

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL MARKETING



But It was in the 1970s that the digital landscape slowly starts to emerge with the invention of the mobile phone. By the 1980s, personal computers had entered the scene with IBM and Apple taking the first steps in this direction. Fast forward to 1995 when the internet and mobile phone start to gain serious popularity and they are adopted by the mass audience.

It was also at this time when search engines like Yahoo and AltaVista were launched followed by Ask.com in 1997 and Google in 1998.

The use of the term "Search Engine Optimization" was also first recorded around this time. By the early 2000s, multiple tech companies like LinkedIn, Myspace and Facebook were founded. Today, these companies dominate the tech space and form an indispensable part of our lives too. Can you imagine your life without the internet? I certainly cannot!!

# WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING?

Digital marketing covers all branches of online marketing, specifically, it consists of these modules:

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
2. Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
3. Social Media Marketing
4. Email Marketing
5. Inbound Marketing
6. Web Analytics

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

If you are hearing this term for the first time, just breaking it up into Search Engine and Optimization will indicate that it is about doing something efficiently on a search engine. A search engine is simply a website built to answer any questions you may have, however, this simple-looking website is made possible by thousands of engineers working tirelessly at the backend. Complicated algorithms and machine learning technology are what keep the website up and running 24\*7\*365.

Now you might be asking, how is all of this relevant to me?

Well, as an aspiring Digital Marketer, you have the opportunity to showcase your/your client's website on the search engine results page also. You have to, however, follow some rules. Let's look at an example.

Say you are in the business of making shoes in Australia and your brand's name is Lupa. Someone from Australia is looking to buy a new pair of shoes and they get on google.com and search for " buy a new pair of shoes". As a business owner, you would want your website to show up against this search query, and not only that you would want the user to click on your website and purchase from your brand. This seems like a fascinating situation and like every business you wish to leverage the search engine results in your favour. Search engines use techniques like crawling, indexing and ranking to determine the most relevant website that solves the user's situation.

The search engine deploys bots which crawl your website and record the content on their database. This is an ongoing exercise which happens continually in the back-end and eventually the indexed websites are ranked. Those with a higher ranking have a better chance of showing up at the top.

Best practices to rank your website at the top include but are not limited to

- Avoid using rich media files
- Make sure your pages are crawlable
- Build internal and external links
- Fix broken links
- Use feeds such as RSS and XML



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF MARKETING

Reports say that traditional marketing has existed since 1450 and yes, that's a long way back. However, marketing existed well before 1450.

Allow me to clarify. Philip Kotler says, "Marketing is a process that is used to regulate which product or services may be of interest to customers". In simple words, it is a process of influencing/luring you to take action towards a desired goal. Knowingly or unknowingly, we do this in our everyday lives too. Children promise to get better grades if they are allowed to play for an additional 10 minutes. Couples influence each other to vacation at their favourite destinations. If you think beyond these examples, we are constantly influencing someone to do or buy things we like. And frankly speaking, this is all marketing. Just that you don't get paid to do it.

Another point to note here would be to optimize your website for both the bot and users. This can be done by technical upkeep, regular site maintenance and by keeping the website user interface clean and easy to navigate.

SEO can also be done On-Page and Off-Page. On-Page SEO refers to optimizing your website's content and user experience for search engines. Having quality content and good site architecture with internal links attribute to On-Page SEO whereas Off-Page SEO refers to building links from external websites to your pages. This includes Link Building with content, social media links and brand building to increase traffic.

Keyword research is another important aspect that sits at the core of SEO. Without relevant keywords on your web pages, it is almost impossible to rank on Google.

Last but not the least, the number one reason why people use SEO is that it's completely organic. You don't have to pay for your website to show up on the search engine results page. The only downside to SEO is that it's a time taking process. Sometimes it can take anywhere from 6 to 12 months for your website to even show up. If you plan to pursue a career as an SEO specialist, then patience is a virtue you should possess.

Two useful websites for SEO keyword research are <https://www.neilpatel.com/ubersuggest> and <https://www.semrush.com>



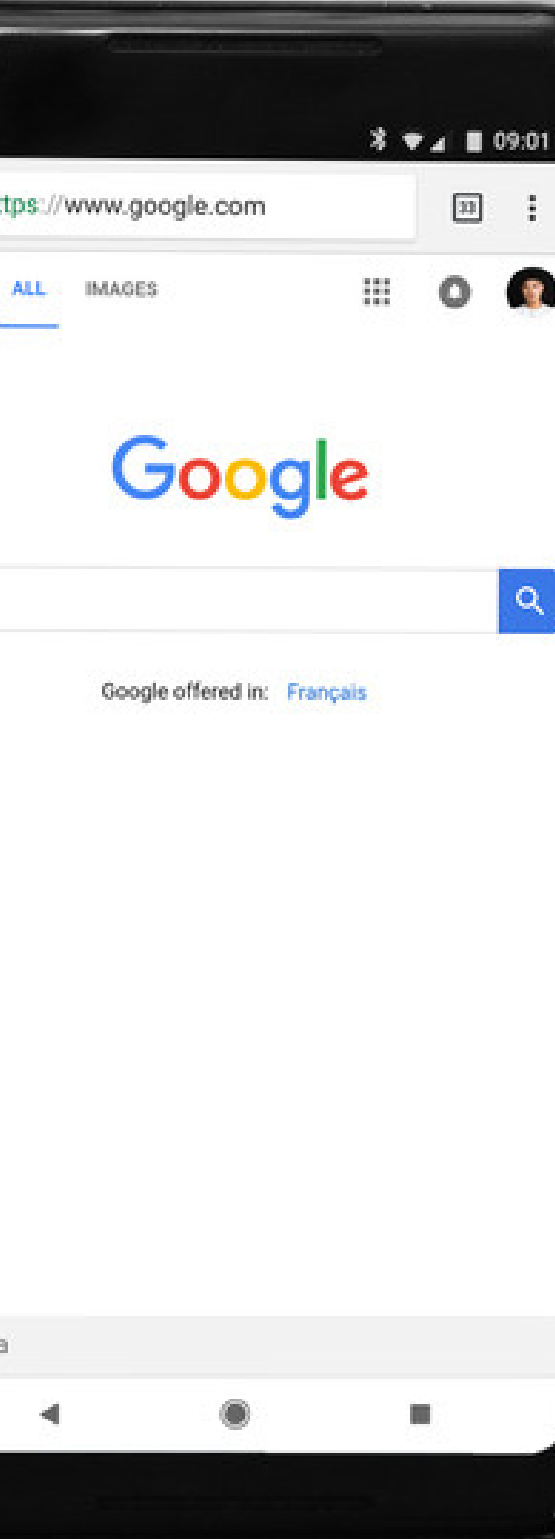
## SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)

Contrary to SEO, search engine marketing is about using paid advertisements to market a business on the search engine results page. While this could be a costly affair it provides businesses, the opportunity to show up on top of the organic results, thus increasing the probability of being clicked by the user. Although SEM is paid, the advantage it has over SEO is speed, since paid advertisements take not more than 24 hours to show up.

It is also essential to keep in mind that this is also the primary source of revenue for the search engines like Google and learning paid ad skills can boost your career in Digital Marketing. As more and more users shift online to research and shop, brands are openly embracing the online marketing model.

Every day, there are about 5.6 Billion searches on google.com alone (source: SEOTribunal.com) and this data speaks volumes about the intensity of online traffic and its importance for brands.

Google Ads was first launched in 2000 and they advertise on Google's display and search networks. While the Google search network comprises google.com and other search partner websites, the Google display network has more than 3 million partner websites and mobile apps.



Based on your business goals, you may choose which network suits you better. If your website is a blog then branding or increasing traffic could be one of your primary goals. In this case, the google display network could be of more significance. Those who want to generate leads or sales enquiries could be better off advertising on the search network. However, with the ever-changing landscape of Digital Marketing, you should advertise on both these networks. The deciding factor to achieving success in paid advertisements is to understand your audience and their buying behaviour and once you've identified that, you can tailor ads to match their interest.

Apart from the choice of networks, Google Ads provides you with a plethora of options like the market geography you want to advertise in, the devices you would like to focus on and the exact time of the day when you want your ads to run. Google also has a set of pre-defined audiences which you can select based on the type of business and geography you are in.

If you are thinking that whoever spends more on google ads has an upper hand, you are mistaken. While money does matter, the quality of your ads and landing page and its relevance to the search query matter too if not more.





Related auctions - related search queries can also influence thresholds. For example, the ad threshold for the search term [pet insurance] can be influenced by the auction for the search term [dog insurance] and [cat insurance].

The quality score primarily depends on 3 parameters namely Click-Through Rate, Ad Relevancy and Landing Page Quality.

The ad auction scores ads from 1 to 10, (1 being poor and 10 being the best) and once this process is complete, the most relevant ad shows up on the search results page.

The following illustration is an example of how the ad auction system works. Even though John pays the least amount of money (\$3), he still gets to show his ad in the first position due to the high-quality score his ads have. However, Amber who has a max bid of \$10 loses out in the auction due to the poor quality score. Hence, it is important to understand that maintaining a high-quality score is crucial.

| Advertiser | Max CPC |   | Quality Score |   | Ad Rank | Position |
|------------|---------|---|---------------|---|---------|----------|
| John       | \$3     | * | 10            | = | 30      | 1st      |
| Betty      | \$5     | * | 5             | = | 25      | 2nd      |
| Paul       | \$7     | * | 3             | = | 21      | 3rd      |
| Amber      | \$10    | * | 2             | = | 20      | 4th      |

Another important point to note here is that Max CPC is not necessarily the amount you pay for the click. Max CPC is the maximum amount you are willing to pay for a click, however, most times you are charged lesser.

Realistically, it is Actual CPC that you pay for your ads and it is just enough to beat your competitor, i.e \$0.01 more than the next advertiser.

To build a career in pay-per-click advertisements, you should consider getting certified and Google offers a bunch of free certifications at <https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/>.

As a beginner, you should aim to get google certified as soon as possible as many jobs consider this as a pre-requisite to apply.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

In recent years, Social media has emerged as a force to reckon with. People all across the globe are spending millions of hours every day on social media and this makes it a favourable place for digital marketers to advertise their products and services.

According to the website, <https://datareportal.com/>, the number of users on Facebook exceeds over 2.9 Billion. That's the combined population of India and China put together. Other social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat and Pinterest also have millions of users and this only makes it lucrative to advertise on them.

The other advantage of advertising on Social media is the relatively younger audience that is primarily active on these platforms. They actively spend on products and services compared to the older generation.

Facebook, for instance, offers a bunch of options to marketers to advertise on its platforms. They also provide you with enough insights and data to measure your ad performance and reach. You can also get Facebook ads certified to boost your career and in fact, many employers are on the lookout for such skills.

Another aspect of social media is influencer marketing. It has gained massive popularity in recent years and significantly reduced the cost of advertising for brands while still being able to reach their target audience.

All in all, as a digital marketer, you cannot ignore social media marketing, in fact you must embrace it irrespective of which industry you are in.



## E-MAIL MARKETING

Several digital marketing gurus proclaim email marketing as the most powerful form of online marketing and rightly so. Emails are probably the oldest form of digital marketing technique still being widely used.

Emails can be highly personalised and the right email can work wonders in your favour. As a marketer, you can customise each email with the user's name and include several call-to-action buttons to prompt the user to act. Additionally, you can also analyse user behaviour patterns and much more through the analytics data that email providers allow.

Although emails have strict compliance like GDPR and CAN-SPAM ACT, marketers still deploy thousands of emails to users' inboxes and get results. And the major reason for this is the minimal cost of email marketing compared to other mediums.

There are several providers out there who allow you to send bulk emails to your target audience such as constant contact, Mailchimp, Hubspot, Sendblue etc.

Several providers also allow you to send up to a certain number of emails for free per month.

Best practices for email marketing include :

- Make sure you are authorised to send the email and that they have provided consent.
- Optimizing your images and keeping the file size less than 120KB
- Avoid using too many codes in the email templates
- Scale your email volume gradually and not be aggressive early on.
- Keep your emails simple and uncluttered.
- Never advertise prohibited or illegal content.
- Always include an UNSUBSCRIBE button.



## INBOUND MARKETING

Back in the day, marketing was about aggressively bombarding the customer with your message. Buy Now before the sale ends. Grab the offer today - these messages however are still common today but rather than outbound, the trend has changed towards inbound marketing.

Inbound marketing is the process of bringing potential customers to you rather than having to fight for their attention. One of the ways to initiate inbound marketing is by curating and sharing content that appeals to your target audience. It could be a simple postcard or an e-book, anything that brings them value.

The majority of the potential customers are not yet ready to buy. But they will eventually buy either from you or your competitors. With this information, the next question is "How can I make them buy from me?" While the customer, might be thinking - "Why should I buy from him?" The answer to both these questions resides in one word and that is - VALUE.

Whoever provides better value wins the game.

And, how do you show the value of the product/service to them? That's where inbound marketing comes in.



Here are a few inbound marketing strategies that you may deploy to engage your audience:

- **Personalized messaging:** An email with their name on it makes a world of difference compared to a generic one.
- **Keep it short and simple (KISS):** Do not clutter your messages, instead keep to the point and as short as possible. Sometimes, a kiss is all you need (No pun intended)

It's your anniversary today and we would love to be a part of the celebration.

Here's a 20% discount from us.

Cheers -

The message is both personal and enticing. It captures the essence of the event and in return, you build a solid relationship with the customer. They appreciate that you remembered them on their special day and even if they don't buy now, they will keep coming back to you. They might also be strong advocates of your brand and word of mouth goes a long way.

- Identify your audience and provide value.
- Find the sweet spot. (Frequency)
- Be subtle, but encourage action.

Three Phases of Inbound Marketing are :

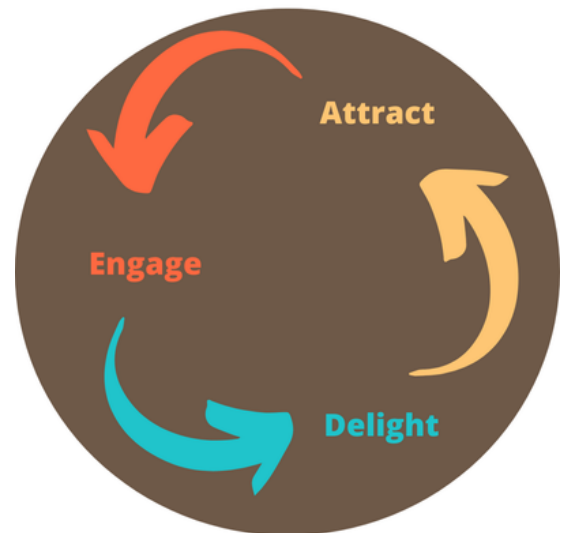
### 1. Attract your Audience

The goal is not to force attention, but to attract your audience with relevant content and remove any barriers. You may deploy this strategy by writing blogs or using ads.

### 2. Converting them into leads.

Keep your audience engaged in your products and services. Do not use gimmicks or false messaging to spam them, instead create meaningful connections with them via social media or newsletters.

3. Nurturing the leads into sales. Once your audience trusts you, they will become your advocates. But to get there, you have to build that trust with meaningful interaction. Do your best to delight them and provide value with no one else. They should feel like coming back to you every time.



## WEB ANALYTICS

The next step after you have made all your strategies and implemented them is to measure data. Is your strategy working? Numbers don't lie, but you need a tool to see all those numbers. That's where Web Analytics comes in.

It is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for understanding and optimizing web usage. In simple words, web analytics is all about analyzing user behaviour on a website.

The most widely used web analytics tool is Google Analytics and the free version is enough for a mid-size business. However, there are other analytics software out there, but they are paid and expensive.

Businesses across the globe use Google Ads to measure and interpret data from their website.

You might be thinking if it's necessary to know how many people visit your website or store. I mean, what's the point of knowing this when you are consistently providing value? Well, the answer lies in perception. What is valuable according to you may be useless to your customers and without this knowledge, you could hurt your business.



If you are a midsize or large business, chances are that you experience tons of transactions every day. Without analytics, it's impossible to measure success.

Businesses can also use analytics to predict future trends and pivot business ideas. In 2020 when the pandemic hit, businesses with enough customer data and analysis could pivot themselves and retain their clients, hence surviving the downturn.

To get started, there are many videos on <https://www.youtube.com> that provide information on Google Analytics. Google also has a dedicated platform where they teach Google Analytics for free. Check it out at <https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy>.

A certification in google analytics can help you pivot your career. Try out the certification on Google Analytics certification (<https://fw.ws/t3k40>)

Digital marketing extends well above and beyond these topics, but as a beginner, it's more than enough to get started. Mastering these topics will solidify your foundation and get you your first job in Digital Marketing.

I hope you found the contents of this e-book interesting. All the best for your future endeavours.