THE HARDWORKING **WEB-MARKETING GUIDE** FOR B2B INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES



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Who this guide is for

THIS GUIDE IS FOR MARKETING GUYS AT COMPANIES THAT WEAR THESE



As the title implies, this guide was put together as a resource for business owners, CMOs, marketing managers and/or the guys in charge of marketing at business-to-business companies in construction, painting, manufacturing and other "hard hat-wearing" industries.

LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT RIGHT AWAY

This guide isn't for the faint of heart. This stuff can get complex. But, it is for the person who understands that in a tough economy and a much more competitive landscape, innovation can be the best tool in your toolbox (yep - we're gonna use puns, so roll back your sleeves and get ready). We're certainly not saying you should abandon those traditional roots, as a handshake and "your good word" have certainly proved their worth. But, maybe, just maybe, with the help of this guide, we can help take your marketing to the next level.

This guide is for those who know there are other business development sites than trade shows and four-man scrambles (ahem... the web). Those who want to walk into their Monday marketing meeting with more than a scratch piece of paper and a bulleted list of magnet-calendar concepts. This is for the innovators out there, the guys who want to walk in and slap a fistful of hard leads on the table.

We hope you find it fits well in your toolbox.

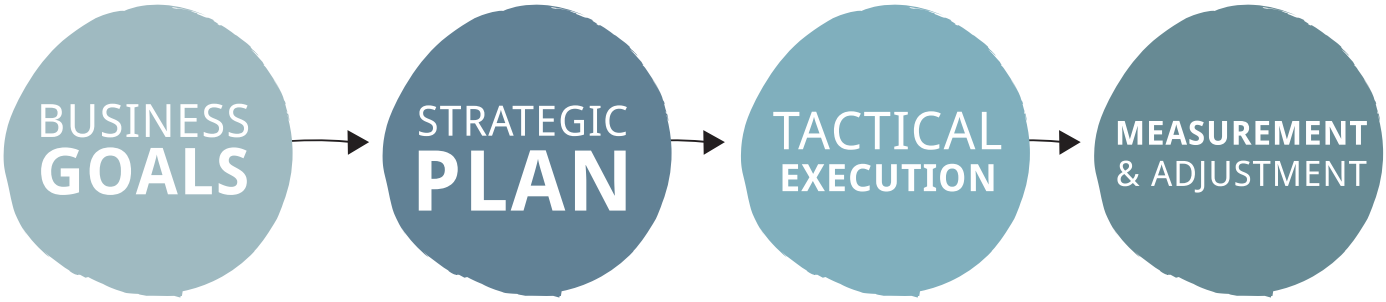
Know your goals or waste your time

BUSINESS GOALS COME FIRST

Digging into web marketing can be overwhelming. One of the most common mistakes is focusing on tactics too early.

> *"We need a better looking website. We need to use Facebook and Twitter. We need to send email blasts."*

Yep, we've heard them all. And yep, we've done them all. But only after we've made sure they aligned with the goals at hand. They can be the perfect tool, but only if the perfect opportunity is there. Have you ever tried driving a screw with a hammer?



You know the goals of your company more than any marketing or consulting or research firm could ever hope to know. And if anyone tells you differently, they're lying through their teeth. What is the company trying to accomplish? How do you generate qualified leads? How do you win new business? How can you grow by 50% in the next two years? How can you position your company as an authority and leader in your industry?

When you know exactly what your business is trying to accomplish at a company level, you can begin setting goals that are specific to marketing. More often than not, those goals may fall into one or more of the following three buckets:



LEAD GENERATION

Nothing will earn the trust of your sales team more than delivering them qualified leads. It makes their job easier. It makes the company more money. It gets you that corner office. And it wins you that prized Browning shotgun they annually give to the Employee of the Year.



BRAND AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION

Your potential customers need to know you're there, but so do the trade organizations, trade writers, subcontractors and vendors, and other industry authorities. Once they know about you, what's their perception of your company? This is big. This is how people describe you when they talk about you. This one is worth some serious consideration.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Position your company as an expert and a valuable resource for your audience. Keep them aware of this. When they're ready to buy, you'll already be in their consideration set.

Know your audience like the bottom of your steel-toed boots...



...OKAY, OKAY – PENNY LOAFERS

Your marketing communications will fail if they're not tightly targeted. It's imperative to get inside the heads of your audience. Not in a marketing-101 audience-profile sense. To be honest, who cares what TV shows they watch, what their diet consists of and what time of the day they sit on the throne. We certainly don't. And neither will your marketing.

The stuff that really matters is as follows. These are the questions you must answer to create the profile you must have.

WHO ARE THE COMPANIES YOU'RE TARGETING?

Make a list. Be specific. Identify who the decision makers are at the companies you've identified. What about other industry organizations or local / national business authorities who might pay attention to you? You're certainly familiar with the industry pubs that call monthly to ask for a little "pay for play." These are valuable contacts!

WHERE IS YOUR AUDIENCE ONLINE?

What media and tools are your audience using? Your customers may not be on Twitter, but the most relevant industry news publications who could spread your company's message with the simplicity of a retweet probably are. And guess what? They love interaction. Our point is this: don't write anything off just yet.

WHO'S READY TO BUY? WHO ISN'T?

Acknowledge and accept that different companies will be in different stages in the buying cycle. Don't let yourself miss opportunities with those who aren't ready to buy right now. Prep them so they'll be ready to choose you when they are ready to buy. This is lead nurturing at its finest. And there's no easier place to do it then on the web.

Know where your customer is in the buying cycle.



Resources

How to map lead nurturing content to each stage in the sales cycle / *Article by HubSpot* »

Your website is HQ

Resources

How to make your website a real business tool */ Article by Gorilla 76* »

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

The price of entry into a successful web-marketing campaign is a website built for success. A good B2B website is not defined by its color scheme, animated bulldozer graphic or fancy fonts. It's defined by its ability to convert visitors to customers.

THIS AIN'T A PRINT BROCHURE

A strong and effective B2B website is much more than a brochure. It's a lead generation machine filled with fantastic content for your specific audience. Pages are planned like blueprints – with every piece of information crafted and placed with a purpose. Copy communicates a distinct brand voice while optimizing for Google searches. Calls-to-action and carefully constructed navigation steer visitors where you need them to go. And lead capture forms turn visitors into leads.

YOUR STRONGEST TOOL

Your website is home base. You own it. You control 100% of what happens there. The same cannot be said for any other channel. So take control of it and use this to your advantage. Use the other marketing channels to drive your audience there and make it the strongest tool in your marketing tool belt.



IS YOUR WEBSITE WORKING AS HARD AS IT SHOULD?

Is the information on my website useful and easy to read for the audience I'm targeting?

Does it provide articles and resources that make a visitor's day easier?

Is it simple to navigate, so my visitors can find what they're looking for?

Is the content written in a voice that makes my brand happy?

Is it organized and written to give me the best chance of showing up in Google searches?

Do calls-to-action on the right pages encourage my audience to contact me?



Do lead-capture forms throughout the site let me build a database of interested email contacts?

Does the design communicate the image I want others to have of my company?

Can I easily make updates and publish more content on my own?

Construct relationships with social media



THE NATURAL EXTENSION OF TRADITIONAL MARKETING TOOLS

"My daughter is on that Facebook and it's a big waste of time."

Entering and participating in social media is often a major area of resistance for traditional, B2B companies. We think this stems from a misunderstanding of how social media can and should be used in the business world. If you see tools like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn as distractions, you're likely missing an opportunity. Think of them instead as extensions of the face-to-face meeting, the trade publication and what you'd traditionally picture as PR. And remember, your reason for utilizing these social media tools is no different than any other marketing tool: **convert on your business goals.**

IT'S CALLED "SOCIAL" MEDIA FOR A REASON

Participation is very much about relationship building. If you're a marketer at a B2B company, you probably know something about building relationships. You make phone calls, go to trade shows, golf with prospects and then make more phone calls. Social media presents opportunity to extend those kind of interactions to an online setting. It also creates a platform for dialogue with people and organizations that may have otherwise been inaccessible.

Resources

The B2B Social Media Book / *Book by Kipp Bodnar and Jeffrey L. Cohen*

It's time to bring B2B marketers into the social-media world / *Article by Ad Age*

How B2B marketers use social media: new research / *Study by Social Media Examiner*

LinkedIn for new business / *Three-part article by Gorilla 76*

LISTEN FIRST

LinkedIn offers discussion groups where industry chatter takes place. Twitter allows you to segment your audience through lists. Read and listen to what people in your industry are talking about. When you join these conversations and infuse your opinions, you can position yourself as an influencer and an authority.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE NEW PR

> *"But my customers don't use social media."*

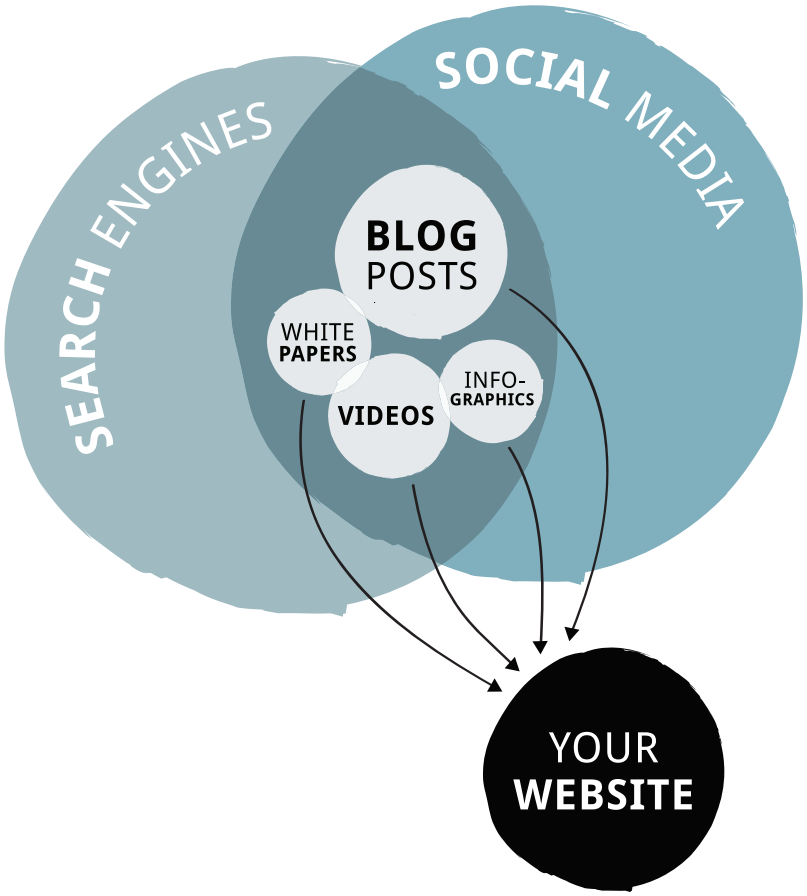
OK, that's a legitimate point. But guess what? **It doesn't matter.** Even if your customer isn't there, you simply cannot underestimate the power of capturing the attention of journalists, trade organizations, business journals, bloggers and influencers in your industry. These people have expansive, highly-targeted audiences. And if you play your cards right and they spread your message for you, their audience becomes yours.



Generate leads with inbound marketing

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

Inbound marketing, in short, is about qualified leads discovering you. Here's how it works: You create audience-centric, keyword-driven blog posts and website content that show up in Google searches. Links to that content circulate on Twitter and LinkedIn and visitors find their way to your website. Rather than hunting, you build the infrastructure up front, then watch prospects come to you. Think about it like this. The smart lion doesn't wander aimlessly looking for prey. The smart lion hides by the watering hole, letting the prey come to him. (We borrowed that analogy from this blog post by the smart guys at HubSpot.)



MARKETING CHANNELS WORKING IN HARMONY

Inbound marketing is most effective when all of your tools are in sync. Active participation in social media grows your audience, a bigger audience commands more exposure and more exposure results in more website traffic.

As qualified website traffic grows, so does the opportunity to engage potential customers and capture leads. Simultaneously, the more industry-relevant content you publish online, the more authority Google and other search engines will grant you in related search results.



DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY!

Social media participation and great website content are all but worthless in the absence of lead-capture mechanisms. Prominently post your phone number and include contact and newsletter subscribe forms throughout your site. Make it as easy as possible for your visitor to get in touch with you.

As visitors submit their email addresses, plug them into a database so you can follow up with periodic e-blasts that give these new leads additional content. This keeps you top of mind. This makes you a smart marketer.



Capture leads on your website.

Resources

Inbound marketing vs. outbound Marketing / *Infographic by Mashable* »

The 5 critical components of fantastic lead-capture forms / *Article by HubSpot* »

Why B2B companies need good landing pages / *Article by Gorilla 76* »

Nurture your leads until they're ready

NOT EVERY PROSPECT IS READY TO BUY

In fact, most probably aren't. In many B2B markets, the sales cycle can take months or even years.

Online lead nurturing is rooted in developing relationships and becoming a valuable information source for your audience. There are many ways this can and should happen.



BLOGGING

A business blog exists to provide prospective customers with useful, targeted, well-crafted content that makes his or her job easier. Period. A general contractor might publish an article on LEED certification to populate Google searches for things like "green building practices". Those search results lead to clicks. Clicks expose new visitors to website content. And calls-to-action on the site result in newsletter subscriptions and inquiries. It's then that the lead nurturing begins.

EMAIL MARKETING

As your email list grows, segment subscribers into groups for the purpose of sending targeted information to each. E-blasts with short teasers can link to full stories on your website. Remember, your website is HQ. Get visitors there and make sure there's plenty of useful content to engage them.

Resources

How to market with patience in a tough economy / *Article by Gorilla 76*

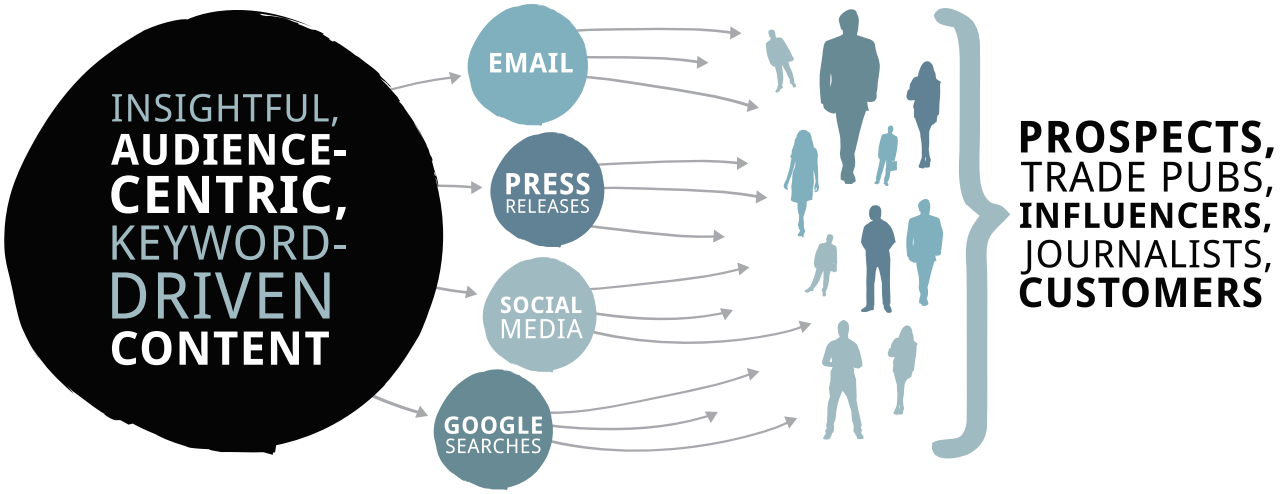
Need ideas for your business blog? Here are 50 / *Article by Entrepreneur.com*

SOCIAL MEDIA

As demonstrated earlier in this guide, social media marketing is about building targeted connections and developing relationships. Now it's time to nurture those relationships through consistent dialogue and sharing of useful content.

PATIENCE... PATIENCE... PATIENCE... GO!

If you've prepared your website and blog with high-quality, highly targeted content, built a following in the social media channels and begun participating, captured email leads through forms on your website and started sending those targeted e-blasts, you've set yourself up for success. Congrats! When your prospective customer is ready to buy, they'll think of you first, trusting that you're the expert.



Measure success and failure

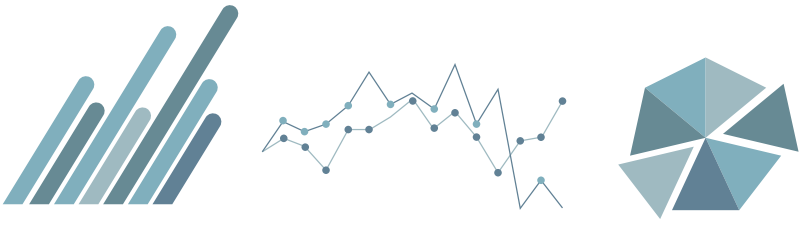
No one gets it all right the first time. Some things will work and some won't. Fortunately for all of us, free tools like Google Analytics allow us to observe website performance and measure against business goals. You can learn:

- What pages are and aren't being visited
- What keyword searches in Google are driving targeted visitors
- What marketing channels and websites are responsible for sending the highest number of qualified leads

And much, much, much more.

Want to know how effective Twitter, email and blog posts have been at generating leads? You're in luck. Analytics can be customized to align with your specific business goals. That's powerful stuff when it comes to measuring ROI. And ROI is powerful stuff when it comes to making the boss-man smile.

And don't forget – after measuring, it's time to make adjustments. Try things, measure, learn what's working and failing and adjust your web-marketing strategy accordingly.



Resources

Google Analytics: features / *Page by Google*

Digital marketing and measurement model / *Article by analytics expert/author Avinash Kaushik*

The basics of Google Analytics in five minutes / *Video by Gorilla 76*

Who we are

ABOUT GORILLA 76

We're a St. Louis-based web-marketing agency specializing in online marketing strategies for industrial, B2B companies.

CLIENT EXPERIENCE AND CASE STUDIES

A sampling of our strongest and most relevant work follows. To view all of our case studies, click here.

The Korte Company

Engineering News-Record's 203rd largest contractor in 2011

View case study

Thomas Industrial Coatings

Engineering News-Record's third largest painting contractor in 2011

View case study

TruQC

iPad application poised to change the job-site forever

View case study



HOW ABOUT A TEST DRIVE?

Sometimes our client relationships begin with a web-marketing audit. We do the research and digging. You walk away with a thorough report and a very specific plan of action. Click to learn more.

Let's talk B2B marketing



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