



Top Online Marketing Challenges for Industrial Companies

MacRAE'S Marketing

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Regardless of the size of a company, the digital age has changed things. More and more people are relying on technology to find businesses and products while companies struggle to understand the changing market and how to advertise themselves in this new day and age. Smaller companies are leveling the playing field and those that are successful are the ones that can successfully appeal to the market in fresh and new ways. The following addresses some of the biggest challenges that industrial companies face and see as their biggest hurdles in this changing marketplace.

Introduction

The introduction of technology has drastically changed how people interact with one another. Industrial professionals now use the internet as their primary way to handle day-to-day tasks, such as communicating with suppliers, scheduling logistics or researching parts/products. This way of doing business affects how their digital media strategy is developed. A proper marketing strategy is essential for any industrial company to succeed because it has a direct impact on their ROI and can help their business succeed in new ways.

A survey was conducted with 436 industrial companies in order to determine what they saw as their biggest challenges in the current digital market. [MacRAE's Blue Book](#) and [Canadian Trade Index](#) would like to reveal their learnings, so that everyone would be able to see where the current concerns are and how to address them. The top four categories that respondents considered the biggest challenge areas were:

- Getting better rankings in search engine results
- Making my current website better
- Understanding search engine optimization (SEO) and keyword optimization
- Email & database marketing

At first glance, many of these seem like areas that should already be successfully mastered by industrial companies, but the constantly changing requirements pose a very real challenge for all businesses. One example of this can be the search engines and their changing requirements. Google is known to change their algorithms from time to time in order to provide genuine content for the user, but understanding those changes can be very difficult. Google is very protective of the algorithms that it uses, and companies that were once on the top of the search rankings can quickly drop down the list when a change is implemented.

Sometimes, it's not a matter of failing to adapt to the changing world, but having the right resources to follow the trends. 60% of respondents said they spend less than \$500 a month to maintain their online presence. This means that more than half of those surveyed are spending as little as possible on their online presence, possibly contributing to the reason why so many struggle with bringing in new customers or business from the internet. Another 25% of companies spend between \$500-\$1,000 a month, meaning that 85% of those surveyed spend less than \$1,000 a month on the management of their online presence. Time and money are limited resources that must be used cautiously for businesses of all sizes, which is why each aspect of digital marketing needs to be understood and addressed.

Getting Better Rankings in Search Engine Results



50%

GETTING BETTER
RANKINGS IN
GOOGLE SEARCHES

As mentioned earlier, many businesses struggle to work within the confines of Google's algorithms in order to maintain a high ranking in search engine results. The higher the ranking is for a site, the better chance it has of appearing on the first page of results during a keyword search. **50% of the companies that were surveyed wanted to have better search engine rankings**, especially on Google. Google Panda and Penguin were both updates to the algorithm that affected many companies as they tried to shift their attention to search engine rankings. For industrial companies, having a high ranking is a very important way to connect with potential clients and customers.

Google used to be much more open about how a company was doing with rankings so that they could adjust their business strategies. However, Google has recently decided to give more vague answers in order to protect their algorithm and keep others from manipulating the system. If industrial companies don't understand why they have a drop in their rankings, they will struggle to get the marketing appeal that they need to be successful.

Having a Better Website



47%

MAKING
THEIR CURRENT
WEBSITE BETTER

Industrial businesses know that they must have a well-designed and easy-to-navigate website if they are going to increase their business. **There were 47% of the respondents that said having a better website was their top priority.** Today, websites can be built by practically anyone, but a good website is one that considers the client's needs as well as the overall appeal of the business. Things like product placement, written content, and eye tracking can drastically affect how a site is laid out.

Results also show that there are too many companies that don't understand the power of a mobile-friendly site. Industrial businesses are known to provide a wide spectrum of people with the materials that they need, but not everyone has easy access to a computer. There is a lot of potential in the mobile industry, but not very many companies have taken advantage of it. It's much easier to navigate a mobile site and order something if it's designed for a smaller screen, than to try to tab through a smaller version of the same site. Mobile searches are on the rise, and it's important that industrial businesses show an acceptance of the platform and build a mobile friendly website now. In 2014, mobile searches are expected to take over desktop searches and one half of all local searches are performed on mobile sources.

Understanding SEO and Keyword Optimization



33%

UNDERSTANDING
SEARCH ENGINE
OPTIMIZATION (SEO)
AND KEYWORD
OPTIMIZATION

Search engine optimization, commonly known as SEO, is something that many people want to understand, but do not have a firm grasp of. **33% of those that were surveyed want to improve their SEO and keyword results, and this is something that is linked to the search engine ranking page as well.** When someone searches for something Google or Bing, they are asking the system to scan through millions of web pages to pull up the most appropriate results. An inquiry could turn into a potential sale when someone searches for a certain part for a machine or extra materials to complete a project, and your company pops up in search

results. This is a clear way to get noticed.

There are good ways to target an audience and there are also bad ones. Having a broad keyword that you are hoping to be found for will not necessarily bring in customers, while specifying a specific part or material that you sell will pull in the right type of leads. Another way to find the right audience is to specify where goods or services are offered so that businesses are able to target clients that will benefit the most from the company. Performing a simple task, like creating a list of phrases that describe the company the best, can help create a better online presence compared to just providing basic keywords and hoping for the best. Also, many companies focus just on Google when there are other search engines out there. While Google may be the largest search engine, plenty of other people use Bing or Yahoo (for example) to find what they need online.

Email & Database Marketing

Businesses and industries need to have a solid email marketing system in place if they want to reach out to their customers and create a strong bond with people. **It is difficult to create a successful email database marketing program, but it is clearly important when looking at the 37% of respondents that said this was a top priority.**

Database marketing and email systems may be very costly, but they are very sophisticated and can accomplish a lot more than traditional systems. For example, they can send specific information to customers based on their likelihood to take action. This covers the costs that are typically hidden with email marketing due to emails that are not relevant and end up being deleted, ignored, or even cause a person to unsubscribe from a newsletter. There are even some database marketing solutions that can give companies a detailed look into the types of online visitors that they get and what products are selling the best in order to target that group and increase the potential to make sales.



Industrial businesses need to have the right system in place so that they can retain the customers that they have and create lasting relationships. Getting someone to visit their site and place an order is just the first step, and email and database marketing helps ensure that everyone is happy and that there are always clients that return for further business transactions.

Other Results

The top four categories may be what businesses consider the most important when they are thinking about their business online, but they do not account for everything. Another concern that industrial businesses have is obtaining new customers and business. Companies need customers in order to grow and become larger, and the digital market is where much of the potential is. It can be difficult, as the traditional sales process is very different from that of the online sale. This potentially could be one of the biggest challenges to overcome.

Some other techniques that industrial companies should consider is creating a business video and relevant content to help influence a customer's decision. **Nearly half of Engineers, about 47%, create videos and share them on a website**



for work. Most of the videos are how-to videos or product demonstrations, but they enable others to reply and comment on the content as well. This approach is a simple and passive one that helps engineers and industrial professionals get the most out of social media without having to put in a lot of time or effort. Visitors to their site enjoy seeing what's new, as well as product reviews, and it's a great way to keep a company in the spotlight while promoting certain products.

If your company hasn't started video marketing, here is a great place to start to get a short [business video produced](#) very easily.

Conclusion

If industrial companies want to succeed in the digital arena, they need to change gears and adjust their focus on what matters. They are aware of the key areas where they are lacking the most, yet fail to do anything about the issues. It's clear that resources are scarce when it comes to these areas, and not all companies will be able to spend the required amount of time or money to eliminate all of their online woes. However, with the right approach and the right people working for the company, many of the issues (such as keyword optimization and online ranking) will disappear at the same time.

The digital age has brought out a new type of support system to help out different businesses, such as industrial companies. If a company is serious about making a difference and increasing their online presence and revenue, they should take a look at the services that are offered by these companies and see what suits them the best. [MacRAE's Marketing Services](#) are a great place to start.

The survey that was conducted showed that industrial companies are eager to make their mark in the digital market. Now that the problems have been identified, it's time for companies to do something about them and move forward so that they become leading examples in this new digital world.

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