



Digital Marketing Demystified

Unlocking Your Marketing Success

Introduction

In an increasingly digital world, the success of a business hinges on their ability to adapt and thrive in the online realm. With technology revolutionising the way we communicate, connect, and consume, traditional marketing methods alone are no longer sufficient. Enter digital marketing – a powerful toolbox that levels the playing field and offers boundless opportunities for companies to reach, engage, and convert their target audience.

This eBook serves as your comprehensive guide to understanding why digital marketing is vital for your business. Whether you're a budding entrepreneur looking to launch your first venture, an established business owner seeking to enhance your online presence, or a marketer wanting a better understanding of the options available. The principles and strategies outlined within these pages will help you harness the full potential of digital marketing and propel your business towards sustained growth.

Together, we will examine the diverse components of a successful digital marketing strategy, including search engine optimisation (SEO), paid search or pay per click (PPC), social media marketing, email campaigns, and more. By equipping you with a solid understanding of these key elements, we aim to empower you to make informed decisions and leverage digital marketing channels effectively to achieve your business objectives.



Here are some of the most common problems businesses have with their website. Which of these apply to you?

- Your website doesn't get found on Google for your keywords
- Your competitors rank ahead of you on Google
- You tried Google Ads and it was a very expensive exercise
- You aren't 100% sure who your target audience is
- No-one is searching for your product or service
- You don't get great engagement of social media
- Your email newsletters don't get read and you don't know why
- Your website isn't converting the few leads you do get
- You don't know which methods of digital marketing to use website

We will also address the thorny subject of budget. How do you go about setting your budget and should you share that information with a marketing agency? Then how do you know if you have been successful!

Ready to embark on a journey that will transform the way you approach marketing and unlock the full potential of your business? Let's jump in by looking at the main options to build your campaign in the ever-changing world of digital marketing.



Search Engine Optimisation

Search Engine Optimisation or SEO, is all about driving targeted traffic organically to your website, and to do this you need to persuade the Search Engines – and that primarily means Google – that your website is worthy of the top spot in their listing for your chosen terms.

Traffic quality is as important, if not more so, than quantity, as you need to be attracting people who will be interested, and eventually will make a purchase of your products and services. SEO is a process that takes time and dedication, but small changes can have big results.

You need to be aware that few people scroll down to the bottom of a page of the search results, and even fewer people will ever click onto the second page. Because of this, having your website rank as close as possible to the top spot for a particular phrase or keyword can make huge differences to the amount, and quality of traffic you see visiting your site. On average, the top three listings can capture around 60–75% of the total organic search traffic for a given query.

What Can You Do?

There are quite a few things that any business owner, manager or marketer can do to impact your search rankings.

- Choose your keywords – The process begins with knowing what keywords or phrases you want to be found for. For example, if you have just started a Cake Shop in Exeter, you would want to find the most popular terms that your customers are typing into the Search Engines to find your services, and then rank top for those phrases .e.g.

Exeter cake shop, Birthday cakes Exeter, Wedding cakes Exeter, Custom cakes Exeter, Cupcakes Exeter, Celebration cakes Exeter, Cake delivery Exeter, Exeter bakery, Cake decorating Exeter, Gluten-free cakes Exeter

Tools such as Google Keyword Planner offer data on the number of keyword searches per month, and it's sensible to also look at the keyword competition when judging which phrases to go for. You could use Artificial Intelligence, such as Chat GPT to get a rough idea of possible keywords, it won't give details or search numbers but it's an OK guide to set you on the right track.



Choose your keywords with care

- Create great website content – the Search Engines absolutely love unique, relevant content. Provide as much information on your products and services as possible, including guides, FAQs, technical information, your own expertise and reviews, etc. Write your own unique content, update and add to it regularly, and make it invaluable to your customers.

- Blogging – The easiest and most popular way to keep a website updated is by blogging, producing regular and unique content for your site that includes the keywords you're wanting to rank (at a reasonable level, don't spam your content with keywords!) It builds up an archive of content over time, that means Google sees tonnes of keywords, over an extended period, which it loves.
- Optimising meta title and description tags – these should be entered on each page, the title tags can influence your rankings quite a bit as the Search Engines use them as a guide to the page content. Meta descriptions do not influence rankings so much, but they do affect click-through rates, so you'll want to write them to encourage users to click your result in the listings. These should be unique on each page.
- Improve your social media – building your social media presence and the network that follows from, this is a brilliant way to share your content and hopefully achieve inbound links and shares in return. Inbound links and site engagement like this can really help with rankings.

Building inbound links – links to your site from other sites, so long as they are relevant and trustworthy, can help boost your ranking as Search Engines will regard your information again as more relevant and nudge your site closer to the top. You might do this by asking partner websites to link to you, by looking for reputable sites that list businesses like yours, or producing highly valuable site content that people will want to link to. Be careful when building links in, Search Engines take a dim view of links that are clearly built just for the purpose of increasing rankings.

There are also areas you will almost certainly need your web developers to help with, notably:

- Optimising code for clarity and speed – if the Search Engines cannot clearly read your content and site structure, then they won't rank well. The Search Engines like a well organised, clear site and need to be able to read your content to work out what you do. They also prefer a site and code that loads quickly, to provide users with a fast website experience, so you will need to check your code for speed and efficiency. This comes under what Google calls "Core Vitals."
- URL structure – making sure your URLs are clear, keyword-rich and represent your site structure can also really help SEO. For example, if you have a website with services divided into categories, then a URL for individual services would take this structure: www.yourdomain.co.uk/services/top-level-service/unique-service-details/ This clearly differentiates at which level or category the user is on and gives the website a cohesive URL structure that search engines can very easily read.



There are a myriad of other small technical changes that will make a big difference to your rankings, such as ensuring your site has an SSL certificate, an up to date XML sitemap, optimising your h1 tags on each page, adding alt tags to your images, checking your indexing settings, etc. There are too many to go into detail in this guide, focus on the basics to start with for your SEO.

There are so many tools Google has provided users with to really improve their web experiences and understand how search works. Creating a Google account to include Google Business, Google Analytics and Google Search Console can help Google understand more about your business. This is great for helping your business appear in local search results. Many of these can also provide more information on how Google sees your site and therefore how you can improve its rankings.

When should you use SEO?

Getting top on search engines is a great way of building long-term, sustainable marketing results that will pay dividends for years to come. Its core to many marketing strategies, but it's not right for everyone.

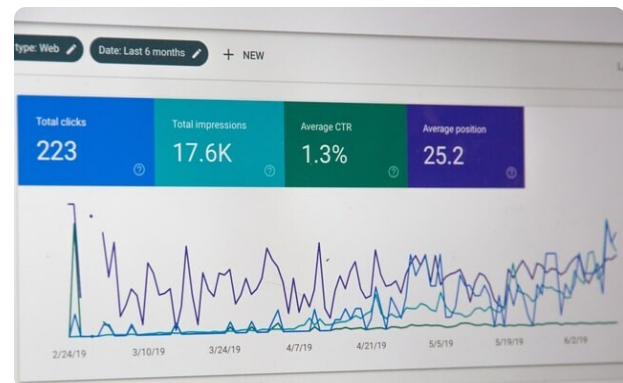
Please remember that SEO is a medium to long term method of building your visitor traffic, it takes at least 6-9 months to have any meaningful effect. It's also a reactive marketing method, in as much as you need people looking for your product or service in reasonable numbers.

You also need to bear in mind your competition, if you have ten major competitors, who dominate your sector keywords, you have little chance of success. However, for many businesses, SEO is the cornerstone of their long-term digital strategy.

Paid Search – Google Ads

Google Ads are where businesses pay to come top on Google. There are other providers such as Bing Ads, but we'll talk here about Google Ads, as it's the most popular and well-established provider. The principles are the same on other platforms.

The Google Ads program offers the opportunity to create and pay for ads that will appear at the top of a search results page, above the non-paid organic links. Google Ads operates around keywords much like SEO, but in this instance, you are given control over which keywords will trigger your ads to show at the top of the results pages.



Advertisers will choose a list of keywords to target that are relevant to their offerings and those searching for their product or service are most likely to use. Businesses will then bid on those keywords based on how much they are willing to pay for each user to click on their ad, known as the Cost Per Click (CPC). This bid, when combined with a Quality Score decided by Google (based on the quality and relevancy of the ad, account setup and any linked landing pages) determines which ads will appear on the search engine results page. You only pay Google when a user eventually clicks on the ad, hence the expression "Pay-Per-Click."

What Can You Do?

Google Ads can be quite technical, so please beware, it can be a money-pit if you set it up incorrectly and don't monitor it! The average Cost Per Click (CPC) across all industries on the Google Search Network is £2.16 per click – that's the amount you must pay Google every time someone clicks on your Ad link. (2023 figures). Some keywords are much cheaper, and others much more expensive! If you are looking to do Google Ads yourself you would need to do the following:

- Create Ad Groups – single keyword ad groups are often the most beneficial to a campaign as they produce more relevant and accurate results. For example, our Cake Shop store may choose to have one ad group with phrases around the term “birthday cakes”, another with the keyword “Christmas Cakes,” and another with “Wedding Cakes”. Within these ad groups, the keywords would be the focus of the ad and there would be ideally 3-4 ads produced per ad group.
- Choose Keywords and Keyword Types – you'll need to use Keyword Planner to research the popular keywords you'd like to appear for, and then decide how to target these. You can target keywords in Google Ads in a way that allows your ads to appear for them searched within phrases, or exactly as specified, or in different variations. This needs careful consideration. Getting this wrong can be expensive.



- Pick Your Targeting –you can also choose to target by audience, which involves location and demographic targeting; remarketing, in which you target recent visitors to your website that may not have converted yet, and by topic, which concerns the topic of your ad, its placement and the keywords you use. Finally, you can target device – mobile, desktop, tablet or even smart TV.
- Monitor Search Terms – be sure to regularly check your ‘search terms’ which shows you the terms that have led to people seeing your ads and clicking on your ads. You’ll want to ensure they are all relevant, and if you see something irrelevant on there be sure to change your keyword targeting or add it to your ‘negative’ keywords so that you’re not spending money on clicks you don’t want.
- Create clear Ads using the search term in your text. Include benefits or unique selling points to encourage click throughs. Make sure you have a Call to Action, tell the customer what to do next, i.e. Click or Call
- Utilise Ad Extensions –Ad extensions can help your ad appear more prominent compared to your competitors – they take up more space in the search results. More information is also available to your audience if you use ad extensions – it could be the influence as to whether they click through to your site and convert, or whether they decide to phone you from their mobile phone.
- Send visitors to a page specifically about the product or service, not to a generic page or your Home page. Google will reward you if the page is more relevant (called Quality Score). It also needs to be quick to load and mobile friendly.

A guide to creating a marketing campaign that gets results

- Conversion Tracking – ensure you use the Conversions area to set up conversation tracking for your phone calls, contact forms, email link clicks, product purchases, etc. Without reliably tracking your conversions you won't know which keywords and ads are most successful.

- Google Ads offer a free call tracking service for ad accounts, enabling you to track how many people call when they have clicked through from an ad. It will also tell you what ad and keyword



they specifically used – there are better options, that offer many extra features well worth having, but they do have a cost.

When you should use Google Ads

Google Ads offer a greater level of control than SEO, so if you need traffic fast and want to be able to turn ads up and down again exactly when you please, this is ideal for you. Some keywords may be too competitive for you to list for via SEO, and in this case, you can still top the rankings anyway through Google Ads.

They can also be ideal for seasonal campaigns, such as Mother's Day or Christmas adverts where you want to control exactly the time of year they show. A word of warning here: whilst you CAN turn campaigns on & off, Google itself doesn't like you to do this & will penalise you, in terms of Quality Score, which in turn increases your Cost Per Click (CPC). Google wants to see consistency across your account as a whole, even if individual campaigns/ad groups are paused & restarted.

Google Ads can also offer Display Ads which show to people as they are browsing websites online (instead of when searching in Google) and you can target quite specific demographics. This can be perfect for services or products that aren't yet well known. Display Ads can also take advantage of Remarketing, which can show ads to people that have already seen website or visited your site shopping cart, to try and capture lost enquiries or sales.

Email Marketing

Email marketing involves sending targeted messages and promotional materials to a group of subscribers via email broadcasts. It is an effective way for businesses to connect with their audience, build relationships, and promote their products or services.

In recent years, it has been overshadowed by approaches such as social media, but the power of email marketing should never be ignored and it's important to have an email marketing strategy in place. The direct method of marketing that email provides sends your material right into your customers' Inbox – and it will be sitting there until your recipient sees it, making your messages a lot harder to miss!

Email Marketing is an extremely cost-effective and adaptable marketing technique, that compliments both B2B and B2C marketing. Messages can be tailored to specific audiences or segments, which makes for an overall very targeted campaign, ensuring your message reaches those intended. Your emails can also be tracked, which allows you to see who has opened your emails, who has clicked through to your website, and to resend emails to the people who didn't open the original email.

The most common question we get asked is "How often should I send emails?" There's no right or wrong answer but one good guide is to look at what the big companies do. Tesco, Experian, TUI, Trip Advisor, whatever the sector they email very regularly, often 2-3 times a week, or more. They do this because it works!

However, they have huge databases and big marketing teams. For the average business, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly is more realistic. The more often the better but you need to be producing great content and that takes time and/or resources that most SME businesses just don't have. Ensure you are consistent and emails don't stop in your busy periods, which is just when you should be sending more often!

What Can You Do?

One of the benefits of email marketing is that it doesn't require as much technical knowledge as some other digital marketing techniques. You will need to use an email marketing software, we tend to recommend Keap or MailChimp to a lot of our clients. Then once you have a template created and tracking set up, you are ready to go.

Sending out weekly or monthly emails is all well and good, but if you haven't optimised your account and emails to improve your performance and results, you could be in for a losing battle. Here are the basics that you need to nail before sending an email:



- Design – A well-designed email will take you far, and users will appreciate this. Remember to include appealing and relevant images and have a clear call to action – this is key and is what is most helpful in getting people to click through to your website.
 - The Importance of a good subject line – this is the make or break moment. The subject line is the first part of your emails that people will see in their inboxes. It determines whether the user is going to open your email, so without a strong and engaging subject line your email may stay unread longer than you'd like. Short, snappy and intriguing is usually the best combination of techniques to keep readers' interest and make them want to find out more.
 - Compelling Content – getting the right balance on content can be tricky, yes you want to sell, but recipients don't want to be sold to! Create interesting, relevant content that informs your readers and tells them things they want to know. People love stories, so engage them with case studies and examples to bring your content to life.
 - Include a Call to Action – you could have created the best email we have ever seen, but there's no point sending it out if it doesn't state the action you want recipients to take. Use action-oriented verbs to encourage people to convert. Couple your text with call-to-action buttons and forms throughout the email to make converting easy for your audience.
- Top Tip:** Don't include more than three external links, increasing the number means you are more likely to trigger spam filters and your email will never be seen!

- Segmenting your Audience – you may have different messages and content that you want your prospects and clients to see. For example, you don't want to try and sell a service to a client that already has it. It's crucial to segment your audience into at least two groups, in order to get the best results from the right people, at the right time. Understanding where the person is in the buyer's journey can make your marketing message a lot more relevant to the individual and help nurture them along this journey. It can also improve your unsubscribe rate.
- Sending Time – it may take a few tries to understand the peak times at which your audiences open their mail, but if you continue experimenting and can always deliver at the most convenient time, your emails are sure to win. Usually, between 9 am – 10 am on a Tuesday or a Thursday is the optimum time to send out emails.
- Split testing – this is the best way to test and analyse which subject lines perform the best with your audience. This should therefore influence the tone and style of all of your future subject lines. You will want to regularly test your subject lines as your audience expands to ensure you're still optimising your emails accurately for your mailing list.



When should you use Email Marketing?

Obviously, you need a few email contacts to use email marketing, but this can be a smaller number than you might think. One of our clients trawled back through their usual email programme, got about 100 names and email addresses from past contacts, sent an email broadcast and picked up £15,000 of orders!

Now I can't promise that kind of return every time, but an email to a focused, targeted audience can often produce great results. However, often the benefit of email broadcasts is to remind your clients and prospects that you exist, educate them on your product or service and reinforce your message. So that when they are ready to buy, you are the first people they think of.



Social Media Adverts

There are lots of options on paid social media adverts, Facebook/Instagram Ads are most common but depending on your audience, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, etc all have advertising options.

The key thing about social media adverts, especially Facebook/Instagram Ads, is that you can reach an extremely targeted audience. Meta (who own Facebook/Instagram) know a huge amount about their audience. If you use Meta platforms, they know your hobbies, interests, geography, where you go, who your friends are, what websites you visit and much more.

From a personal viewpoint the data privacy is frightening, but from a marketing viewpoint its gold dust. They also offer a very flexible form of digital marketing – you can create different formats of ads including single images and text, video ads and multiple images. You have the power to decide your goals, your audience and more. Ad users can test and optimise ads to find out which are working best and worth further investment.

What Can You Do?

- Decide your target market – what platform are your audience on? What are their interests and demographics? What type of device will they view your adverts on? What geographic area do you want to reach?
- Consider Lookalike Audiences – using a list of your existing clients or ‘hot’ prospects, Facebook will create a list of people who they deem like your list. This will be using all the information that Facebook has available to them by matching emails to Facebook accounts.

A guide to creating a marketing campaign that gets results

- Be clear on your goals – are you looking to generate direct sales, tempt people to download your eBook or other marketing material, build followers, create brand awareness or some other action? Be clear what outcome you want and make it easy for people to take that next step.
- Choose your Ad Formats – most platforms support multiple ad formats and types, depending on the intended outcome of your campaign. Will video, a picture, a carousel, or text only work best? Usually video or strong images are the top performers, but it's worth understanding your audience and experimenting a bit.



- Set your Budget – most platforms allow you to set a budget of the maximum you're comfortable spending. You can set either a daily budget of how much you're willing to spend, or a lifetime budget over the duration of the campaign. You have complete control of your budget and can alter this daily.
- Analytics Access – Facebook Ads 'overview' tab will give you all of the basic statistics you need to know about your ad performance, but integrating your Ad account with your Google Analytics allows you to see how users are interacting with your ads after clicking from your ads.

When Should You Use Social Media Adverts?

Social Media Adverts are a great way of reaching a targeted audience quickly. Like Google Ads, they can get you visitor traffic fast, although they do take a bit longer to set up, as usually you have to create videos or produce images. Of course, you may already have resources in place, saving considerable time.

Other than the fantastic targeting, the other key advantage is the proactive nature of this type of advertising. You can reach people who didn't know your product or service even existed, which is great for new products, or spur of the moment purchases.

It can also be a great way of brand building, especially if you are using retargeting, which is where your ads only appear to people who have visited your website.



Social Media Marketing

Social Media marketing, unlike the social adverts described above, is where you use platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, Pinterest or LinkedIn to organically post content about your business, product or service without paying for visitors.

Social media marketing is great for sharing user content and interacting with your customers quickly and directly. It gives a friendly and approachable appearance to your business, which ensures customers feel like they have a simple and direct line to your business. Building rapport with people over social media can also lead to an increase of trust between the consumer and your business, helping to increase their brand loyalty.

Social media is a very low-cost method of marketing. Creating an account is free and there is no charge to posts on your pages. Where there is a cost is in time, and this can be the biggest cost of all, but if you are happy to invest the hours, social media can create big returns.

What Can You Do?

- Work out where your audience hangs out?

Is it Facebook, or Instagram, Pinterest or LinkedIn, Twitter or YouTube, or one of the countless niche platforms?



- **Set Up Your Social Media Accounts** – this is the first step in beginning your social media marketing journey. Use your brand's logo as your profile picture, and make sure your company contact information is clearly displayed across all of these platforms. Ensure all of your accounts link to your website – this will benefit your SEO.
- **Determine Your Goals** – what do you want your social media accounts to achieve? Do you want to drive engagement with your posts? Do you want to drive traffic to your website? Do you want to generate enquiries? Decide your goals from the outset as it can really affect the type of content you post and how you engage with your audience.
- **Know and Engage with Your Audience** – you need to know who your social media audience is, this could be completely different to your Google Ads audience or your mailing list. In order to market to an audience, you need to know your audience. They will determine your tone and voice on your social media.
- **Post Valuable Content** – post great content frequently on your social media, be it posts, images, videos, polls or live videos. They will be the key to drawing your customers in and encouraging them to engage with your business online. Social media marketing is a fast paced technique which means you need to be focused and consistent.
- **Growing Your Following** – it takes time and dedication to build your following on social media, but if you're doing it right, you'll be sure to see results over time.

When should you use Social Media Posting?

Social Media is another medium to long-term strategy, it takes time to build your audience and the algorithms reward those who post regularly over a longer period. Don't expect fast results and don't think because its free, that it is cheap. Your time is your most valuable asset! However, with time and a little thought and creativity, you can build your brand, manage customer relationships and encourage "raving fans" who will promote your business for you. Like all the options, you need to set your Key Performance Indicators and track your results.



Things to consider before starting digital marketing

That's a whistle stop tour through the primary digital marketing methods, there are lots of variations, such as Remarketing, Shopping Ads, boosted posts etc, but understanding the core options and how you begin to use them is a great starting point. But before you select the methods you are going to use, there are a few more things to consider.



Tracking Results

Getting lots of digital marketing activity is great, but if it's not the right activity or not implemented correctly, you can waste a lot of time and money. So, how do you know if your marketing is generating results? There's a famous quote, attributed to various people that goes, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half." Well that was true 30 years ago but really shouldn't be the case for 99% of the time today. Tracking and monitoring everything is essential and very possible.

- Get to know Google Analytics (GA4) – GA4 is a tool you can link to all of your sites to help you track web visits, conversions, social media interactions and e-commerce sales. Getting to know this can allow you to see if any recent SEO improvements you've had done have resulted in any drastic increases or decreases in your analytics.

- Call Tracking – If you want enquiries or sales by phone you need to know where the calls came from and did they generate business. Call tracking allows you to trace where your phone calls came from, whether this is through your Email Marketing, Google Ads, and so forth. You can then listen to these phone calls and determine whether or not this phone call likely turned into a paying customer, based on the conversation so you can calculate your ROI as accurately as possible.
- Platform Statistics – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube etc are all desperate to prove to you that your budget is being well spent, and so provide all kinds of options to track visitors and results. Make sure you use the tools available.

If you can't monitor it, consider if it's a marketing strategy you should be using. I totally respect "gut feelings," however, I like my gut to have solid data to base its judgements on!

Which of the digital marketing options is best for my business?

Well of course that varies from business to business. Do you need more business fast, or are you happy to see steady, long-term growth? Are people actively searching for your services or have you got something they would buy if only they knew about it? The optimum strategy will be running at least two, ideally three or more different channels. They often overlap, e.g. use SEO to generate visitors, get them to sign up to your emails, then run Facebook remarketing Ads to further build the brand.

Setting your marketing budget

Are you time or cash poor? – Yes, I know what you are thinking, but which are you best placed to invest?

If you have little or no budget, then social media, content creation and maybe email marketing might be your only options. If you can invest money in your marketing, then all the options open up.

Even if you have a big budget, I would suggest small steps are best when exploring any new digital strategy, there is no need to dive in headfirst. That said, you do need to commit enough to build up meaningful amounts of data. To continue the analogy, putting a little toe in the water is no good, you need to test the water with a lower leg, say up to the knee! Meaningful engagement, without over committing.

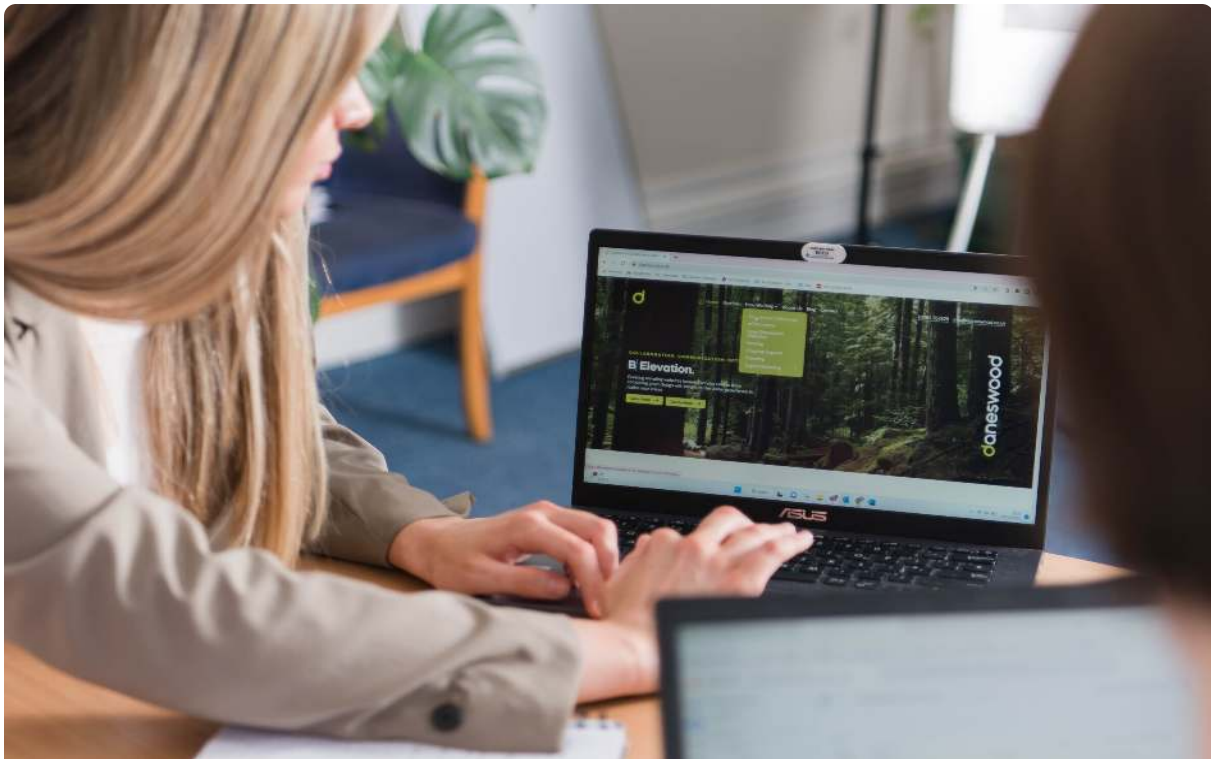
When setting your budgets, please do be realistic. We had one prospect who wanted to generate £300,000pa of recurring revenue with a proposed budget of £250pm. Meaning over three years, they wanted a £1.8 Million return on a £9k investment.

Now I understand a 19,900% Return on Investment sounds wonderful but it's clearly not realistic! Take a moment to consider, "Does this feel plausible?" If you are using an agency, please do tell them your budget and the returns you are expecting.

Of course, the fear is being sold to, "You'll just give us a strategy that uses the budget we've said!" Well, yes, that's the point. You'll get a strategy that works with the budget you've set, not one plucked from thin air.

Conclusion

Choosing the right digital marketing strategy can catapult your business to the next level and beyond, but it does take time, experience and an investment in time and money. Finding an experienced agency that you like and trust, one that understands your business, your sector and your objectives can speed your journey no end. They can also bring tools into the equation that might be beyond the reach of most businesses. For help or advice with setting up a digital marketing campaign using any of the methods above, or to speak to our team and find out what more we can offer you, contact us using the details below:



About Daneswood

At Daneswood we're a friendly web design, development and digital marketing company, operating in Devon, with a speciality in websites and digital marketing.

Digital Marketing is one of our core skills with our dedicated team of experts covering Search Engine Optimisation, Paid Search, such as Google Ads and Facebook/Instagram, Social Media and Email Marketing, meaning you can be sure your website will get the targeted visitors you want.

Working with us enables you to benefit from a dedicated and driven team of industry professionals who provide ongoing support and contact with you throughout your entire marketing journey.

Our discussions will focus on exactly what you are looking for, and how we can make this become a reality. Established in 2003, we have long and proven experience working within the web and digital marketing industry, which we apply to every project we undertake. So, you can be sure that we can advise on what the best solution is for you, taking your business to the next level.

Regards

Nigel Wilkinson

Managing Director

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