

2023 Digital Marketing Trends You Need to Know

It's almost a wrap for 2022, and as we enter the final stages of the year and importantly, the holiday season, it's inevitable to begin to think about what is in store in 2023. For small businesses who are always looking to be a step ahead of the competition through digital marketing tools and ideas, there are several emerging trends to look forward to next year, as well as the continuation of what we saw in 2022.

Social media platforms will continue to be the home to many of these trends, but small businesses may also see the reemergence of some other, more traditional tools also. What experts agree upon is that knowing where the next trend is and how they can be manipulated for your business' benefit is vital for both long- and short-term success, no matter the industry you are in!

Fortunately, small business owners have a cheat sheet right here for them to refer to and know what 2023's digital marketing trends are likely to be.

Use of AI Tools

Providing good customer service is at the forefront of everything small businesses do, or at least it should be. But when staffing is short and money is tight, there's only so many directions people can be pulled in to ensure customer satisfaction is 100% and service is prompt. That's where AI tools can help bridge the gap for small businesses.

More and more small businesses have installed AI tools in their websites to help with keeping customers happy. It may also keep track of customer spending habits and what they view on a website to better help with targeting campaigns. Common questions that emerge about a product can be answered instantaneously by AI tools too.

In 2020, over 50% of respondents to a survey conducted by McKinsey's (according to the Wharton School of Business) said they were using AI tools on their websites. This statistic shows that AI is no longer some experimental form of technology, it has in fact gone mainstream.

Googles Helpful Content

In August 2022, Google announced the launch of a new algorithm update unofficially titled the 'helpful content update'. The main goal for installing this new algorithm is to reward 'good content' by making it more prominent in searches than 'poor content'. Content that is well received, well reviewed, original, and written by people (and not by bots) will be further up the top of search results.

Small businesses therefore need to focus digital marketing efforts on creating content that better fits this algorithm, so they stay at the top of search engine results. We know that Google essentially dominates the internet, so if a small business is at the top of a Google query, the sales implications can be immense, all thanks to this helpful content update.

Instagram Automated Messaging for Better Customer Service

Instagram turned out to be the most useful social media platform for small businesses, even if they had a brick-and-mortar store. While Facebook was initially the leader, the visual component of Instagram

and the influencer culture that emerged from it made it the app of choice for the majority of small businesses. When Instagram launched their messaging feature, specifically the automated messaging feature, it made for a much easier way for businesses to perform better customer service.

Using these real-time messaging features means that businesses are not only directly communicating with clients to build up a sense of loyalty, but the replies they receive form a whole new data hub that they can draw on for future marketing purposes.

Chatbots

Chatbots are increasingly common on business' websites, and they have become a far more intuitive tool. Whilst customers know it is missing the old-fashioned personalized communication of making a phone call or sending off an email, the instant response to their inquiries is what makes chatbots so useful.

Chatbots are very useful for digital marketing, and more businesses are investing in them for their own websites. They prove especially useful when it is not within traditional business hours, meaning that even small businesses have the potential for global reach. In fact, chatbots are now regarded as the single fastest growing tool brands can use to communicate with their clients. Small businesses cannot afford to ignore them in 2023!

Zero Party Data

Small businesses are increasingly relying upon the use of Zero Party Data, specifically when it comes to creating more targeted campaigns. This type of data is literally the fuel burning the personalization fire, so to speak.

But what is it? Unlike first- and third-party data, Zero Party Data is the type of data that really makes sophisticated personalization campaigns, as it is the data customers directly share with brands. They do this because they want to feel a connection with a brand, so they are more open with what they share. Some examples of zero party data include buying habits and future purchasing intentions, more nuanced data on their personal context and financial situation and their identity, within the world of a brand.

Whilst this type of data has changed many privacy rules (especially with regards to Apple's iOS), it is still considered the type of data small businesses will benefit from immensely. Form building will prove vital in collecting Zero Party Data. The other beauty of Zero Party Data is that consumers appreciate the more nuanced marketing they receive and won't hit the delete button nearly as quickly on emails or ads they are sent from small businesses who rely on returning customers.

Changes and Developments on Social Platforms

Social platforms operate on the same principle as small businesses if you really think about it. They must constantly evolve, change and find new ways to stay ahead of the competition. Whilst small businesses' competition maybe the other shop in a local area, social platforms are constantly finding new ways to increase signups and daily usage. They need to drive users away from other platforms and dominate their time each day.

These changes and developments mean small businesses who use social platforms can only benefit. It is vital to experiment with them, create accounts on new platforms and learn how they can be exploited for your small business' benefit. By not doing so, you're essentially leaving money on the table.

Despite a somewhat contentious and slow start, the metaverse appears to be a new frontier for marketing. Twitter is also experiencing some massive changes with their recent takeover. And again, this hasn't gotten off to a particularly smooth start, but monitoring what new features are implemented could have a significant effect on your bottom line.

Email Marketing

While it may have taken a back seat for a number of years within digital marketing, we have seen the continued reemergence of good old fashioned email marketing as a way to reach people. It is by far one of the more effective marketing tools small businesses can use, once again. In fact, it is estimated that some 89% of small businesses use email marketing as their primary method of generating leads.

The fact is, people these days have multiple email accounts, and more and more people are categorizing these accounts into work, personal and promotional accounts. People having dedicated accounts for their subscriptions, offers and promotions is great news for small businesses, because subscribers actually want to read these communications from their dedicated email account.

Small businesses have now reverted to relying on their email lists for product and campaign launches and pushing emails out to dormant shoppers too.

Social Selling

Social selling is another term being used more and more within digital marketing when it comes to enhancing a small businesses' reputations. This term refers to the notion that businesses want to build a rapport with their clients and customers, to enhance brand loyalty and get them to return. This is done via social media. So, while the concept of social selling is hardly new, the method of how it is being achieved is relatively new.

The key to successful social selling is through regularly sharing new content. Whilst customers and followers likely won't interact with everything that is posted by a brand, they will find a connection with at least something, or likely across multiple posts. What small businesses then need to do is tailor their future content based on what posts were most popular in the past.

Success stories are a great way to socially sell a brand. Highlight when employees achieve something or celebrate a milestone, as it will put a name to a face and people will form a virtual bond with them.

So, there you have it. These are some of the digital marketing trends small businesses need to keep an eye on as we enter 2023. 2022 proved to be a year where the world regained some stability and small businesses saw better profits, despite the issues of inflation and the global supply chain. Barring another global catastrophe, 2023 should see increased stability and more growth, and by monitoring these trends, your small business will be able to take advantage of that.

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