A Beginners Guide

Digital Marketing on Little-To-No Budget

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Table of Contents

NOTE: Google Ad Words, Ad Retargeting, Social Media Advertising and other paid methods of advertising online are also a part of effective digital marketing campaigns today, however, they all cost money and deserve their own guide with the full breadth and depth of options and information out there on how to use it. That did not fit the spirit or aim of this guide, so we left it out, but we did want to acknowledge it.

Introduction

It's not enough to just have a website with static or placeholder content anymore. If you want to get the attention of your current and potential customers, as well as search engines, you have to produce active and engaging content and then find ways to track, manage, and report on it.

The sales process has changed and users are completing 60% of the buying process online before ever engaging with a sales rep. Don't believe us? There is a lot of literature on this, but you can get started with this article from Forbes.

How do you do it? Believe it or not, this can be a lot cheaper and a lot easier than it sounds and this guide will walk you through how to do that.

While we wholeheartedly think the best way to do digital marketing is through the Hubspot platform (which combines all your marketing tools and website into one streamlined experience), we also recognize that there are businesses and individuals with little to no budget that just want to get started.

This guide is precisely for those people.

We'll go over the core parts of a successful digital marketing operation, a brief explanation of each, and the best (in our opinion) free or cheap tools out there to help you put it together.

Responsive Design

What is a responsive website design?

Responsive web design (RWD) is an approach to web design aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing and interaction experience—easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling—across a wide range of devices (from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones). To be clear, a responsive website is not a separate mobile website that is different or located elsewhere than your main site. It is also not a mobile application for iPhone or Android. Put simply, it's a website that adapts and morphs it's content and layout on load and in real-time to the size of the viewing screen you are using, regardless of what device or platform you are on. It's a one-size-fits-all website design.

If you're interested in the philosophy of where this idea came from, Ethan Marcotte wrote an 8introductory article about the approach, "Responsive Web Design," for A List Apart and he gets a lot of the credit for starting the movement.

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What it looks like:

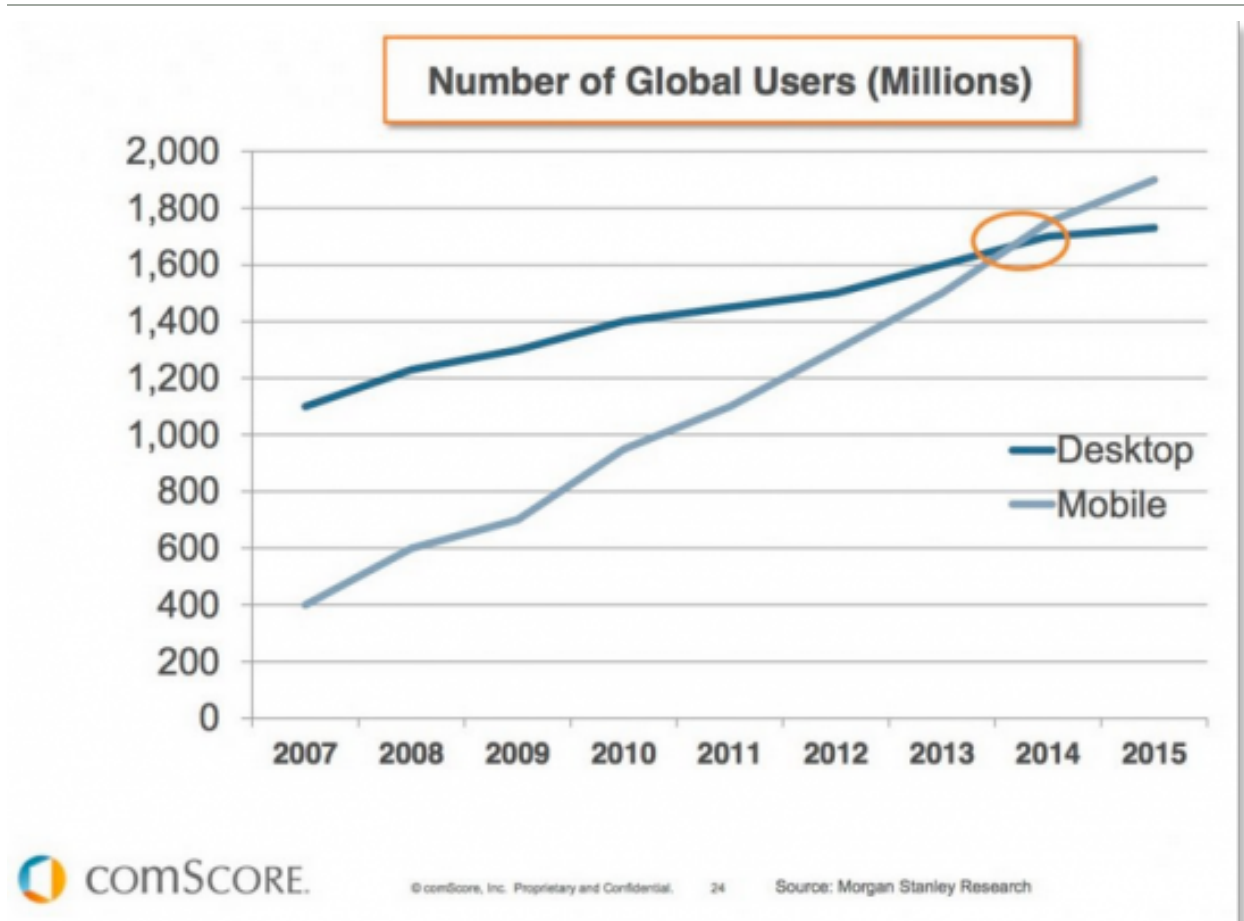1920 PX   768 PX   ⊢ 460 PX ⊣

Why is Responsive Design So Important?

More people use mobile devices and smartphones than desktops or laptops in 2016. The growth has been both consistent year-over-year and pervasive on a global scale. Have a look at the data:

The number of Global Users (in millions) on the Internet using a mobile device outpaced desktop in 2014.
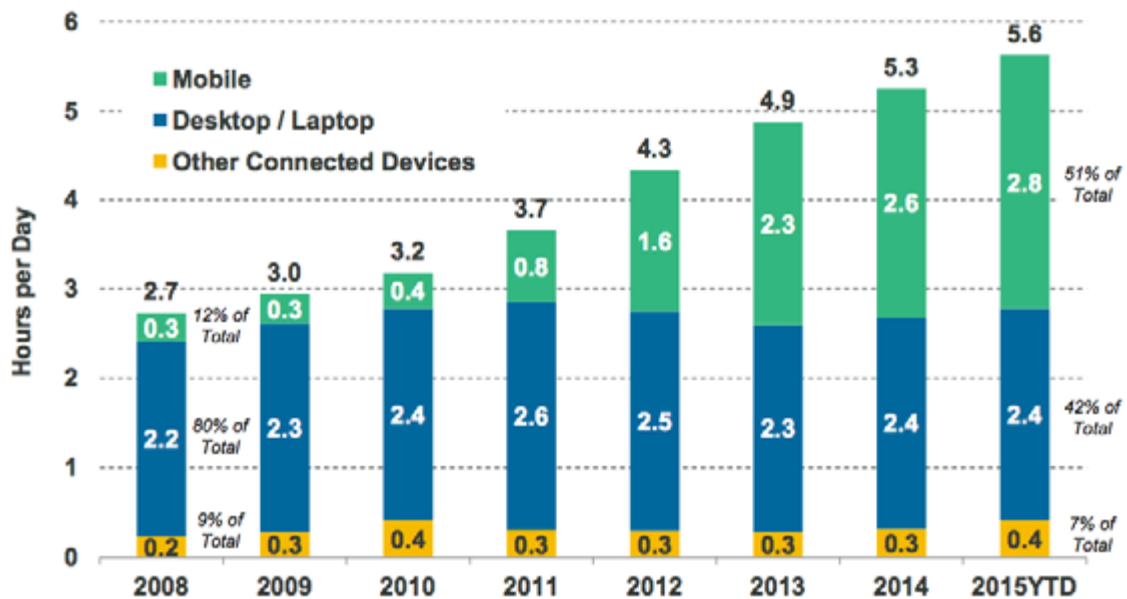
Example Graphic:

SOURCE: Tech Crunch - http://techcrunch.com/2014/08/21/majority-of-digital-media-consumption-now-takes-place-in-mobile-apps/

SOURCE 2: The U.S. Mobile App Report - http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations-and-Whitepapers/2014/The-US-Mobile-App-Report

Mobile Media Time is now Greater than Desktop and Other Media

Internet *Usage* (Engagement) Growth Solid
+11% Y/Y = Mobile @ 3 Hours / Day per User vs. <1 Five Years Ago, USA

Time Spent per Adult User per Day with Digital Media, USA, 2008 – 2015YTD

- Mobile
- Desktop / Laptop
- Other Connected Devices

Hours per Day

Year	Other Connected Devices	Desktop / Laptop	Mobile	Total
2008	0.2 (9% of Total)	2.2 (80% of Total)	0.3 (12% of Total)	2.7
2009	0.3	2.3	0.3	3.0
2010	0.4	2.4	0.4	3.2
2011	0.3	2.6	0.8	3.7
2012	0.3	2.5	1.6	4.3
2013	0.3	2.3	2.3	4.9
2014	0.3	2.4	2.6	5.3
2015YTD	0.4 (7% of Total)	2.4 (42% of Total)	2.8 (51% of Total)	5.6

@KPCB Source: eMarketer 9/14 (2008-2010), eMarketer 4/15 (2011-2015). Note: Other connected devices include OTT and game consoles. Mobile includes smartphone and tablet. Usage includes both home and work. Ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking.   14
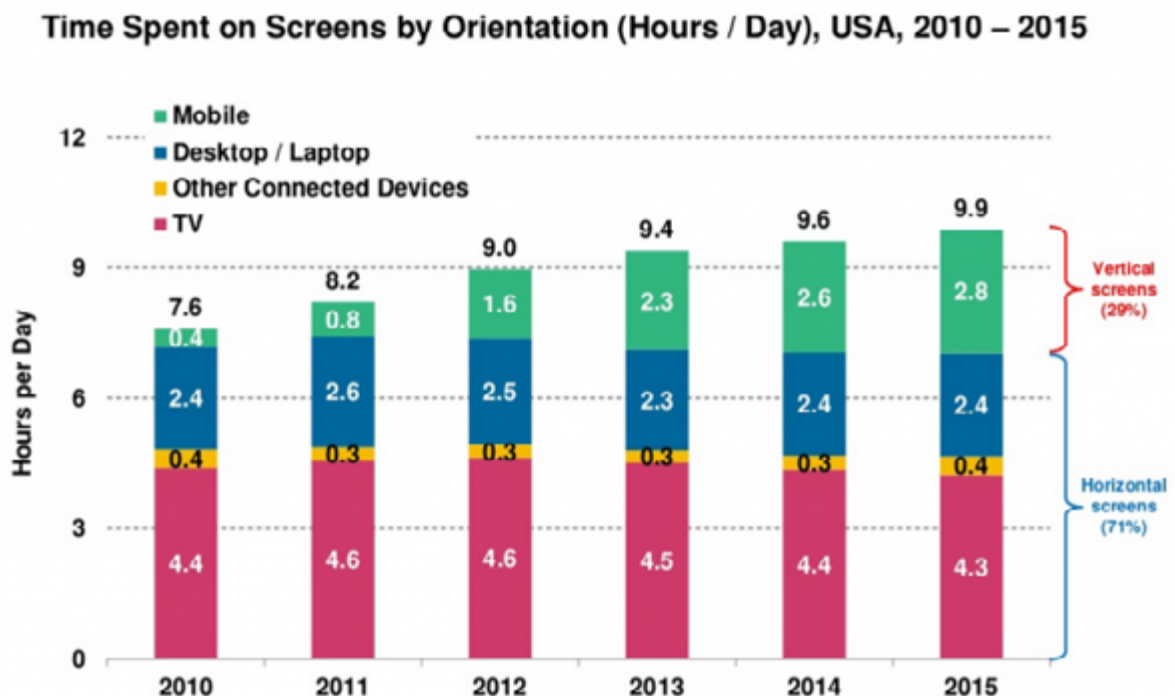
SOURCE: http://www.smartinsights.com/internet-marketing-statistics/insights-from-kpcb-us-and-global-internet-trends-2015-report/attachment/mobile-internet-trends-mary-meeker-2015-1/

80% of Internet Users own a smartphone

- Global Web Index 2015

SOURCE: https://www.globalwebindex.net/blog/80-of-internet-users-own-a-smartphone

Mobile vs desktop device usage

You can even see the evidence just by looking at data for screen usage by orientation (i.e. horizontal vs vertical)

SOURCE: http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/

Last but not least, Google fundamentally changed their search algorithm in 2015 to scan websites to determine whether they are mobile-friendly and websites that fail this test will not show up on mobile search results compared to those that are.

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Not sure how your current website stacks up?

Get it tested here: https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/

The implications are clear - if you're not reaching your users through mobile search, display, or a satisfactory mobile experience in general, you will miss out greatly compared to your competitors who are.

If your current website is not mobile friendly, you need to seriously consider a website redesign to a responsive website before doing anything else suggested in this guide. A website redesign doesn't have to be expensive or unattainable to achieve the simple goal of transferring your content into a more mobile-friendly experience. Many companies, including our own here at Begin Bound, LLC, can advise you about the costs and your options to achieve this. Just drop us a line on our website and we'd be happy to answer any questions and provide you with various options to meet you where you're at.

Landing Pages

For too long, websites have been little more than static, digital brochures with information that only goes one way from your site to the user. But what if you could *get data back* from your users? Enter the Landing Page.

The Landing Page is the Digital Sales Rep for your website.

The purpose of the Landing Page is to convert your anonymous user into a lead by gathering real information from them. It uses a simple form on the page to gather the data and stores it on your website so that you can review it and incorporate it into your digital marketing strategy.

Now you're probably asking, "Why would someone want to voluntarily fill out information about themselves on *my* website?"

Simple, because you're going to offer them something useful for that information.

Think about this very document that you are reading right now. You downloaded it because you need help to put together a Digital Marketing Operation on little to no budget. When you came to our website to get it, we asked you for a few simple pieces of information on the form to download it. Once you provided that, we redirected you to the hidden download page and gave you this guide. In full disclosure, we now know that you are interested in this topic and when we create new pieces of content in the future, we may send it your way. This helps us create intelligence on the people visiting

our website and their interests. But now that you know, you can turn around and do the exact thing for *your* potential customers!

To be clear, there's nothing creepy or nefarious about this. As long as you are providing your users/customers with unique, relevant solutions and openly asking for non-invasive information like their name, industry, and email to receive the content, it's a simple transaction that has become commonplace in a Digital Marketing Strategy.

The Anatomy of a Landing Page

Now that we've talked about the philosophy behind the landing Page, let's talk about how to set one up the right way. The anatomy of a Landing Page (according to Hubspot) has the following elements:

- A clear, concise action-oriented headline

    Example: Get Your Free Guide on Smart Savings Tips When Traveling To Europe

- Explain what people are going to receive in the download clearly and honestly.

    Explanation: This goes without saying.

- Remove Navigation Menu and all other links (if you can).

    Explanation: We don't want anything to distract the user from the conversion offer that would take them away from the page. They can always hit the "back button" on their browser.

- The form length mirrors the value of the offer.

    Explanation: We want to make sure the exchange of personal data for relevant content is a fair one. For instance, if we're only offering a simple two-page guide on social media tips, we might only ask for their E-mail address. However, if you're offering a complete 30-page case study on marketing survey data in the mobile application space, you could

reasonably ask for some more pieces of data like Job Title, Industry, City, State, Age, etc. The bottom line is not to ask people for a ton of personal information on a thin or poorly created piece of content.

• Include a relevant image, animation or short video.

Explanation: Supporting visual content is a big one to enhance your offer to your user. A custom graphic to support your download is mandatory. Why? It increases traffic and conversions. For instance, Hubspot found a 55% increase in leads when images were added to Tweets in an A/B Test.

• Add social sharing icons.

Explanation: We want people to be able to share our content, so make sure that they can!

Tools To Create and use Landing Pages in your digital marketing efforts

One thing to understand is that Landing Pages are essential to collecting data and executing a 21st-century digital marketing strategy at it's most basic level. You also can't use them without paying *something*. Granted, there are tons of ways to piece this together and many are quite cheap, but there is no truly free option. Here are several ways and options you can use to add Landing Pages to your strategy:

SQUARESPACE

This has become a popular and cheap way for the non-coder to create stunning websites that are responsive and easy to update. One of the features of Squarespace is the Form Block, which you can add to any page to collect information and manage data submissions. It's not robust, but it will do the job for now.

Squarespace starts at just $12/Month:
https://www.squarespace.com/pricing

WORDPRESS

Wordpress is a free CMS Platform, however, you will need to pay for Hosting. There are lots of hosting options, we just recommend GoDaddy because of their straight-forward pricing, 24/7 support and one-click Wordpress install.

Costs start at just $3.99/Month:
https://www.godaddy.com/hosting/wordpress-hosting

If you're using Wordpress for your website, there are quite a few free and paid options to collect submission data through forms. Here are some of the more notable ones:

CONTACT FORM 7 - FREE

Link: https://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-7/

Description: Contact Form 7 is undoubtedly the most popular free forms plugin with more than 18 million downloads in the WordPress Plugin Repository. Contact Form 7 can manage multiple contact forms, plus you can customize the form and the mail contents flexibly with simple markup.

NINJA FORMS - FREE & PAID ADD-ONS

Link: https://wordpress.org/plugins/ninja-forms/

Description: Ninja Forms is another popular free plugin. It has an easy-to-use drag and drop interface and allows you to create contact forms, email collection forms, or any other form you need on your site.

GRAVITY FORMS - PAID

Link: http://www.gravityforms.com/

Description: One of the most Popular plugins on Wordpress for creating forms. Prices start at $39 a year for a personal license and it includes support, and unlimited forms and entries.

Standalone Landing Page Resources

PAGEWIZ

PageWiz includes unlimited A/B testing, the full slate of professional integrations, and an easy-to-use editor.

Prices start at just $29/Month for up-to 5,000 monthly visitors:

http://www.pagewiz.com/

UNBOUNCE

Unbounce is a well-known leader in landing page optimization. They offer a powerful platform for customizing proven templates or creating your own pages from scratch.

Pricing starts at $50/Month:

http://unbounce.com/

LEADPAGES

With high-value features like opt-in boxes and click-to-subscribe text links, a LeadPage subscription provides owners with a formidable set of tools to build email lists or convert traffic into buyers.

Pricing starts at just $37/Month:

http://www.leadpages.net/products/

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All-In-One Marketing Tools - Hubspot

Hubspot has Landing Pages, Forms, and Contact Database management all built into its tool set. It keeps everything in one place and available so that you can streamline your digital marketing efforts and reporting. The costs are considerably higher than many options in here, but if you're serious about your digital marketing and you have some budget, you should seriously consider this incredible platform and tool set.

Learn More about their Landing Page Tool:
http://www.hubspot.com/products/landing-pages

Learn More about ALL their tools:
http://www.hubspot.com/products/marketing

Is this all getting a little too technical for you?

No problem! Begin Bound, LLC specializes in both consulting and setting these systems up for your growing business.

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Social Media

Having a social media presence is key to any digital marketing strategy, but it doesn't have to be complicated. At the end of the day, you just need to have a few accounts set up so that people can at least find you. This is not the ideal social media strategy or plan, but here are some great shortcuts and resources to get you up and running at little-to-no-cost.

Using The Right Design

Make sure each of our social channels has both a good profile picture (use your logo if you can't think of anything better) and properly sized graphics.

Each social media account is different, but here's a great free resource with all the current, up-to-date media sizes:
http://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-image-sizes-guide/

Social Media Automation

Making your social media account look lively and active is the key to getting a base starting point. One of the classic (though admittedly not the best) ways to do this for a small company or department is to plan your posts and schedule them ahead of time. We all do this through automation. Here are some great free tools you can hook up your accounts to and start using today:

Buffer Apps

This handy tool works perfectly in the cloud and even has a Google Chrome extension to make adding posts to your queue a breeze. The FREE account lets you hook up one account from each social channel and schedule up to 10 posts in advance!

Sign up for FREE:
https://buffer.com/r/b5df5e

HOOTE SUITE

This tools has been around for awhile and is well established in the social media space. However, the free account isn't as robust as what Buffer Apps offer. Plans start at $9.99/Month but this tool can be well worth it if you're serious about automated and reporting on the Social Media Marketing Plan and demonstrating ROI.

Blogging

The word "blogging" sounds kind of stupid, doesn't it? It's not a very professional or endearing word and sounds more like something a teenager does on Snapchat, rather than what a professional marketer does as a vital component of your business. Nevertheless, *Blogging is one of the single most important things you can do for ANY business in ANY industry to try and generate new traffic to your website for free.*

CONSIDER THESE STATS:

- Social media sites and blogs reach 8 out of 10 of all U.S. Internet users and account for 23% of all time spent online. (Source)

- In 2013, 78% of CMOs said custom content was the future of marketing. (Salesforce)

- B2B companies that blog generate 67% more leads per month than those that do not blog. (Source)

- The only thing blogging costs you: TIME

Even if you can only blog once a month, some blogging is better than no blogging at all. It creates opportunities for people to enter your website from another avenue, especially if you are writing content that is helpful to your customers. Starting out, you want to be writing a blog post two times a week, at a minimum, to start seeing results. Over time, your goal should be to have a new blog post five-days-a-week.

How do you write a good blog post?

There are a lot of great resources on blogging best-practices, but we're going to take advice from the creators of Inbound Marketing at Hubspot and give you an overview of their simple, but detailed steps to follow:

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE.

- Know who you are writing for when you set out to create a blog.
- What are their biggest pain points?
- What free advice can you offer them that would make a small difference in the daily business?

STEP 2: START WITH A TOPIC AND WORKING TITLE.

- This helps narrow it down and get your thinking focused on something specific.
- A topic might be "Tax Season"
- Then come up with a few working titles to further narrow your focus:
  - "5 ways to prepare for tax audit season"
  - "The one thing you don't want to forget come tax time"
  - "Four common mistakes every business owner makes during tax season"

STEP 3: WRITE AN INTRO (AND MAKE IT CAPTIVATING)

- Grab the reader's attention in the first few sentences.
- Explain the value of this blog post to them in the first paragraph.
- What problem are you solving?

STEP 4: ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT WITH AN OUTLINE

- To complete this step, all you really need to do is outline your post before you write it. That way, before you start writing, you know which points you want to cover, and the best order in which to do it.

STEP 5: WRITE

- Sit down and actually write the thing.

- Set aside 30-60 minutes of time where you will turn off E-mail, phones, etc, and commit to filling in the gaps in your outline. You'll be amazed how fast things develop from there!

STEP 6: EDIT/PROOFREAD YOUR POST

- Get a second pair of eyes to read it over before you publish it. The internet is littered with poorly written and edited content, so make yours stand out with a flawless post!

STEP 7: INSERT A CALL-TO-ACTION (CTA) AT THE END

- Almost done, but not quite yet! Every post should have a purpose and the end of the post should provide a "next step" for the reader to take.

- Using our "Tax Season" topic example, after we just told the reader about "5 ways to prepare for tax audit season," we might want offer them a free spreadsheet template that helps them organize and prepare. Or perhaps we've written a more comprehensive guide or offer a free consultation?

- Whatever it is, challenge yourself to always provide a next step for a reader to keep them engaged in your site and your content.

STEP 8: OPTIMIZE FOR ON-PAGE SEO.

- This isn't as hard as it sounds. There are some basic things you need to do to properly organize your post so that the internet can index and understand it, which makes it easier for people to find in search engines.

- **Meta Description**
  - Meta descriptions are the descriptions below the post's page title on Google's search results pages. They provide searchers with a short summary of the post before clicking into it. They are ideally between 150-160 characters and start with a verb, such as "Learn," "Read," or "Discover."
- **Page Title and Headers**
  - Your main post title should be there by default in whatever blogging platform you are using. In coding terms, this is referred to as an "H1" Title Tag.
  - Subsequent Subtitles on your page help web spiders understand the hierarchy of your content. For instance:
    - H1 (Main Header)
      - H2 Title (Sub Header)
        - H3 Title Tag (Subtitle)
          - H4 Title Tag, etc…
- **Anchor Text**
  - These words are what you use in links to other pages. So if you are linking to Tax Guidelines that the IRS posts on line, you might create Anchor text that reads, "Here are some IRS Guidelines to follow for Tax Season," and then link it to the appropriate page.
- **Mobile Optimization**
  - This should already be handled by your web platform, but we want to make sure that our blog posts are mobile responsive. This way anyone on any device can read our content and have a great user experience.
  - In 2015, Google made a change to its algorithm that now penalizes sites that are not mobile-optimized. In May of 2016, Google rolled out

their second version of the mobile algorithm update -- creating a sense of urgency for the folks that have yet to update their websites.

Need help with your content creation?

Begin Bound, LLC provides top tier Brand Journalism to write content for your brand with world-class editors and writers.

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Free Design Resources

Everything is design. As soon as you start thinking about your website, your blog, your social media, your content, etc, you are going to need design assets. Here are some of the best free resources we've curated over the last several years.

THE BEST FREE DESIGN CREATOR/EDITOR - CANVA

Create posters, infographics, business cards, presentations, book covers, and much more. If you're not a designer, this is definitely the resource for you.

Link: https://about.canva.com/

FREE STOCK "FACES":

Link: http://uifaces.com/

GREAT, FREE STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY:

Link: https://unsplash.com/

Link: https://pixabay.com/

Link: https://www.pexels.com/

FREE WEBSITE PATTERNS:

Link: http://subtlepatterns.com/

DEVICE MOCK-UPS

Link: http://mockuphone.com/#ios

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Basic Data & Reporting

We make a lot of assumptions about our customers, our designs, our marketing, etc, to get us to the final product. But in today's era of digital marketing, we really don't have to guess anymore. There are many tools out there and it can all seem overwhelming, but we've put together a basic list of data & reporting tools that will make your efforts smarter and get you going TODAY:

Google Analytics

This is Data 101 for all things web. If you have a website, you need to log into your Google Account and create a free Analytics account. Once created, they give you a simple embed code to add to your website and that's it; the data starts flowing. Of course, this tool can be quite complex if you really dive into it, but at least get it set up on your website from Day 1 so you can start to create a history of your web efforts.

Sign Up Here:
https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/provision/?authuser=0#provision/SignUp/

HotJar - UX Data

Heatmaps and session recordings can provide incredible insight into how users are interacting with your website. Are they getting to the key content on your page? Do they only look at the top and never scroll down to see the other content? Are they frustrated by a misplaced button? You can answer these questions and more using HotJar. They

provide a free account to get you started testing up to three pages and 100 session recordings!

Link: https://www.hotjar.com/

Website Grader

Tool can provide you with a free report on how any given website is optimized for digital marketing, usage, SEO, etc. Check it out!

Link: https://website.grader.com/

Website Speed Test

How fast your users can look at your website is vitally important to engagement and all your digital marketing efforts. Use this free tool to test your pages to get an idea how your platform is doing.

Link: https://tools.pingdom.com/

Email Marketing

At some point, you're going to need to start sending professional Emails to your users. Perhaps it's a follow-up to an action they took or just a friendly introduction. But the bottom line is that one of the single most valuable assets that any company generates is its customer lists. You need a place to store and send messages to this growing list of Emails you collect from your Blogging and online efforts, and that's where Email Marketing comes in.

CONSIDER THESE STATS:

- 44% of email recipients made at least one purchase last year based on a promotional email. (Convinceandconvert.com)

- 7 in 10 people said they made use of a coupon or discount from a marketing email in the prior week. (2012 Blue Kangaroo Study)

- Email marketing spend grows 10% year over year. (Forrester 2011)

- For every $1 spent, $44.25 is the average return on email marketing investment. (Experian)

- 64% of decision-makers read their email via mobile devices. (TopRankBlog)

Put simply, you need to be doing some form of Email Marketing, even if you're a "one-person shop." Lucky for you, there are a lot of great tools out there, and one we love in particular that provides a valuable free account to get you going.

MailChimp

Your first 2,000 contacts are free to store and send promotional Emails to forever. You can send 12,000 emails per month on the free plan. Now that's a great deal!

Link To Check Out MailChimp.

Video Marketing

Video might be the most important content driver in today's marketing world after blogging.

THERE ARE A TON OF STATS TO BACK THIS UP:

1. Syndacast predicts 74% of all internet traffic in 2017 will be video. ([Source](#))

2. 51.9% of marketing professionals worldwide name video as the type of content with the best ROI. ([Source](#))

3. Shoppers who view video are 1.81X more likely to purchase than non-viewers. ([Source](#))

4. Using the word "video" in an email subject line boosts open rates by 19%, click-through rates by 65% and reduces unsubscribes by 26%. ([Source](#))

5. Midway through 2015, mobile video plays exceeded 44% -- up 74% from 2014 and up a whopping 844% since 2012. ([Source](#))

6. Between April 2015 and November 2015, the amount of average daily video views on Facebook doubled from 4 billion video views per day to 8 billion. ([Source](#))

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Here are some great pointers and resources to help you get going with Video Marketing:

Video Creation

QUICKTIME AND IMOVIE ON MAC

Creating video for your company doesn't have to be crazy. If you own a Mac, you can record screen captures of your computer using Quicktime. Then put the video in iMovie and record a voiceover for it if you're doing some kind of training. If you need a pro version, check out Camtasia for $99.

FIVERR

One of the coolest tricks to creating video on the cheap is to find a deal on Fiverr. All sorts of people offer pieces and parts of video creation at only $5 a pop. Check it out here and see if you find anything useful!

Video Hosting and Sharing

YOUTUBE

You need to put your stuff on Youtube, whether you want people to watch your content on YouTube or not. YouTube is a fine platform, but this is also for SEO reasons as Google will favorably index your stuff as well if it's on YouTube to show up in search results.

WISTIA

This is the gold standard in video hosting right now. Wistia offers the best-looking embed options to brand and add your video content to any site. But more importantly, they also offer unique data on your video so you can see how many people are watching, how long they are watching and whether they are converting at the end or now. Wistia also provides a free account to get you started:

Pricing Breakdown: https://wistia.com/pricing

Sign up for FREE: https://wistia.com/account/signup

Need To Talk To Someone?

Thank you for reading this guide from Begin Bound, LLC! We hope that you find some useful links and information to help you get your digital marketing efforts off the ground! However, sometimes we just need to talk to someone about our specific situation. Our CEO, Mr. Jesse D. Pennington, would be happy to talk to you about a custom solution that solves your unique challenges.

Jesse's Professional Background

Mr. Pennington has been working in Inbound Marketing since 2011, working closely at his company with the pioneers of Inbound Marketing at Hubspot. Learn more about Mr. Pennington on LinkedIN.

Let's Talk!

Please provide the requested information on the form at the link below and Mr. Pennington will personally reach out to set up an interview time with you.

GET STARTED