

Build your 2016 marketing plan with these 5 questions.

Businesses often jump head first into the digital marketing world without taking time to build a solid plan, and they end up wasting money with no results.

There is no secret formula to building a plan that works for all companies, but here are few questions to help get you started.

1. Who is my audience?

One of the greatest advantages of digital marketing is the ability to target an audience. Who and where they are depends on your business, but can include social networks, online forums, industry groups, etc.

2. What is the best way to reach that audience?

You'll need to think both long and short term when deciding on a marketing strategy. Most businesses use some combination of search engine optimization (SEO), pay per click (PPC), banner advertising, and social media marketing. The combination of tactics depends on whether you're trying to bring in new leads immediately or develop your online presence over time. Ultimately, all will deliver results based on how you prioritize.

3. What can I give the audience?

Too many businesses believe that just posting discounts or links to their website all over social media will be effective in driving sales. You have to offer your audience something educational, exclusive, and worth their time. Ask yourself "would I want this in my news feed or inbox? Will my target audience enjoy it?" Build trust that you're an expert in your industry.

4. How can I convert this audience into customers?

Conversions can happen when a customer decides to contact you. This is another part of your marketing plan that will need to be tested and refined based on your growth strategy. You need to see what performs well and what doesn't, and adjust accordingly.

5. When can I find time for marketing?

Notice that this question is not asking *if* you have time for marketing, but rather *when* you will find that time. Marketing isn't a practice where you can "set it and forget it" and assume you'll be successful. You need time to plan, and time to adjust that plan based on the results. Is someone running a campaign for you? You should look at reports every month. Ask questions and keep track of how your efforts are impacting your business.

"A man who stops advertising to save money is like a man who stops a clock to save time."

– Henry Ford

Need someone to take a look at your current online marketing? [Let us know and we'll give you a call.](#)