



## Quantifying Your Digital Marketing and Social Media Spend

by Anthony "Bert" Bertino

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The next generation of advertising leans towards spending your marketing dollars in digital marketing and social media. These avenues are important to understand in order to quantify the expenditure.

The goal of digital marketing is to find an existing customer or new customer and entice them to travel to your facility. Digital marketing can seem space age to some and invasive to others, but it is relevant in this present day where almost everyone has a "computer phone" in their pocket. To reach a customer that is searching for a keyword that is relevant to your property is the true definition of targeted marketing. If a consumer searches the keywords "gaming," "restaurant," "golf course," "spa" or "hotel," wouldn't you want your property to appear? Of course you would.

Social media has matured and is now considered mainstream. But what is a "like" or a "comment" worth? Is it worth what you pay to advertise in those spaces? Many of the social media outlets have true measurables, but linking to your present database and realizing what drew a new customer in is imperative. Social media gives your facility a voice to speak with existing customers and those who may want to become part of your database. Making sure you are part of the conversation is imperative to the success of any media program, especially social media.

As marketing dollars shift from radio and print, many of these organizations are offering digital services to supplement where they are losing market share. While they may have a grasp of their present markets, do you still buy from them? There are many SEO organizations that offer help, and they may have a better grasp, but they also may be trying to play catch up. Cable companies are another source of digital providers, but they too may not be the best provider for your facility. So who is? What do you need?

Begin your journey by asking questions before you interview digital ad space providers. The questions are determined by your facility, what it offers, what and how many keywords you may need and what budget are you willing to spend to reach a measurable influx of customers. Are you willing to reach further than where you normally would? Are you looking for a demographic that you do not normally entice? Or, do you have a competitor that is "less than" in a certain aspect that you can

capitalize on if patrons knew you existed? These questions are good to start with. Do you have a brand message that is slick, quick and memorable? Can people find you easily on the web and recognize who you are? Is your brand strong enough for digital scrutiny? If these questions are a resounding yes, then it is time to start to enter into negotiations with digital providers. If not, stop and shore up these areas before you continue.

From a social media perspective, are you a powerful presence with the big market leaders, such as Facebook, Instagram, Yelp, and TripAdvisor? Are you communicating with your online guests and providing them a proper response each and every time? Is there a meaningful experience on your web portals? If you can answer yes, then you have begun the hearty journey. If not, shore up these weak areas to avoid giving your customer a poor experience and cause greater push-back on social media, causing you to actually lose market share.

Once all of these areas are secured, you can begin to design a game plan as to who you want to reach and what works best for your organization and jurisdiction. A marketing strategy should include many of these aspects and how you will attack the marketplace you want to dominate. Many organizations are in the digital and social media space, but question if it is worth it. The first issue is to correspond your database with the people that are driven to your facility. Once that is clear, you can begin to quantify if you are spending in the precise area, if keywords are accurate, if your provider is displaying in the exact areas that you sought growth from, and finally, if your budget is appropriate for what you are receiving. Once you can answer all of these questions, you can adjust for greater success and power on to increase your digital spend while reducing antiquated portals that have diminished your reach and increased your spend over the past years.

If your advertising is universal in all realms, then your customers can be reached wherever they go and your brand strengthens. This is the goal of every successful organization – quantifying spend and budgeting for growth. This is where realization blossoms from. ♣

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