EMP⚡WERDIGITAL™

GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

GETTING STARTED

Use the following information as a starting point to discover options for improving your business by developing your digital capabilities in the areas of digital operations, e-commerce, digital marketing, and social media engagement. This guide includes areas of digital needs to consider and possible points of consideration before choosing a solution. This is not an exhaustive list.

OPERATIONS (Digital-Based)

Accounting Software
Software that assists with bookkeeping and accounting and helps provide insight into your business's financial health

- Considerations before choosing accounting software:
  - Cost
  - Usability
    - Mobile access
    - Multiuser access
    - Cloud-based software
  - Features
    - POS and CRM integration
    - Income and Expense tracking
    - Time tracking
    - Invoicing
    - Payroll management
    - Bank and Credit Card Syncing

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software
Technology for managing information, relationships, and interactions with customers and potential customers; many CRM systems use artificial intelligence to analyze patterns in sales and offer insights in consumer information/habits

- Considerations before choosing CRM
  - Cost (ask to try their free-trial or live demo before commitment)
  - Usability
    - Mobile access
    - Cloud-based access
  - Features
    - Lead management
    - Contact management
    - Customer Opportunity management
    - Sales forecasting, analytics, and data
      - [Google Data Analytics Certificate Program](#)
      - [Google Analytics Tutorial](#)
    - Reports and dashboards
    - E-commerce integration
  - Have a sales strategy before purchasing CRM
  - Include all other key CRM users (if you will not be the main person interacting with this system so they understand how to take advantage of this system)

- o Determine present and future needs and evaluate how CRM will grow with your company, as CRM is a highly individualized process

Cybersecurity System

Protects networks, devices, and data against criminal or unauthorized access of electronic information

- Considerations before choosing security options:
    - o Cost
    - o Vendor Industry certification
    - o Vendor's policy on clients' right to audit their system
    - o Features
        - Monitoring and management of security systems
        - Mobile security and management
        - Firewall protection
        - Encryption
        - Two-factor authentication
- Perform a Risk Assessment to try and identify potential threats, identify where data is stored, and identify potential gaps in security
    - o Use this information to develop or refine your cybersecurity strategy
- Additional precautions:
    - o Password protect devices
    - o Back-up data regularly when possible
    - o Secure Wi-Fi router by password protecting it
    - o Control physical access to devices such as laptops
    - o Train staff to take proper security precautions

Electronic Point of Sale (POS) Systems

A POS system is hardware and software that can be used to collect payment for goods or services and help with many other aspects of managing a business; many businesses are using cloud-based POS systems for more advanced features

- Considerations before choosing/upgrading your POS system:
    - o Cost
    - o Usability
    - o Features
        - Integration with accounting software
        - Inventory management/sales tracking
        - Gift card/loyalty program implementation
        - Sales analysis features
        - For hospitality businesses – placing orders, making reservations electronically
        - Ability to accept all forms of payment
        - Customer engagement software

o   Make sure that the POS system's features are tailored to your type of business (restaurant, home repair, etc.)

Productivity Management Software
Software that helps organize, prioritize, assign, and track work

- Considerations before choosing your productivity management software
  o   Cost (many free options with paid upgrade packages)
  o   Questions for You & Your Staff
    ▪ How do you/your team work best? Visual organization? Checklists?
    ▪ What are your long-term project goals for the next month, 6 months, 1 year, etc.? What are the short-term steps you need to take to achieve these goals?
    ▪ How can you work towards these goals more efficiently and maximize productivity using Productivity Management Software?
  o   Usability
    ▪ Easy implementation and use
    ▪ Compatible with different operating systems or devices
  o   Features
    ▪ Assigning roles
    ▪ Time tracking
    ▪ Shared calendars
    ▪ Ability to integrate other apps
    ▪ Project management templates

Product Photography For Digital Use
Professional photography services for your products/business to use for digital use – website content, social media content, email marketing content, etc.

- Considerations before choosing a photographer
  o   Cost
  o   Their Website/Portfolio
    ▪ Do you like their work and how they edit their photos?
  o   Photography Type (Event? Food? Portraits? Venues? Etc.)
    ▪ For example, an amazing wedding photographer may NOT necessarily do great food photography
  o   Equipment
    ▪ Do they have the right equipment for your needs?
      - Basic: camera, lenses
      - Other: Lighting, product backdrop, props, etc.
  o   Fees
    ▪ What's included? Some examples of extras may be:

- Photo Editing
- Shoot Styling
- Overtime
- Are they insured?
- Good questions to ask if it's not available on their business website/portfolio:
  - How long have you been a commercial photographer?
  - What's your experience in this industry?
  - What clients have you worked with in the past?
  - What clients do you work with now?
  - What is the turnaround time?
  - What does your fee include?
  - What are our backup options in case the photographer is unable to make it? (Illness, camera breaks, etc.)
  - What do you need from me? If they need you to do any preparation, it's good to know beforehand so it's a smooth process!

Website

From free products to digital essentials, Google makes it easy to get online and in front of more customers. Learn more with [Google for Small Business](#).

- Basic business website:
  - Mobile-friendly landing page with business contact description of work/services/store/etc., contact information (email, phone number, etc.), hours of operation, address; many free options available as a starting point
  - [Google Sites](#), Create and host a high-quality business website for your team, project, or event.
- Optimized business website: (See Digital Marketing)
  - SEO/SEM ([Free SEO Starter Guide, Grow with Google](#))
  - Branded design/imagery/product photography
    - Business logo
- Considerations before building/upgrading your website:
  - Cost
  - MUST BE mobile-friendly (can be easily viewed/used on phone, tablet, desktop alike)
  - E-Commerce capability? (See E-Commerce)
- Maintenance:
  - Do we have the ability to regularly update and maintain the website?
  - Who is responsible for updating the website as your business grows and evolves?

E-COMMERCE

Electronically buying or selling products or services online. E-commerce sales rates have been skyrocketing over the past several years. It is an important time to consider developing an e-commerce component for your business.

E-Commerce website

- Considerations before choosing e-commerce website solutions
    - o Analyze online customer buying habits using online tools and web analytics. Look for trends and develop your e-commerce component around these patterns.
        - Google Analytics Tutorial
    - o Features:
        - Web Customer Experience (CX) optimization
            - Optimize mobile experience
            - Live chat feature installation
            - Streamlined and easy-to-use checkout process
            - Shopping cart redesign
            - Return/refund experience design
            - High-resolution imagery (product photography, graphic design, User Interface or UI/UX)
                - o Google UX Design Certificate Program
            - Integration of customers' reviews
        - Ability to scale and to add new features
    - o How do we utilize e-commerce to continue engaging customers and connecting with them when fewer customers are shopping in-person?
        - Use creativity and be willing to experiment with customer engagement as your business evolves and incorporates e-commerce
    - o Digital Marketing & E-commerce Google Certificate Program

CRM Software (See Digital Operations)
Cybersecurity (See Digital Operations)
Digital Order Fulfillment Solutions/POS Systems (See Digital Operations)
Marketing (See Digital Marketing)
Web traffic/visitor conversion strategy (See Digital Marketing)

DIGITAL MARKETING

The following are all components of a larger digital marketing strategy that, ideally, should be established first and foremost before beginning any other digital marketing work or buying any services

- Considerations before choosing digital marketing strategy/agency/consultant:
    o Cost (many consultants offer a basic free consultation, ask for services and prices then)
    o Experience (check their website for past clients' success & reviews)
    o Specialty (some consultants/agencies specialize in marketing for different industries: restaurants, clothing, make-up, etc.
- Additionally, before developing any of the strategies listed below, it may be useful to collect customer data and receive customer feedback to evaluate their experiences, refine your strategy, and appropriately target specific goals.
    o [Google Data Analytics Certificate Program](#)

Branding
- Visual identity (logo design, color palette, typography guidelines, imagery guidelines, design guidelines (E.g., package design & ad design guidelines)
    o Be consistent
- Alignment in written and visual content (See Social Media Engagement)
- Target audience research
    o Your digital audience base may be different than those you are used to targeting
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Storytelling
    o Who does your business serve?
    o What does your business offer?
    o What does your business believe in? (Corporate social responsibility)
    o Customers can engage with your story and form a personal connection with your business

Digital Marketing Strategy
A consultant can help organize/prioritize how to promote your business strategically by identifying target markets, helping with marketing content, setting and evaluating success metrics, thinking through and implementing the other elements in this category (branding, omnichannel marketing, etc.) and everything in between

- [Digital Marketing & E-commerce Google Certificate Program](#)

Google Business Profile (FREE)

Turn people who find you on Google Search and Maps into new customers with a free Business Profile for your storefront or service area. Personalize your profile with photos, offers, posts, and more. https://www.google.com/business/

- Free stickers, posters, social posts, and more – from your Business Profile on Google, https://marketingkit.withgoogle.com/

Omnichannel marketing

Omnichannel marketing sends one unified brand image and message to customers by utilizing various digital or traditional marketing strategies. Customers often have to build up trust in a business and interacts with brands through different platforms. Omnichannel marketing helps instill this trust in your business and personalize the experience for the customer.

- Email marketing
- SEO optimization
    - (Free SEO Starter Guide, *Grow with Google*)
- Social media marketing on multiple platforms
- Micro influencer marketing

Peer-to-Peer marketing

Peer-to-peer marketing or advertising utilizes customers and encourages them to recommend your company to their current social circles. This allows your business to find new avenues for growth, while simultaneously building strong customer relationships and keeping them satisfied.

Retargeting marketing

Retargeting marketing is for reaching customers/audience that have already engaged with your business once before. A successful retargeting campaign can increase sales and build customer engagement.

- Brand ads

SEO optimization

Researching and using key words associated with your products or services using analytic tools or web metrics to help potential consumers find your business in their web searches

- Free SEO Starter Guide, Grow with Google

Web traffic/visitor conversion strategy

Digital marketing consulting may help analyze patterns in web traffic and suggest ways to change things on your website (visual layout, description wording, etc.) to increase sales/time-spent on your website, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Social media is a large component of digital marketing. The area of social media *engagement* focuses on building a community/network of people in your target market/audience that can grow around your business's products or services.

The following are all components of a larger **social media strategy** that **should be established first** and foremost before beginning any other social media marketing/engagement/community-building work or buying any services.

Social Media Strategy

- Key Tenets
  - o Engagement: Utilize engagement strategies, social media features and tools, and a consistent marketing strategy to build engagement and support
  - o Continuity: Marketing materials should be uniform in format and **consistent** throughout online and offline platforms
  - o Professionalism: The aesthetic, layout, and content of social media pages should serve to present your organization as inviting and professional
- Social Media Strategy Templates (free)
  - o As a starting point, you can search for free templates and guides for how to set social media goals, what metrics to track, ideas to evaluate which social media platforms serve your business, and more. Track basic engagement and develop and refine your social media strategy accordingly.

Content Strategy

- Rule of Thirds: 1/3 content promotes business; 1/3 content shares ideas from industry leaders; 1/3 is unique brand content
- Social media pages should be consistent with the business brand
- Try to post **consistently**- it is better to post once a week consistently than three times one week and zero times the next

Competitive Analysis

Find what competitor businesses are doing on their social media accounts, see what's working and what's not working

Identify Target Market/Audience

Honestly define your target market and find the ways your products or services solve real life problems that they may have. Different platforms such as Instagram and Facebook will have different audiences.

SMART Goals

SMART is acronym for tool to help you attain your goals:
(S)pecific; (M)easurable; (A)ttainable; (R)elevant; (Time-bound) goals

- The key to a social media strategy is **consistency**. Better to set realistic, achievable goals rather than creating a strategy that you are unable to sustain.
- As your online presence grows, **track and analyze** social media and marketing data and identify where your business is having the most success
  - [Free Google Data Analytics Certificate Program](#)

GROW WITH GOOGLE RESOURCES

Find free training, tools, and resources to help you grow your skills, career, or business.

- [Applied Digital Skills](#), Learn practical digital skills through free video lessons
- [Google Primer](#), A free mobile app that offers quick, easy-to-understand lessons to help business owners and individuals grow skills and reach their goals.
- [Google for Small Business](#), From free products to digital essentials, Google makes it easy to get online and in front of more customers
- [Google for Startups](#) is on a mission to support thriving, diverse, and inclusive startup communities around the world. We connect startups with the right people, products, and best practices to help your startup grow.
- [Google Workshops](#), find free workshops (including virtual options) to grow your skills, career, or business.

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