

Digital marketing tips for SA's small businesses

 By [Stephen Sandmann](#)

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I cut my teeth, as a digital marketer, on many SMEs and an NGO before I started working on major brands. I've also seen the direct benefits on a personal level via my wife's hair salon's digital marketing.



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My history with SMEs allowed me to focus on 'performance digital marketing,' providing results-driven digital marketing, which is in a permanent state of improvement/optimisation. Small businesses don't have millions of rands to spend and can't afford to put up with any inefficiencies. This stage of my life led me to find my calling, specialising in Google Search-related digital marketing.

How should you approach digital marketing?

When it comes to approaching digital marketing, it requires both caution and optimism. Referrals or third-party reviews can help you select the digital marketer for your business. Also, remember to do your own homework, and ask a few questions too. How much will it cost? How long will it take to achieve results? Will my desired outcomes be met?

Popular types of digital marketing

Let's get started. First, you will need a digital marketing strategy/approach compiled for your business once you've found the right digital marketer for your business. Depending on your budget and industry, a combination of some or all of the digital marketing platforms / disciplines will be used, which usually include: [Google Search](#) adverts, [Search Engine Optimisation \(SEO\)](#), [Facebook](#) adverts, ['display' image](#) adverts, [Twitter](#) adverts and [Instagram](#) adverts usually do the trick.

Get a website

But we're jumping the gun a bit. You need a website first, which means that you need reliable [web hosting](#), a website builder (e.g. [WordPress](#) and [Wix](#)) and a [domain](#) (e.g. mywebsite.co.za).

Website content

Next, you need to fill your website with relevant written information (also known as website content), that would engage your

intended audience. You may need to hire a copywriter for this task, depending on your writing skills. Do some research, and ask current clients a few questions. It's important to be objective and not caught in the trap of jargon and 'legalese,' which could marginalise many website visitors. Ask yourself a few questions – here are a few. What information are they looking for online? What style of writing would they prefer? What would your prospective clients be looking for via Google Search (and then visit your website) – and answer these questions? There is an old saying when it comes to digital marketing: "Reward people with information, and they may reward you with business."

Google Search

Google Search is arguably the gateway to the internet and can't be ignored. Instead, it should be harnessed. You may or may not be aware that the page (search result page), that appears after you have done a Google search, is made up of advertisements and organic (website listings that appear for free) listings. This is where AdWords and SEO come into play, which together make up Search Marketing. Your business website needs these two types of Search Marketing to have sufficient visibility on Google Search. This is when your prospective customers turn to Google Search to find what your business has to offer. AdWords advertisements usually appear as text-type advertisements in Google Search, but these days you also get shopping advertisements (an advertisement with an image of a product), which are useful if you sell electronics, for example.

Social media

Your social media presence needs to be properly set up too. Only be present where they are present. This is often referred to as social media marketing. You should produce social media posts and tweets that, which must communicate the right message in an engaging way. Without the use of social media advertising, the right message won't reach many people. There is a reason that social media platform CEOs are often billionaires. Do your prospective customers use Facebook or do they prefer other social media platforms? Facebook advertisements work well because people tolerate them, seeing they are seeking escapism on the platform.

We all live in a digital world and it's time for your business to make the most of it.

ABOUT STEPHEN SANDMANN

I have a keen interest in innovative, digital marketing-lead advertising and search marketing (SEO and paid search), which I've developed through my award-winning agency and corporate career at Ogilvy, Quirk (now Mirum), Vodacom and now a specialist digital marketing consultant at Sandmann Digital.

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