

A vibrant, cobblestone street in a European city, likely Krakow, featuring colorful buildings in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The street is wet, reflecting the sky and buildings. A few people are walking, and a car is visible in the distance. The sky is blue with white clouds.

# **Social Media Marketing and Digital Marketing**

ebook author

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

Imagine spending as little as 6 hours a week in order to increase your business's recognition, traffic, and sales with little to no cost. That's right! About 90% of marketers claimed that social media generated immense exposure for their company, and that's only one of its many advantages. Social networks are now a substantial part of every marketing strategy, and the benefits of using social media are so great that anyone not implementing this cost-effective resource is missing out on a phenomenal marketing opportunity.

It's easy to see that [social media marketing](#) is a key element for success in marketing and many marketers realize the potential for business growth using the platform. However, some of these professionals are unsure of which tactics to apply and if they are effective.

According to [Social Media Examiner](#), about 96% of marketers are currently participating in social media marketing, but 85% of participants aren't sure which tools are the best to use. With our help, we will diminish the confusion by thoroughly explaining the advantages of using social media to market your business.

## 1. Increased Brand Awareness

Social media is one of the most cost-efficient digital marketing methods used to syndicate content and increase your business' visibility. Implementing a social media strategy will greatly increase your brand recognition since you will be engaging with a broad audience of consumers.

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

To get started, create social media profiles for your business and begin interacting with others. Get employees, business partners, and sponsors to "like" and "share" your page. Simply having people interact with your content will increase brand awareness and begin building your reputation as a business. Each post that is shared will be introduced to a new network of individuals, which can lead them to becoming potential customers, and the more people who know about your business, the better.

By investing only a few hours per week, over 91% of marketers claimed that their social marketing efforts greatly increased their exposure. There is no doubt that by simply having a social media page your brand will benefit, and with regular use it can generate a wide audience for your business.

## 2. More Inbound Traffic

Without marketing your business on social media, your inbound traffic is limited to your usual customers. The people familiar with your brand are likely searching for the same keywords you already rank for. Without utilizing social media as part of your marketing strategy, you'll have much more difficulty reaching anyone outside of your loyal customer circle.

Every social media profile you add to your marketing mix is a gateway to your website, and every piece of content you post is another opportunity to acquire a new customer. Social media is a melting pot of different types of people with varying backgrounds and behaviors. With different people come different needs and different ways of thinking.



# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

Syndicating your content on as many platforms as possible allows these individuals to organically reach your business. For instance, perhaps someone in an older demographic of consumers will search for your website using a particular keyword on Facebook, but a millennial could begin their search by using a different social media platform entirely, because they search for products totally differently. By marketing on social media you can effectively open your business to a wider variety of versatile consumers all over the world.

## 3. Improved Search Engine Rankings

Although posting on social media might get your business some site traffic, more effort than that is required to see significant success. [Search engine optimization](#) is very important for achieving higher page rankings and obtaining traffic to your business website. While social media doesn't directly increase search engine rankings, Social Media Examiner states that more than 58% of marketers who have been using social media for one year or longer still see improved search engine rankings. Being able to rank in the top positions for your keywords will revolutionize your traffic and continue to generate positive results for your business.

Let's face it, everyone uses Google to find information, and they likely won't navigate past page 1 because their answer normally is on the first page of results. If your business website isn't ranked towards the top of search engine results, you should probably adjust your search engine optimization strategy.

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

To give yourself the best chance of ranking better through social media, create high quality content that integrates your targeted keywords. Content such as blogs, infographics, case studies, business information, and employee photos will make your business's social media profile intriguing and credible. Once you begin posting quality content, you'll begin to build a social media community where followers will "like" and "share" your content. Most importantly, it gives you more opportunities to get in front of industry influencers who will write about your business and provide links back – which will help to directly increase search engine rankings.

## 4. Higher Conversion Rates

With increased visibility, your business gains more opportunities for conversion. Every blog post, image, video, or comment may lead viewers to your company's website and increase traffic. Social media marketing allows your business to give a positive impression through a humanization factor. When brands are interactive by sharing content, commenting, and posting statuses on social media, it personifies a brand. People prefer to do business with other people, rather than companies.

Over 51% of marketers claimed that taking the time to develop relationships with consumers showed positive results in sales. The better impression you make on a visitor, the more likely they are to think of your business when the need for your product or services arises.

**Studies** have also shown that social media has a 100% higher lead-to-close rate than outbound marketing. When a brand is interactive online, consumers who follow your brand's accounts often begin to more completely trust the credibility of your business.

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

People use social media platforms to stay connected to their friends, family, and communities. Since people are already talking, why not throw your brand into the mix? More likely than not, they'll mention your brand to a friend when your products or services are needed, overall providing your business with social proof of its quality. As reported by Social Media Examiner, about 66% of marketers saw lead generation benefits by using social media platforms at least 6 hours per week. Putting your brand in an atmosphere where people are sharing, liking, and talking, can only improve the conversion rates on your existing traffic.

## 5. Better Customer Satisfaction

Social media is a networking and communication platform. Creating a voice for your company through these platforms is important in humanizing your company. Customers appreciate knowing that when they post comments on your pages, they will receive a personalized response rather than an automated message. Being able to acknowledge each comment shows that you are attentive of your visitors' needs and aim to provide the best experience.

**"When you interact with customers on a one-to-one basis on social media, it makes them more loyal. Loyal customers spend more with you, stay with you longer and tell their friends about you."**

**- Dan Gingiss, Marketing & Customer Experience Executive**

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

Every customer interaction on your business's social media accounts is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate your compassion for your customers. Whether an individual has a question or a complaint, social media allows you to address the matter using interpersonal dialogue. A brand devoted to customer satisfaction that takes the time to compose personal messages will inherently be viewed in a positive light, even if responding to a customer complaint.

## 6. Improved Brand Loyalty

One of the main goals of almost all businesses is developing a loyal customer base. Considering that customer satisfaction and brand loyalty typically go hand in hand, it is important to regularly engage with consumers and begin developing a bond with them. Social media is not just limited to introducing your brand's products and promotional campaigns. Customers see these platforms as a service channel where they can communicate directly with the business.

The millennial generation is known for being the most brand loyal customers of all. Born between the early 1980's and the early 2000's, millennials are the largest generation in US history -- and will soon completely consume the market. Studies show that this **segment** of customers is 62% more loyal to brands that directly engage with them on social media. Since these technology natives require communication with their brands, businesses must implement social media marketing to get the attention of their most influential consumers.

## 7. More Brand Authority

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty both play a part in making your business more authoritative, but it all comes down to communication. When consumers see your company posting on social media, especially replying to customers and posting original content, it makes you appear more credible. Regularly interacting with customers demonstrates that your business cares about customer satisfaction, and is available to answer any questions that they might have. Satisfied customers are eager to spread the word about a great product or service and they usually turn to social media to express their opinion. Having customers mention your business on social media will advertise your business, and show new visitors your value and brand authority. Once you obtain a few satisfied customers who are vocal about their positive purchase experience, you can let the advertising be done for you by actual customers who enjoyed your product or service.

## 8. Cost-Effective

Social media marketing is possibly the most cost-efficient part of an advertising strategy. Signing up and creating a profile is free for almost all social networking platforms, and any paid promotions you decide to invest in are a relatively low cost compared to other marketing tactics. Being cost-effective is such an advantage because you can see a greater return on investment and retain a bigger budget for other marketing and business expenses.

If you decide to use paid advertising on social media, always start small to see what you should expect. As you become more comfortable, fine tune your strategy and try increasing your budget. Just by spending a small amount of time and money you can significantly increase your conversion rates and eventually get return on investment on the money you initially invested.

## 9. Gain Marketplace Insights



# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

One of the most valuable advantages of social media is marketplace insight. What better way to know the thoughts and needs of your consumers than by directly talking to them? By monitoring the activity on your profiles,, you can see customer' interests and opinions that you might not otherwise be aware of if your business didn't have a social media presence.

Using social media as a complementary research tool can help gain information that will aid you in understanding your industry. Once you gain a large following, you can use additional tools to analyze the demographics of your consumers. Another insightful aspect of social media marketing is the ability to segment your content syndication lists based on topic, and identify which types of content generate the most impressions. These tools give you the ability to measure conversions based on posts on various social media platforms to find the perfect combination for generating revenue.

## 10. Thought Leadership

Posting insightful and well-written content on your social media is a great way to become an expert and leader in your field. There is no one way to become a thought leader – it requires work that can be supported by online networking tools. To establish yourself as an expert, be sure to utilize social media platforms and build your presence. Be communicative, connect with your audience, share content, and promote your authority. When your social media campaign is aligned with other marketing efforts, your skills will be highlighted and followers will look up to you. Being able to directly connect with your customers creates a relationship that they will value, allowing you to become a notable influencer in your field.

## Get Started!

# 10 Advantages of Social Media Marketing for Your Business

It's clear that social media marketing has its advantages, so if your business doesn't already have the appropriate profiles, create them! Fill out your business' information and post some engaging content to begin gaining followers. As mentioned, ask people relevant to your business to "like" and "share" your page to help build your profile. With consistent updating, the right [social media marketing strategy](#) will lead to increased traffic, better SEO, higher conversion rates, improved brand loyalty, and much more.

There are virtually no reasons not to implement social media into your marketing strategy. Since it is so cost-effective, there is hardly anything to lose. Your competition is most likely already on social media, so don't let them take your potential customers. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll see growth in your business.

# The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

Whether you want to sell products, gain subscribers, persuade followers to a point or sway the hearts and minds of readers to your cause, they've got to know who you are in the first place.

Your ability to encourage any of these actions comes from your brand's authority -- and one of the best ways to build that is through the savvy use of social media. In fact, recent research from Econsultancy shows that 71 percent of brands plan to [invest more heavily in social media](#) in the coming year to reach new followers and build brand reputation.

Want to join their ranks and become known in your industry? Here's everything you need to know about using social media to build your brand:

## 1. Choose networks that support your brand image.

According to Convince and Convert, 22 percent of Americans [use social media multiple times a day](#), making it one of the best mediums on which to build your brand. There are literally hundreds of social networks out there, but most of them aren't worth investing your time and energy.

**Related:** [5 Ways to Use Data to Inform Your Social Media Marketing Strategy](#)

Instead, find the platforms that support your brand image, taking the following factors into consideration:

# The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

- **Facebook** is by the far the best platform for promoting brand awareness, as [nearly three quarters of Americans adults use the site](#). Facebook is a great platform for [promoting virtually any brand](#), due to its very heterogeneous user base.
- **Instagram** is a great option for brands that rely heavily on images, such as clothing companies and retailers. It's also particularly effective for reaching young adults, Hispanics and African Americans.
- While **Google+** hasn't taken off as well as many people predicted, it can be a great platform to reach men in the technology industry, as two-thirds of the network's users are men, most of whom work in engineering or other technical professions.
- **Pinterest** is an excellent social network to reach women, especially for brands selling jewelry or clothing.
- Finally, if you operate a business-to-business company, **LinkedIn** is a stronger choice for promoting business-related content and connecting with other corporate influencers.

## 2. Provide valuable and shareable content.

It should go without saying, but you'll create a much stronger brand reputation if you focus on creating useful content that viewers will want to share, rather than cranking out content to meet arbitrary publishing calendars or that covers subjects only you'd want to read.

Keep the following principles in mind as you craft content for social sharing:



# The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

- Every single piece of content you share should support your brand image. Remember, humor can be difficult to pull off. If you can use memes effectively, they can be powerful brand-building tools. But if you aren't 100 percent sure how your audience will respond to your image, resist the temptation to create memes or engage in clickbait strategies that have the potential to reflect poorly on your company.
- Figure out which content is most likely to gain visibility on your social networks. Images may resonate better with your audience than blog posts, but you won't know that if you don't look at your data.
- Don't be afraid to use visual content. Articles with **images receive 94 percent more views**. Twitter content with images **receives nearly twice as many views as text posts**, even though there are seven times more text posts on Twitter.

One of the easiest ways to create content for deployment on social media profiles that'll support your brand building efforts is to see what types of posts others have been successful with and put together your own, better versions.

Say, for example, that one of your competitors has received good social traction with a blog post titled "12 Strategies for Increasing Website Traffic."

Instead of wasting your time building content around unproven topics, you could release a stronger content piece on this same subject. For instance, you could put together a post titled "102 Strategies for Increasing Website Traffic," or you could go through your competitor's list of techniques and put together your own guide that goes into more depth on how to put these principles into action.

# The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

To find the content pieces that are performing well in your industry, use tools such as [BuzzSumo](#) and sort based on past social engagement. To learn more about implementing this technique, check out the [Backlinko blog's guide](#) on the subject.

**Related:** [4 Do's and 4 Don'ts for Businesses Using Social Media](#)

## 3. Leverage influencers.

Publishing killer content to your social profiles is important, but it's only one part of the equation. If you have a relatively unknown brand, your voice is likely getting lost in the noise. While you can eventually [build your own audience](#) through the creation of great content, this strategy is going to take time.

A much faster approach is to leverage the audiences existing influencers in your industry have already built. There are a few different ways you can do this:

- Mention their names or cite their websites in your content pieces. Influencers with Google Alerts or other notifications set up on their names will see your content after it's published.
- Tag any influencers you've referenced when sharing content to your social media profiles.
- Email influencers after you've published your content to let them know they've been referenced in your work.

The goal of all these different actions is to get them to share your content piece with their followers via social networking. It can take time to build up the kinds of relationships that lead to influencer sharing, but if you're consistent about producing quality content, your efforts will get noticed.

## 4. Use social campaigns to promote content.

# The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

Finally, keep in mind that, in an age of [diminishing organic reach](#), paid campaigns - especially those run through [native advertising platforms](#) -- may be one of your better options for building your brand on social networks.

A growing number of brands use strategies such as contests and other social media campaigns to successfully gain visibility and generate leads.

To take advantage of this effect, provide your audience with valuable incentives that encourage user participation and make sure that your campaigns offers value to all participants.

While social media is one of the most powerful ways to reach new leads, it's easy to waste time or alienate people if you don't use it appropriately. That's what makes having a sound social media strategy in place so important.

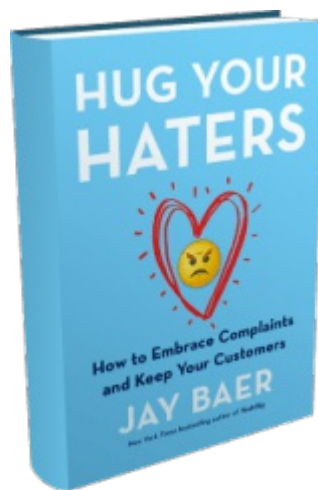
If you make it a priority to consistently share great content and leverage the power of existing social media influencers, your brand building efforts are bound to pay off in the long-run.

# 23 Statistics That Show Why Customer Service Mostly Sucks - infographic

## Customer Experience

Customer service is being disrupted in the same ways that marketing has been disrupted: mobile, social, Millennial behavior shifts. We talk about marketing disruption A LOT. We talk about customer service disruption just a little.

As a result, most companies are using 1995 playbooks to solve modern customer service issues. We have to do better.



My friends at [PixelRoadDesigns.com](https://PixelRoadDesigns.com) created this outstanding infographic that collects 23 statistics – many of them from my new book, *Hug Your Haters* – about why and how customer service needs to change NOW.

Here are the **23 Statistics That Show Why Customer Service Mostly Sucks** in bullet point form, for easier tweeting. *(just highlight the bullet to tweet)*

*(data with a \*\* is proprietary research I conducted with [Edison Research](https://EdisonResearch.com) exclusively for *Hug Your Haters*)*

□



# 23 Statistics That Show Why Customer Service Mostly Sucks - infographic

1. 80% of business think they deliver superior customer service
2. 8% of customers think businesses deliver superior customer service
3. 62% of customers report having to contact a business multiple times to resolve an issue
4. 62% of complaints are made first via phone or email \*\*
5. When consumers complain on the phone, 91% of them expect a response \*\*
6. Just 67% of complainers are satisfied with telephone response time from businesses \*\*
7. Not answering a telephone complaint decreases customer advocacy by 51% \*\*
8. 61% of people who complain via email are satisfied with businesses' response time \*\*
9. Average time it take businesses to respond to an email complaint = 44 hours
10. More than 60% of businesses say they are unable to solve social media complaints in one response
11. Only 48% of online complainers are seeking help. The rest are venting, or seeking vengeance
12. Only 32% of social media complainers are satisfied with businesses' response time \*\*
13. 57% of complainers report having to switch from social media to phone to get problem solved
14. 71% of all social media complaints are on Facebook (17% are on Twitter) \*\*
15. 94% of frequent complainers have a Facebook account \*\*
16. 84% of frequent complainers have a smartphone, compared to 67% among occasional complainers \*\*
17. 74% of consumers use three or more channels when trying to get help from big companies

# 23 Statistics That Show Why Customer Service Mostly Sucks - infographic

- 20. Customers whose problem is resolved in one try are twice as likely to buy from the company again
- 21. Not responding to a customer complaint in social media decreases customer advocacy 43% \*\*
- 22. A 5% increase in customer retention can increase profits 25% to 85%
- 23. 82% of American consumers say they've stopped doing business with a company due to poor service
- 24. 55% of consumers have intended to make a purchase, but didn't due to poor service
- 25. 95% of unhappy customers never complain in a way a business can find the complaint

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

According to a [‘Managing Digital Marketing’ study](#) by Smart Insights, 46% of brands don’t have a defined digital marketing strategy, while 16% do have a strategy but haven’t yet integrated it into their marketing activity. But here’s the thing: if you don’t have a plan in place how can you expect to grow and innovate, to measure meaningful results and to learn from past mistakes?

It’s time to stop panicking about next year or next month and start crafting a plan that can pack a powerful punch. We’ve selected the 5 most important steps that you, the decision maker should take to ensure that your digital marketing efforts create a real impact on your bottom line.

## 1. Know What You Want (& Set the Objective)

### **Nail Your Mission:**

- Define your business’ overall mission/objective first – your digital marketing mission must fit into your grand plan.
- Answer this question: what is the overriding objective you want your digital marketing efforts to achieve (for example do you want to position your company as the go-to online provider for computer parts in Europe)? This is your mission.

### **Set & Measure Your KPIs:**

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Get specific with your KPIs by identifying the figures you will be held accountable for achieving.
- Get realistic with your KPIs by analysing your previous digital marketing efforts first – this will ensure you aim for a positive increase on your current results, while helping you to avoid setting your expectations too high.
- Identify a method to help you measure each of your KPIs – for example, will you use [Google Analytics](#) to measure your conversions, your individual social media analytics to track engagement or a tool like [BuzzSumo](#) to assess the success of your content marketing?
- Here's a handy KPI template for you to steal: (Insert goal, e.g. 'Increase traffic') by (insert figure)% in (insert number of months).
- Before you begin planning your KPIs [find out which metrics matter most to your CEO](#).

## 2. Analyse Your Past (& Learn From Your Mistakes)

You don't have to (and shouldn't) go into the planning period in the dark. Analysing your digital marketing strategy's past success and failures can help focus you on setting the best KPIs for your business. You, therefore, might want to complete step one and two together.

Choose a time period you'd like to analyse (it's best to set this time period as the same length of time you plan for your new strategy) – for example decide on whether you're going to analyse the previous year, quarter or month.

### How to Analyse:

Determine the time period you would like to analyse and set your Google Analytics calendar to match this timeframe.



# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Try out [Google's Benchmarking Reports](#) in your Analytics account to compare your progress to your competitors.
- Don't forget to analyse your competitors' strategy too – create an analysis spreadsheet of their online activities (you can use [SEMrush](#) to identify the SEO strategy of a competitor, i.e. what keywords are driving the largest volume of organic traffic to their website. It can also be used to compare the organic and paid traffic of different websites so again quite useful to see how aggressive they're being with their paid spend.)
- Ask yourself this question at regular intervals: is there anything else I need to analyse that I haven't thought of before – e.g. should I be testing the times I post my content or the types of images I use?

## 3. Remember Who You're Talking to (& Speak Their Language)

Don't let the planning take away from the people you're trying to reach. You already know who your audience are (at least we hope you do) but sometimes they're the first thing a digital marketer can forget amidst the KPI setting, budget fretting and channel selection.

You're not going to make this mistake – not this time. Instead you're going to put your audience at the heart of your strategy, cater to their emotional needs and satisfy their deepest desires. How? Through the creation of well fleshed out and well thought out personas, of course.

Develop Useful Personas:

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Start with the basics and note down all the demographic information you know about your target consumer – like age, gender and location.
- Then dig a little deeper and Identify the problems you can help your target persona solve.
- Delve into their emotional desires, goals, aspirations and fears and document all of the factors that could make them tick (think about their conscious and unconscious desires).
- You can dive deep into the '[Audience Reports](#)' of your Google Analytics account to identify key characteristics of your target persona like age, sex, career, etc.
- When creating your personas this is the perfect time to identify the people who will be of influence to them – these will be the influencers your strategy should target.

## 4. Identify Your Means (& Stick to Your Budget)

Three things are important for identifying your means: these are your budget, your digital channels and your team (or people). It is important to take stock of all of your resources before deciding on what else you might need for the next period.

For example, now is the perfect time for creating an audit of your existing digital channels and to decide whether you're going to outsource specific sections of your digital marketing and whether you need to set budget aside for a new hire or two.

### How to Identify Your Means:

#### Your Budget:

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Define your overall digital marketing budget.
- Look at the historical data of what has worked before (for example, have any specific channels brought you quality leads at a low cost?)
- Decide whether you will use paid promotion (for, example Adwords or paid ads on social media).
- Allocate a specific portion of the budget for each digital channel you want to use for paid promotion (delve into your Analytics to help you assess the most cost effective digital channels with the largest reach and conversions and the lowest Cost Per Click).
- If a certain element of your paid promotion strategy isn't bringing you the results you desire, revisit it and invest the allocated budget figure into the channel that's bringing you the best results.

## Your People:

- Look at your current team and assess what you are capable of achieving (be realistic here and ensure that no-one will be over stretched or over worked).
- Identify whether you need to hire more people and whether you have the means to do so.
- Decide whether all of your digital marketing activity will take place in house or if you'll need to outsource some elements to a third party agency.
- Get each of your team members to review their digital marketing activity and brainstorm a few ideas for their future strategy (the more autonomy your employee has in their role the more they'll be on board with your new plan).

## Your Channels:

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Review your current digital marketing channels and decide which channels to keep and whether you'd like to invest in any new ones (this depends on where your customers are and the time you have available).
- Clearly articulate what each digital channel is trying to achieve.
- Make sure you have at least one KPI attached to each of your digital channels.

## 5. Make the Plan (& Don't Stick to It)

'Create a plan and don't stick to it? But, but, what do you mean?' Before the panic sets into the most organised of digital marketers let me explain...your plan is never going to be perfect from the outset. Not every assumption you make is going to be correct.

And although you've taken every care to craft a carefully constructed plan based on a set of insightful assumptions and analysis you still can't predict exactly how your customers will behave. It is, therefore, essential to continuously measure and monitor your strategy's performance and to change elements where needed.

Create Your Digital Marketing Calendar:

- Try creating your timeline using Google Calendars – that way you can share it with your team members and allow them to edit it where necessary.
- Highlight the key campaigns you'll create and promote throughout the year and allocate a timeframe for each.
- Document the digital channels needed to ensure the success for each campaign.

Review Your Strategy & Identify Changes Needed:

# 5 Steps to a Powerful Digital Marketing Strategy

- Create a measurement and monitoring plan (this should fit in with your KPIs).
- Check the success of the individual elements of your strategy at continuous intervals.
- If something is not working (i.e. you're not achieving the KPIs you've set out) isolate the different elements and try to identify what is not working (e.g. is it the time you're posting content or the taglines you're using for your ads?).
- Revisit your previous analysis, personas and budget allocation and try something new.
- Create a clearly defined KPI for your new venture.

# How Do Search Engines Work?

To many people, Google *IS* the internet. It's the default homepage and the first port of call before accessing any site. It's arguably the most important invention since the Internet itself. Without search engines, content would all be hand picked – just like newspapers and magazines. And while search engines have changed a lot since those first humble beginnings – and Google certainly isn't the *only* search engine out there – the underlying principles are the same as they always were.

Do you know how search engines work? There are three basic stages for a search engine: crawling – where content is discovered; indexing, where it is analysed and stored in huge databases; and retrieval, where a user query fetches a list of relevant pages.

## Crawling

Crawling is where it all begins – the acquisition of data about a website. This involves scanning the site and getting a complete list of everything on there – the page title, images, keywords it contains, and any other pages it links to – at a bare minimum. Modern crawlers may cache a copy of the whole page, as well as look for some additional information such as the page layout, where the advertising units are, where the links are on the page (featured prominently in the article text, or hidden in the footer?).

How is a website crawled *exactly*? An automated bot – a spider – visits each page, just like you or I would, only very quickly. Even in the earliest days, Google reported that they were reading a few hundred pages a second. If you'd like to learn how to [make your own basic web crawler in PHP](#) – it was one of the first articles I wrote here and well worth having a go at (just don't expect to make the next Google). [How To Build A Basic Web Crawler To Pull Information From A Website \(Part 1\)](#) [How To Build A Basic Web Crawler To Pull Information From A Website \(Part 1\)](#) [Read More](#)

# How Do Search Engines Work?

The crawler then adds all the new links it found to a list of places to crawl next – in addition to re-crawling sites again to see if anything has changed. It's a never-ending process, really.

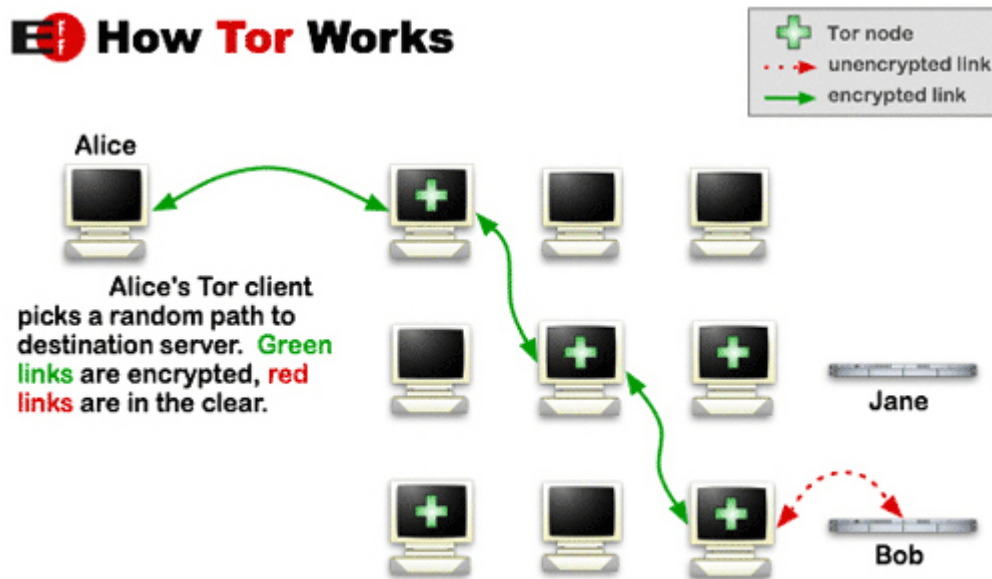


Any site that is linked to from another site already indexed, or any site that manually asked to be indexed, will eventually be crawled – some sites more frequently than others and some to a greater depth. If the site is huge and content hidden many clicks away from the homepage, the crawler bots may actually give up. There are ways to ask search engines NOT to index a site, though this is rarely used to block an entire website.

There was even a time when large parts of the Internet were essentially invisible to search engines – the so-called “[deep web](#)” – but this is rare now. TOR-hosted websites ([What is Onion Routing?](#)) for example, remain unindexed by Google, and are only accessible by connecting to the TOR network and knowing the address. [10 Search Engines to Explore the Invisible Web](#) [10 Search Engines to Explore the Invisible Web](#) [Read More](#)



# How Do Search Engines Work?

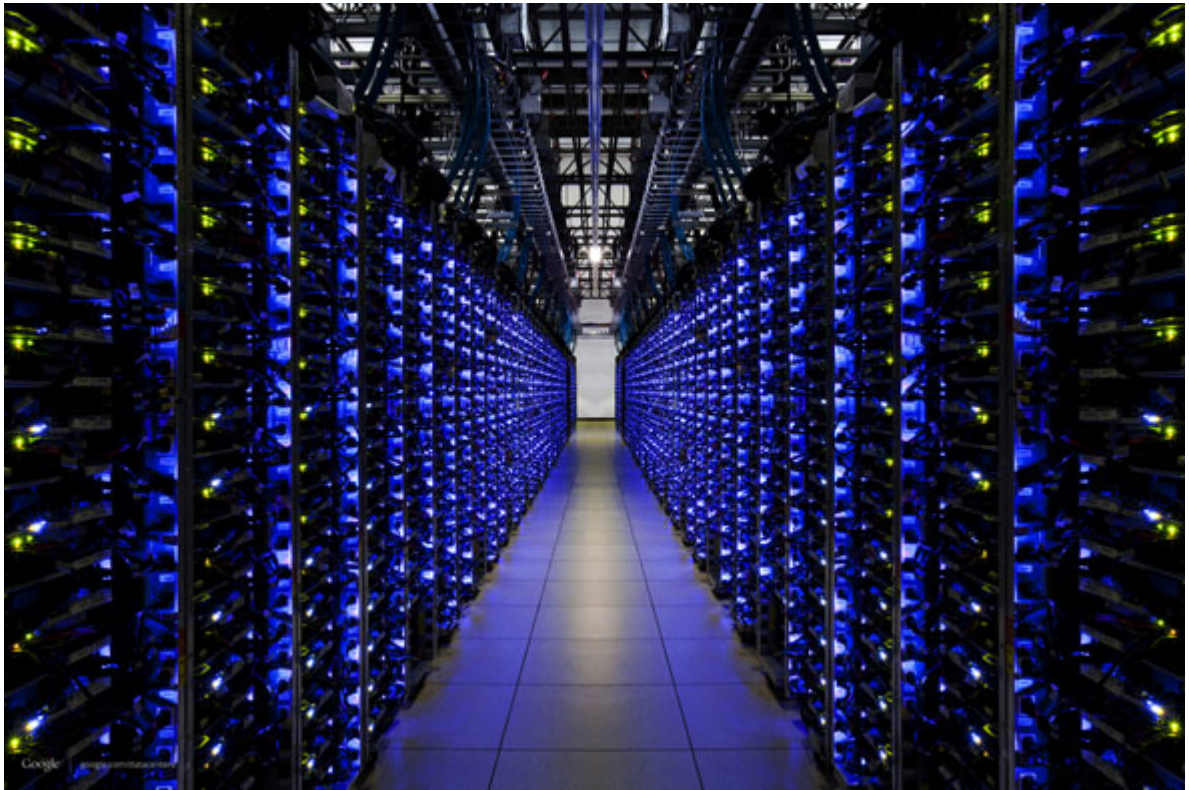


## Indexing

You'd be forgiven for thinking this is an easy step – indexing is the process of taking all of that data you have from a crawl, and placing it in a big database. Imagine trying to make a list of all the books you own, their author and the number of pages. Going through each book is the crawl and writing the list is the index. But now imagine it's not just a room full of books, but every library in the world. That's pretty much a *small-scale* version of what Google does.

All of this data is stored in vast data-centres with thousands of petabytes worth of drives. Here's a sneaky peak inside one of Google's:

# How Do Search Engines Work?



## Ranking & Retrieval

The last step is what you see – you type in a search query, and the search engine attempts to display the most relevant documents it finds that match your query. This is the most complicated step, but also the most relevant to you or I, as web developers and users. It is also the area in which search engines differentiate themselves (though, there was some evidence that [Bing was actually copying some Google results](#)). Some work with keywords, some [allow you to ask a question](#), and some include advanced features like keyword proximity or filtering by age of content. [10 Cool Uses Of Wolfram Alpha If You Read And Write In The English Language](#) [10 Cool Uses Of Wolfram Alpha If You Read And Write In The English Language](#) It took me some time to wrap my head around Wolfram Alpha and the queries it uses to spout out those results. You have to dive deep into Wolfram Alpha to really exploit it to... [Read More](#)

# How Do Search Engines Work?

The ranking algorithm checks your search query against **billions** of pages to determine how relevant each one is. This operation is so complex that companies closely guard their own ranking algorithms as patented industry secrets. Why? Competitive advantage for a start – so long as they are giving you the best search results, they can stay on top of the market. Secondly, to prevent gaming of the system and giving an unfair advantage to one site over another.

Once the internal methodology of any system is fully understood, there will always be those who try to “hack” it – discover the ranking factors and exploit them for monetary gain.

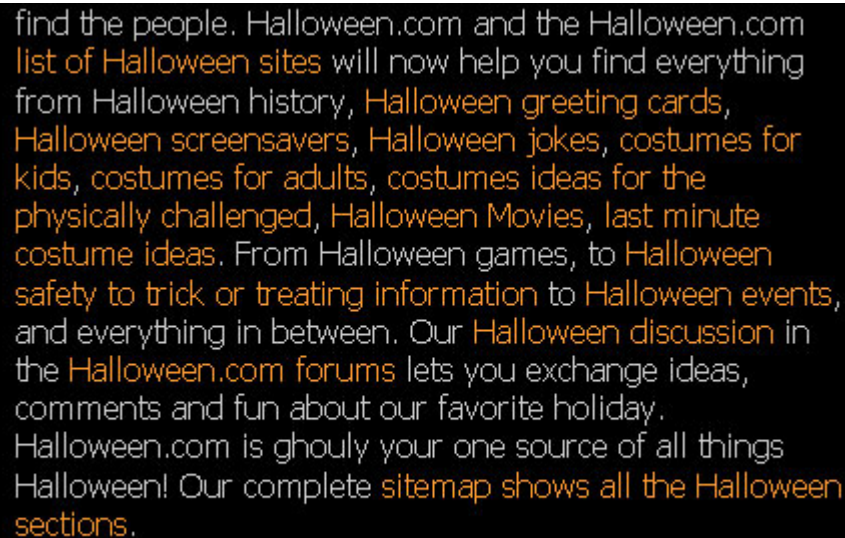


Exploiting the ranking algorithm has in fact been commonplace since search engines began, but in the last 3 years or so Google has really made that difficult. Originally, sites were ranked based on how many times a particular keyword was mentioned. This led to “keyword stuffing”, where pages are filled with mostly nonsense so long as it includes the keyword everywhere.

# How Do Search Engines Work?

Then the concept of importance based on linking was introduced – more popular sites would be more linked to, obviously – but this led to a proliferation of spammed links all over the web. Now each link is determined to have a different value, depending on the “authority” of the site in question. If a high level government agency links to you, it’s worth far more than a link found in a free-for-all “link directory”.

Check out [SEOFailBlog.com](https://seofailblog.com) for more examples of SEO gone wild.



find the people. Halloween.com and the Halloween.com list of Halloween sites will now help you find everything from Halloween history, Halloween greeting cards, Halloween screensavers, Halloween jokes, costumes for kids, costumes for adults, costumes ideas for the physically challenged, Halloween Movies, last minute costume ideas. From Halloween games, to Halloween safety to trick or treating information to Halloween events, and everything in between. Our Halloween discussion in the Halloween.com forums lets you exchange ideas, comments and fun about our favorite holiday. Halloween.com is ghoully your one source of all things Halloween! Our complete sitemap shows all the Halloween sections.

Happy Halloween!

Today, the understanding of the exact algorithm is even more shrouded in mystery than ever, and the dark art of “Search Engine Optimization” has largely been crippled – the advice now is to focus on providing the best content, with a great user experience (how crazy, right?!). Considering that almost 60% of all searches end up clicking the first result, it’s easy to see why ranking your page well is so important.

## What’s Next For Search Engines?

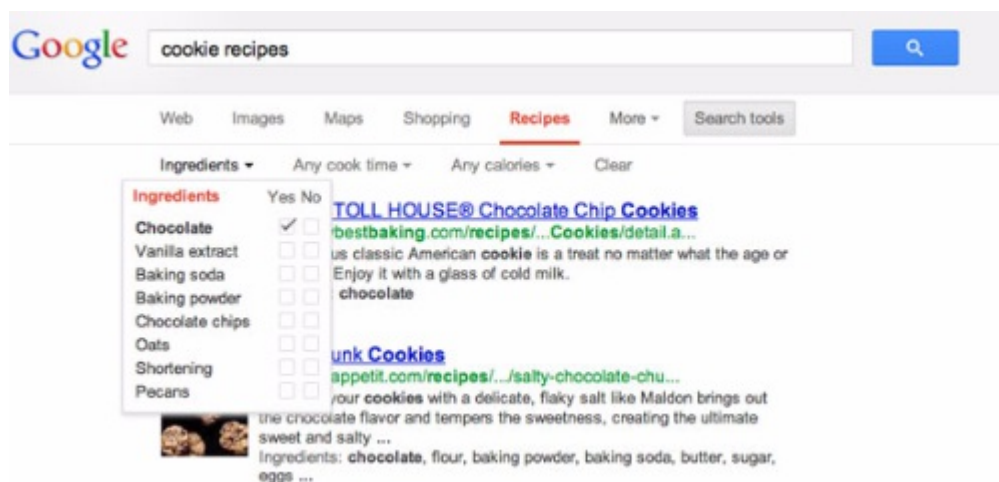


# How Do Search Engines Work?

Ah, now there's an interesting question. The answer is – semantics – the meaning and type of content a page contains. For more information on that, read my article on [Semantic Markup and How it Will Change the Web Forever](#). [What Semantic Markup Is & How It Will Change The Internet Forever \[Technology Explained\]](#) [What Semantic Markup Is & How It Will Change The Internet Forever \[Technology Explained\]](#) [Read More](#)

Here's the easiest example – right now, you could search for gluten-free cookies, but the pages you find might not actually be a recipe for gluten free cookies; they might have a regular cookie with a bit of text that says “*this recipe is not gluten free*”. In a world with semantics, you could search for cookie recipes and then remove regular flour from your list of acceptable ingredients. Then you could remove any with nuts, because you're not particularly keen on nuts. Then you could narrow it down to only recipes with a review score of 4/5 or greater, and a total preparation time of less than half hour. *That* would be cool right?

Well, you can. Just head over to [Google.com](#) (international versions may not work), search for a recipe, and use the search tools to narrow it down to only results that are recipes. Then you'll find an ingredients filter, and more!



And that, dear readers, is how search engines work.

# The importance of Visual Content in your Marketing Strategy

---

A picture is worth a thousand words, and when it comes to capturing your audience's attention, you want to take full advantage of every chance to communicate your message. **Short attention spans** have made lengthy explanations less effective – so how do you keep interest?

Show, don't tell.

Use effective visuals to power up your communications, boost engagement, and spark up your social media. Here's why you must integrate visual content into your marketing strategy and communications.

## An apple a day helps memory stay: why are visuals important?

If a message is released to the public but no one remembers it, did it really happen?

Communicating does no good if it's not retained by your audience. Today, it's easy for information to get lost or ignored if it's not in a digestible format. Integrating visual content can boost how much your audience absorbs and remembers.

Studies show our brains not only process visuals faster, but they retain and transmit much more information when it's delivered visually.

# The importance of Visual Content in your Marketing Strategy

In addition to helping you communicate a message that is remembered, effective visuals pack a serious punch when it comes to upping your engagement. OpenView Marketing Lab's "Beginner's Guide to Stunning Visual Content Marketing," reports that company Facebook pages who post status updates with visuals in the form of videos and photo albums create up to 180 percent stronger engagement.

As you can see in the infographic below, visual components seriously boost your social media engagement.



Boost engagement with visuals and see the results



# The importance of Visual Content in your Marketing Strategy

Those who reach their audience via emails can still get in on **optimizing images for the increasingly mobile market**. Again, take advantage of every chance you get to capture your audience's attention with stunning visuals.

## Get creative in how you use graphics

For sites that aren't specifically oriented towards pictures or videos, it's easy to integrate visual content. Facebook or Twitter status updates that include photos can replace text-only updates, infographics can replace white papers, and sprucing up your company communications with videos and animated slides are all simple, low-budget visual options.

Replace your plain old PowerPoints with animated slides can increase attention, retainment and engagement with both your customers and your employees. Company-wide meetings will never be the same again.

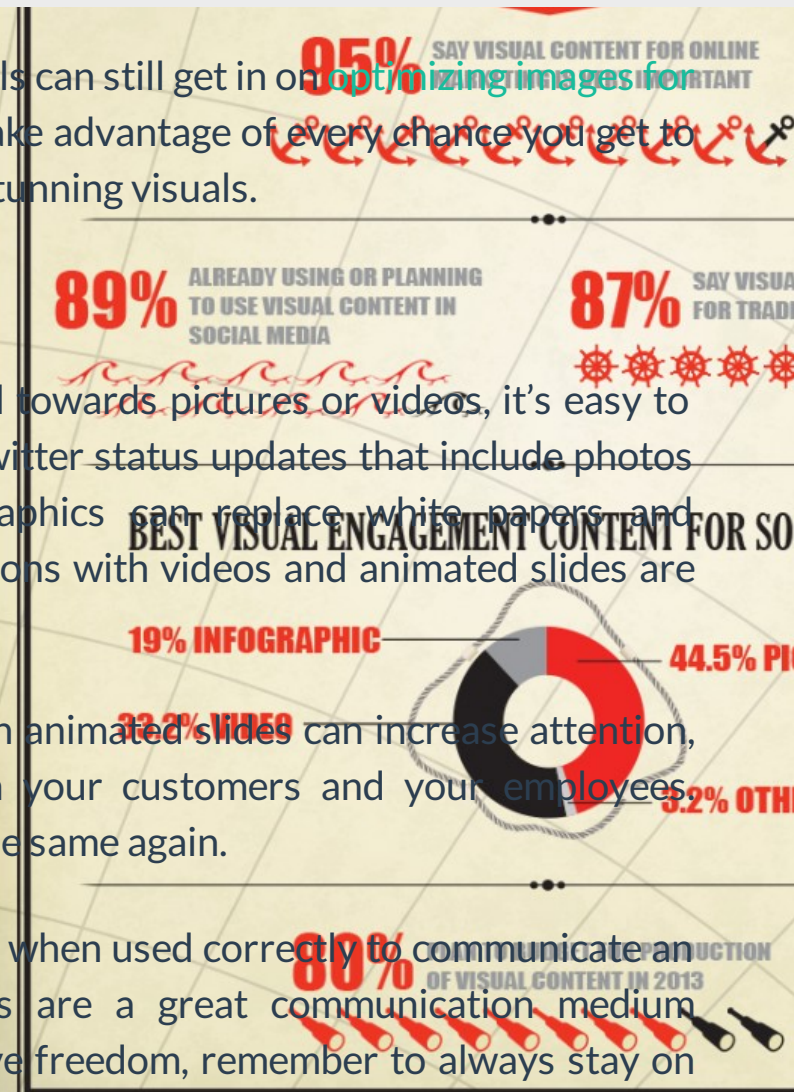
Effective visuals are extremely powerful when used correctly to communicate an appropriate message. Although visuals are a great communication medium because they lend themselves to creative freedom, remember to always stay on board with your company message and create and spread content that reflects your brand. An offbeat video or inappropriate photo posted with a company status update can do more harm than no visual content at all.

Visuals also have the chance to go viral – it's easy for people to like, share and respond to graphic content. That being said, don't be afraid to **have fun**. The most high-impact visuals are those that personalizes your content. We all know a good meme says much more than words alone could.

## So how to deliver effective visuals?

If you're ready to jump into a graphic digital marketing strategy, there are a few easy tricks to boost your initial engagement and make sure all the visual content you deliver is getting the biggest impact it can.

Put the social back in social media



# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science



The cutthroat inbox of your standard consumer roils with marketing messages, competitive subject lines, and scores of attention-seeking emails. With **over 144 billion emails sent each and every day**, email marketing remains one of the elite channels for business communication. So how does the signal separate itself from the noise?

To be sure, finding the key to a stand-out message is critical to your bottom line—whether that bottom line is cold, hard cash or community engagement or anything in between. What follows are eight inbox-tested email marketing strategies that successful senders have used to get their emails clicked.

## 1. Personalize your email without using the recipient's name

No more “Dear [INSERT NAME HERE]”.

The practice of personalized email greetings is not nearly as effective as it may seem. In fact, research by Temple’s Fox School of Business suggests that **this particular kind of personalization could be harmful**.

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

Given the high level of cyber security concerns about phishing, identity theft, and credit card fraud, many consumers would be wary of emails, particularly those with personal greetings.

A significant element of email marketing is relationship. Does a recipient trust you? Does a recipient even know who you are? When an email jumps the gun by forcing familiarity too soon, the personalization comes across as skeevy. Intimacy is earned in real life, and it would appear to be the same way with email. Take this example from my inbox; no one has called me lowercase kevan l lee in years.

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science



Faking familiarity with the subscriber turns many wary email readers off. But this isn't to say that all forms of personalization are off-limits. In fact, [a particular brand of personalization](#) can pay off big time: Sending email that acknowledges a subscriber's individuality (e.g., purchase history or demographic).

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

(The study) also found that product personalization, in which customers are directed to products that their past purchasing patterns suggest they will like, triggered positive responses in 98 percent of customers.

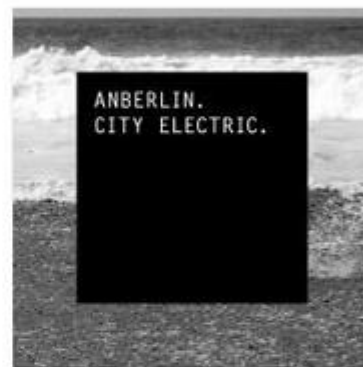
The takeaway here is that if you are to use personalization as an email strategy, do so in a meaningful way. It takes little knowledge or relationship to place someone's name in your greeting. It shows far greater care to send personalized email that is specific to a recipient's needs and history. Again, an example from my inbox, this email from Rdio dispenses with the formalities and simply provides an update on music I actually listen to.



Discover more music from artists in your collection.



Is Survived By  
Touche Amore



City Electric  
Anberlin

[Rdio US](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Blog](#) | [Help](#)

Rdio and the Rdio logo are trademarks of Rdio, Inc. © 2013 Rdio Inc. All rights reserved.  
Rdio, Inc. 1550 Bryant St, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103  
[Manage](#) your email notification preferences.  
If you prefer not to receive emails like this from Rdio, you may [unsubscribe](#).



# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

## 2. The long and short of subject lines

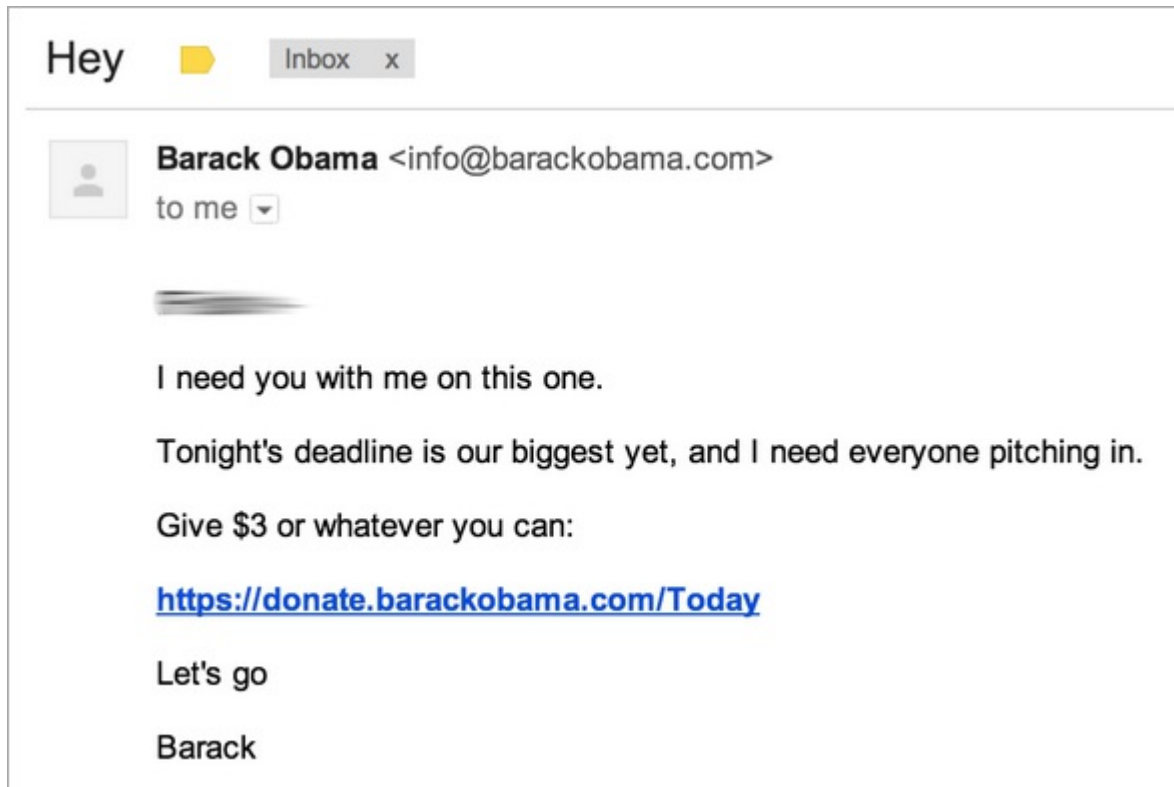
When it comes to deciding how to craft that perfect subject line, there appears to be really only one area to avoid: the subject line of 60 to 70 characters. **Marketers refer to this as the “dead zone” of subject length.** According to [research by Adestra](#), which tracked over 900 million emails for its report, there is no increase in either open rate or clickthroughs at this 60-to-70 character length of subject line.

Conversely, subject lines 70 characters and up tested to be most beneficial to engage readers in clicking through to the content, and subject lines 49 characters and below tested well with open rate.

In fact, Adestra found that [subject lines fewer than 10 characters long had an open rate of 58%.](#)

Short subjects came in vogue with [the success of President Barack Obama’s email fundraising.](#) He saw incredible engagement with subjects like “Hey” and “Wow.”

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science



So the question becomes: Do you want to boost clicks (response) or opens (awareness)? Go long for clickthroughs; keep it short for opens.

Either way, a helpful email strategy is to squeeze out more words or cut back just a bit to avoid that 60 to 70 character dead zone.

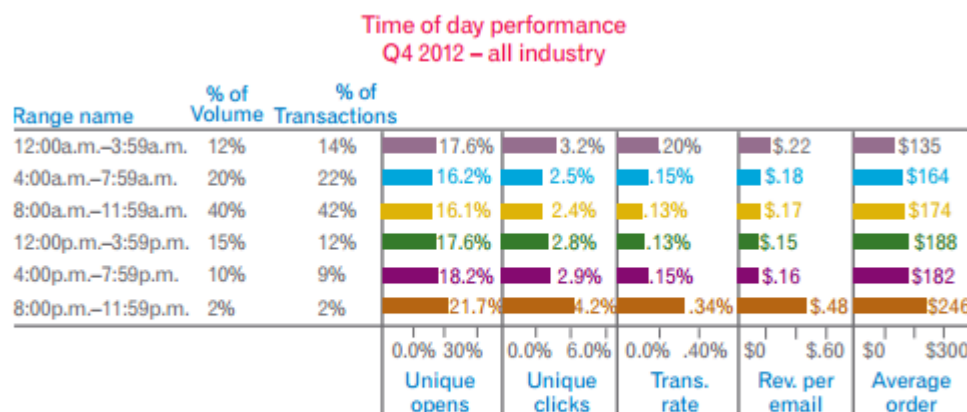
## 3. 8:00 p.m. to midnight is the prime time to send your email

While many a quality email may be built during business hours, the ones with the best open rates aren't being sent from 9 to 5. The top email strategy is to send at night.



# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

In their quarterly email report for 2012's fourth quarter, [Experian Marketing Services](#) found that the time of day that received the best open rate was 8:00 p.m. to midnight. This block not only performed better for open rate (a respectable 22 percent) but also for clickthrough and sales.



Source: Experian Marketing Services

The chart above shows that the 8:00 to midnight window is also the least used—a key factor in helping those late night emails outperform the rest. [From Experian:](#)

Optimal mailing time often depends upon your customers' behaviors, inbox crowding, and the deployment times of other marketers.

Inbox crowding and the deployment times of other marketers go hand-in-hand; if your email goes out when few others do, it stands a greater chance of getting noticed (so quick, start sending between 8:00 and midnight before everyone else catches on).

Optimal mailing for your customers' needs will be up to you. **Test, test, and test some more** to find out how your customer ticks and when he/she opens email.

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science


## 4. The best content is free content: Give something away

Consumers love a free lunch—or a free template.

In a study on their email list of 6,300 subscribers, Bluewire Media tested various types of content to see [what led to the highest rates for opens and clicks](#). The winner was templates and tools, just the kind of freebies that email readers want.


Here is a freebie example from Help Scout:

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

 **Help Scout**

CUSTOMER LOYALTY INSIGHTS

**New eBook: 10 Stories of Unforgettable Customer Service**



Every once in a while comes an opportunity to **WOW** a customer in a truly unforgettable way. In our latest eBook, we've featured 10 incredible stories of people seizing their opportunity to deliver great customer service.

[Download Now](#)

Many a consumer will ask, “What’s in it for me?” When it comes to resources, [Bluewire Media’s test results](#) say that templates and tools outweigh ebooks, expert interviews, brain teasers, and even photo albums. You will want to test with your own list, but certainly use Bluewire’s research as a head start.

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

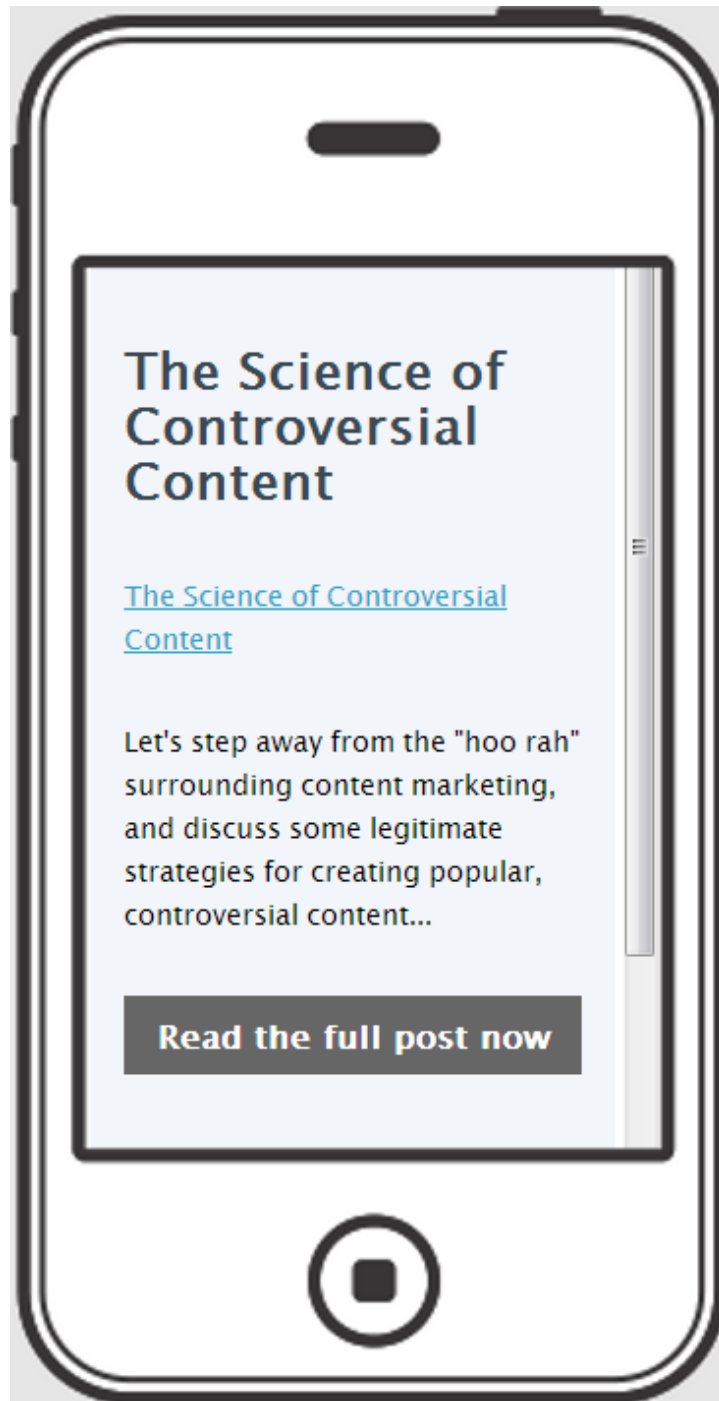
## 5. Mobile opens accounts for 47 percent of all email opens

**Mobile opens accounted for 47 percent of all email opens** in June, according to [numbers provided by email marketing firm Litmus](#). If your email list accounts for \$100,000 in sales each month, could you afford to wave bye-bye to \$44,000 just because your email looks funky on a mobile phone?

Design responsively to ensure that your email looks great no matter where it's read. Here are [some quick mobile design tips](#):

- Convert your email to a one column template for an easy mobile fix.
- Bump up the font size for improved readability on smart phones.
- Follow the iOS guideline of buttons at least 44 pixels wide by 44 pixels tall.
- Make the call-to-action obvious and easy to tap. Above the fold is preferable.
- Consider ergonomics. Many users tap and scroll with their thumb, so keep important tappable elements in the middle of the screen.

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science



6. Email still reigns over Facebook and Twitter

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

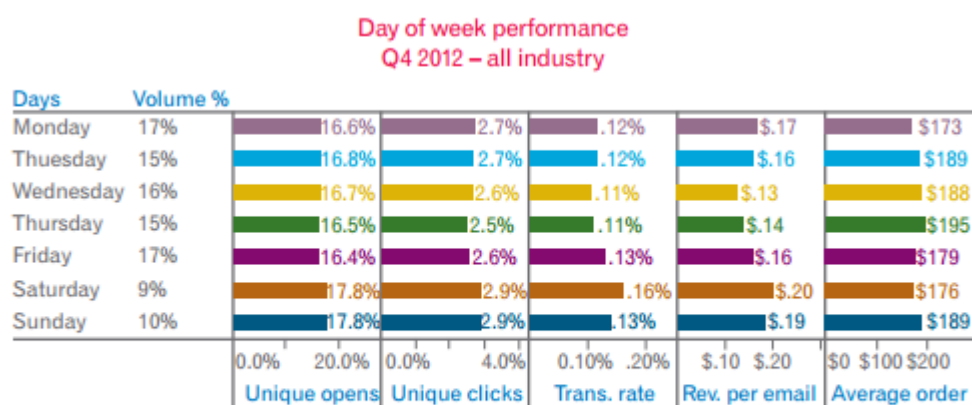
Social media may be the young whippersnapper nipping at email's heels, but the content king of the inbox still holds sway in social influence, according to [a study by SocialTwist](#). Over an 18-month period, SocialTwist monitored 119 referral campaigns from leading brands and companies. The results showed a significant advantage to email's ability to convert new customers compared to Facebook and Twitter.

Of the 300,000 referrals who became new customers, 50.8 percent were reached by email, compared to 26.8 percent for Twitter and 22 percent for Facebook.

Email ruled supreme, by almost *double*.

## 7. Send email on the weekends

While not as overwhelming a winner as the 8:00 p.m. to midnight time of day, Saturday and Sunday did outperform their weekday counterparts in [Experian's study](#) of day-of-week performance.



Source: Experian Marketing Services

# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

Again, the volume of email sent on the weekends is low, just like the volume for evening emails, which could help those messages stand out more. The margins for clickthrough, open, and sales rates were not substantial, but in email marketing, every little bit counts.

## 8. Re-engage an inactive group of subscribers

Your list is huge. Great! The only problem is that two-thirds of it may be inactive.

Research has found that the average inactivity for a list is 63 percent, meaning that once someone joins they are less likely to ever follow-up with your follow-up emails. Email marketing firm Listrak goes so far as to identify the first 90 days as the window for turning a sign-up into a devotee (and they lay out a plan for doing so).

What's to become of that inactive 63 percent? Re-engagement campaigns are an excellent place to start.

Recently, a re-engagement campaign from Digg wound up in my inbox. The subject was catchy ("This Is Not An Email From 2006"), and the content helpfully explained what the email was all about.



# 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science

If you've been to Digg in the last year, you probably noticed some changes. Some big changes.

One thing that has not changed, though, is your email address.

Below is a preview of something we call The Daily Digg, a brief overview of our top stories delivered to your inbox. If it's not your thing, of course please unsubscribe. But if you're at all interested in finding the best and most current stories on the Internet without the clutter and noise, we think you might enjoy sticking around.

Hope you're well.

-The Digg Team

## The Daily Digg

Wednesday, October 2, 2013

**digg**

BOTH WILL MAKE YOU PEE

### Coffee Vs. Beer: Which Drink Makes You More Creative

oomf.com

Hopefully, this will help you decide when it's best to have that triple shot espresso or ice cold brew.

RIVER STYX IRL

### The Deadly Lake That Turns Animals Into Statues

newscientist.com

Unless you are an alkaline tilapia (*Alcolapia alcalica*) – an extremophile fish adapted to the harsh conditions – it is not the best place to live.

As with everything that we call science, it's all about doing experiments. Very likely, if you are doing your own experiments, you might actually have found different results.