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## Last-Minute Tips for 2017 B2B Marketing Planning

In our ever-advancing world, it can be hard to keep up – for B2B marketers, especially. Seemingly every week there is a new marketing tactic to not just analyze for validity and endurance, but to learn, implement and take advantage of. Notably online, there are endless marketing platforms, software and tools, each promising to fulfill your corporate objectives of generating leads, converting customers and ultimately, increasing your company’s return on marketing investment (ROMI) . So where should you focus your efforts? As professional B2B marketers who live and breathe the stuff, we’ve done the legwork and are here to tell you exactly where you should start.

### one Web Development: Mobile-Friendly & UX

80% of Internet users now own a smartphone. What does this mean for your business? It means that whatever method you’re using to try and reach your target audience – email marketing, SEM or SEO – the ultimate destination will likely be your company’s mobile website.

Instead of building multiple sites, create one site that can be appropriately formatted for mobile. A responsive design addresses several aspects, including proportions, loading speed and site maps. An efficient mobile site should mirror your desktop site, but adjust for smaller screens. Users should be able to click links and buttons without constantly pinching to zoom in and out.

Another adjustment to account for is loading speed. Mobile users expect sites to load within seconds.

**In fact, 61% of users are unlikely to revisit a mobile site they had trouble accessing and 40% will visit a competitors’ site instead.**

Lastly, your site map should be logical and easy to navigate on desktop and mobile, otherwise you will find a high bounce rate from your homepage – and likely to a competitor’s!

### two Branding, Rebranding and the Launch

Take a second and consider all of the aspects of your business that include small (or large) branding elements: business cards, websites, brochures, email signatures, trade show displays and recruitment materials – the list goes on. From small handouts to event-based deliverables, branding plays a huge role in driving the credibility of your B2B business.

An imperative step to creating cohesive marketing materials is developing a brand strategy guide.

**It is important to define your company’s mission and vision statements, and apply them to all facets of your B2B brand and operation.** Establishing a strong brand foundation, centered on your target audience, is the key to success in B2B marketing, especially for niche industries.

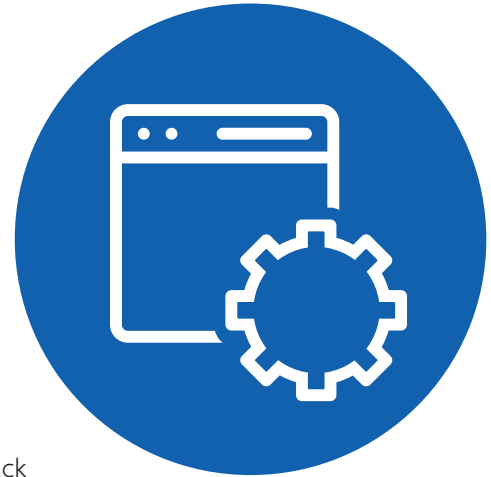
After doing all of the hard behind-the-scenes strategy, it’s important to carefully orchestrate the launch of your brand (or rebrand). Develop a strategic media blitz and public relations plan to disseminate the news to influencers and decision makers in your market. Consider integrating your PR plan with website updates, email marketing and social media to drive credibility.

## three Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Content Marketing's BFF

In year's past, optimizing your website was simple and involved scattering keywords across your homepage. Now, with Google's sophisticated algorithms, the bar is set much higher. **The best way to improve your SEO and your search engine ranking positions (SERP) on Google, is to create great content.**

From blogs to infographics, content marketing is a way to gain authority in the eyes of Google – but placing content on your own website is not enough to skyrocket SEO. Content, also referred to as linkable assets, should be placed on other news or industry-related websites.

Once a third party site agrees to host your content, provide a link that directs the user to your website within the copy. That link is called a back link; which leads us to the “magic” formula: more on and off-site linkable assets equate to better SEO for your B2B business.



## four Search Engine Marketing (SEM): Google Adwords

SEM is another way to reach your customers online. It's a great tool for those who face stiff competition for an organic position on search engines. Google Adwords places your company's ad amongst the top four slots on Google, based on keywords. Although this comes with an “ad” distinguisher, which may turn some people away, the increased clicks and impressions will still provide a boost in traffic to your website.

**Another question you may have is: why Adwords when SEM is available on other search engines, such as Yahoo and Bing?** Although Google is a pricier option, the company currently owns 71% of the search market share. In addition, Google display campaigns reach 80% of global Internet users. From a probability standpoint, Google is your best bet.

## five Social Media: LinkedIn-Sponsored Content

LinkedIn has been rated the most effective social media platform at 66% and 94% of B2B organizations use it to distribute content. **If you're looking for potential clients amongst the upper management sector, close to half of the top 25% of earners on the Internet are LinkedIn members.**

LinkedIn's sponsored content feature is a great way to get more bang for your advertising buck. The platform's targeting function for their sponsored content and text ads. There are 15 different targeting categories, including location, company industry, job title, seniority, gender, age and years of experience – to name a few. Targeting can be very useful, but be sure to keep your audience around 300,000 for sponsored content and 60,000-400,000 for text ads.

REFERENCES: Impact Branding and Design, Main Street ROI, Iron Paper, LinkedIn

