



HOW CAN MIDSIZED COMPANIES BENEFIT FROM DIGITAL MARKETING?

How Can Midsized Companies Benefit from Digital Marketing?

Companies of all sizes can benefit from digital marketing. Large corporations can hire big departments to address their marketing and digital presence needs. Midsized companies and small businesses frequently do not have this capability. This can put them at a disadvantage, but this problem can be solved leveraging outside resources.

What digital marketing comprises is often misunderstood and over complicated. There is a lot of noise about it in the marketplace. Many companies and individuals present themselves to SMBs to address different aspects of digital marketing. However, digital marketing is about using all the tools in the toolbox, doing it consistently, and meeting customers and prospects where they are, in the digital world.

Digital Marketing boils down to having strategy and tactics for three main things, ... three pillars. The three pillars of digital marketing are messaging (having compelling content), the web and social media. If businesses are not addressing these three pillars, they will fail at digital marketing.

In today's digital economy and online world, digital marketing IS marketing, and the importance of digital marketing cannot be under stated. Today's customers are online a tremendous amount of the time. Today's consumers shop on the web and research businesses they want to know more about online. Digital marketing is inseparable from the digital economy, and this is the overriding reason all businesses need digital marketing.

In the remainder of this white paper, we will take a deeper dive on what is digital marketing, why SMB organizations need to leverage it, when they should engage in digital marketing and how they can go about it.

What is Digital Marketing?

Digital marketing helps companies communicate with customers and prospects, increase traffic to their websites, increase inbound leads, and ultimately increase sales. So much of modern life and commerce takes place digitally. The explosion of e-commerce is a good example of this. If people cannot find your business on the web, your business is in trouble. Not showing up on the first page of Google search results is a huge competitive disadvantage. If potential customers cannot find your business on the web, it is the equivalent of not even being on the map or being in the phone book (...remember those!). If potential customers visit your site and get a bad impression from a poor looking or performing website or from lackluster content, it is also bad for a business. There is only one chance to make a first impression, right. Well, a company's website is usually that first impression.



Let's look at the **5 current most important aspects of digital marketing** which are, **content marketing, social media, web presence (including SEO & SEM), email marketing, plus emerging conversational and AI marketing.**

1 Content Marketing

Marketing starts with a message. Content Marketing is that message, and it is a continual dialog with your customers and your target market. Digital marketing starts with Content Marketing. Companies today need to create compelling, engaging, and interesting content for customers (or potential customers) about a business's products and services. They need to do this to build a relationship with customers and to stay engaged with them so that when they are ready to make purchases they reach out. Examples of content can be short videos, interesting blogs, white papers, case studies, PR, social media posts, and more. As much as possible, content marketing is about making sure customers contact a business for conversation when they are ready to engage. Everything else in a digital marketing strategy feeds off having content people want to read or watch and interact with. Content marketing helps companies by allowing them to message about their business and build credibility with potential customers and clients.

2 Social Media

Once you have interesting content what do you do with it? Of course, you will include it on your website. You can also post links to it on social media. This is when social media marketing comes into play. This aspect of digital marketing helps business connect directly with their target audience. Posting about content just created, posting about news, initiatives, campaigns, and information that will be interesting to prospective customers can all be done on social media. Social media is one more way to communicate with customers digitally and meet them where they are. There are numerous social media platforms to interact with customers. Linked In for purely B2B engagements is an excellent platform. Facebook and Instagram are good for both B2C and B2B engagements. Twitter is useful for some companies. Pinterest, Tick Tock and Snap are still others that can be used. A good social media strategy and an active social media presence is essential for any comprehensive digital marketing strategy.

3 Website

The importance of digital marketing is never clearer than when thinking about a business **website**, its online presence, and its performance on search engines. A good web strategy is the equivalent of putting your business on the map in the present day.



Having an attractive website with a clear message and branding is just the beginning, however. Business today must pay close attention to **SEO** (search engine optimization) so that they rank high on user searches. This is done by focusing on key words and promoting them on pages. **SEM** or search engine marketing or **PPC** pay per click ad campaigns can also be an excellent way to drive traffic to a web site, so that a business can generate leads that eventually become sales.

Key words and Google algorithms are constantly changing and having a paid digital marketing consultant assist a business on SEO is a worthwhile aspect of any digital marketing strategy. Making sure potential customers can find you online is just one more argument for the importance of digital marketing.

4

Email Marketing

An additional digital marketing strategy to drive targeted traffic to a web site to engage with company content is **email marketing**. Email marketing is best done with short and regular emails that have a specific message.

Conducting a multistep email campaign is often referred to as drip email campaigns. Sending customers and members of your target audience regular updates about content that you are consistently creating is an excellent example of a drip email campaign. Percentages of conversion with email marketing can be relatively low, but this is expected. We could almost equate email campaigns of today to junk mail or direct mail marketing of yesteryear. Costs are low for email marketing and when a conversion occurs it is typically very well qualified. Having a well thought out and consistent email marketing plan is another aspect of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy.

5

Conversational Marketing or AI Marketing

The newest aspect of a digital marketing strategy is **Conversational Marketing or AI Marketing**. The best example of this is bots on a website that will get information for a digital visitor. Great care needs to be taken to make bots nonobtrusive and super easy to opt out of. Bots on a website can be incredibly useful though. The most common use of online bots is for website navigation or to fetch information for online visitors. Bots on our own website will do the above and also place calls to appropriate Valenta team members on behalf of a digital visitor. Bots can also book appointments for visitors with Valenta Managing Partners. Conversational AI works for both the written and the spoken word and bots can be part of a spoken conversation as well as written ones.

It is hard to have inhouse strengths in all these different aspects of digital marketing. Yet all of them make up a comprehensive digital marketing strategy and plan. Valenta offers a full stack digital marketing approach that addresses all of these areas flexibly and affordably by providing bundles of hours in these various disciplines weekly and monthly. We will get more into this later in our paper.



Why do Midsized Companies need Digital Marketing?

Being found on the web and making a first positive impression with customers and prospects are two of the biggest reasons that we have already mentioned for why all businesses including SMBs need digital marketing. But businesses engage in digital marketing for a variety of reasons. The most common ones we have seen are to generate more leads for sales teams, close more deals, improve current customer retention, increase customer satisfaction rates and finally to increase brand awareness. Before a company can be profitable there must be revenue and sales. Every company should be looking to drive topline revenue with an eye on the bottom line. Digital marketing can be a very cost-effective way to improve web traffic, sales, and lead generation. Potential customers who request contact from a business on their website are interested in having a conversation. Having a conversation with a customer who wants to speak with you is much more valuable than speaking to customers who did not ask to speak to you, ... right?

Regarding the web presence and SEO, a business will need to track and improve keyword rankings, organic traffic, time spent on pages, click through rates, bounce rates, returning visitors, and domain authority ratings to improve the appearance of a business on searches. Google algorithms are changing frequently, and a good digital marketing partner can help optimize your web presence for Google and other search engines. In addition to a web presence multiple social channels may need to be managed including, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In & YouTube. Emerging social channels like Snapchat, Tick Tock, Pinterest, and others are also considerations. In addition to a web presence, email marketing is another channel where a digital marketing strategy can be adopted. There is a lot of emphasis on drip email campaigns these days, and that is because it can be effective. They are effective when the content is good and engaging and when there is value in it for the customer or prospect.

Digital marketing is also about not boiling the ocean. One of the advantages of digital marketing is that with all the data that can be gained a business can validate customer personas and conduct digital segmentation. A business can also create content that speaks specifically to their target audience ... whatever it may be and wherever they are. Finding a niche and speaking to your audience also comes down to creating compelling content that keeps customers (and potential customers) engaged. Some content examples that can help you speak directly to your customers include videos, blogs, infographics, case studies, interviews, e-books, and white papers. A good digital marketing agency can help you create, position, and promote all of these.

The answer to why businesses should engage in digital marketing however always comes back to the fact that it is a digital world we live in, and that digital marketing is marketing in the 21st century. To ignore it, is to not conduct proper marketing. Even if it is not well understood by business owners it can be implemented comprehensively and cost effectively. It can be done guerilla style or with big budgets.

DIGITAL MARKETING?



When should Midsized Companies rollout Digital Marketing?

The answer to the question of when companies should rollout digital marketing depends. However, nearly every business needs to have some type of digital presence and therefore a digital marketing strategy. The below list highlights results or activities that can answer the question of when a digital marketing strategy should be rolled out.

- Increase web traffic
- Increase inbound leads
- Improve customer engagement
- Improve brand awareness
- Help prospects find your business on the internet
- Improve your SEO & keyword scores, and Search Engine results
- Conduct a Pay Per Click campaign
- Build a new website
- Improve a current website
- Launch a Content Marketing strategy
- Develop a social media marketing strategy
- Conduct an email marketing strategy
- Engage in video marketing
- Develop brochures and collateral
- Publish case studies and white papers
- Start blog writing to communicate with customers

The skills needed to execute many of these tasks may not exist in a business. But those skills can be supplied from outside a business. Full stack digital marketing service providers can address all of these consistently on a month to month basis. Consistency is a key to digital marketing and required for success.



How should Midsized Companies rollout Digital Marketing

If a business can afford to hire multiple people to fulfill all the different aspects of digital marketing that is an option. This is usually not possible at SMB organizations. In our experience there are frequently highly skilled people at SMBs in one or two of the requirements of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy, but they are not experts in all the aspects of digital marketing. Sometimes there are people trying to do all the requirements, ...and how does the saying go, "jack of all trades, master of none." Other times there is no one in house but a hodge-podge of outsourced services, or different services that have been tried and stopped over a period of a few years. What we have found that works best is working with an executive close to sales or marketing, or with an owner in a small business, and then layering on top our full stack services to execute a comprehensive and consistent strategy.

Full Stack Digital Marketing services like Valenta's can have excellent results for businesses. It ensures that all the aspects of digital marketing are being addressed and a comprehensive strategy is executed. We provide all these services and bring a team for these roles for a few to several hours a week for our clients. At Valenta we exclusively service SMB clients. At Valenta we offer managing partners, plus local or regional senior marketing experts, and offshore staff that can economically execute back-office tasks and provide full stack digital marketing services.

The following is a list of some of the roles, activities, and responsibilities a Full Stack Digital Marketing agency should fulfill for clients. The below is exactly what we provide at Valenta.

Strategist



It all starts with a plan and strategy when it comes to good digital marketing. Any direct marketing agency or full service digital marketing service provider should sit down with a business and assess where it is and help it get to where it wants to be. This involves research and coming up with a plan and strategy. Examining key words your competition is using, how many SEO clicks they receive, how many backlinks they have, if they are doing paid search and if so on what, plus an estimate of any SEM budget that they might have will all be discussion points. A strategist will also assess branding and messaging and suggest plans for copywriting, social media, SEO, and other topics. They will meet with clients regularly to ensure the plan and activities are aligned with the goals of the client.

Copywriting



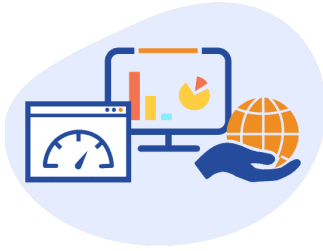
The cornerstone of digital marketing is copywriting. Any good full service digital agency will provide quality copywriting. Good copy is critical when it comes to digital marketing. Digital marketing is all about providing interesting and compelling content that your customers, and potential customers will want to read, watch, or engage with consistently. Once you have the content it is all about making sure people can find it on their own or reaching out to them with it where they are. Copywriting services can be used for web site content, blogs, white papers, brochures, social media post and any number of other things.

SEO



SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is essential to make sure customers and potential customers can find your business online when they search for it. They will search for it by putting keywords into a search engine like Google or Bing. SEO is heavily dependent on the algorithms used by Google and Microsoft to provide search results. Paying attention to key words, page titles, meta descriptions, site structure, internal linking, backlinking, and even site speed all play a role in good SEO results. Some aspects for SEO can get a little technical but the most important thing about good SEO is consistency. A full service digital marketing service provider can help provide both technical expertise and consistent attention to SEO.

SEM / PPC Support



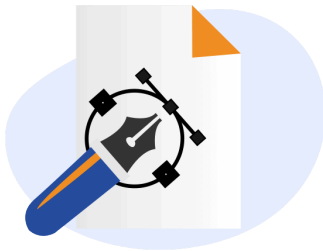
While all SEO results are organic, SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and PPC (Pay Per Click) is not. If clients wish to engage in paid ads on search engines to boost traffic a full stack digital marketing service provider should be able to assist. PPC campaigns are the activity of bidding on specific key words. Once viewers click on your site from a key word search a fee is paid to Google or any other search provider. Paid links always show up at the top of every page. PPC campaigns are typically set up on a monthly basis and can be effective. Just like with SEO it can get a little technical, but consistency is the main driver for success.

Website Design and Maintenance



Having an attractive, well designed, and easy to navigate website is critical in this digital economy. A website will be the first impression your business makes on customers and prospects – so it needs to be a good one. Websites are not static however and they should be updated with fresh content continually to make viewers aware of the latest activities within your business. There is also a bit of fashion to websites and every business should want their website to look and feel current. There are many tools available to launch websites and host them. It is the maintenance of them and the optimization of them that usually needs the most attention with the clients we assist. The ability to design new websites, optimize existing ones, and maintain consistent activity and updates to a company's website should all be capabilities a full service digital marketing agency provides.

Graphics Design



Did you know that pictures and graphics improve SEO scores? They do. This is just one reason to make sure you have original graphics and other attractive visual content on your website, in your blogs, in social media posts, in brochures, white papers and more. You also will want excellent graphic design just to look good and make great impressions on your customers and prospects. Graphic design done with the latest tools and trends is another service a full stack digital marketing service provider should offer.

Video Editing



People love to engage with video content on the web. Video content also drives good SEO scores. Well done video can get your message across to viewers, quickly, effectively, and powerfully. In our experience multiple short videos about topics and keywords that are important to a business get the best results. Putting out video content needs to be done on a consistent bases to have reliable results. Offloading this work to a full service digital agency can make a lot of sense.

Social Media Support



One of the main goals of digital marketing is to create inbound leads and inbound traffic to a business web site. Having relevant content, good SEO, and websites, is focused on this. Social Media activities is about meeting people where they are, and that can be Facebook, Instagram, Linked In or other sites. Messaging about your business and having a conversation on social media with viewers is especially useful. Driving traffic back to your website from these social media platforms is also extremely beneficial. Social media campaigns also require consistent effort to yield results. A full stack digital marketing service provider should offer this as well.

Webinars & Podcasts



Many businesses lend themselves to webinars. Some can benefit from podcasts. Webinars and Podcasts can be excellent ways to get your message out and engage with customers. It is also one more thing to message about on the web and on social media. Developing a plan for webinars and podcasts is something that can be discussed with a digital marketing strategist and then executed by others on a full service digital agency team. Webinars and podcasts can be a very compelling aspect of an overall content marketing strategy.

Email Campaigns



One last area we will mention that a full stack digital marketing service provider should be able to help with is email campaigns. In our experience shorter and consistent emails work best in campaigns. Emailing customers and people who have opted into your mailing list about your latest content, and latest activities is typically the best strategy. We prefer to take a drip email campaign approach when reaching out to new potential clients and more of a consistent messaging and newsletter approach when reaching out to customers. People are inundated with email, but they still read it and campaigns can be an effective way to message and communicate.

Most digital marketing activities take some time to yield results ... but if a business sticks to them in a consistent manner, and if they are smartly executed, they almost always yield results. Full stack marketing services like the ones we offer at Valenta are a cost effective and highly efficient way for SMB organizations to engage in digital marketing.

To measure strategy success, companies can track changes in business results and in their digital presence. Increased sales, increased lead generation and web traffic on a web site are easy metrics to measure. Improved social engagement, SEO improvement, and authority score improvement can also be tracked. Because of the importance of digital marketing there is no better time to start a digital marketing strategy, or to improve one you may already have, than today.

About Valenta

At Valenta we are all about optimizing the business of our clients. Full stack digital marketing services is just one way we do this. We believe our clients should focus on what they do best and allow us to offload work for them and bring expertise that may not be inhouse. At Valenta we exclusively service SMB clients. SMBs can sometimes struggle with digital marketing and do not have large staffs in house to support their efforts. At Valenta we offer managing partners, plus local or regional senior marketing experts, and offshore staff that can economically execute back-office tasks, content creation for digital marketing, implement SEO, run social media, and email campaigns, perform video editing and graphic design and all manner of digital marketing activities. If you would like to explore additional information about digital marketing our website is a good start. At Valenta we are all about optimizing the business of our clients. Full stack digital marketing services is just one way we do this. We believe our clients should focus on what they do best and allow us to offload work for them and bring expertise that may not be inhouse. At Valenta we exclusively service SMB clients. SMBs can sometimes struggle with digital marketing and do not have large staffs in house to support their efforts. At Valenta we offer managing partners, plus local or regional senior marketing experts, and offshore staff that can economically execute back-office tasks, content creation for digital marketing, implement SEO, run social media, and email campaigns, perform video editing and graphic design and all manner of digital marketing activities.

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