

Web and social media websites have become increasingly important to marketing a business successfully. The rise of countless Web and social media tools has given marketers new, cost-effective ways to communicate with customers and prospects. The goal of your organization's Web presence should be to maintain good relations with customers and also to drive targeted visitors to your website and convert them into customers. This article will outline the steps you should take to develop a comprehensive social media and Web marketing plan for your business. To maximize your organization's success, this article will cover Web development, SEO, Web advertising, emails and e-newsletters, social media, social media content, monitoring your social media and Web marketing success and a social media and Web marketing check-list.

1 Web Development

The first step in your business' online marketing strategy is always to create a website. Your website will become the hub of your organization's content and information and the core of your business' identity. When creating your site, design a powerful headline, using keywords, that lets your audience know what the website is about. Likewise, use memorable and strong keywords in your URL. When Google crawls a Web page, it looks at the URL as one of the factors to determine its relevance. Your website should have a clear navigation scheme with a unique description for each page. Instead of a one-size fits all website with a mass-market message, you will eventually want to create different microsites with purpose built landing pages and strong content with each aimed at a narrow constituency. A tip is to link landing pages based on the problems that your product or service solves. People will always be more likely to visit your sites if the content of value to them. Web content is more important than any technology or design because it is the content that compels people to stay and return to your site. Also, excellent content will boost your ranking on the popular search engines. Search engines love well-written, thought-provoking and fresh content. The more fresh your content is, the more easily found you are. Well-organized and well-written Web content will not only help your SEO, it will lead your visitors through the sales cycle all the way to the point when they are ready to make a commitment to your organization. It is also important to include multimedia on your website because people learn and access information differently. For visual learners, add photos and videos relating to your business. Once your website is complete, use [Google Analytics](#) to measure traffic and performance.

For examples of websites that The Public Relations and Marketing Group has created on behalf of its clients, [click here](#). For more information on website development, read our article, "[Developing Effective Websites](#)."

2 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Once your website is designed, develop it with search engine optimization in mind. Update your content regularly with news, positive reviews or testimonials, new products and prices and upcoming events. Building ranking power begins with providing quality, relevant content and then optimizing the visibility of the content using standard on-page and off-page optimization techniques.

For valuable tips on Web optimization, download our free guide, "[Web Optimization Tips](#)."

On-page SEO

On-page SEO refers to all of the production requirements on the individual specific pages you are trying to rank. Strong on-page SEO begins with a strong, well-thought-out design and frequent updating strategy. You should strive to reinvent the content on your website periodically. On-page optimization criteria include a structure of the metadata that includes relevant keywords, titles and descriptions that are specific to each page. Each page should have at least 200 words of content and it is also important to include a dynamic search site map.

For more information on On-page SEO techniques, read our article, “[On-page Optimization and Keywords](#).”

Off-page SEO

Off-page SEO refers to the external aspects which attribute to rankings. Compared to on-page SEO, off-page SEO represents what happens off your website that leads to higher search engine ranking. The key to successful off-page optimization is a great communications strategy that is carried out to other sites on the Web. The most important off-page SEO factors include inbound links, social bookmarking, blogs, and press releases and article submissions.

For more information on Off-page SEO, read our article, “[No, We Can’t Get You Those Results Overnight](#).”

Inbound Links

The most important off-page SEO factor is securing inbound links. Four factors affect link value: whether it is a no-follow or do-follow, the authority of a page, the number of other links on the page linking to you (the more links, the less SEO credit each link has) and the anchor text of a link (links that have your desired keywords in the anchor text are the most valuable).

Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking websites are the hubs for one-click marks of approval. Submitting your business’ website, blog and articles to social bookmarking sites helps share your content with a broader audience and attract more visitors to your Web pages. Social bookmarking sites allow users to bookmark their favorite Web pages that they visit regularly and organize them as favorites. The most popular social bookmarking sites include [StumbleUpon](#), [Digg](#) and [Delicious](#).

Blogs

Blogs are crucial to off-page search engine optimization. Blogging can establish your company as a leader in your industry, change your site from an online brochure to a living, interactive hub, dramatically improve your search engine rankings and give your customers a way to engage with you. We suggest that you spend some time researching and browsing through other blogs before creating one for your company. Once you’re ready, we recommend incorporating your blog, instead of giving it its own URL, especially to those who are new to Web marketing. Most people do not have the time to develop content for and market more than one websites. We recommend that you create your blog with [Wordpress](#). The most successful blogs are updated weekly, at least, with fresh content related to their industry. You may blog about company updates, industry topics and articles that may be valuable to your audience. Load your post with relevant tags so your blog will be easily found and turn keyword phrases into hyperlinks

to anchor text, pointing readers to your website or more specific information. Encourage interaction by adding a call to action with each post, including contact information and an option for readers to subscribe to your blog. Also, make sure that your blog has RSS capability, include links to your social media pages and regularly scan your comments to remove any spam.

Press Releases and Article Submissions

It is important to create articles and press releases that are complete with exceptional content and keyword-rich language used by your buyers. Once you create your content, optimize their delivery for searching and browsing and include links to landing pages and more specific information. A tip is to take advantage of free submission websites when posting your articles and press releases. Thousands of online directories will publish your content for free and enhance your online visibility by providing a link back to your website.

Free Article Submission Websites:

www.longisland.com (regional)
www.openPR.com
www.pressmethod.com
www.pr-usa.net
www.PR.com
www.PR9.net
www.pressabout.com
www.PRUrgent.com

Free Press Release Submission Websites:

www.bpubs.com
www.articlesnatch.com
www.dinosauric.com
www.getyourcontent.com
www.articlecube.com
www.articlesbase.com
www.ezinearticles.com
www.articledashboard.com

Web Advertising

As studies show, the majority of people now turn to online sources when searching for products, services and information. This is why Web advertising is so important to your business' marketing success. When it comes to Web advertising, it is important to include a call to action with your ad (Come on down! Check out our page! Join us for this event!) , adjust your ad when necessary and experiment with different images and wording to determine what has the biggest effect on your audience. Popular Web advertising outlets include pay-per-clicks, landing pages, directory advertisements, emails and e-newsletters and take-over emails.

Pay-Per-Clicks

Pay-per-click services are immensely valuable and cost-effective Web advertising tools. Pay-per-clicks are the most effective form of Web advertising and allow you to create and run ads for your business. The advantages are that you can set a custom budget, pay only when someone clicks on your ad and target based on geography, age, gender, demographics and, with Facebook, interests. Once you determine your target audience, develop a list of keywords to be used for micro-targeting audiences. Popular Pay-Per-Click services are Google AdWords, Facebook Ads, LinkedIn Ads and YouTube Ads.

Google AdWords

Google AdWords lets you create and run ads for your business with a custom budget. Ads are displayed under “Sponsored Links” alongside the search results when someone searches Google using one of your keywords. This is beneficial to you because you are advertising to an audience who is already interested in what you have to offer. In addition to text ads, you can run display and click-to-play video ads on Google AdWords.

Facebook Advertising

Facebook ads can target demographics better than Google AdWords because unlike Google, they can target based on user interests. Google AdWords is search-based and responds only to the use of keywords without knowing anything about the “clicker,” unless you are using the display network. Facebook, on the other hand, captures postings to create analytical data of what members have listed as interests that can be used to target market certain keywords.

For more information on Facebook advertising and our own case studies, read our article, “[Interest-Based Advertising](#).”

LinkedIn Advertising

LinkedIn offers rich display and text ads that can reach millions of active business professionals. LinkedIn ads are highly-targeted and are able to target based on job title.

YouTube Advertising

Any business can broadcast their ad campaign on YouTube and tap into the world’s largest online video community. Promoted video ads highlight your videos at the top of YouTube search results and in the suggested video section. This can help you reach a broader audience, boost your video’s view count and pay only when people watch your video.

Landing Pages

A landing page is a single Web page that appears in response to a reader clicking on an advertisement. Landing pages are often linked to from social media ads, email ad campaigns or search engine marketing campaigns. Marketers can measure the effectiveness of an ad or landing page by analyzing activity generated by the linked URL such as click-through and conversion rates. A landing page is a little more than a Web page since it contains more specific content and can be used as part of Web advertising campaigns. When used in a Web advertising campaign, landing pages should provide access to your entire website but the goal here is for the visitor to interact with the content on the page. For example, the landing page should include brief descriptions of the downloadable content and the services your business offers, as well as an image of the content and a short form requesting contact information in exchange for the free download.

For more information about using landing pages in your Web advertising, read our article, “[Five Steps to Generating New Business through Web Advertising, Landing Pages and Emails](#).”

Directory Advertisements

Directory advertisements appear in a directory, either telephone or online, and the ads are intentionally sought out by customers. We strongly recommend using only Web directories because telephone directories are rapidly becoming obsolete. Most people use the major search engines to find local businesses that are near a certain town. When they search for this town, they will often receive several directory listings of all businesses located within that town with search results. It is essential to list your business in free directories so that customers and potential customers will not have any difficulty finding you. You may also want to consider paid directories that rank high with search engines or featured (paid) listings with free directories.

Regardless to the type of Web advertising you are doing, always link your Web advertising to a landing page.

4 Email and E-newsletters

Invest in an email marketing service that will allow you to send professional e-newsletters, alerts and messages to your audience. Your email advertising strategy should include sending introductions, event invitations, special offers, promotional information, holiday greetings and e-newsletters. E-newsletters are the best way to keep in touch with your customers and keep them informed. E-newsletters should be well-designed with quality content and sent out to your audience at least twice a month. To build your e-newsletter subscriber list, give your customers an incentive to sign up, such as a special offer or coupon.

Take-over Emails

Take-over Emails are an effective way for businesses to reach a far broader audience. For example, Newsday and other publications offer take-over emails for \$50 per thousand, meaning they will send out your email for you. An alternative is an ad in the media outlets' e-newsletter. Your ad should be above the fold of the email, in the viewing area, so your readers will see it right away. Your most important information should be at the top, under the fold of the email, which is where your readers will look first. Take-over emails and email ads should also link to a landing page where your readers can find an offer or take advantage of a coupon in exchange for their contact information.

For more information on Web and email advertising, read our article, "[Web Ads, E-newsletters and Takeover Emails.](#)"

5 Social Media

Social media is more than just a tactic – it is an essential tool to help you join the conversation, rapidly build your business' online platform and get your message out. Every business should be actively using social media in some capacity. Social media is all about forming and maintaining relationships with current and prospective customers through interaction and spreading simple, short messages very quickly. Social media marketing occurs in everyone's day to day life. With the help of Facebook, Twitter and other outlets, information can be circulated through hundreds upon thousands of people with the click of your mouse. Businesses would benefit from using popular social media outlets such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), [FourSquare](#) and [Flickr](#).

For more information on social media, read our article, "[Getting Started with Social Media.](#)"

Facebook

Facebook users create profiles, interact with others, become fans of businesses and join in common interest groups. When users join your community or fan page, their friends will see an update and the messages are spread through their news feed. Businesses will benefit from creating a complete Facebook fan page where they can promote their company, interact with customers and keep interested people informed. You should use your fan page to add photos, send mass emails to fans and update your status each time you have an event, send a newsletter, launch a product, etc.

For more information on Facebook, read our article, “[10 Steps to Getting the Most Out of Facebook.](#)”

For examples of Facebook fan pages that The Public Relations and Marketing Group has created on behalf of its clients, [click here](#).

Twitter

Businesses use **Twitter** to keep in contact with clients and notify followers of special deals, e-newsletters, new merchandise, interesting articles, company highlights or any other news. You can also re-tweet other people's posts that you would like to share with your audience. Businesses should set up an account, complete all profile information and search for relevant followers. You can update your Twitter feed from any Web browser, mobile phone or IM service. It is important to tweet as much as possible – at least once a day. A tip is to include links to more specific information in all of your tweets because this will attract more followers. You should also use hashtags (#) to indicate a category or subject that you are tweeting about. For example, if you are talking about an event on Long Island, end your tweet with “#longisland.” When it comes to Twitter, it is important to remember that people don't care about what you are doing but rather what you are thinking, reading or how you can help them.

For more information on Twitter, read our article, “[Secrets to Twitter Marketing.](#)”

For examples of Twitter profiles that The Public Relations and Marketing Group has created on behalf of its clients, [click here](#).

YouTube

YouTube allows members to upload videos and share them with others by embedding them on websites and blogs. When creating your own YouTube channel, pick a name that matches your business. You can upload customer stories, conversations with your best customers, interviews with experts in your industry, commercials, informational videos and more.

For an example of a business' YouTube channel, [click here](#).

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-orientated service that allows members to network and gather business contacts. Users can find potential clients, search for jobs, land deals and get professional introductions. After you create your LinkedIn profiles, make sure it is as close to 100% complete as possible. Upload a professional photo, give and request recommendations and add a video to your page to incorporate a multimedia element. Two important features of LinkedIn are [LinkedIn Answers](#) and [LinkedIn Groups](#). LinkedIn Answers is a forum where you can ask or answer a question of LinkedIn users. Find the categories that are most relevant to you and share your

expertise, distinguishing yourself as an expert in your industry. You should also join LinkedIn groups related to your industry and consider creating your own group. Communication and interaction are essential to these groups. Periodically engage in conversations and post articles in the discussion area of LinkedIn Groups.

For more information on LinkedIn, read our article, “[Making the Right Connections with LinkedIn.](#)” For an example of a professional personal LinkedIn profile, [click here](#). For an example of a LinkedIn company page, [click here](#).

FourSquare

FourSquare is a popular location-based social media site. Through text-messages or a phone application, users “Check-in” at business establishments when they visit, made possible through geolocation. Users are awarded points and badges for their check-in progress and the user with most check-ins at an establishment earns the coveted title of “mayor.” FourSquare is a useful marketing tool for businesses because, since this social media game offers real-world rewards, users will be more likely to stop by your location if they can earn points or deals on FourSquare. Set up a FourSquare profile for your business, or claim your location if someone has already created one, and consider offering a special deal for FourSquare users. For example, reward the mayor of your establishment with a free drink, a 10% discount for a users’ first check-in or a 20% discount for every 5th check-in.

For more information about FourSquare, read our article, “[Marketing with FourSquare.](#)” For an example of a business’ FourSquare profile, [click here](#).

Flickr

Flickr allows users to submit photos and videos and organize them using tags, where other members can browse and interact with each other. This is a great way to incorporate multimedia into your Web social media and marketing strategy. Create a Flickr profiles and post photos and videos relating to your business or industry. You may also choose to interact with Flickr users and reply to all comments left on your company’s photos.

For an example of a business’ Flickr page, [click here](#).

Social Media Content

When people visit you online, they aren’t looking for commercials, they are looking for information to help them make a decision. Always write for your buyers, not your own ego. Content should be useful, interesting and valuable to your target audience, not just self-promotion. Actively update your social media pages with news, links, conversation and multimedia. Excellent content and pages that are consistently updated are easily and quickly spread on the Web. In order to succeed with social media marketing, you must be a good listener. Listen and respond to your friends, followers and fans. Interaction, communication and awareness are keys to your business’ online success.

6 Monitor Social Media & Web Marketing Success

It is important to periodically monitor your Web & social media marketing success by using the many monitoring services available online. The first step is to monitor your company name, key industry terms and competitors using [Google Alerts](#). You may use [Twitter Grader](#) to monitor your Twitter profile's strength, [Website Grader](#) to score your website and [Compete.com](#) to compare the estimate of traffic your site is getting versus that of competitors.

Popular Web and Social Media Monitoring Services:

[Google Alerts](#) (free)

[Google Analytics](#) (free)

[Twitter search engine](#) (free)

[Twitter Grader](#) (free)

[Website Grader](#) (free)

[Compete.com](#) (free)

[Mixero](#) (free)

[Social Mention](#) (free)

[Wildfire](#) (free)

[BlogPulse](#) (free)

[Technorati](#) (free)

[Radian6](#) (paid)

[TechrigySM2](#) (paid)

[ViralHeat](#) (paid)

[Filtrbox](#) (paid)

7 Social Media & Web Marketing Check-list:

- Determine your target audience and cater all online content to meet their needs.
- Create a strong website with a customized URL, powerful headline, strong navigation scheme and complete your site with fresh content and multimedia. Develop your site with SEO in mind.
- Install [Google Analytics](#) to track the success of your website and blog.
- Create a [StumbleUpon](#) account and/or any other social bookmarking websites of your choice.
- Create a blog. If you choose to create a blog, make sure to update it weekly, at least.
- Create a simple and memorable logo and username that is available on social media sites.
- Set up [Google Alerts](#) to monitor your company's name, products and competitors.
- Create a [Facebook](#) fan page.
- Create a [Twitter](#) profile.
- Create a [LinkedIn](#) profile.
- Create a [YouTube](#) channel.
- Keep track of your competition using monitoring tools.
- Stay active! Maintaining your social media profiles and websites is essential to your Web marketing success.