

14 Ways To Optimise & Adapt Your Marketing for COVID-19

Creating for what's next.

whitelawmitchell





Thank you for taking the time to read our thought leadership. We realise this is a difficult time for many businesses. Every business is going to require a unique strategy, but we are aware budget and resources can be very limited at the moment, so we wanted to give our clients and followers a few DIY actionable items they can start to implement immediately.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to discuss anything in detail or if you'd like our expertise on your brand and marketing strategy.

We love you,

Kim, Maranda and the rest of the team.

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1. Take a few steps back and look at the big picture for your marketing strategy.

Often people get caught up in the small everyday details such as; answering emails and messages, curating social media content, posting content across their platforms... Eventually they lose track of the overall goal that they are trying to achieve. It is therefore important that every once in a while you reflect on why you are doing the things you are and what they are ultimately meant to lead to: “the big picture”. In this way you can better monitor whether or not the tasks and jobs you complete are bringing you closer to your target.

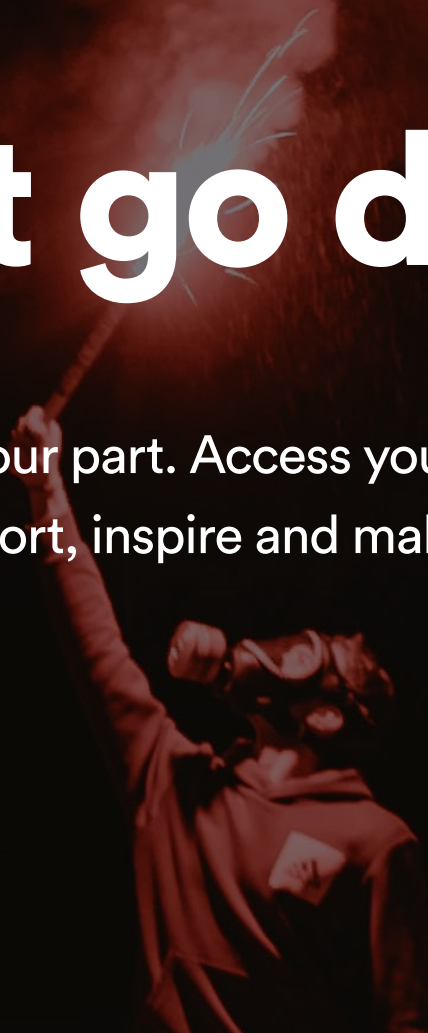
In order to maintain focus on the big picture it's important to:

- Remind yourself of who your audience is and what they really want, not just what you might think they want.
- Review your social media platforms and have a look at whether you are reaching your target audience(s).
- Check whether your marketing and the content you are promoting are aligned with your brand and its values.
- Evaluate how often you are posting content and whether this is happening regularly or sporadically. A content calendar can help maintain consistency.
- Look at the systems you have in place and whether they are benefiting your business or causing an unnecessary hindrance.
- Get comfortable with your finances and regularly evaluate what is and isn't giving you a profit and why this might be.
- Set goals for the short, medium and long term around what you want to achieve from your marketing efforts.
- Map out strategies on how you plan to achieve these goals and share them with employees across your business, including assigning roles and tasks to achieve them.

BUILDING BRAND TRUST DURING COVID-19

Don't go dark.

Show up and do your part. Access your creativity and resources to comfort, inspire and make a difference.



2. Review and revise your paid keyword strategy.

Keyword research can feel daunting and exhausting. What metrics should I be looking at? How do I know what keywords are getting the most traffic? How do I even know which keywords to use? It is true that there are a number of things to consider before getting started. The good thing is that with online ads such as Google Ads when compared to other marketing channels, a small investment can get you a long way, especially if you are looking locally and want to advertise only a small key number of offerings.

In order to review your paid keyword strategy you should:

- Focus on keywords that are relevant to your business and its brand, products or services.
- Put yourself into your customers shoes and look at search intent in regards to what they might be looking up to get to your website.
- Look at your competition and what they are doing and the type of keywords they are ranking for. You can view this under AdWords auction insights or SEM Rush.
- Analyse your data and run A/B tests were possible to see what your audience reacts to best.
- Turn off campaigns that do not performed well but make sure you wait at least a month or two before making this call as it can take time to gather enough statistical data to see accurate results.

As you can see there are many things you can do yourself to perform keyword research for your business but often a great deal of value can be found in reaching out to an agency for help. Many marketing agencies will have a number of digital tools they can use to perform far more in-depth research into the types of keywords that you and your competitors are ranking for as well as comparing these. Whilst most of these tools can be purchased by anyone from the Internet, they are usually quite costly and thus not a viable option especially if you are only going to use them once.

2020 EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER SPECIAL REPORT:
BRANDS AND THE CORONAVIRUS

COMMUNICATE HOW YOU'RE HELPING

Percent who want each from brands

■ Brands must do this to earn or keep my trust □ I hope brands will do this, but there is no obligation

Keep the public fully informed regarding how the **brand is supporting and protecting their employees and customers**

89%

47

42

Keep the public fully informed regarding **changes in how the brand is operating** and in how to gain access to its products and services

88%

46

42

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and the Coronavirus. Q5. In the face of this coronavirus outbreak, how do you expect brands to react when it comes to the nature and tone of their communications with the public? 3-point scale; code 1, brands must do this; code 2, I hope brands will do this. Question shown to those who have heard of the virus (Q1/1). 12-mkt avg. Data collected between March 23 and March 26, 2020.

3. Optimise or update your website.

Google's search algorithm is constantly evolving in order to provide searchers with the most accurate and informative results, this means that your website has to keep up with these changes as well. You can't simply hire a SEO expert once and expect to be seeing the same traffic going through your site that you would have when you first launched.

In order to optimise your website you should:

- Review your current content (visual & written) and design to ensure that it is user friendly, clear and up to date.
- Analyse your keywords and check that they are still relevant. You can do this with Sem Rush or Google keyword planner.
- Check your website's data and look at customer behaviour.
- Create a new blog or update some of your older blogs or website content, making sure that the information contained within the text is still accurate.
- Evaluate your competitor's websites and analytics data, take notes of what they are doing and how they are performing.
- Set up Google alerts for your competitors, getting notified when they receive a backlink or mention online.
- Gather inspiration and have a look at industry leaders in your market.
- Look into your website's page speed on GoogleSpeed insights or Gtmetrix to make sure load time is as short as possible.
- Make sure your website is mobile friendly if not fully mobile optimised. Google has a mobile friendly test online.

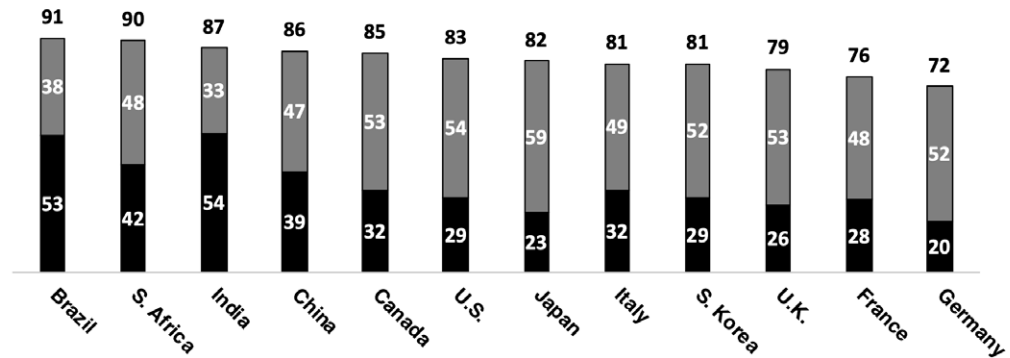
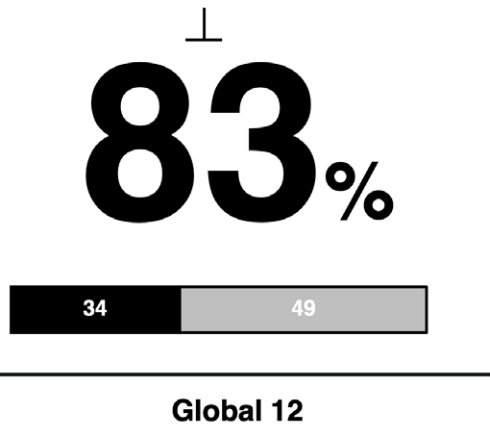
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BRANDS AND THE CORONAVIRUS

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

Percent who want this from brands

■ Brands must do this to earn or keep my trust □ I hope brands will do this, but there is no obligation

Issue public statements **expressing empathy and support** for those most affected by the pandemic



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4. Look at Google Trends.

The digital landscape is always changing. Businesses who are able to evolve with the times are the ones who are going to make it out on top. This is why it's so important to research the latest trends, as this indicates what consumers are looking at, using and purchasing.

Content: By staying on top of trends it means you are able to post about and create content that is relevant, timely and thus likely to increase audience engagement. It also means that you are able to monitor how customers might act next and prevent investments into campaigns that are no longer applicable.

Seasonality: Through Google Trends you are able to see not just what is currently trending but also what has trended in the past and when. Certain campaigns might do better during varying seasons of the year because of the type of service or product that is being promoted. In order to see the greatest returns businesses should be marketing during those times.

Geography: Additionally you can also see where a business's offerings are most popular in the world. This is most beneficial for businesses who sell their products online and can bring to light certain areas, regions or even countries that you might not have expected and which you may not have been emphasising heavily enough in regards to previous marketing efforts.

Branding: The Google Trends feature allow businesses to compare two different search queries against one another which means that you are able to compare your business against that of your competitors. Allowing you to contrast search volume, location and seasonal popularity for these against one another.

Besides Google Trends too there are a number of other ways you can track trends including:

- Following industry blogs, businesses, leaders and influencers.
- Setting aside 30 minutes – 1 hour a day to research key topics.
- Subscribing to magazines and media outlets.
- Watching videos and listening to podcasts.
- Discussions within your network.
- Joining chatroom or groups on LinkedIn and other platforms.
- Participating in workshops and seminars.
- Monitoring your competitors.
- Joining your local Chamber.
- Gathering feedback from your customers.

BUILDING BRAND TRUST DURING COVID-19

Speak with empathy.

Communicate with compassion and reassurance of your brand promise with intent to comfort and inform.

**DON'T
GIVE UP**

**YOU ARE
NOT ALONE**

**YOU
MATTER**

5. Assess your social media campaigns.

The best way to assess your social media campaigns is by creating a step by step process that ensures your objectives are being met. This should go as follows:

- Step 1** Determine your goals
- Step 2** Create metrics around your goals
- Step 3** Measure these metrics
- Step 4** Monitor and analyse the results
- Step 5** Review and report your findings
- Step 6** Adjust and repeat

When determining your goals it's important that you consider your audience above all else. This means creating something that is well planned, relevant and shareable to those individuals. People connect with content that tells a story and that resonates with them on a very personal level. Often businesses can get scared when creating campaigns that target only a specific group of customers as they believe this will reduce profits. It's important to remember that quantity isn't everything when it comes to marketing. If you can get a message to a small number of customers but they truly believe in it and decide to purchase your product or service, then you will have made a far higher income than if you had advertised to everyone but received only a handful in return. So other than profit what kind of metrics should you use to track the results of your campaign?

Metrics to measure include:

ROI: the difference between the amount spent on the campaign and earned.

SALES: how many people have bought your product or service.

REACH: how many people have seen the post.

FOLLOWER NUMBER: the number of people who follow your account, ideally this will rise as a result of each campaign you produce.

IMPRESSIONS: how many times a post has showed up in someone newsfeed because they follow your or someone they are connected to has interacted with it.

ENGAGEMENT: how many actions have been performed on your post including clicks, likes, comments, shares, brand mentions, profile visits and saves.

CONVERSION RATE: the number of visitors who take a desired action, such as subscribing to your businesses newsletter.

CLICK THROUGH RATE: how many people click on a specific link when compared to the total number of users who have viewed it.

SOCIAL MENTIONS: the number of people tagging your social media handles in messages or other posts.

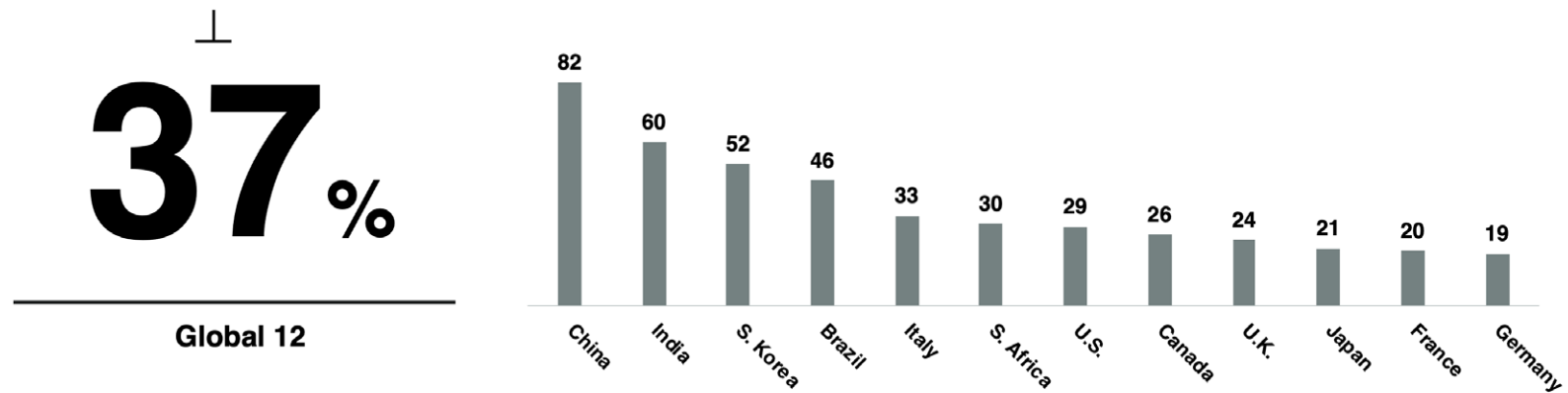
You might have others depending on what your goal is but these are some of the most commonly used key performance indicators (KPIs).

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BRANDS' RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC ALREADY INFLUENCING PURCHASE

Percent who agree

I have recently started using a new brand because of the innovative or compassionate way they have responded to the virus outbreak



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6. Beware of social media detoxing.

As New Zealand slowly moves out of level 4 lockdown and further down the levels it is likely that the rules around social distancing are going to be loosened. Social media appears to have been somewhat of a lifeline over the past few weeks for those who have been separated from their friends and family. However, as restrictions on physical distancing are removed we are likely to see a downturn in social media consumption as people begin to meet up with others outside of their bubbles and are no longer as reliant on these platforms. As Kiwis, we have very close ties to the outdoors and many of us can't wait to get back to exploring our beautiful backyards and off the couch. Some of us also appear to be suffering from information overload after having spent many hours browsing the Internet over the last few weeks and will be keen to return to more normalised routines, including going back to work.

So with less eyes on our screens and to avoid the pitfall of having all of our eggs in one basket it is a good idea to make sure your marketing efforts are being well balanced across all platforms and not just social media. This includes:

- Building email database.
- Be consistent with posting but don't overload your audience.
- Use search engine marketing such as Google Ads.
- Increase your blog posts.

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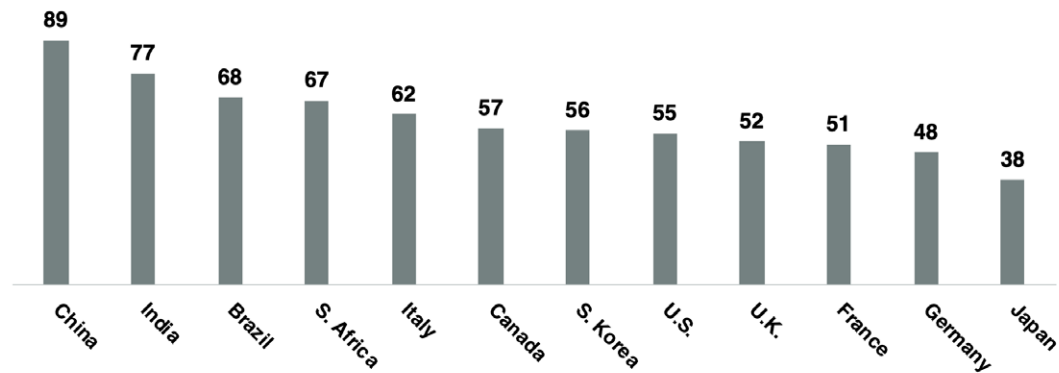
PEOPLE TURNING TO BRANDS THEY TRUST

Percent who agree

In this time of crisis, I am turning more and more to the brands that I am absolutely sure that I can trust

60%

Global 12



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7. Build your email database.

Awareness is of huge importance to your business and the more people you are able to reach with your emails, the greater people's recognition for your business and its activities will be. An email database also gives you a good insight into who your most loyal clients are as they are the ones who have chosen to subscribe to your mailing list voluntarily and thus are genuinely interested in your business and its offerings. Building a database isn't as straightforward as it might seem however and can take time to grow this. In order to attract subscribers in the first place and then retain them further down the line you need to provide email content that is useful and relevant to them. This is where you can benefit from having multiple audience lists within your subscriber base so that you can target your content to specific groups even more accurately, giving them highly relevant offers and information to get better results.

Emails are also very personal and unlike posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and so on, they can make you feel as if you are the only person the sender is talking to. There is also a level of privacy there because the message isn't public and so they help to build trust and form deeper connections.

- Encourage subscribers to share and forward your email - include a subscribe option at the bottom so that non-subscribers can then sign up for themselves.
- Create and promote blogs by getting people to sign up for these in order to receive new releases.
- Create a quiz or Typeform survey where people have to enter their email address to participate or see the results.
- Give a preview of your email/newsletter so people can see the type of content that they might be missing out on.
- Promote your emails on social media and ask followers to subscribe.
- Publish case studies.
- Create valuable and informative guides e.g. best practice, top 10 hints and tips, staying up with current trends.
- Add a subscribe link in your email signature.
- Create an online tool or resource that requires an email sign up.
- Create lead magnets in the form of cheat sheets, checklists, guides, prompts, tutorials, short e-books.
- End emails and blogs with a further call to action.
- Include an opt-in form to subscribe on your Facebook page.

BUILDING BRAND TRUST DURING COVID-19

Solve, don't sell.

Focus on meaningful interactions and problem solving for what people are facing today.



8. Get B2B and B2C reviews to build reputation

Whether we admit it or not we are highly swayed by the opinions of others. Especially when these reviews or testimonials are coming from reputable sources. This is why it's hugely important for businesses ensure that they aren't just pleasing their customers but that their customers then go on to tell others about their awesome experience.

Reviews aren't just important to potential customers, they're a big factor in Google's algorithm.

Some of the ways you can grow your reviews and testimonials includes:

- Reaching out to past and current customers to ask for a reviews on Google and any other social media platforms that you may have after purchase.
- Emailing each client individually and personalise your message to them.
- Using reviews across your business marketing strategy.
- Suggesting an exchange of services, whereby you review one another (works best in a B2B scenario).
- Including reviews and testimonials on your website to increase awareness.
- Respond to all reviews even if they are negative and make it apparent that you want to solve the issue and work together to come to a positive outcome.
- Contact those who leave a glowing review and thank them personally, ask if you can highlight them in some way.

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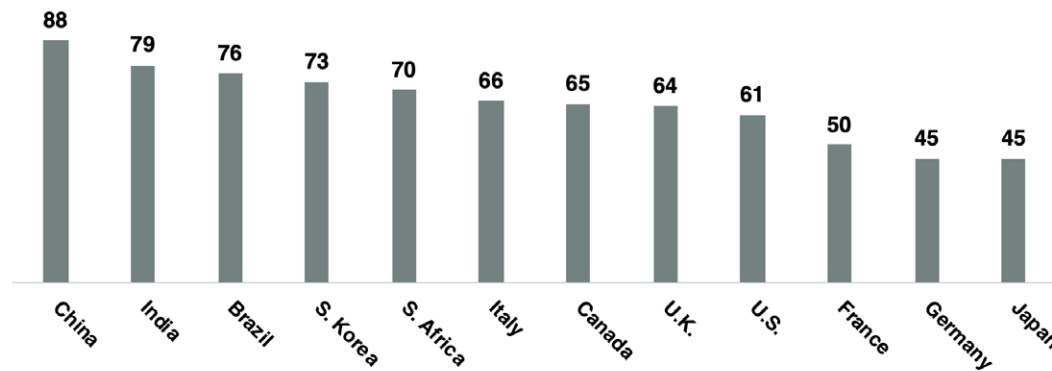
BRANDS' RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC WILL INFLUENCE FUTURE PURCHASE

Percent who agree

How well a brand responds to this crisis will have a huge impact on my likelihood to buy that brand in the future

65%

Global 12



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9. Local SEO

Local SEO is different from regular SEO. Any business with a physical shopfront that serves customers in a particular geographic area needs Local SEO. The easiest way to check whether the local algorithm applies to your business is with a quick Google search. Search for a handful of your most important keywords and check out the search results.

If you see a map pack – a map with three results underneath, that’s a clear signal that the local algorithm returned those results, and that means your business needs Local SEO.

Let’s look at the map pack and map search factors. Proximity is a major factor in results 25.12%. Links comes in second with 16.53%, followed by reviews at 15.44%. So for showing up in the map pack, which is the goal, your Google My Business profile, your inbound links, and your reviews (we wrote above about building those reviews) matter more than the content on your site, which comes in at number 4 with 13.82%.

In Local SEO, the important factor is that the link comes from a local business or website. Sure, industry-relevant links are still important and still carry value, but local links move the needle more than anything else.

If you get involved in the local community, building local links is actually incredibly easy. Many businesses can find local link opportunities related to things they’re already doing in the community, or through local relationships they already have, so reach out and get that all important backlink from them.

When you’re ready to go out and build some local links, sign up for a free SEM Rush account. Start by checking your competitors links, download a list of your inbound links and a list for each of your major local competitors. They may have links back to them that you can reach out to.

Don’t forget to make sure your Google My Business profile is set up properly and is up to date. It is the first impression you make with potential customers.

10. Review your analytics.

It's all about metrics and observable as well as measurable results. Whether you are performing an analysis of your website or an ad platform such as Google Ads or Facebook Ads Manager it's important to set yourself a number of KPIs in order to track how these are performing. Which of these you choose can vary greatly depending on the goal of your campaign and thus it can be difficult to say how you could improve your efforts without knowing exactly what these are. However, one of the best ways to measure your results is by comparing and contrasting through an A/B test. This means that you have two or more versions of the same ad and only change one element. The ad that performs the best based off the metrics you choose is the one that you should invest in going forward.

It may even be advisable to hire an expert on the matter to have a look into your analytics and to perform a SWOT analysis on your businesses site, ad platforms and campaigns. This will give you a baseline of how your business is tracking and whether or not it is currently operating at the level you want it to be. It also means you are getting an unbiased and honest opinion which may be difficult if the analysis is being performed internally.

Google Analytics has lots of data you can use to optimize your website. But mastering every single aspect of Google Analytics takes a lot of time. If you don't have enough time to dive in, and only have a little understanding of the analytics tool, then you can spend some time once a week looking at two reports.

The first is the source/medium report, which you can find in the 'Acquisition' section under item 'all traffic'. This will show you where your site's visitors are coming from. Check if you get organic traffic from search engines, like Google. And try to understand the data you're seeing. Which sources have a high bounce rate, which sources drive the most traffic to your site? If you look at this data every week, you'll know if your site's doing better than the week before.

The second report that's interesting is the Landing pages report you can find in the 'Behaviour' section under 'All pages'. These pages are the very first pages people visit on your site, which gives you insight into the things your visitors are interested in. It'll (basically) tell you if the description of a page on Facebook or in a search result was interesting enough to make people click. Again, try to understand the data. How's the bounce rate of landing pages that shouldn't have a high bounce rate, like your homepage, for instance?

Ask your web provider to add you as a user if you don't already have access.

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BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Percent who want each from brands

■ Brands must do this to earn or keep my trust □ I hope brands will do this, but there is no obligation

Connect people and help them
stay **emotionally close**

83%

32

51

Use social media channels to
**facilitate a sense of
community** and offer social
support to people

84%

34

50

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and the Coronavirus. Q3. In the face of this coronavirus outbreak, what roles do you expect brands to play? 3-point scale; code 1, brands must do this; code 2, I hope brands will do this. Q5. In the face of this coronavirus outbreak, how do you expect brands to react when it comes to the nature and tone of their communications with the public? 3-point scale; code 1, brands must do this; code 2, I hope brands will do this. Questions shown to those who have heard of the virus (Q1/1). 12-mkt avg. Data collected between March 23 and March 26, 2020.

11. Update old blog posts.

Updating your old posts can carry a number of benefits with it. Including, boosting your search engine optimisation (SEO) score, increasing the click through rate and potentially invite back current subscribers as well as gaining new ones.

There are a number of ways to do this, including:

- Updating information such as statistics, changes in rules, regulations or laws or writing about new research that has come to light on the subject.
- Deleting old or irrelevant content.
- Including new best practices or more helpful hints and tips.
- Writing about new providers, services or products that have come onto market.
- Adding relevant keywords throughout the text to improve SEO.
- Link to old posts that are on similar subject matters so that you don't have to repeat content.
- Proofread for errors such as spelling mistakes, get rid of old dates and links that no longer exist or update links to new more relevant articles.

By performing these key steps it will give your readers quality content that is relevant and saves you a huge amount of time as you don't have to write a whole new article on the subject.



BUILDING BRAND TRUST DURING COVID-19

Don't act alone.

Find the strength in collaboration. Join forces with like-minded businesses and organisations to truly help other.

12. Mine your B2B network for referrals.

Happy clients will tell other people about their experiences. Word of mouth from trusted sources such as your close friends, family and thought leaders in the industry carrying more weight in the decision making process than any campaign your business could ever design. This is why it's critically important that no matter who your customer is or what job you are completing for them, as a business you make sure that they feel special. This can be done in a number of ways; including going above and beyond what is expected, maintaining strong contact throughout the process, asking them for their input etc. What ultimately exceeds their expectations and leaves them feeling satisfied will vary from one person and business to the next. Which is why it's important to do your research and take the time to work out what makes them tick.

Some of the ways you can improve your likelihood of gaining referrals is by:

- Being referable – this includes how your brand and business profile is viewed by others.
- Provide an awesome customer experience.
- Maintain regular contact with your customers even after their purchase.
- Asking customers both current and past for referrals.
- Make it easy for clients to refer your business – provide easy to share content and summarise what your business does, the benefits it provides and points of difference.
- Reciprocate the deed by referring clients to others businesses within your network.
- Show your appreciation after they have referred you by thanking them personally.

13. Plan and fill out your social media calendar.

A social media content calendar allows you to plan your marketing efforts and visualise what your strategy will look like over a set period of time. It also means that you are able to hold yourself and others accountable for ensuring it is achieved and that you are staying on track to meet the goals you have set out for your business. This is also a great opportunity to look ahead into the future and think about what important dates or events are coming up that you could participate in and which would align with your brand image.

Consumer can be turned off by information overload. A content calendar ensures that your viewers are receiving a steady stream of information about and from your business without being bombarded all at once or not receiving any content for a number of days. It also means that you are able to see if there is any content overlap that needs to be addressed. Consistency is key and you don't want to bore your followers by posting the same information multiple times or across all your social media platforms. It might also be beneficial to create a separate content calendar for each of your marketing channels, especially if you are targeting these to slightly different audiences.

There are a number of ways to do this, including:

- Get your content calendar started early. Make sure you have next month's content calendar finished before the current month ends, at least two weeks in advance, otherwise you might be left sitting high and dry with nothing to post. It can often be a good idea to plan anywhere from 2-6 months at a time.
- Brainstorm content that aligns with your brand's values, mission and persona.
- Decide on certain key metrics and make sure you review what has worked and what hasn't at the end of every month.

14. Get a professional audit.

It can be very difficult to be self-critical, especially when it is something that you have invested a lot of time, money and energy into, such as your business and its brand. This is why it is important every once in a while to ask a third party, especially experts to do these audits for you. It's like writing a 1000 word essay. After staring at it all day you will begin skim reading it and miss those repeated words, forgotten commas and start writing 'effect' instead of 'affect'... or was it the other way round? Doing an audit of your own brand is pretty much the same thing. As the owner you are too close to remain unbiased and there will likely be a number of issues or areas of improvement that they can pick up which you may not have recognised.

Getting a brand audit done by an agency means you are receiving an impartial review of your business and how it stands up against its competitors. They are also able to best advise your on what improvements can be made as it is their job to constantly review the latest trends so you know you are getting the best and most up to date recommendations.

- Get a brand audit done regularly (at least annually) to review your image, audience and competitive standing from every angle.
- A brand audit allows a business to get an insight into its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Thank you.

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