

DigitalMarketing**NOW**

A Breakthrough Guide for Small Business

SEO

Secret Sauce

REVEALED!

*Dominate
Search with
PBN Networks*

**Emerging
Digital
Trends**

Successful

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facebook

FEATURES

*You Probably
Didn't Know Existed*



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SEO Secret Sauce Revealed! Dominate Search with PBN Networks

The days when keyword density was enough to earn your site a high rank on Google are long gone. The search giant is constantly updating their (proprietary) search algorithms, which means that the metrics are always changing. But have no fear, we're revealing the "secret sauce" top agencies and SEO "Guru's" use to dominate the search engines and how you can too.

Welcome To Digital Marketing NOW

Thanks for checking out Digital Marketing NOW, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Digital Marketing NOW
www.digitalsapien.com

Digital Sapien Interactive is a leading small business internet marketing service provider. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Digital Marketing NOW and feel free to reach out to us anytime.

Emerging Digital Trends

A man in a light blue striped shirt and grey trousers is jumping joyfully, holding onto a thick red arrow that points diagonally upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. The background features a stylized city skyline at the bottom, overlaid with large, translucent blue geometric shapes. The overall theme is one of upward growth and digital advancement.

The end of the year is fast approaching, and it is natural to want to look forward and see what the big digital marketing trends will be for 2016. With technology advancing so rapidly, it is important for marketers to stay abreast of new developments and take advantage of them. Here are some of the digital marketing trends you can expect to see emerge in the coming year.

Video Marketing

Video marketing is already hugely popular, so this trend isn't exactly new. However, there are some recent developments that make it highly likely that video marketing will become indispensable in 2016. Google (the world's largest search engine) owns YouTube (the world's second-largest search engine.) They recently announced that they will be enabling embedded video ads for search results, which means that many companies will use Google AdWords to run video ads going forward.

The video marketing you do can include commercials, but you can also find other ways of using videos to promote your business. For example, you can make a video demonstrating different ways to use a product, or make an unboxing video to show the things that come with a particular product. You might also make videos giving customers a behind-the-scenes look at your manufacturing process or answering customer questions.

Optimizing for Digital Assistants

Siri, the digital assistant who comes with the iPhone, is known for being able to find answers to almost any inquiry. While digital assistants may sometimes use traditional search engines like Google to find information, they only do so when necessary. Some of the things you may need to do to optimize your online content for digital assistants include:

- Researching how customers are likely to use digital assistants to find your business
- Allowing for casual, verbal inquiries instead of formal keywords
- Posting content in forms that are compatible with wearable mobile devices, such as audio or video streaming

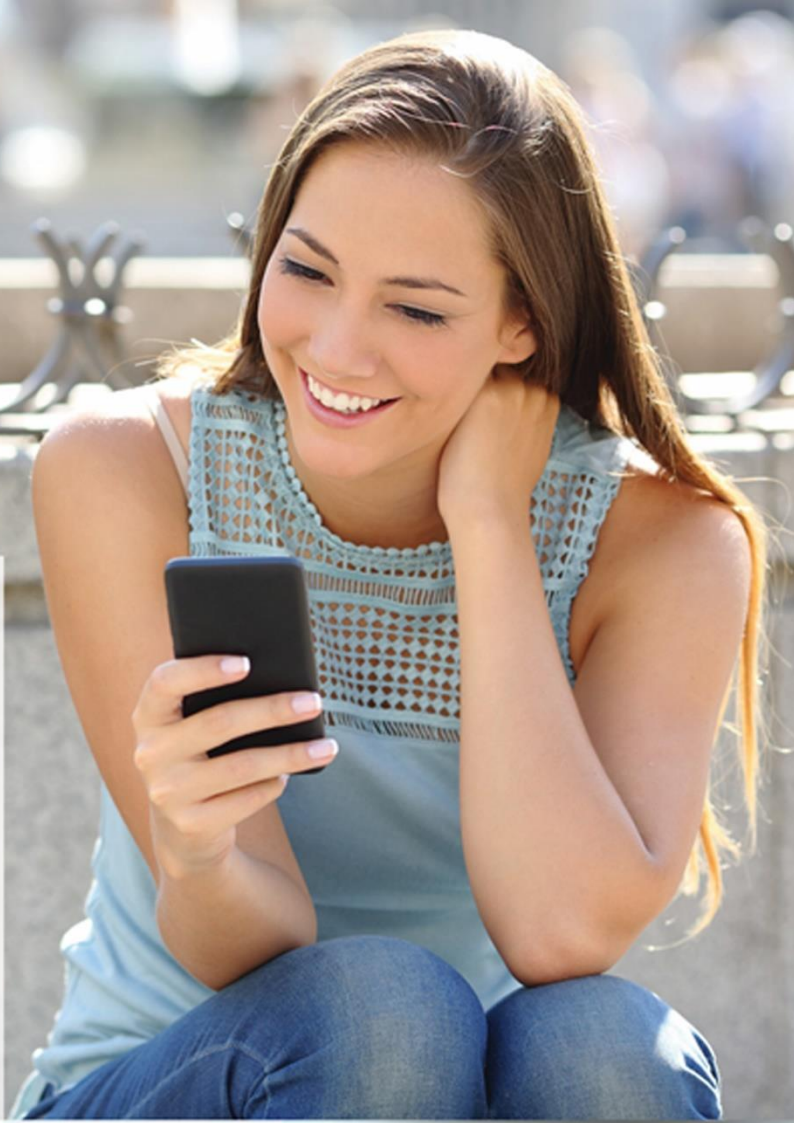
Digital assistants are already widely used by iPhone owners, but the introduction of wearable mobile technology like the Apple watch makes their increased popularity likely.



Mobile Payments

Mobile marketing is increasingly popular, and with good reason. Text messages have a far higher open rate than emails do, and they are a very effective way to stay in touch with customers. Large companies like Starbucks have made it possible for customers to pay for their coffee using mobile devices and the evidence suggests that mobile payments are going to be a major trend going forward.

Another thing to keep in mind is that mobile traffic is very likely to outpace desktop traffic in the near future. Mobile access to the internet is increasingly common and easier to come by in many places than desktop access. If your website isn't mobile-friendly, now is the time to update it. Mobile users are notoriously impatient and will not patronize your site if it takes too long to load or if it isn't optimized for mobile devices.



Instagram Advertising

You probably already know that, thanks to Facebook's algorithm changes, you now have to boost a post if you want to be sure it is seen by all of your social media contacts. At the moment, Instagram still works the way Facebook used to – meaning that the content you post is free and can, at least in theory, be seen by everybody who follows you there.

However, Facebook purchased Instagram in 2012, and Instagram is expected to follow in Facebook's footsteps and introduce similar changes in 2016. What that means is that Instagram advertising is about to take off. Year to date, the site has made about \$600 million in advertising sales, and that number is expected to more than quadruple in the coming years. The good news for advertisers is that user engagement on Instagram tends to be very high. A lot of brands use the site's tools for sharing visual content and find that their customers are approximately 2.8 times as likely to recall the advertising they see in Instagram as they are to recall ads they see on the other online platforms.



Social Search

Until now, internet searches have largely been conducted on search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. However, social searching is one of the trends to have exploded. YouTube is a classic example of how it can work. While it is primarily known as a video sharing site, YouTube is also a search engine. You can expect Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites to follow.

What that means for marketers is that soon, things like customer reviews on social media will be searchable. If you've been diligent about maintaining a solid social media presence and cultivating customer relationships, this particular trend will be a very good thing for you. If not, it's not too late to get started. Pinterest has already implemented guided searches, and Facebook and Twitter will soon follow.



Targeted Marketing

If you're advertising on Facebook, you already know that you can target your ads there using detailed demographics (things like age, gender, and location) as well as psychographics (hobbies and interests.) Digital advertising platforms are adding new ways to target ads all the time, and it will be easier than ever to focus your ad spending on the people who are most likely to buy what you're selling.

One of the best ways to take advantage of this trend is by using Google AdWords to place remarketing ads. These are ads that target customers who have visited your website without making a purchase, or who have bought from you previously. They identify display targets by using cookies. It is already possible to target customers based on a wide array of criteria, and if you start now, you'll be able to avail yourself of updated options as they become available.

Digital marketing offers options and advantages that were not available a few years ago. Those advantages make it possible to get better results from your advertising dollars than ever before. While traditional print advertising can feel like a crapshoot, digital marketing is increasingly sophisticated and scientific. You can make the most of your marketing budget by getting out ahead of these trends.

Successful *Holiday* Marketing Ideas

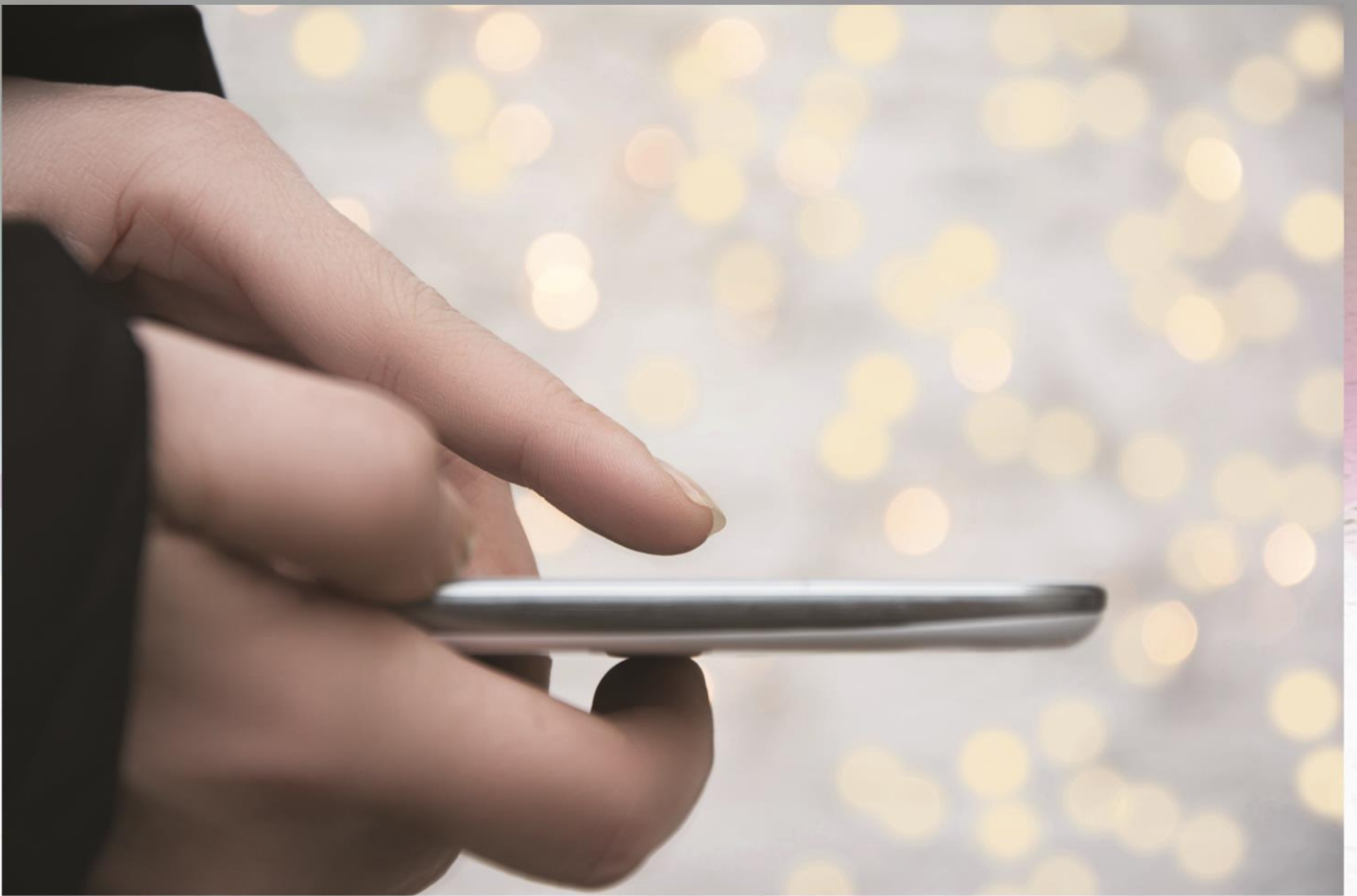


*T*here is no denying that the holiday shopping season is important to retailers. You can and should market your business year-round, but what you do in the months and weeks leading up to the holidays can make a huge difference in your sales for the entire year.

One mistake a lot of small businesses make is focusing their marketing efforts on those few months instead of making an effort to engage with their customers on an ongoing basis. Here are some ideas you can use to boost your holiday sales.

1

MAKE FULL USE OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS. In spite of the fact that a huge percentage of shoppers follow brands on Facebook, small businesses are lagging behind in using social media to promote themselves. Using social media effectively gives you a way to connect with your customers on a regular basis. For example, you can use social media to announce the arrival of new products in your store. Offering special deals to your social media followers is another good way to boost sales.



2

DON'T FORGET MOBILE ADVERTISING. Text messages have a much higher open rate than emails do, and using them can be a great and inexpensive way to encourage customers to visit your store. For example, you can send mobile customers a coupon code that they can only redeem in your store. Even people who don't have access to a computer often have a mobile device, so you can reach a wider audience with mobile marketing than you can with internet marketing only.

MAKE AND POST VIDEOS. Video content is always popular. In fact, YouTube is the world's second-largest search engine behind Google. There are plenty of ways to use videos to promote holiday shopping in particular. For example, you could demo a new product or film yourself unboxing a product. You could also offer customers a behind-the-scenes look at how your products are made.

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CONSIDER PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING, TOO. When you advertise on Google, you end up paying based on how much competition there is for your chosen keywords. Social media advertising is affordable and easy to manage. For example, Facebook advertising gives you access to demographic information (such as age, gender, and geographical locations) and psychographic information (hobbies and interests.) What that means is that you can target your ads to the people who are most likely to be in the market for what you are selling. It is also very easy to budget for social media marketing. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites let you set a per-day budget so you can always know in advance how much you will be spending.

MAKE THE PAYMENT PROCESS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE. That means if you have an online store, you need to give people the option of paying with a credit card or PayPal. You should also seriously consider enabling mobile payments so people can make purchases on their cell phones.

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USE LOCAL ADVERTISING TO GET PATRONS TO COME TO YOUR STORE.

Local newspapers and radio shows are a good (and often low-cost) way to connect with customers. Don't make the mistake of assuming that just because someone is local, they know who you are.

CONSIDER PAIRING UP WITH OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES TO OFFER SPECIAL DEALS AND PROMOTIONS.

For example, the owner of a clothing store might pair up with the owner of a shoe store to cross-promote their businesses when people come in shopping for gifts. You can do anything from displaying ads and telling customers about your partner's store, to offering cross-promotions and package deals. The one thing to keep in mind is that it's best to pair up with businesses that offer products or services complementary to yours.

7



BLACK FRIDAY SALE

8

IN THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE HOLIDAYS, CREATE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDES AND MAKE THEM AVAILABLE IN YOUR STORE AND ONLINE.

Some people have a knack for picking out gifts for the people in their lives, but others might need a bit of help. You can do separate guides to help people shop for teachers, relatives, significant others, and children. Even if your product might not seem to lend itself to this kind of promotion, you may be able to get creative and come up with something special. For example, a discount membership or service – even if it's one that's more suited to the summer – could convince people to give your product as a gift.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT BLACK FRIDAY AND CYBER MONDAY. As the owner of a small business, you might think that it's pointless to try to compete with big retailers and the kinds of deals they offer on Black Friday. The good news is that you don't have to offer the same kinds of deals they are offering – and you don't have to go in to work on Thanksgiving Day, either. There are plenty of customers who make a point of patronizing small and local business for their holiday shopping, so why not give them an excuse to shop at your store? You don't have to open in the middle of the night, but you should consider expanding your store hours to make shopping more convenient for customers.

There is research that suggests customers are more likely to respond to a sale that offers them a percentage off everything in the store instead of on selected items, so think about that too. And if you don't have a brick-and-mortar store, you don't have to be left out. You can still participate. A lot of online retailers offer special deals on Cyber Monday – that's the Monday after Thanksgiving. Whatever you decide to do, you can promote it on your social media pages and using local and mobile advertising.

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FIND NEW WAYS TO PROMOTE PRODUCTS. A lot of products have multiple uses, and demonstrating them for customers can be a good way to boost sales. For example, if you own an apparel store you might think about showing customers different ways to wear a basic item of clothing. The more versatile you make an item seem, the more value customers will attach to it.



You need to market your business on a year-round basis, but that doesn't mean that you can't - and shouldn't - make a special effort to boost your holiday sales. A lot of people start their holiday shopping in November, or even October. If you make full use of the resources available to you and give customers a reason to visit your store, you will increase the chances that they will do their holiday shopping with you. And the efforts you make to promote your business now will make a difference with shoppers who wait until the last minute, too.

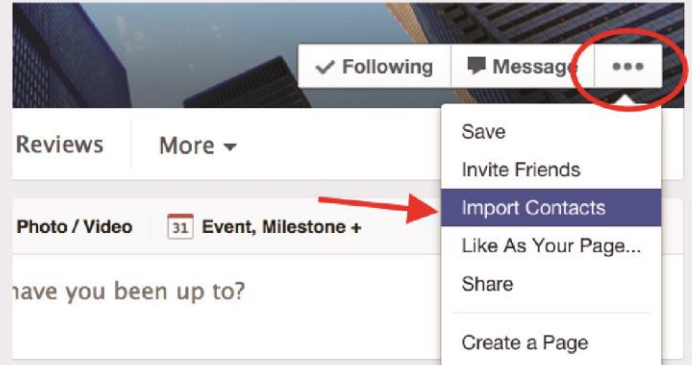
FIVE **FACEBOOK** FEATURES YOU PROBABLY **DIDN'T** **KNOW EXISTED**

If you're managing a Facebook page for your business, the chances are good that you are missing out on some great tools and features. While setting up a page for your business is easy, Facebook doesn't offer a ton of guidance about some of the things you can do with a business page. Some of the tools they offer can help make managing your page easier, while others can be used to make your ads more effective.



IMPORTING EMAIL CONTACTS

This feature provides a quick and easy way to let your existing customers know about your Facebook page. If you have an email list or client database, you can import it into Facebook and send invitations to everyone on your list asking them to "Like" your page. To use this feature, all you need to do is click on the ellipsis that appears next to the SHARE button at the top of your Facebook Timeline.

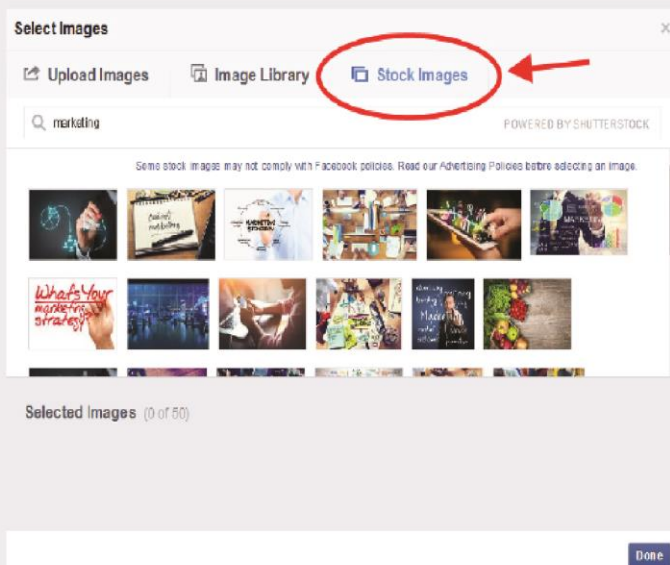


Then click the "Invite Friends" option and it will give you the opportunity to import your email list from a variety of places, including:

- » Autoresponder sites like Constant Contact and MailChimp
- » Email providers like Outlook and Yahoo
- » AOL Instant Messenger

It is important to note that you are limited to importing 5,000 addresses per day. If you have a huge database you may need to do it in batches. You can select specific names from a list or choose the whole group. That means it's easy to eliminate clients who have already liked your page and focus on those who have not.

USING FREE STOCK PHOTOGRAPHS IN FACEBOOK ADS



If you have ever gone looking for stock photographs to use for your business, you know that they can sometimes be expensive. One nice perk that Facebook offers advertisers is free access to a huge database of stock photographs courtesy of Shutterstock.

You can access this feature when you first set up your ad, or going to your Manage Ads page and clicking "Edit Ad". You will see three options for images:

- » Upload image
- » Choose Image from Library
- » Stock Images

You may already have images to use in your ads, but if you don't this is a good way to make your ad more appealing. Research shows that people respond more strongly to images than they do to text alone, and a

compelling picture can do a lot in terms of getting people to click on your ad. However, it is important to make sure that you check that the image you choose meets Facebook's guidelines.

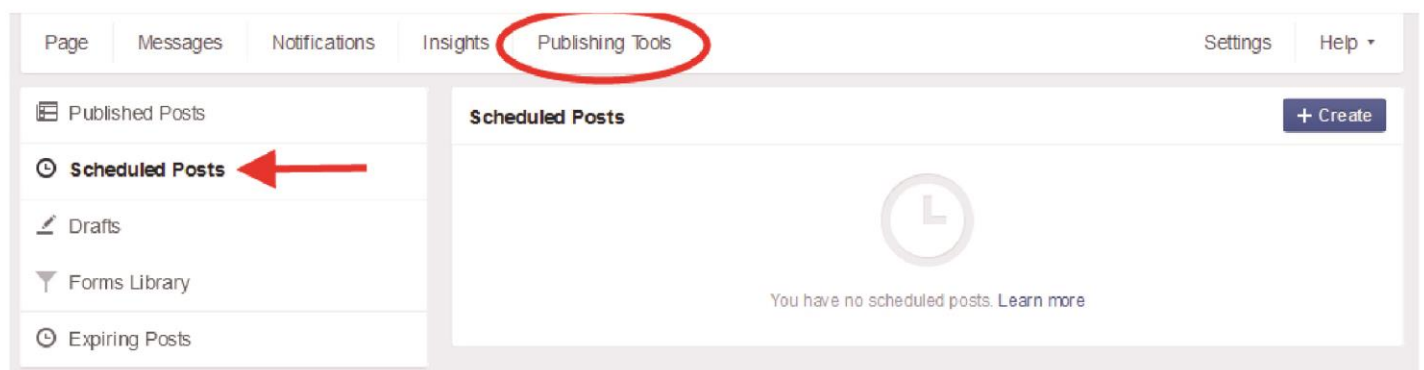
SCHEDULE FACEBOOK POSTS IN ADVANCE

Many companies use social media management tools like Hootsuite to manage their social media content. However, you don't need to pay for an online tool to schedule Facebook posts. The ability to do so is built right into your Facebook page.

Like many of Facebook's features, this one requires a little detective work to find. To access it, click the "Publishing Tools" tab at the very top of your Timeline. When you do, you will see a menu on the left with an option to schedule posts.

You can draft your posts and specify the date and time you want them published. You have all of the same options you would have when sharing a post in real time. That means you can include links to websites and articles, as well as embedding videos and photographs.

The nice thing about this feature is that it means you can be sure you will always have new content on your page, even on weekends or when you are on vacation.



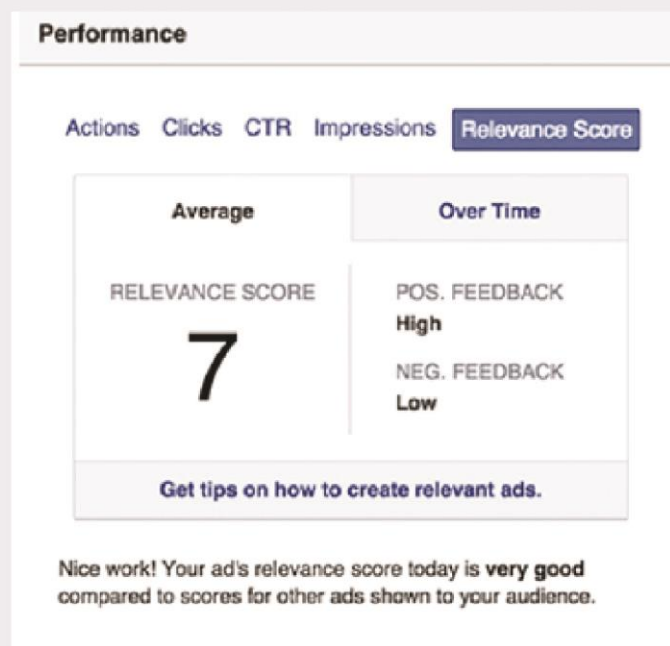
CHECK THE RELEVANCE OF YOUR AD

One of the nicest things about social media advertising is that you can get feedback, in real time, about how your ad is performing. With Facebook, you get a notification every time someone new follows your page, and

you also get information about the number of people your posts reach. These are important things to know because they can help you identify the content that matters the most to your audience. A relatively new thing that

you can find on Facebook is a score that rates the relevance of your ad. It takes into account things like comments, video views, clicks, likes, and shares. If people are telling Facebook to hide your ad, that can decrease its relevance. You can access this feature from your Manage Ads page.

What's the benefit of tracking your ad's relevance? Sometimes companies don't make adequate use of Facebook's demographics and psychographics when targeting their ads. If a large number of people are telling Facebook that your ad is not relevant to them, it may be time to take a look at who is seeing it. Your ad spending won't do you any good if you're wasting it on people who aren't interested.



CHECK THE RELEVANCE OF YOUR AD

Every skilled marketer knows the importance of monitoring the competition. Regardless of your industry, there are other companies online who are in direct competition with you. Many of them undoubtedly maintain a presence on Facebook.

Facebook gives you an easy – and free – way to monitor the competition's social media activity. To access it, all you need to do is go to the Facebook Insights page and scroll down to the bottom.

Pages to Watch (at the bottom of insights)

Compare the performance of your Page and posts with similar Pages on Facebook.



Pages to Watch helps you compare the performance of your Page and posts with similar Pages on Facebook. **Add Pages** to get started.

Add Pages

Likes, Comments & Shares

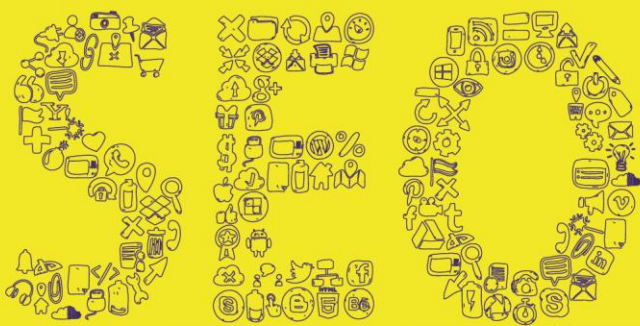
You can add up to five pages and track things such as the number of likes they get or how often they post new content. These are helpful things to know. If your competition is posting new content twice a day and you're only posting a few times a week, you may need to increase the frequency of your posts to keep up with them.

All of the above tools are free and very easy to use. Facebook is constantly adding new tools and features, and keeping up with them can be tricky. The features mentioned here are ones you would be unlikely to stumble upon unless you made the effort to scroll through all of your ad management tools to see what you had missed. Using them is a good way to make sure you are getting the most bang for your Facebook advertising buck.





MASTERING THE
SECRETS OF
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IS A NEVER-
ENDING BATTLE



SECRET SAUCE REVEALED!

DOMINATE SEARCH WITH PBN NETWORKS

Mastering the secrets of SEO is a never-ending battle. The days when keyword density was enough to earn your site a high rank on Google are long gone. The search giant is constantly updating their (proprietary) search algorithms, which means that the metrics are always changing. Not only that, but they are better than ever at sniffing out and shutting down so-called black hat SEO tactics. In other words, it is harder than it ever has been to earn a high search rank and avoid penalization by Google. SEO is not for the fainthearted.



The good news is that there are still things you can do to build quality backlinks and improve your SEO. One very effective example is the use of Private Blog Networks, or PBNs. This strategy is the "secret sauce" a lot the top agencies and SEO "Guru's" use to dominate the search engines



➤ SO WHAT IS A PRIVATE BLOG NETWORK?

Let's start by talking about what a PBN is. Simply put, it's a collection of websites owned by a single company or person. It is used as a way to place outgoing links for clients. If you have spent any time at all working on off-site SEO, you know that finding quality backlinks is hard work. Google frowns upon buying links, and webmasters who do it can end getting hit with significant penalties if they get caught.

The benefit of using a PBN is that, if you do it right, you can build up a collection of high-quality links from reputable sites. Of course, there are some risks involved

too. Here's a quick look at the dos and don'ts of PBN use:

- » DO take the time to find expired domain names for sites that already have links
- » DON'T use sites that have spam links, such as links to porn
- » DO keep the sites in your network active by posting new content on a regular basis
- » DON'T expect Google to overlook inactive sites that are adding new links and nothing else
- » DO build a network of related sites that contain content that's relevant to your niche
- » DON'T waste your time on sites with low authority or trustworthiness

In other words, PBNs carry many of the same risks and rewards of other SEO techniques. If you build a PBN and take the time to do it right, it can end up increasing your Google rank and providing a valuable resource for people interested in your niche. If you cut corners and skimp on the details, you could end up with a Google penalty – and if it's serious enough penalty, it could put you out of business.





➤ HOW TO BUILD A PBN

Now that you understand what PBNs are and why they can be so valuable for your SEO, let's talk about the steps required to build one.

1. Find expired domain names, preferably ones that are relevant to your niche or industry. Domain names expire for a lot of different reasons. Sometimes the people who own a domain forget about it, miss a renewal deadline, or they've simply moved on to other products and sites. Expired domain names are easy to find. You can use sites like **ExpiredDomains** or **FreshDrop** and search for domain names that appeal to you.
2. Research each potential domain name to determine its value as part of a PBN.
3. After you have identified viable domain names, register the domain names you have chosen and turn each one into an active site with fresh and relevant content. As I mentioned earlier, it is very important to make sure that each site in your PBN is active. Stagnant sites with old content are far more likely to attract negative attention from Google than active ones.
4. Add links, making sure that each link you place is relevant and adds value to the site.

One of the tools I like to use is **Majestic SEO**, which lets you check several key metrics to determine if a site is worthwhile. We'll talk more about which metrics to evaluate in a minute.



When you evaluate expired domain names, there are several key metrics that you need to review before registering the name. Some of the things I like to look at are:

- » **Page Authority.** Page Authority is a formula developed by Moz that gives you an estimate of where a web page will rank in Google's search hierarchy. Changes in Google's algorithms frequently mean changes to your Page Authority as well. In general, you want to look for websites whose pages have a Page Authority of 25 or more.
- » **Domain Authority.** Like Page Authority, Domain Authority is a ranking that indicates how a domain name will perform in search. Instead of looking at individual pages, though, it looks at the entire domain name. When you are shopping for viable domain names for your PBN, look for domains with an authority of 20 or more.

- » **Trust Flow.** Trust Flow is a metric developed by Majestic SEO that determines the trustworthiness of a site based on the pages it links to. Look for domain names that have a Trust Flow score of at least 15.
- » **No anchor spam.** This isn't a fixed metric, but it is essential. It is important to avoid sites that have anchor spam such as links to porn and other questionable content.
- » **Clear archive history.** Check any domain name you are considering on Archive.org to make sure that it is free of 301 redirects and has not been abused in the past.

The purpose of checking out your domain names this way is that you don't want to buy a domain name only to find that you have inherited problems that make the site unusable. There's no point in laying down money to reserve a domain name that has been tainted by bad links, spam, or black hat SEO practices.

➤ HOW TO BUILD A PBN

The bottom line is that building a Private Blog Network can be a very effective way to increase your website's rank on Google, but it is extremely important to do it the right way if you want to reap the benefits and not put your website at risk by doing it wrong. Researching domain names and generating fresh content for a network of sites can be hard work, and there's a lot of moving parts. For that reason, it may be best to

consider hiring an agency to do the work for you.

The SEO savvy who build PBNs for a living will be aware of the pitfalls and have the resources they need to pinpoint the right domains and the experience to eliminate issues that might be a problematic. A carefully built PBN is a worthwhile investment for any company looking to improve their rank with Google.

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Every business is different and has its own needs and challenges when it comes to marketing online.

WE CAN HELP YOU!

Our team of experts can help position your business in front of more customers online. We offer solutions that are designed to meet your needs, and exceed your expectations.

Digital Sapien Interactive specializes in building high performance organic search programs that achieve breakthrough results for local businesses, enterprises, nonprofits, and freelancers.

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