traditional. The most common ones include:

- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Email newsletters
- Social media
- Online advertising
- Referral marketing
- Events and experiential marketing
- Public relations
- Traditional media advertising, such as radio, television, print, and outdoor advertising

The idea is to determine the channels and tactics for each of your objectives. Let's take the following example: You have just launched a new service, and your marketing objective is to increase its awareness among the target audience. Here are some ideas:

Search engine optimization (SEO):

- Create a dedicated page on the website for the new service
- Publish two blog articles per month related to the service

Social media:

- Run advertising campaigns on LinkedIn and Instagram targeting the relevant audience, highlighting the service and its benefits
- Create a teaser video for the new service and upload it online 15 days before the launch

Email newsletters:

- Send an email to existing customers who are relevant to inform them about the new service

Referral marketing:

- Network with complementary businesses that could promote your service to their clients

These are just a few examples, and you can tailor your channels and tactics based on your specific objectives and target audience.

Attention, your goals and marketing tactics are not limited to promoting your company or services. Indeed, it is important to consider the overall picture, which can be summarized by the 4 Ps of marketing:

- Product: One of your objectives could be to improve your product or launch a new service.
- Price: Your objective could be to match the competition or set a higher price.
- Place: How and where you sell. For example, you can sell online but decide that a physical store or a mobile application would be appropriate.
- Promotion: How you reach your customers and potential clients.

4. Define a budget

At this stage, your marketing strategy is well underway, but to make it happen, it is essential to plan your budget. Each marketing channel and tactic represents an expense item that you need to plan for. A marketing budget should align with the maturity level of your company and/or its services. Typically, more investment is made during a launch, while budgets are reduced when a product reaches a certain level of maturity. Often, the marketing budget is calculated as a percentage of the estimated revenue, commonly between 6% and 12%. Alternatively, allocating 30% of gross profit to marketing expenses is another approach.

5. Define performance indicators

To determine if a strategy is achieving its desired objectives, you must define certain performance indicators. If we revisit our previous example, it could look like this:

30%

It is the share of profit that is commonly allocated to the marketing budget.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

- Create a dedicated webpage on the website for the service
- Publish 2 blog articles per month related to the service Indicators: Search engine rankings, website visits

Social Media

- Run an advertising campaign on LinkedIn and Instagram targeting the audience, highlighting the service and its benefits
- Create a teaser video for the new service and upload it 15 days before the launch Indicators: Traffic from social media, number of followers, click-through rate, conversion rate

Email Newsletter

- Send an email to relevant existing customers to inform them about the new service Indicators: Open rate, click-through rate, unsubscribe rate

Referral

- Network with a complementary company that could promote your service to its clients Indicators: Number of events attended, number of prospects generated through networking

6. Define a roadmap

The final step of your marketing plan is to plan your actions and establish your roadmap. Some tactics are relatively simple. They will only take a short amount of time to implement and will have immediate impact. Others, on the contrary, require a lot of planning.

Let's revisit our example. We wanted to launch a new service and, in order to create visibility, we wanted to create a teaser video to share on social media. This is a classic example of a tactic that needs to be planned well in advance.

Your roadmap is, in essence, your month-by-month action plan of the tactics to implement in order to achieve your objectives.

TRACK YOUR MARKETING OBJECTIVES

What is a Key Performance Indicator (KPI)?

Regardless of your industry, it is important to track the performance of your marketing and sales efforts, commonly referred to as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The specific KPIs to track will depend on your business and the marketing tactics you are using, but there are some KPIs that are almost universal and found in the majority of marketing plans:

Basic KPIs:

- Number of generated leads
- Generated revenue
- Average conversion rate, both from visitor to lead and from lead to customer
- Website traffic
- Bounce rate and time spent on the website
- Return on investment (ROI)
- Customer satisfaction

KPIs by marketing channel:

- Traffic by source
- Conversion rate by source
- Search engine ranking
- Cost per acquisition by source
- Channel-specific indicators, such as engagement rate and number of followers for social media, or open rate, click-through rate, and unsubscribe rate for email newsletters.

How to ensure proper performance tracking?

Here are some tips:

- Make sure to define the key performance indicators (KPIs) for each of your marketing actions.
- Keep track of the costs associated with your marketing actions, even for strategies that may seem free. For example, for activities like search engine optimization (SEO) or networking, it's important to track the number of hours invested. If you spent 4 hours networking this month and value your hourly rate at $100, you would have invested $400 in that strategy.
- Some marketing tactics have immediate effects, while others have long-term impacts. Don't hesitate to ask your customers how they found you. This will give you more visibility on which marketing actions are working.
- Most marketing platforms provide detailed information on the sources of your leads. Take advantage of tools like Google's URL builder to create specific URLs for your marketing campaigns.

It's up to you to define the most relevant indicators to track for your business, as well as the goals to achieve.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

CONDUCT A SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

Visibility, conversion, loyalty... Your social media presence can have a significant impact on your business results. In some industries, it may even be the most important marketing channel.

Many small businesses make the mistake of wanting to be on all major social media platforms simply because they are popular, or they choose a social network because their competitors are using it.

However, to ensure the success of your social media strategy, it is important to choose the network(s) where your target audience is present and to be realistic about the time you can dedicate to your communication efforts. Each social media platform is different, but as a general rule, the more consistently and regularly you post, the better. So it's better to be on a minimum number of networks, the right ones, and use them regularly.

However, being present on social media is not enough. You also need to know what to say, to whom, and when. This is where conducting a social media audit can help.

Why conduct an audit?

In marketing, every action or tactic should be done with a specific purpose. It could be to increase brand visibility or enhance customer loyalty, for example. You need to ensure that you have a clear idea of the objectives you want to achieve, whether they are qualitative or quantitative. The audit will help you determine whether you are achieving these objectives or not, and it will guide you on how to adapt your editorial calendar accordingly.

The information to collect:

For each social media platform you use, you should collect the following information:

- Reminder of objectives: Recall the objectives you have set for each social media platform. What do you want to achieve through your presence on that specific network?
- Target audience: Remind yourself of the target audience you want to reach. Posting the same content across all social media platforms is a common mistake. Is your target audience present on each of these platforms? It's important to know which audience you are addressing and which products or services are associated with that audience.
- Content quality: Determine the types of content you use on each platform. Are you using videos, photos, text-based posts? List the different types of content you post and the ratio between them. Having a varied content mix is important, keeping in mind that platforms are increasingly favoring video content.
- Content mix and relevance: Note which posts generate the most engagement. Are they photos, videos, or other types of content? It's important to identify what you're doing well and replicate it consistently. Look for trends in terms of content format, such as post length, number of hashtags, use of emojis, etc. Also, analyze the content theme - promotional posts, tips, aspirational posts, etc. What is the current ratio between promotional content and other types of posts? Your social media presence should highlight promotional content as well as aspirational content and user-generated content (UGC).

- Frequency and publishing schedule: Determine the optimal posting frequency for each platform. Are posts with higher engagement published in the morning or afternoon? Is there a specific day of the week that performs better than others?
- Hashtags: It is recommended to use 5-7 hashtags per post. How many hashtags are you currently using? Are you alternating hashtags from one post to another? Do you have a good mix of popular and less popular hashtags, or are you using hashtags that are either too popular or too niche?
- Audience: What is the demographic profile of your audience? Who is following you on social media? It's important to understand the characteristics of your audience, such as age, location, interests, and preferences.
- Branding: Your social media presence should reflect your brand positioning and image, whether it's through the content itself or the visual elements such as colors and aesthetics. Is this alignment evident in your social media accounts? Ensure that your branding is consistent across platforms and resonates with your target audience.

By collecting and analyzing this information, you can gain insights into your social media performance and make informed decisions to improve your strategy and achieve your objectives.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer marketing, is a marketing strategy that involves collaborating with content creators or influencers to promote a brand. Influencers can be active on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and more. While initially popular in the B2C space, influencer marketing is now increasingly used in the B2B sector as well. This strategy has gained significant traction in recent years and is widely adopted across various industries.

Why is influencer marketing important?

Influencer marketing allows brands to leverage an influencer's audience that aligns with their target audience to promote their brand.
Working with influencers has numerous advantages. It saves brands a considerable amount of time as they don't need to build an audience from scratch. By choosing the right influencer, brands ensure a high engagement rate and immediate impact on their brand.
With influencer marketing, brands ensure visibility on results and return on investment since social media platforms provide various statistics.
Collaborating with an influencer also means partnering with a creative individual who can produce unique visuals, photos, and videos at a lower cost. This is a significant advantage, especially for small businesses with limited content creation budgets.

As you can see, influencer marketing has numerous advantages. It's no wonder that over the past 10 years, this marketing strategy has gained popularity. What sets it apart from other strategies is its human dimension. As the name suggests, influencers have an influence. Their community is engaged and more likely to use a product or service recommended by an influencer they trust.

Haven't you noticed that we tend to ask our circle for recommendations when we need one? Here, the same logic applies on a larger scale, as an influencer addresses a very broad community.

Should you work with influencers who have a large number of followers?

It's better to have influencers with a sufficiently targeted and loyal audience rather than an influencer with a large subscriber base but no engaged audience. It's important to measure the engagement rate of an influencer, including the number of likes on their posts and the quantity and type of comments on their page. Micro-influencers can be better candidates for your business, depending on the message you want to convey, as their audience is loyal and they are also more affordable for your budget!
A campaign is considered successful when it generates a high number of results and meets the campaign's objectives. The calculation can sometimes be subtle, and the impact is measured over time.

The mistakes to avoid

Not being authentic and lying. Honesty is essential. Yes, you can influence, but with good manners! In the past, marketing was seen as a kind of misleading advertising, so it's important to reflect the community and sincerity aspect. Showing ethics is essential. Decline certain partnerships if you feel they don't align with your values. It is also important to create a contract with the influencer to define the precise terms and what is expected from both parties. In conclusion, influencer marketing will continue to grow and has already established itself as a reference in 2.0 advertising. It is crucial to take the right path and know how to use it.

TIPS ON HOW TO USE INSTAGRAM

To make the most out of your Instagram account, keep these tips in mind:

Links don't work in Instagram captions: The only place where you can share a functional link that directs users to a website is in your profile. Links don't work in captions or comments on photos. If you want to direct people to a specific web page, you can modify the default link in your bio to that page and mention in the caption that the link is in your profile.

Ensure your posts are relevant to your brand: It can be tempting to share popular photos of food, fashion, and animals because they perform well on the platform. However, if your business has nothing to do with these things, it may make your account appear disconnected and confuse your followers.

Offer giveaways and promotions. Post an image announcing your giveaway, sale, or contest, and ask users to repost that image with a specific and personalized hashtag. You can then search for that hashtag to see who has reposted it and choose a winner. Promotions like this allow your customers and followers to market your brand for you by sharing your promotion on their personal pages, and it encourages more people to visit your profile. If you decide to organize a contest or a draw, make sure to follow the rules and guidelines.

Respond to comments from other users. When people comment on your photos, reply to them. Interacting with customers and followers shows that you pay attention and care about what they have to say. They will be more likely to continue following you and engaging with your photos if they feel that their comments matter.

Integrate Instagram posts on your website. From the desktop version of Instagram, you

can obtain an embed code to add specific images and videos to your company's website. This shows visitors that you are active on Instagram and can help you gain more followers. Simply select the photo you want to embed, click on the ellipsis button in the bottom right corner, and select Embed. This displays a box with the embed code and gives you the option to display the caption. From there, copy and paste the code where you want it to go on your website.

Use Instagram influencers to promote your business. Influencers are individuals who have a large number of followers on Instagram. You can pay influencers to market your products to their followers in a natural way. These sponsored posts are typically subtle and do not look like advertisements. This is beneficial because people generally dislike traditional ads.

Share posts directly to your story. With this feature, small businesses can interact with their followers while promoting their products or services. If a customer posts a photo of your product, you can share the post directly to your story to showcase the product and your customer.

Utilize polls and other features in your stories. Instagram offers many interactive features that you can use to create conversations and build online relationships. You can use polls to gather feedback, ask questions to engage your audience, or use other interactive features to make your stories more engaging. For example, you can use the interactive question sticker in Instagram Stories. This feature allows followers to submit questions that you must answer. It's a fun and simple way to engage with your audience.

Utilize Reels. Launched in August 2020, Reels is one of Instagram's most recent updates. Reels are short videos (up to 15 seconds) that you can edit with audio, effects, and creative tools. You can use Reels to showcase new products, highlight your employees or recent work, or directly interact with customers.
To create a Reel, it's important to:

- Have a clear idea
- Think about transitions
- Use a tripod
- Apply filters
- Then, add a caption and hashtags

We hope these tips and tricks will help you grow your online business. Remember that there are different strategies depending on the goals you want to achieve, whether it's creating buzz, building a connection, or establishing trust with your audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Advertising on social media is one of the most effective and cost-efficient methods to increase brand awareness. 80% of individuals aged 18-49 have an account, making it a leader in terms of engagement rates (1.6% per post, according to Sprout Social). And that's just one platform! Depending on your industry and target audience, using multiple social media platforms is even advisable. Let us introduce you to different social media platforms and explain how to leverage social media advertising to your advantage.

What are the benefits of social media advertising?

Expand brand reach:
Advertising is one of the most underestimated marketing strategies. Many businesses perceive it as a waste of money, something to be dealt with later. In reality, it's quite the opposite! The earlier you invest in advertising, the better. It allows you to spread your brand and its values to people who will support you and convert into customers.

Target a specific group:
Today, social media platforms use algorithms that favor those who pay for advertising. While you can also utilize other means to gradually increase your visibility, the fast track is through paid advertising. How many times have you seen a sponsored ad on your Instagram feed and wondered why it appeared? Websites track your search habits to target the ads you see. So, if you're a sports brand and you pay for advertising, anyone who has searched, posted, used hashtags, or liked content related to fitness or sports will see your products appearing in their feed.

Market testing:
How do you know if you have a winning product? It all depends on the reactions! Advertising is an excellent way to quickly introduce your brand to your target audience and test the market. It provides you with quick feedback on your results on specific platforms, allowing you to focus your time and money where you get the best outcomes.

Advertising options:

Facebook:
With 1.5 billion Facebook users eagerly awaiting ads to appear in their feed (well, maybe not eagerly, but you get the idea), if you have eye-catching visuals, you have a higher chance of generating conversions.

Instagram:
Do you notice when you see an ad on Instagram? Most of the time, the visuals are striking and thematically appealing, making users realize they've already read something about your product! The good old stealth approach!

Twitter:
Known as the micro-blogging platform, advertising on Twitter is an excellent way to make your brand known to the masses. You can share your story, goals, and values. People are much more likely to buy from you if they identify with your vision!

TikTok:
A new popular social media platform since 2020, TikTok has brought teenagers back into the world of short videos and mass scrolling. Implementing advertising that takes inspiration from some of the viral videos on TikTok will help you reach not only the youth but also an increasing number of young adults

80%

Individuals aged 18-49 have at least one social media account.

in their thirties. TikTok has nearly 1 billion monthly active users. With the ad creation tool, you can choose your target audience. You don't have to guess if it's filtered by an algorithm; you're in control!

YouTube:
YouTube has made a strong comeback as a platform for influencers. It has 1 billion unique monthly users, with 82% being teenagers. It's an ideal platform for advertising, especially if you can make it quick. You can't skip the 5-second ads, but if they make an impact, they stay in the viewer's mind!

Pinterest:
Pinterest is a visual discovery platform with 478 million monthly active users. It's a great platform for advertising, especially if your brand aligns with visual inspiration, lifestyle, fashion, or DIY. By showcasing your products or services creatively, you can capture the attention of Pinterest users who are actively seeking inspiration and ideas.

LinkedIn:
If your product is business or technology-related, LinkedIn is the platform for you. With 57% of LinkedIn users being business profiles, advertising your product directly targets the industries you want in their most business-oriented mindset. If they're on LinkedIn, they're thinking about business and what can improve their operations. Will it be your product that they see?

Snapchat:
With 293 million daily active users, including 60 million using Snapchat Discovery, you can easily reach the 71% of users under the age of 34! However, keep in mind that the attention span for scrolling on Snapchat tends to be shorter compared to other platforms. So, be concise and captivating in your ads to grab their attention.

Remember, each platform has its own unique features and audience, so it's essential to choose the ones that align with your brand and target market.

CONDUCT AN SEO AUDIT

We know that having a well-referenced website on search engines is a very important business asset. Many entrepreneurs have already heard of natural referencing, also known as SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), but few really know how it works. This article will not only provide you with more information about natural referencing but also allow you to conduct an SEO audit of your website to identify what needs improvement or changes in order to optimize your referencing.

On-Site SEO

To determine the position of your site, Google will analyze it based on various criteria, and this is called On-Site SEO.

The right keywords

The first thing to do to ensure that your site is optimized is to define the keywords that your target audience will search for to find a business like yours. Are you a business coach? There is a good chance that your keyword is "business coach," unless it is "coach for businesses." The difference may seem minor, but it matters. Different methods exist to determine which keywords you should target:

- Analyze your competitors' websites. If you see recurring terms, they could be good keywords.
- Engage in conversations with your target audience. What terms do they use?
- Use tools such as Google Keyword Planner, SEMRush, or Ahrefs to determine the search volume of your chosen keywords.

The Metas

If I mention meta title, meta description, and H1, does that ring a bell? Probably not, but it's something you already know! Take any result on Google, and you'll see it. Each page of your site should have a meta title and meta description, both of which should include the keyword(s) you want to be ranked for. Remember, each meta title and meta description is unique, so no copy-pasting! The meta tags must also adhere to a certain length in pixels to be fully displayed in search results. When writing meta tags, it is recommended to use a simulator to ensure the proper length.

And what about the H1?

This refers to the main heading of a page, a title that everyone can see. It is often the largest title on a page. How do you know if your H1 is properly set up? Open your website using Chrome, highlight the main title, and right-click > Inspect.

Your Images Optimizing your images has a significant impact on the SEO of your website. In this regard, there are several things you should do:

- Include your keywords in the file name (e.g., canyoningvancouver.jpg).
- Avoid using PNG images, as they tend to be heavier. Prefer JPEG images.
- Optimize the dimensions of your images. There's no need to upload a 2000px image to your website if you only need a 200px image for display, for example.
- Optimize the file size of your images. Tools like Photoshop can help you with this, or you can use online compression sites. The lighter the image, the better it is for your site's speed and SEO.

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03
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

- Adding alternative text (also known as alt text) to all your images, including your keywords if possible.
- Installing compression extensions/plugins like Imagify if your website is on WordPress.

Off-Site SEO

A backlink is a link from another website that points to your own, and it plays a significant role in your SEO. This is known as off-site SEO. Do you know how many backlinks you have? What about your competitors? You can take a free test here. The more backlinks you have, the better. However, it's not just about quantity; Google also looks at the domain rating (DR) and URL rating (UR), so you need high-quality backlinks.

OPTIMISING YOUR WEBSITE RANKING

There are best practices to implement in order to succeed in your referencing and gain visibility with your customers, without the need for technical knowledge. Discover the key concepts of search engine optimization (SEO) and learn the rules to follow to climb to the top of Google's search results.

SEO: What is it and what is it used for?

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the acronym for "Optimization for search engines" in English. It is a set of techniques used to position a website on search engines to make it visible to internet users. Also known as "organic referencing," SEO increases the quality and quantity of traffic to a website through organic search results (non-paid). Therefore, SEO is often a key focus in terms of traffic acquisition and lead generation for businesses... so it's worth working on!

As Google is the most widely used search engine with 91% market share worldwide, it is essential to understand Google's expectations in order to have a chance of appearing among the top search results related to our industry.

How does SEO work?

When Google's robots crawl websites, they consider three major categories of criteria that are important to remember.

- The technical aspect: which forms the framework of your website.
- The content: which is the essence of your site, the editorial content.
- Popularity (linking): which includes the number of external links pointing to your website.

Google analyzes websites, particularly based on these three categories of criteria, and then ranks them in order of relevance for each user query. Google's goal is to provide the most relevant search results to the user for a given keyword. The more actions you take to improve these three categories of criteria (popularity, content, technical), the more visible your website will be on Google for your strategic keywords. The aim is to outrank competitors in search results and ultimately achieve the best possible ranking. In other words, search engine optimization can help you attract customers.

What are the main SEO criteria?

There are nearly 200 criteria that Google takes into account to rank websites, and its algorithms determine on-page and off-page criteria.

On-page criteria:

This involves optimizing different parts of your website through technical or editorial changes

There are several criteria, such as:

- The structure of Title tags, Meta Descriptions, and Hn tags.
- Optimizing the size and weight of images.
- Page loading speed.
- Display on all platforms (responsive design): Your website should be able to display seamlessly on computers, tablets, and smartphones.
- The presence and relevance of internal and external links.
- The variety and relevance of keywords used and overall content.
- The position and frequency of keywords on the page.

- The presence of robots.txt and sitemap.xml files.
- The accessibility and indexability of your pages: Google should be able to find and read your pages.

Off-page criteria:
This involves strengthening external elements to the website, which is your authority. Authority is measured by the quality and quantity of links redirecting to your pages (backlinks). If influential or high-traffic sites redirect to your site or if your site is mentioned on social networks, your popularity will increase, and Google will value your website in its search results.

How to optimize your SEO in 2023?

Firstly, it is crucial to determine your target audience. By knowing who your products or services are aimed at, you can think about how to effectively target them.
You should research keywords related to your products and services that your potential audience is likely to search for on search engines. There are tools like Google Adwords Keyword Planner or Google Trends that can show you the popularity of keywords, which ones are frequently searched, and their trends.
You can also track the ranking of your website for these keywords to evaluate your performance on Google. Tools such as Google Search Console or SEM Rush can help you monitor this progress.
It is advisable to define your objectives before starting your SEO campaign. These objectives may include:

- Increasing SEO traffic
- Generating SEO leads (potential customers)
- Gaining positions on strategic keywords in Google
- Reducing customer acquisition costs (SEO is known to be more cost-effective than SEA)
- Increasing brand awareness

To ensure a high-quality SEO strategy, even though it is possible to handle the key concepts of search engine optimization, it is preferable to consult an SEO expert to:

- Conduct audits and analyses
- Define an action plan aligned with your SEO objectives
- Determine and allocate the necessary resources to carry out the actions

Local SEO

For Google, the most important criterion is always the user experience, so the search engine seeks to provide users with results based on their geographical location whenever it's relevant.
If you run a local business, local SEO has never been more essential to attract online customers to your stores or physical establishments.
A large number of businesses from various sectors have a local customer base. Therefore, being visible to people in your neighborhood or city is crucial. Keep in mind that, especially for local searches, if it's not your business that appears in the search results, it's one of your competitors'.
Tell yourself that particularly for a local search, if it's not your business that appears in the search results, it's one of your competitors.

How does local SEO work?
The majority of people search for local businesses using their phones, and the first phase of local SEO is to add your business to listings that index businesses.

Not only do you gain visibility by creating your profile on these sites, but you also encourage search engines to pay attention to your website.
The primary platform that manages business listings on Google is called Google My Business. Just as Google is the main player for search engines, Google My Business is the main player on the web for creating your listing and displaying your points of sale.
Creating a profile on Google My Business is free, and it provides your potential customers with key information such as your location, opening hours, customer reviews, photos, etc.
But just like its search engine, Google expects you to meet certain criteria in order to rank well in its results, such as:

- Location: your business address.
- Correct categories: choose the category that matches your industry.
- Fill out all fields: provide as much complete and accurate information as possible.
- Landing page: ensure that the page on your website that you add to your listing is relevant and coherent for customers.
- Description: create a compelling and concise description of your establishment so that users can understand who you are and what you offer.
- Customer reviews: positive reviews are a ranking factor in search results, and online reviews are one of the main influencing methods in 2023.

Additionally, it is important to optimize the local content on your website by including location information in your texts or tags.
Finally, don't overlook listings on platforms other than Google, such as Yelp or Yellow Pages, as well as local portals like hotel directories, restaurant directories, chambers of commerce, specialized search engines, and more. Being present and visible on as many platforms as possible is essential for a strong local SEO strategy. However, ensure consistency as Google scans websites to ensure the relevance of data across different portals.

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CONTENT GENERATION

WRITING AN EFFICIENT BLOG POST

Since their first appearance over twenty years ago, blogs have continued to evolve and transform. Today, blogs are at the forefront of the preferred digital marketing tools used by businesses, surpassing email. According to a study published in 2021 by SEMrush, nearly 9 out of 10 marketers include blog article production in their marketing strategy. A blog can generate 55% more website visits and 67% more leads each month.

The tourism industry was one of the first sectors to embrace the blog format, to the point where it is now regarded by consumers as more credible than other traditional communication channels. Blogs, whether they come from individuals, influencers, destinations, or tourism companies, are a major source of information, advice, and suggestions for tourists and travelers. They are also known to improve the organic search ranking of the websites that host them, generate online and on-site traffic, and significantly contribute to the long-term reputation development of an organization.

As you may have understood, blogging is now a powerful tool in digital marketing, particularly in the tourism industry. It allows you not only to create and maintain a connection with your customers and visitors but also to support the credibility, attractiveness, and expertise of your business. However, it is essential to produce content that is sufficiently interesting and of high quality!

Here are 5 tips to help you create blog articles that are effective, engaging, and persuasive.

1. Know and understand your target audience

Before diving into writing articles, take the time to define who you want these articles to reach and what message(s) you want them to convey. Understanding your audience means grasping their needs, expectations, and the type of information they're seeking, as well as their level of knowledge and expertise related to your products or services. This clear understanding of your target audience's needs will enable you to determine the best way to address them. Remember that your blog is a marketing tool serving your business objectives.

2. List, prepare and plan your topics

Create a list of topics that are likely to provide relevant answers to your target audience's expectations and questions while showcasing your brand and activity. For example, if you offer guided tours of a city or region, you can provide content on the best family-friendly attractions or unique seasonal activities. Why not give a voice to a local resident who can share their favorite spots or recommendations? Or present the features and strengths of a specific neighborhood or city? Let your imagination run wild here, try not to limit yourself, and list as many topics as possible, even those that may seem unconventional.

Go back to this list with a more critical eye: which topics are easy and quick to address? which ones require specific resources? And where can you find these resources? Upon reflection, which topics do not ultimately hold much interest?

Then, once this list has been refined, you can create an editorial calendar that allows you to schedule the production and publication of your content. In this calendar, take into account seasonality, so that your content resonates with a specific time period or seasonal trend.

3. Tell a story

Get ready with your pens (or keyboards)! It's time to get to the heart of the matter and start writing. Regardless of your level of expertise or comfort in this area, it's important to follow a number of best practices to ensure that your article is effective in both form and content.

First and foremost, always keep your target audience and objective in mind to ensure that you stay on track and provide clear, relevant, and useful information. Next, write your content like a story, with a context, a problem, and a solution. Imagine that you are telling this story to a friend, someone you know well: this approach helps you remain authentic and genuine in your approach and offers content that is easy to read and absorb.

Don't hesitate, for example, to share a personal experience as a starting point: "Here's how I discovered this city/region and why I fell in love with it," "I recently met someone who pointed out to me that...," etc.

Just like with the list of topics, try to write as freely as possible, without filters. Proofreading and optimization can come later.

4. Edit, proofread, optimize: tips and tricks

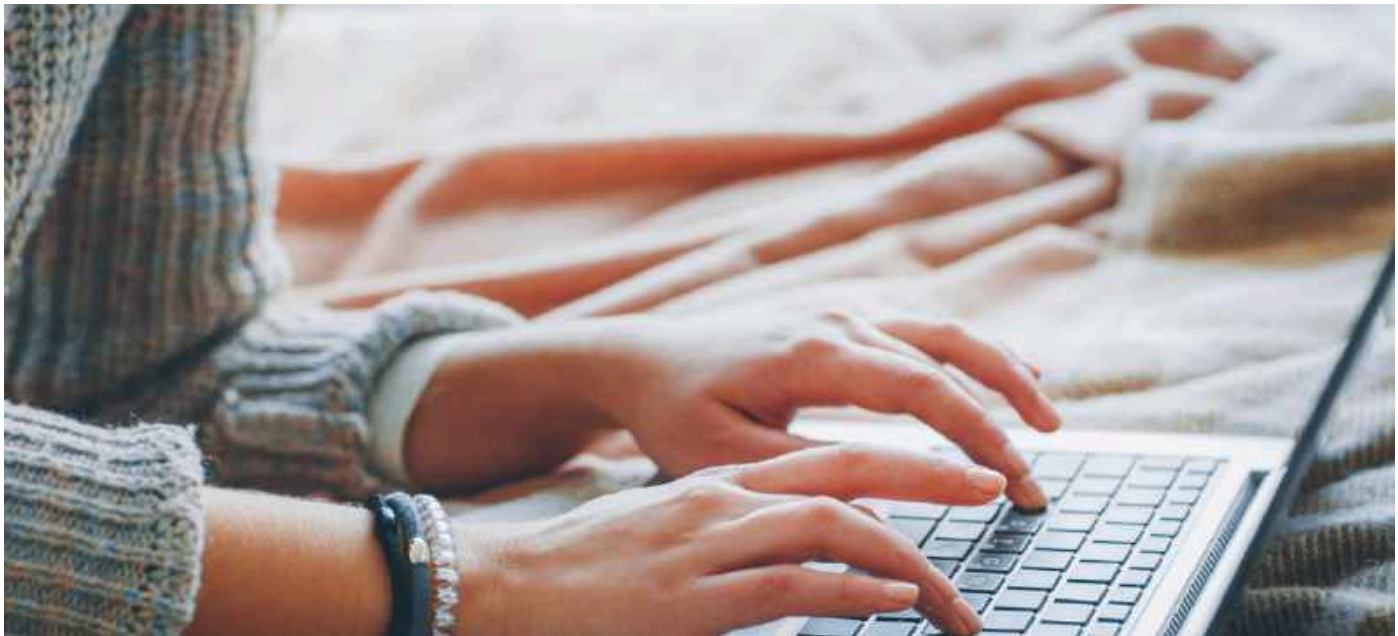
Once you have completed your first draft, take the time to review and optimize it. Prioritize short sentences, accessible and varied vocabulary, and an appropriate tone. Ensure that you are in line with your personality and values (or those of your brand). Check that your content is well-structured with paragraphs, clear subheadings, highlighted sentences and keywords, bullet lists, etc. Also, verify your spelling and grammar and rephrase sentences if necessary. Add one or more images, as well as a call-to-action at the end of your article. A call-to-action, as the name suggests, is an invitation to take action, often in the form of a button or a link such as "learn more," "book now," "see our products," "contact us," etc. This call-to-action is important for converting a reader into a customer by guiding them to the next step in their purchasing journey. Therefore, the call-to-action you choose should align with the business objective you have set beforehand.

Lastly, pay special attention to the title of your article: it serves as the gateway to your content and is the first contact your reader will have with your message. It should be catchy, relevant, and explicit, particularly through the use of keywords. Don't hesitate to use classic but effective title templates such as lists ("X attractions not to be missed"), how-tos ("how to reduce your environmental impact while traveling"), questions ("What to do in Vancouver in winter?"), etc.

5. Publish and observe

Once your article has been reviewed, optimized, formatted, and illustrated, all that's left is to publish it... and promote it! This is particularly true if your blog is new and doesn't yet have the visibility or SEO necessary to attract organic traffic. To promote your blog, there's nothing like sharing it on social media, in a newsletter, on the homepage of your website, etc.

Lastly, don't forget to measure the performance of your articles using analytics tools. The number of views and the time spent on each article are among the interesting indicators to assess the relevance of your strategy and the quality of your content. And if necessary, make adjustments. Like any digital marketing strategy, blogging doesn't always hit the mark right away: it sometimes requires testing, reassessment, and adjustments to find the right approach that generates the desired results.



CREATE PHOTO CONTENT

Creating photo content for social media or your business is the use of images to capture the attention of users. The images (photos, illustrations, GIFs, etc.) should be relevant to the brand, campaign, and topic, as well as impactful and relevant. Creating photo content is essential to achieve the goals of a social media strategy and stand out. However, to distinguish yourself from others, you need to create high-quality content.

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but we often don't realize how powerful visual communication is for a business. That's why in this article, we will present different aspects of marketing photography and techniques that will help you create high-quality visual content for your business.

What is marketing photography?

Marketing photography is:

- Visual content associated with your brand
- The image of your company
- Your visual identity that reflects the DNA of your company to your target audience in a lasting way.

Marketing photography brings you closer to your visitors through content that evokes emotions, grabs attention, and makes your brand more human by communicating your values. This fosters a sense of closeness and sharing of your brand, as users can identify with it. Sharing creates the e-reputation of your brand and allows you to build a strong customer base.

Here are some numbers:

- Images are processed by the brain on average 60,000 times faster than text.
- 90% of the information transmitted to the brain is visual.
- Photos are shared 40% more than text (especially on Facebook).
- People remember 80% of what they see, 20% of what they read, and 10% of what they hear!

Regardless of the type of business you run, good photography can help grow your brand and attract your ideal customer. In marketing photography, there are 4 types of photographs:

Product Photography

It presents the product as it is. If you produce goods, consider having a beautiful gallery of product photos available on platforms like Etsy, Amazon, or your own website, depending on what is appropriate for you. Product photos can be used in marketing campaigns on traditional media and social media, as well as in lookbooks. A lookbook is a showcase for prospects and journalists, typically featuring photos from a single collection by a unique creator (although the term has evolved and can include multiple creators/collections). It can take the form of a book, a notebook, a small catalog, or even cards.

Service Photography

Service-oriented businesses often think they don't need photographs. However, just like with products, professional photos can be useful for marketing, social media/website, and public relations.

80%

People remember 80% of what they see, 20% of what they read, and 10% of what they hear.

14%

Photos are shared 40% more than text (especially on Facebook).

90%

90% of the information transmitted to the brain is visual.

X60,000

Images are processed by the brain on average 60,000 times faster than text.

They can be used to motivate potential customers and help them understand what makes your business unique. Focus on the unique value that your service provides and consider how you can capture that in your photos. If you're an artist, you can showcase photos of yourself creating, for example, to emphasize that each of your works is unique.

Lifestyle photography

Lifestyle photography focuses on the impact your business will have on your customer's life. These are images that convey the feeling and life that your customers want to have and will have through your business. A good example of lifestyle photography clearly shows the product in the background. The images portray a moment that customers aspire to have in their lives. It could be a child reaching for a book, with the book being the product being sold. Simply create a scene that is positive and makes the viewer want to imagine themselves in that scene.

Team/headshot hotography

Customers want to know the faces behind the brand. Who works behind the scenes? Whether you have an "About" page on your website or share team photos on social media, it's a great opportunity to connect with your audience and humanize your company.

Using your phone or camera

When it comes to photography for promoting your business, there's a tendency to think that you need to choose high-quality (and therefore expensive) equipment to capture high-quality photos. However, it's possible to take poor shots even with good equipment!

To start off, you don't necessarily need to buy the best DSLR camera on the market. You can use what you already have in your hands: your phone.

Here are some options to consider when choosing a smartphone for marketing photography:

- More than 15 million pixels
- HDR (High Dynamic Range) mode (which allows you to take three photos with different exposures and combine them to improve the contrast ratio)
- Night mode for low-light photography
- Depth of field control
- Ultra-wide-angle lens
- Macro mode for capturing details
- Dedicated lens for portrait photography with background blur
- Telephoto lens with 2x, 3x, or 5x zoom capabilities

If you prefer to use your camera for your professional shots, that's also a good option!

There are 3 essential parts in a camera:

- The sensor: It is composed of photosensitive cells. Its role is to convert light signals into digital data to create the image file.
- The viewfinder: For compact cameras, the viewfinder is no longer present, and the image is directly displayed on the camera screen (which is why it's no longer necessary). For DSLR cameras, the viewfinder is actually an image reflected by mirrors in line with the lens, showing the image as it will be captured by the system.
- The lens: The centerpiece of a camera. It is through the lens and its lenses that light is directed towards the sensor.

To capture the right shot for your business, you can choose from the following modes:

- Macro mode: It has a very shallow depth of field, requiring a small aperture. The focus area is maximized.

- Landscape mode: It uses a small aperture to maximize depth of field. The aim is to extend the focus area.
- Portrait mode: It uses a wide aperture to minimize depth of field and create a background blur.
- Sports mode: It uses the highest shutter speed to effectively freeze motion.
- Night portrait and night landscape modes: They use a slow shutter speed to capture as much light as possible. It's useful to use a flash and a tripod for stability.

If you're not very knowledgeable about photography, automatic and preset modes can be more suitable than manual mode.

In conclusion, there are different types of marketing photography, and now, with current technologies, it can be just as effective to use your phone to capture photos that showcase the potential of your business to your clients and prospects. If you choose to use a camera, consider the different modes that will align with the message you want to convey to the world. As American photographer Ansel Adams said, "It is not (just) about conveying a vision but about touching people through an image."

SECRETS TO PHOTO COMPOSITION

"Everything can seem perfect: the light, the location, the outfit, the style, absolutely everything, but a flawed composition will be a dealbreaker."

What is photographic composition?

Photographic composition is the way in which the photographer arranges the visual elements within the frame and creates a sense of harmony between the different elements. Creating space for subjects or scenes may seem easy, but it is far from obvious. Composition in photography is often challenging but always important. Simply placing the main subject in the center is not enough to compose a good photo.

There are seven rules that we will detail in this article to help you understand the secrets of successful composition.

1. The Rule of Thirds

Divide the photo into nine equal parts to achieve an optimal composition.

- This involves dividing the frame evenly using two horizontal and two vertical equidistant lines to create a grid of three boxes by three.
- To achieve balance and fluidity in the image, the elements of the composition should be placed at the intersections of the grid, where the image is segmented.
- This technique generally makes the photo more interesting than simply centering the subject.

2. Balancing the Images

Balance is a concept that is related but different from symmetry. The appearance of a balanced image may not necessarily be the same from left to right or from one side to another. Its different thirds complement each other in a flattering and aesthetic manner. The viewer's gaze will likely analyze the image, searching for a point of interest and another element that resonates with it.

3. Depth of Field

Depth of field has a major impact on the composition of a photo. A shallow depth of field isolates the subject from its surroundings. With a shallow depth of field, the viewer may feel that their attention is drawn to an element right in front of them, adding depth and dimension even to a flat photo. For product photos, a shallow depth of field is often preferred to draw attention to the highlighted element. On the other hand, a large depth of field places the subject within its context by showing everything around it.

4. Finding the ideal point of view

To play with your composition, move around! Experiment by changing the space and distance between you and the subject. Get closer, step back, and move around to find how to frame your subject. A simple change in perspective can make the difference between a mundane image and a captivating photo. This technique is well-known in children's photography, where it is recommended to lower yourself to their eye level to avoid overpowering them in the image. You can apply this rule to all your photos. Lower yourself, stand up, but don't necessarily stay at your own eye level with the subject.

Do you want to give the viewer a sense of vertigo? Play with the bird's-eye view or the worm's-eye view. A bird's-eye view involves aiming downward, while a worm's-eye view involves aiming upward.

5. Frame tightly

When starting out in photography, we often have a tendency to see the bigger picture and therefore frame... broadly. But some subjects are better showcased with a tighter frame, even very tight.
For example, clothing can appear in a better light when captured with a tight frame.

6. Choose an odd number of subjects

A photo with an odd number of subjects appears more dynamic. With an odd number of subjects, you can play with the balance of the composition, which gives more strength to the image.

7. Use lines or curves

Whether they are straight lines on their own or a combination of lines, you always have multiple possibilities when taking a shot.

You can just as well use curves to enhance your compositions and give a different look to your photos. Curves can be found everywhere in nature: rivers, coastlines, animals, snowfields, etc. But also think about more artificial curves like winding roads or railway tracks, streets, buildings – there are numerous lines to explore.

The importance of light
White balance Our eyes naturally adapt to white balance when we look at something: white appears white and not blue or orange. If you take a photo of a product, the color may appear "different." Indeed, you may have noticed in your own photos that snow looks blue or an object illuminated by a candle appears orange. The best approach is to find a balance between the two extremes to achieve lighting results that are closer to reality. By adjusting the white balance on your camera, you can address this issue and obtain product photos with colors that are closer to reality.

Types of light
There are two types of light:
Natural light

- Artificial light

Regarding natural light, it is the best light to use in photography. The only constraint is the weather. However, there are ways to modify sunlight, and we can also move our subject based on the available light. Don't forget that you can compose with natural light even indoors! For that, there's nothing better than a large window or glass pane. Pay close attention to the "color" of this natural light, which also changes throughout the day. The light coming through windows is a fantastic light source and allows you to work sheltered from the elements.
The best light is usually during the early morning or late afternoon, or on a cloudy day, as it is naturally more diffused. The advantage of diffused light is that it doesn't directly hit your subject, thereby avoiding unflattering shadows.
You'll notice that the ambient light is very soft during the golden hours, which are the early morning and late afternoon hours. Whether it's for portraits or landscapes, the golden hours are always a reliable choice.

And what about artificial light?

The lightbox
The lightbox is an essential tool if you want to create beautiful product photos with a

professional look, similar to those seen in catalogs and online stores. So, what is a lightbox? It's an empty box with translucent white sides and a smooth white background. Place your product inside, take a photo, and you'll get a well-lit photograph. You can either buy a pre-made lightbox, which can cost between $20 and $3,500, or make one yourself. You don't need an expensive digital camera: a lightbox will significantly improve your photos, even if they are taken with your smartphone.

Other ways to use artificial lights Find multiple lamps and place them in front of your subject to distribute the light evenly. The important thing is to diffuse the light effectively to highlight the volume of your object and to avoid pronounced shadows.

To diffuse the light, use a white sheet or a transparent curtain between your light source and your object.

You can also play with light using LED light sticks that will give your photos a new look depending on the chosen colors (blue, red, orange, green...). To succeed in a photo, it's not only about knowing the rules of composition and playing with light but also knowing how to set up a backdrop.

Different types of backdrops

White backdrop When preparing for a shoot, it's important to anticipate a backdrop or set. The most suitable option is a white backdrop. Taking photos on a white backdrop ensures not only that there are no visual distractions but also provides a better view of your product for your clients. A wall or a white sheet is perfect for creating a home studio. However, if you don't have a white wall, be creative and use a backdrop or a sheet.
Colored or fabric backdrop

If you don't have a white backdrop on hand, try taking your photos against a solid, colored backdrop that attracts the customer's eye and highlights the subject.

Set design
Show the product in its natural environment. Place your product in a location that allows people to imagine its use. Its features or functionalities will be immediately highlighted. Your customers will have a clear idea of how the product can be used in everyday life.

Mirror or reflection plate
You can use reflection plates or mirrors to play with reflections. It's an excellent way to unleash your creativity.

Accessories
Cubes, stools, or tables - you can use all of them for your set design.

In summary, taking a good photo is not something that can be improvised! However, there are good practices to adopt that will help you achieve the "perfect" photo that best represents your business (product, service, team presentation). Opt for natural light whenever possible and pay attention to white balance, framing, and shadows to achieve optimal results.

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05
BEST MARKETING TACTICS

TACTICS FOR RESTAURANTS

"If I buy a cactus and paint a wall pink in my café, Instagram influencers will find it cute and want to come take photos of my business. Doesn't that guarantee the success of my business?" Well, our answer, and the answer of most marketing consultants out there, is: no! It's a marketing strategy that many tourism and restaurant businesses seem to follow these days, especially in Vancouver, but it has its ups and downs.

It's true that influencers or aspiring influencers will want to take a photo of your business (we would do it too, to be honest), which can help increase your brand's visibility on social media, especially on Instagram. However, there's a difference between becoming the trendy café to visit once and the café that will be successful for decades. How do you make a difference? By adopting the right marketing strategy.

So here's our list of the top 10 marketing strategies for restaurants, cafés, or bakeries that we recommend:

Website

Firstly, a business without a website is invisible to your target audience. A website is the face of your business for potential customers, partners, or even future employees. A poorly designed website could decrease your conversions, but it shouldn't be too complicated either, as long as you ensure to display a few key elements:

- Who you are and what you do
- How to find you and your opening hours
- Your competitive advantage (why customers should choose you over your competitors),
- Photos of your business,
- Menu,
- Special offers,
- Online reservations,
- Online ordering (if applicable to your business).

If your website is easy to navigate and contains the right information for your customers, that's a win! Not all business owners are HTML experts. Don't worry, you don't need to be. You can actually create simple websites on platforms like WordPress or SquareSpace, but if you have specific needs or don't have the time, most digital marketing services in town should be able to help you.

Create profiles on major review and delivery platforms.

Yelp, TripAdvisor, Google reviews, Foodora, UberEats... When customers are looking for a restaurant, they want to make sure they'll have a good meal, which is why they want to read reviews from past customers and see photos. The two main platforms where you should have a profile are Yelp and TripAdvisor. The main advantages are:

- Raising awareness among people who don't know you yet
- Converting/reconverting those who already know you.
- Please note that this is an incomplete translation, as the rest of the content was not provided.

Of course, this is only applicable if you have good reviews. This means that customer

satisfaction should also be at the center of your marketing strategy. Many entrepreneurs seek advice on how to improve customer satisfaction. If this is also a major concern for your business, don't hesitate to contact our business advisors or our network of digital professionals.

Sensory marketing strategies for restaurants

Sensory marketing! You may not have heard this term yet, but believe us, you have already experienced it. Sensory marketing is a marketing approach that appeals to your senses. Music, smells, visuals, textures, taste... Step into a Saje or Lush store, and you'll see that everything is designed to activate your senses. The goal is to have customers spend more time in the stores, try the products, and ultimately make a purchase. Studies have shown that a sensory marketing strategy for restaurants significantly increases conversions.

How can you use sensory marketing in your tourism or restaurant business?

You have many options, and ultimately, the choices you make should be consistent with your brand and what you offer to your customers, but here are some suggestions:

- Music: A fast tempo will push customers to leave earlier. On the other hand, slow music played at a low volume will increase the time and money spent inside. Customers tend to eat faster and consume less with high volume and fast-tempo music.
- Textures and visuals: All renowned chefs will tell you that you need to have different textures on your plates and create visually appealing dishes. Plus, they are more likely to be #Instagrammable!
- Aroma: Did you know that some bakeries use chemical diffusers to spread the smell of fresh bread outside their store, even though they don't bake anything on-site? While we don't recommend this strategy as it deceives customers, it is nonetheless a perfect example of sensory marketing.

Social media marketing strategies for restaurants.

You probably cook delicious dishes, and your customers know it, but what about potential customers? If you want to promote your restaurant, make sure you have a presence on social media and share photos of your establishment and the dishes you serve. There are many social media platforms, but as a business owner, you need to focus on those that will give you the best return on investment. That's why you should regularly post on Instagram! On this platform, everything revolves around visuals, whether it's photography (on your feed or in stories), as well as videos (short ones like reels or longer ones like IGTV). Make sure to take beautiful photos of yourself, your restaurant, and your dishes. Additionally, Pinterest is another excellent social media platform for food-related content. Many people are looking for recipe ideas. As a restaurant owner, what can you share on this platform? Create a blog section on your website where you share recipes.

It's not necessarily about recipes from your menu, but try to share recipes that align with the positioning of your restaurant.

Influencer awareness

An excellent way to increase brand awareness among potential customers is to work with bloggers and influencers. Identify those who share your brand's values and who could talk about your brand to your end customers. It's

not necessary to approach top influencers to get results. The key is to reach out to those with high engagement.

PR marketing strategies for restaurants

Dailyhive, VancouverIsAwesome, Dot604.com... Reach out to websites, journalists, and experts who could talk about your brand. If they like what you do, they might mention you on their website, social media, or newsletter. Keep in mind that the results and budget involved may vary from one contact to another.

Online reputation

Potential customers judge the quality of your services based on previous customer reviews. Make sure to monitor what people are saying about you on your Google My Business, Yelp, and Tripadvisor pages. Don't leave a bad review unanswered. Keep an eye on your competition; you may be able to identify recurring negative comments that your business can overcome.

Loyalty program

The cost of acquiring new customers is much higher than for returning customers. Your current customers already know you, so why not encourage them to come back and make repeat purchases? This can be done through a loyalty program, for example. You can also implement marketing strategies and tactics that allow you to engage with your previous customers so that they can return.

Create a referral network

You're not alone in this! Did you know that you can acquire customers from other businesses? This is what marketing consultants call referral marketing. Create a network of business owners; attend associations, organizations, and events that might interest you. Determining which businesses are most likely to help you in this strategy will depend on the products you sell and the target audience you aim for, but the logic and return on investment of referral marketing are proven.

Define your brand properly

The tourism and restaurant industry is highly competitive. How many restaurants or cafes are around your business, for example? Probably a lot. How different are you from them? If you don't know how to answer that question, neither will your customers. This is where branding comes into play. The idea here is to define a few key points for your business:

- What is my vision?
- What is my mission?
- Who am I?
- What is my positioning?
- Who is my target audience?
- What are my strengths/weaknesses?
- What are my values?

Once you have answered all the questions above, your only job is to ensure that your marketing strategy, communication strategy, and retail space align in that direction, so that your employees and customers are familiar with your brand.

Are you already doing everything mentioned above but not seeing the expected results? Knowing what to do is one thing, knowing how to do it or even having the time to do it is another. This is where digital marketing services come in handy. Feel free to contact our business advisors or leverage the network of digital professionals approved by the SDECB.

TOURISM MARKETING TACTICS

Google, Airbnb, Tripadvisor, Kayak, Instagram... The tourism industry is constantly evolving because algorithms, tools, and key players are regularly changing! How can you ensure that your travel or hospitality business thrives and continues to do so in the long run? With a solid marketing strategy! In the tourism industry, trends come and go, but best practices remain! This has allowed us to define a list of 9 marketing strategies that are worth implementing for your travel business. Why 9? Because Vancouver has broken records three years in a row with 10 million visitors per year. One or two strategies are not enough!

Stay informed

One of the key factors of differentiation between a successful travel business and one that fails is information! Regulations, political environment, natural disasters, and of course, a global pandemic (hello COVID-19!)... You need to know what's happening in your industry, the latest news about the destinations you sell to your potential clients, and be able to quickly disseminate that information accordingly.

What are the trendiest destinations or travel activities of the year or season? Okanagan? Vancouver Island? Quebec? What is the travel destination your target audience wants to visit this year? As a tourism expert, you need to know the current popular destinations and tailor your marketing strategy accordingly.

Whether through your search engine optimization strategy, social media content, or offering event products.

Travel marketing advice:

Since social media and search engine optimization (SEO) are likely to play a major role in your strategy, try to stay up-to-date with best practices. Algorithm changes are quite regular and can have a significant impact on your business. Your marketing manager or a marketing consultant are best positioned to advise you on this.

Have a solid content generation strategy

Content is essential to the success of a travel or hospitality business. Over the years, we have seen so many businesses with great concepts that unfortunately failed due to their content strategy. As a travel business, keep in mind that your target audience is there to travel, and that the travel experience should start from the moment you have a first point of contact with them. Social media, website, apps, advertising... Your entire strategy should be focused on travel and immersion.

Blog articles, photos, and videos... This is the content you should have regularly for your brand.

Generating travel content regularly can be challenging, especially for a small business with limited resources, which is why you should consider user-generated content (UGC). Different approaches are possible:

- Influencer marketing:

Travel bloggers, Instagrammers, YouTubers... Identify who is popular among your potential customers and could talk about your brand. The idea is to reach out to influencers who have similar values to your brand and a high engagement rate (the number of followers being secondary). Many influencers already work with travel and hospitality brands and produce great articles, photos, and videos. The budget can vary depending on the influencers, so if you can't spend too much on influencer marketing, prioritize influencers with fewer than 10,000 fans.

- Organize contests:

To engage your fans or current customers, raise awareness, and create content, organize a contest. You can do this on one of your social media platforms or even on your website. It can be set up quite easily and generate a lot of value for your business.

- Create a community:

Is travel photography, video, or articles part of your brand positioning? Have you considered creating a member community on your website where people can exchange tips or upload their content? This is an essential pillar of the content strategy for many brands, such as National Geographic, for example.

- Collaborate with content writers:

Do you have a company blog? Are you a travel publisher? The team that writes your content, whether internal or external, could be an asset to your strategy. Don't forget to ask them to generate different types of content while they work for you. Hire a content creator! If you don't have the time or struggle to write quality content, you can hire contract writers who will produce what you want to distribute to your readers.

Travel marketing tip:
You're already doing everything mentioned above, but you're struggling to get conversions? Establishing partnerships with complementary businesses can also help retain visitors to your website. For example, if you sell tours to Tofino, why not partner with the local tourism office to provide useful information about this destination on your website? Your users will have more reasons to stay on your website, which means a greater potential for conversion for you.

Think about search engine optimization

Whether they're searching for a flight or information about a destination, many people use a search engine like Google to plan their trips. Make sure your potential customers find your brand rather than your competitors'. How, you ask? By optimizing your website for SEO! Without getting into too technical terms, here are some current best practices in SEO that an SEO consultant should be able to help you with:

- Having an optimized website, focusing on how it functions as a mobile site, and overall speed.
- Creating internal links between pages.
- Creating external links to your pages.
- Using keywords searched by your target audience in the navigation and content of your website.
- Having an optimized Google My Business profile.

Travel marketing tip:
Optimize ALL your content for SEO, even content that is not on your website, such as YouTube videos or even Instagram.

Instagram is your friend

What would a website be without inspiring photos and videos? The best social network for that is Instagram. Your travel business should be present on Instagram. What should your action plan on Instagram look like? We advise

you to:

- Regularly post on the platform.
- Create visually appealing content.
- Curate content from other accounts (with their permission!).
- Contact influencers and see if collaboration is possible.
- Use the right hashtags that will make your account more visible to your potential audience.
- Engage with the community.

Don't forget about other social media platforms that could benefit your business, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter primarily, but also TikTok. The platforms on which you will focus your efforts and the content you will publish will depend on the nature of your brand and niche, but keep in mind that people want to be inspired.

Travel marketing tip:
When you publish, try to keep the 1/3-2/3 rule in mind: 1/3 of the content should be about your brand or products, and 2/3 should be more inspiring (something that is related to the positioning of your brand and that your audience should enjoy).

Getting positive reviews

Whether you are a hotel, a travel agency, a tour company, etc., your target is probably browsing the internet to have more information about you and your competition before making the decision to buy. What could make a key difference on your conversion rate is reviews. Different platforms exist where your clients can leave reviews: Google My Business, Tripadvisor, Booking, Yelp, Facebook…

Make sure to provide a great customer service to your clients and ask them to leave reviews. You can do that the old traditional way (just ask them face to face), through a follow up email or through print. The solution you will adopt depends on what you are selling.

Travel marketing tip: Not only you need positive reviews, but you need to have recent reviews. Also don't forget to reply to negative reviews.

Define a clear target audience and a unique positioning.

The demographic characteristics of the customers you are trying to reach should be at the core of your concerns. Who are they? Where are they? What do they do? What do they like? Are your end customers the ones seeking your services/products or not? For example, some studies have shown that women make 68% of the searches when it comes to family vacation ideas. Make sure to target the decision-maker in your marketing tactics, not necessarily the end customer.

Travel marketing tip:
Creating personas will help you create effective campaigns that will speak to your target audience and encourage them to click and convert.

Meet your target audience at events

A great way to make your business known to your target group is to participate in events or even organize them. Major conferences, fairs, street festivals, workshops, conferences... See where you can go and talk to your potential customers.

Travel marketing tip:
Events can also be an excellent opportunity for you to meet and collaborate with potential partners targeting the same group. Bring your business cards!

Raise awareness among your target audience through emails.

Are you trying to build brand awareness? Why not showcase your services in a newsletter sent to your target group? Reach out to complementary brands that are already working with your potential customers to see if you can get some visibility.
Since most visitors who first come to your travel website may not make an immediate purchase, ask them to subscribe to your newsletter so that you can send them quality content, encouraging them to buy your travel products. Remember that emails can be an excellent tool for staying in touch with your existing customers. You have a higher chance of converting an existing customer than a new prospect, which is why you need a clear email marketing strategy when it comes to your regular customers.

Travel marketing tip:
Personalize the content of your newsletters and transactional emails so that it relates to the experience your customers have had with you. Have they booked a trip to the Rockies in the past? They might be interested in other national parks or a mountain trip, for example.

If you feel that your current marketing strategy is not strong enough to achieve more awareness and conversions among your target market, we have been working with many travel companies like yours for decades. From National Geographic to small travel businesses, we know what works and what doesn't. From marketing assessment to a comprehensive action plan, we work with you to find the marketing strategy that will help your travel business achieve its goals. Contact us!
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Need help? Feel free to contact our business advisors or enlist the support of the SDECB-approved network of digital professionals.

CONCLUSION

Do you need help with the growth of your business? Get support from our consultants. It's a free and non-binding service, available online or in person.

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