

What Customers Want in Digital Marketing Agencies



Have you ever struggled to put your finger on what real problems you solve for your clients? Well, worry no more!

This guide starts with an analysis of customer reviews for **Digital Marketing Agencies** and follows with suggestions for effective marketing tactics. Lastly, we have a couple of supplementals – The Marketing Hourglass and website strategy – that provide additional information and tips.

This reference gives you actionable insights, messaging ideas, and pitfalls to avoid that your business can implement to get ahead today.

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Themes from All Reviews of Digital Marketing Agencies

What are clients of **digital marketing agencies** around the nation saying about their experiences working with companies in this sector? Here are our findings from research conducted for you that provide a higher level of understanding of what clients of **digital marketing agencies** find most important regarding their experience.

Quality of Service

- Reviewers consistently mention high levels of professionalism, responsiveness, and expertise.
- Many praise the agencies for delivering exceptional quality work, exceeding their expectations.
- Numerous clients commend the agencies for their thorough communication and detailed progress reports.

Positive Outcomes

- Clients frequently highlight significant improvements in their web traffic, leads, and sales.
- Reviewers report noticeable enhancements in their online visibility and search engine rankings.
- Many note that these positive outcomes were achieved within a relatively short time frame.

Comprehensive Services

- Agencies are often appreciated for offering a broad range of digital marketing services, including SEO, PPC, web design, and social media management.
- Clients value the agencies' ability to handle all aspects of digital marketing under one roof.
- Flexibility and customization of services to meet specific business needs are commonly praised.



Client Relations

- Reviewers emphasize the importance of strong, collaborative relationships with the agencies.
- Many clients appreciate the agencies' commitment to understanding their business and goals.
- Excellent customer service, consistent follow-ups, and prompt issue resolution are frequently mentioned.

Expertise and Knowledge

- Reviewers often commend the deep industry knowledge and expertise demonstrated by the agencies.
- Agencies' ability to provide data-driven and strategic insights is highly valued.
- Many clients note the agencies' proficiency in using the latest marketing technologies and trends.

Creativity and Innovation

- Clients often highlight the agencies' creativity in developing unique and effective marketing strategies.
- Agencies are praised for their innovative approaches that stand out in competitive markets.
- The ability to bring fresh ideas and creative solutions to marketing challenges is a common theme.

Long-term Partnerships

- Many reviewers mention their long-term engagements with the agencies, reflecting high levels of satisfaction and trust.
- Clients often describe the agencies as essential partners in their business growth and success.
- Positive experiences over several years of collaboration are frequently noted.



To Summarize the Summary

The reviews for digital marketing agencies reveal common themes emphasizing quality service, positive outcomes, comprehensive offerings, and strong client relations. Clients consistently appreciate the professionalism, responsiveness, and expertise provided, which lead to significant improvements in web traffic, leads, and search engine rankings. Agencies are valued for their broad range of services, ability to tailor solutions to specific needs, and their strong commitment to understanding client goals. Their industry knowledge and innovative strategies are frequently highlighted as key factors in achieving exceptional results. Many reviewers mention long-term partnerships, reflecting sustained satisfaction and trust in these agencies' contributions to their business growth.





Insights From 5-Star Reviews

When considering feedback from the most satisfied customers, **digital marketing agencies** can derive opportunities for areas in which to focus future offerings as well as areas where they can improve their own performance to stand out in the marketplace. We also look to positive reviews to craft core messaging recommendations that feature language that may resonate well with real consumer sentiments.

Customer Satisfaction and Client Relationships

- Many reviews highlight the excellent communication and responsiveness of the agencies.
- Clients often mention personal interactions with key team members, indicating strong relationship-building capabilities.

Exceptional communication and responsiveness at every step.

Proven Expertise and High-Quality Results

- Agencies consistently deliver tangible results, such as increased leads, traffic, and conversions.
- Reviews frequently praise the deep industry knowledge and marketing expertise of the teams.

Proven expertise that skyrockets your results and ROI.



Detailed and Clear Project Management

- Agencies are noted for their structured and clear project workflows, ensuring clients understand each step.
- There is a strong emphasis on meeting deadlines and maintaining transparency throughout projects.

Clear project management ensures no detail is overlooked.

Customized and Tailored Services

- Clients appreciate the agencies' ability to customize strategies that specifically align with their business goals.
- Many reviews mention tailored solutions across SEO, PPC, social media, and web development catering to unique client needs.

Tailored strategies designed exclusively for your business

needs.

Professionalism and Collaboration

- Professionalism and the ability to foster a collaborative working environment are common themes in the reviews.
- Many clients highlight the agencies as integral extensions of their own teams, indicating successful integration and teamwork.

Professional collaboration like having an expert team in-house.



Creative and Innovative Approaches

- Agencies are often commended for their creativity and innovative solutions that go beyond standard marketing practices.
- Several reviews mention unique ideas and strategies that significantly enhance client marketing efforts.

Creative solutions that set you apart from the competition.

Long-Term Partnerships and Consistent Performance

- Reviews frequently mention long-term collaborations, underscoring sustained client satisfaction and reliability.
- Consistency in performance and delivering on promises are recurring points of praise.

Long-term partnerships that drive consistent success.

Technical Proficiency and Implementation

- Clients consistently highlight the agencies' technical skills, particularly in web development, SEO, and PPC management.
- Effective implementation of marketing campaigns and technical solutions is a significant valueadded aspect.

Technical proficiency that turns plans into profits.



Positive ROI and Cost-Effective Solutions

- Many reviews indicate excellent return on investment through cost-effective marketing strategies and reduced ad spend.
- Clients often note the agencies' focus on maximizing budget efficiencies and achieving measurable results.

Maximize ROI with cost-effective, results-driven solutions.

Customized Branding and Design

- Reviews often mention agencies' efforts in creating or revamping brand identities and designing visually appealing, functional websites.
- Clients appreciate the agencies' ability to capture their vision and translate it into effective branding and design elements.

Branding and design that encapsulate and elevate your vision.





Observing comments made from the least satisfied customers can likewise provide opportunities for messaging improvements and pitfalls to avoid in one's own business. The following represent trends from the bottom tier of comments and core message ideas to help guide your own messaging decisions.

Lack of Results and ROI

- Many customers complain about not getting the promised results, such as increased organic traffic or conversions.
- There's a recurring theme of no ROI being delivered, with significant investments yielding few to no tangible outcomes.

Achieve real, measurable results and stellar ROI with our datadriven digital marketing strategies.



Poor Communication and Support

- Several reviews mention unresponsive support teams and a lack of communication from account managers or project leaders.
- Clients have highlighted issues like missed deadlines, ignored emails, and calls being unorganized or unprofessional.

Experience seamless communication and top-notch support with our dedicated client success teams.

Misleading Practices and Scams

- A number of reviewers explicitly call out fraudulent behavior, such as asking for additional fees unexpectedly or failing to deliver promised services.
- Some customers feel deceived by the company's practices, such as fake reviews and inflated claims about their expertise.

Trust in our transparency and ethical practices to ensure you get exactly what you pay for.

Unprofessionalism and Incompetence

- There are many instances where customers describe the staff as unprofessional or incompetent, attributing their negative experiences to poor execution.
- Mismanagement of projects and websites, such as unauthorized changes and lack of proper maintenance, are commonly cited problems.

Partner with skilled professionals committed to delivering excellence and precision in every project.



Overpricing for Services

- Many customers feel that the services provided were grossly overpriced compared to competitors.
- The perceived value of the services did not match the high costs, leading to dissatisfaction among clients.

Value for money: premium digital marketing services that fit your budget.

Fake Reviews and Reputation Management

- Reviewers believe that the company pays for fake positive reviews to boost their online reputation.
- Genuine reviews by actual customers highlight a stark contrast between the perceived reputation and actual service quality.

Genuine success stories and testimonials from satisfied clients.

Unauthorized Changes and Lack of Transparency

- Clients report that the company made changes to their websites without informing them, leading to frustration and a loss of control.
- A lack of transparency regarding actions taken and results achieved is a common complaint.

Full control and transparency over every change and improvement we make to your website.

High Turnover and Staff Issues

- Some reviews mention high turnover rates within the staff, leading to inconsistent service and lack of continuity in handling accounts.
- Clients often feel neglected or mishandled due to staff's poor coordination and reliability.

Consistent, reliable service from a stable, dedicated team passionate about your business success.

Overall Dissatisfaction and Warnings

- Many reviewers strongly advise against using the company's services, expressing regret over their decision.
- The sense of being misled and not receiving value for money figures prominently in the reviews, presenting a severe trust issue.

Discover why our clients love us: customer satisfaction is at the heart of everything we do.





Action Items to Drive Success

Based on our research, here are five actions on which you can focus your efforts to improve your performance and take your organization to the next level.

1. Emphasize Quality Service

- Ensure consistent professionalism and responsiveness in client interactions.
- Deliver detailed progress reports and maintain clear communication.
- Strive to exceed client expectations with high-quality work.

2. Focus on Delivering Results

- Implement strategies that drive significant improvements in web traffic and leads.
- Regularly monitor and adjust campaigns to enhance search engine rankings.
- Aim for quick, measurable outcomes that clients can see within a short timeframe.

3. Offer Comprehensive Solutions

- Provide a wide range of digital marketing services, including SEO, PPC, web design, and social media management.
- Customize solutions to fit each client's specific business needs and goals.
- Be flexible and willing to tailor service packages based on client feedback.

4. Build Strong Client Relationships

- Invest time in understanding each client's business model and objectives.
- Maintain excellent customer service with consistent follow-ups and prompt issue resolution.
- Develop collaborative partnerships that emphasize mutual growth and success.



5. Leverage Expertise and Innovation

- Stay updated with the latest marketing technologies and trends to offer cutting-edge solutions.
- Use data-driven insights to inform strategic decisions and campaign adjustments.
- Foster creativity and innovation to develop unique marketing strategies that stand out in competitive markets.



Continuing with actionable items, below are a list of online strategies you can use to enhance your online presence.

1. Focus on Quality of Service

- Maintain high levels of professionalism, responsiveness, and expertise in all interactions.
- Ensure thorough communication and provide detailed progress reports to keep clients informed and engaged.

2. Showcase Positive Outcomes

- Develop and share case studies and success stories that highlight significant improvements in web traffic, leads, and sales.
- Use metrics to demonstrate enhancements in online visibility and search engine rankings achieved within short time frames.

3. Offer Comprehensive and Customizable Services

- Provide a wide range of digital marketing services such as SEO, PPC, web design, and social media management.
- Customize services to meet specific client needs and position the agency as a one-stop shop for all digital marketing needs.



4. Build Strong Client Relations

- Emphasize strong, collaborative relationships by taking the time to understand client businesses and goals.
- Ensure excellent customer service with regular follow-ups and prompt issue resolution.

5. Promote Expertise and Knowledge

- Share data-driven and strategic insights through content like webinars, blogs, and white papers to demonstrate industry expertise.
- Stay up-to-date with the latest marketing technologies and trends to maintain a competitive edge.

6. Encourage Creativity and Innovation

- Develop unique and effective marketing strategies that stand out in competitive markets.
- Highlight creative solutions in client case studies to attract attention and differentiate the agency.

7. Cultivate Long-term Partnerships

- Aim for long-term engagements by delivering consistent and reliable performance.
- Position the agency as an essential partner in the client's business growth and success through sustained client satisfaction.

8. Enhance Technical Proficiency

- Focus on developing and showcasing strong technical skills in areas like web development, SEO, and PPC management.
- Ensure the effective implementation of marketing campaigns and technical solutions.

9. Maximize ROI and Cost-Effectiveness

- Offer cost-effective marketing strategies that deliver high return on investment.
- Regularly review and optimize campaigns to ensure continued cost-effectiveness and high ROI.



10. Emphasize Customized Branding and Design

- Work on creating or revamping brand identities and designing websites that align with client visions.
- Highlight successful branding and design projects in a portfolio to attract similar clients.

11. Address Common Negative Feedback

- Improve communication and support by being responsive and well-organized in managing client interactions.
- Avoid misleading practices by being transparent about services, costs, and expected outcomes.
- Address pricing concerns by clearly demonstrating the value and ROI provided.





Here are some ideas to improve your website content based on the themes of these user reviews.

The Importance of Professionalism and Responsiveness in Digital Marketing Agencies

- About Us: Highlight your commitment to professionalism and responsiveness, showcasing client testimonials and case studies emphasizing these qualities.
- Services: Incorporate a section discussing how professionalism and responsiveness are integrated into each service offered.
- Testimonials/Reviews: Feature specific client feedback that underscores the agency's professionalism and quick response time.

Achieving Business Growth: Case Studies on Improvement in Web Traffic, Leads, and Sales

- Case Studies: Create a dedicated section with detailed examples of how your agency has helped clients improve web traffic, leads, and sales.
- Blog: Publish articles and success stories focusing on the tangible results achieved for various clients.
- Services: Integrate snippets or brief case studies that link to the full articles, demonstrating how each service contributes to business growth.



Comprehensive Digital Marketing: Why a One-Stop Shop is Beneficial for Your Business

- Services: Create detailed descriptions of each service, explaining how having all services in one place benefits clients through streamlined processes and cohesive strategies.
- Homepage: Feature a banner or section emphasizing the advantage of being a comprehensive agency.
- Case Studies: Provide examples of client successes that resulted from using multiple services provided by your agency.

Building Strong Client Relations: The Key to Successful Digital Marketing Partnerships

- About Us: Include information on your approach to building and maintaining strong client relationships, enhanced by client testimonials.
- Testimonials/Reviews: Highlight reviews that emphasize the importance of collaborative relationships with clients.
- Blog: Write articles or blogs on strategies for fostering strong partnerships with clients.

Leveraging Expertise and Industry Knowledge for Superior Marketing Results

- About Us: Outline the expertise and industry knowledge your agency possesses, emphasizing your team's qualifications and experiences.
- Services: Explain how your expertise in various fields translates to better results for clients, supported by relevant examples.
- Blog: Share thought leadership pieces and insights on industry trends and how your expertise helps clients stay ahead of the competition.



Creativity and Innovation: Developing Unique Strategies to Stand Out in a Competitive Market

- Services: Discuss how creativity and innovation are incorporated into each offered service, featuring examples and unique strategies you've implemented.
- Case Studies: Highlight specific projects where creative approaches led to significant client success.
- Blog: Write about innovative trends and creative marketing strategies, offering tips and insights.

The Value of Long-Term Partnerships in Digital Marketing Success

- About Us: Illustrate your commitment to establishing long-term partnerships, supported by client testimonials and long-term case studies.
- Testimonials/Reviews: Showcase reviews from clients who have worked with your agency for an extended period.
- Blog: Post articles on the benefits of long-term partnerships and how they contribute to sustained business growth.

The Role of Thorough Communication and Progress Reports in Client Satisfaction

- Services: Highlight how thorough communication and detailed progress reports are integral to your service offerings.
- About Us: Include a section detailing your communication strategy and the importance of regular updates and reports.
- Testimonials/Reviews: Feature client feedback that praises the agency's effective communication and detailed progress reports.





An Example Content Calendar Based on Search Keywords

Remember the Marketing Hourglass from a previous section? Search Engine Optimization has a similar strategy called search intent. When someone searches for something on the internet, SEO people usually group the keywords people use into three buckets:

- Informational intent searchers want to learn something: "what to ask a digital marketing agency"
- Transactional intent searchers want to buy something: "digital marketing near me"
- **Navigational intent** searchers are looking for a specific thing on the internet, like a specific website: *"digital marketing cheatsheet"*

And, like the Marketing Hourglass, it's good practice to have website content that caters to these three groups. Here's an example content calendar that has something for each one.

Tip: For topics that could have a lot of content worthy of a full blog post, create the blog posts. Then, on relevant landing pages such as the home, about, and services pages, include sections that introduce the topics. From these sections, link to the corresponding blog post and make sure the text of the link uses the keyword phrase. That's SEO! <u>Refer to our supplemental section for</u> <u>additional SEO tips</u>.



Week	Content Suggestion
1	keyword: digital marketing agency near me
	Finding the Best Digital Marketing Agency Near You
	Factors to consider when choosing a local digital marketing agency
	 Benefits of working with a nearby agency
	 How to verify the credibility and reputation of local agencies

Week	Content Suggestion
2	keyword: marketing funnel for a digital agency
	Building an Effective Marketing Funnel for Your Digital Marketing
	Agency
	 Key stages of a marketing funnel and their importance
	 Tips for optimizing each stage of the funnel
	 Case studies of successful marketing funnels in digital agencies

Week	Content Suggestion
3	keyword: what does a digital marketing agency do
	Understanding the Core Functions of a Digital Marketing Agency
	 Overview of common services provided by digital marketing agencies
	Examples of successful digital marketing campaigns
	Role of digital marketing agencies in enhancing online presence



Week	Content Suggestion
4	keyword: how to choose a digital marketing agency
	A Comprehensive Guide to Choosing the Right Digital Marketing
	Agency
	Essential criteria for evaluating potential digital marketing partners
	 Questions to ask during the selection process
	 Red flags to watch out for when hiring an agency

Week	Content Suggestion
5	keyword: what services do digital marketing agencies offer
	Exploring the Range of Services Offered by Digital Marketing Agencies
	 Breakdown of typical services like SEO, PPC, content marketing, and social media
	 How these services contribute to overall marketing goals Custom services and tailored strategies for different businesses

/
5



Week	Content Suggestion
7	keyword: do digital marketing agencies create content
	Content Creation Services Offered by Digital Marketing Agencies
	 Types of content produced by digital marketing agencies (blogs, videos, infographics)
	 The process of content creation and strategy development
	Benefits of professional content creation for businesses

Week	Content Suggestion
8	keyword: what is a digital marketing agency
	What Is a Digital Marketing Agency and How Can It Help Your Business?
	 Definition and scope of digital marketing agencies
	 Different roles within a digital marketing agency and their functions
	 Examples of how businesses have benefited from agency partnerships





Supplementals: The Customer Journey a.k.a The Marketing Hourglass

If you aren't familiar with the concept, the Customer Journey, also known as the Marketing Hourglass, is a system that describes how a potential customer interacts with your brand. There are seven (7) stages:

- **1. Know**: The customer becomes aware of your digital marketing agency, often through online presence, advertisements, or content marketing efforts.
- **2. Like**: The potential client develops a favorable opinion of your agency by engaging with your content, such as blogs, social media posts, or newsletters.
- **3. Trust**: Trust is built as the potential client sees consistent, high-quality work and perhaps reads reviews or case studies highlighting your agency's expertise.
- **4. Try**: The client experiences a sample of your services, such as a free consultation, a downloadable resource, or a trial of a specific service offering.
- **5. Buy**: The client commits to purchasing your agency's services, signing a contract, or engaging in a project, thereby becoming a customer.
- **6. Repeat**: The customer returns for additional services or contracts, finding value and satisfaction in previous engagements, and becomes a recurring client.
- **7. Refer**: Satisfied customers recommend your agency to others, sharing their positive experiences and contributing to word-of-mouth growth.

Customer Journey of Someone in Need of a Digital Marketing Agency

For each stage of the customer journey, we can generalize the customers' thoughts at that point in time, the action(s) they typically take, and the marketing tactics a business uses to meet the



(potential) customer at that stage.

1.	Know:
	 Thoughts: The customer is realizing they need digital marketing services to grow their business.
	 Actions: They search online, browse websites, and look at advertisements.
	• Marketing: Use SEO, PPC campaigns, and social media advertising to increase visibility.
2.	Like:
	• Thoughts: The customer starts to form a positive impression of your agency's brand and expertise.
	 Actions: They follow your social media accounts, read blog posts, or subscribe to your newsletter.
	 Marketing: Share engaging and valuable content that resonates with your target audience.
3.	Trust:
	 Thoughts: The customer believes your agency is credible and can deliver results. Actions: They read reviews, testimonials, and case studies from other clients.
	 Marketing: Showcase client success stories and maintain consistent, professional communication.
4.	Try:
	 Thoughts: The customer is considering testing your services to see if you meet their needs.
	 Actions: They sign up for a free consultation, request a demo, or download a useful resource.
	• Marketing: Offer free consultations, trials, or downloadable guides to demonstrate your value.
5.	Buy:
	• Thoughts: The customer decides to invest in your services, believing it will benefit their business.
	• Actions: They contact your sales team, negotiate terms, and sign a contract.
	 Marketing: Provide a seamless sales process with clear information and strong support to facilitate the purchase.



6. Repeat:

- Thoughts: The customer is satisfied with the initial results and considers using your services again.
- Actions: They renew contracts or inquire about additional services.
- Marketing: Maintain strong customer relationships through follow-ups, exclusive offers, and regular check-ins.

7. Refer:

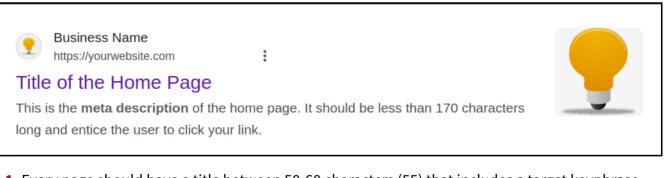
- Thoughts: The customer is happy with your services and willing to recommend you to others.
- Actions: They share their positive experiences on social media or directly refer your agency to their network.
- Marketing: Encourage referrals through referral programs, testimonials, and incentives for existing clients.

An effective marketing strategy will encompass all seven (7) of these stages.



A website is a big investment. You want it to be a shining example of your business and there may be some vanity to it, no doubt. Don't forget: You also want customers to be able to find it. The primary purpose of your website is to attract customers and relay your story to move them through the Marketing Hourglass. When you can tailor the site messaging to focus less on you and more on the customer and how your business solves their problems, your engagement rates will improve.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)



- **1.** Every page should have a title between 50-60 characters (55) that includes a target keyphrase when possible
- 2. Every page has a meta description that is less than 160 characters that includes a call-to-action (e.g. Learn how)
- **3.** Your website should have an icon (called a favicon), such as an icon version of your business logo
- **4.** Though not a necessity, it's nice when pages have a featured image (called an Open Graph or OG image) that automatically shows up in social media and search engines. This image should be no smaller than 200x200 and 1200x630 is ideal for most platforms.



Content Strategy with SEO Keywords

When it comes to website content strategy, one of the first tools digital marketers grab are keyword reports. These reports contain the keywords, which are the phrases people type into Google and other search engines, as well as the questions people ask. For example:

- what to ask a digital marketing agency
- digital marketing near me
- digital marketing cheatsheet

Where do these keyword reports come from?

- <u>Google Search Console</u>: you've connected your website to <u>Google Analytics</u> and Search Console, yes? The search console will show you the search queries used to find your website.
- Services like <u>SEMRush</u> and <u>Ahrefs</u> which collect vast amounts of data about what users search provide detailed analytical information about all things SEO.

How to integrate keywords into your content

Let's look at the top keywords for people searching for solar installation companies:

Top 10 Keywords

- digital marketing agencies
- digital marketing agency near me
- marketing plan for a digital agency pdf
- do digital marketing agencies create content
- marketing funnel for a digital agency
- b2b digital marketing agency
- full service digital marketing agency
- ecommerce digital marketing agency
- seo digital marketing agency
- healthcare digital marketing agency



These types of keywords should be naturally integrated into your website content. Focus on placing them in key areas like titles, headings, and the first paragraph. Make sure the content reads smoothly and provides value to visitors, as search engines prioritize quality and relevance. This way, you help search engines understand what your site is about without compromising readability.

Keyword Use Tip: You don't have to repeat "**digital marketing agency**" verbatim throughout each page. For instance you can use variations like "**we're certified digital marketing experts**" or "**a team of digital marketing enthusiasts**". Make the content your own. Make it applicable to your target audience.

How to use the questions people searched for content ideas

While you can use keyword phrases to help generate ideas on what content to write, the questions people ask are also valuable in this regard. Here are some questions people ask search engines related to your industry:

Top 10 Queries

- do digital marketing agencies create content
- what is a digital marketing agency
- how to start a digital marketing agency with no experience
- what does a digital marketing agency do
- why hire a digital marketing agency
- how to choose a digital marketing agency
- how to hire a digital marketing agency
- what services do digital marketing agencies offer
- how to evaluate a digital marketing agency
- what to look for in a digital marketing agency

These types of questions are great for blog posts and FAQ pages: pick one or multiple related questions and write a blog post that answers the question(s) at length. If the questions are too basic to create a full page of content, aggregate the questions and answers in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page.

Once you get enough blog posts related to a particular topic, you can create a **hub page**. A hub page is like a central library for a specific topic on your website. Imagine it as a main page that covers a



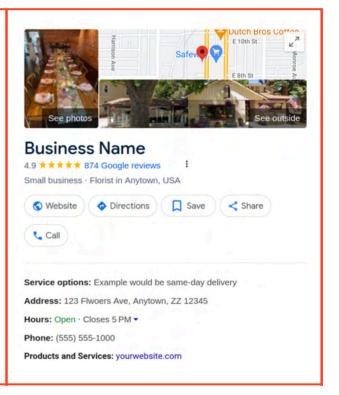
broad subject and links to various sub-pages or articles related to that topic. This makes it easier for visitors to find all the information they need in one place and helps search engines understand your content structure, improving your site's visibility and ranking.

Local SEO

You've put a lot of effort into your business. Make sure it gets found. Local SEO is a strategy that helps businesses be more visible in search results for local-related searches, like when someone looks for "restaurants near me" or "plumbers in [city]." It's about making sure your business shows up for people in your area who are searching for the services or products you offer.

Steps to Improve Your Local SEO

- Claim and register your <u>Google Business</u>
 <u>Profile</u> and <u>Apple Business Profile</u>
- In your business profile, include photos and videos, links to all social profiles, and any timely updates
- Make sure your business name, address, and phone (NAP) is consistent everywhere it is used
- Services like <u>MozLocal</u> and <u>Yext</u> can help with NAP consistency.



Website Accessibility is Important

The <u>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for websites</u> may sound scary and / or a lot of work. And the effort required to address ADA issues on a website depends on how it's built and what needs to be fixed. It all may sound more complicated than it really is - it's not rocket science.



Not only will your handicapped customers appreciate the effort, search engines give better rankings for sites that have solid accessibility.

Top ADA issues that plague websites

Images have no descriptive, alternative text:

Missing descriptive text for images, otherwise known as "missing ALT text". When screen readers encounter an image, this ALT text is what they want to read. And the fix is to simply make sure each image used on the website has its ALT text set to a description of that image.

Poor color contrast:

Color contrast is too low. Examples: the website has dark gray text over a black background, pink text over red, or text over an image. To put it another way, anything that makes text difficult to read can fall into this category. The fix is to change the colors of the background and text: if the background is light and text dark, make the background lighter and text darker to increase contrast. If the background is dark and the text is light, make the background darker and text lighter to increase contrast.

Content doesn't flow well and/or is missing ADA descriptors:

Examples of page content issues:

- Icon buttons that don't have text that describe what the button does. For example, a search button that only contains the icon "a" wouldn't be ADA compliant. The fix is to add additional text to the button to indicate it does a search.
- The content doesn't follow a typical outline structure with one H1 (top heading) followed by consecutive sections like a typical outline would describe. An example is a page that has an H1 heading followed by an H3 heading the H2 heading was skipped. In this case, the fix is usually changing the heading tag from H3 to H2.
- Interactive elements do not have appropriate descriptors for ADA software utilities to read. An example would be a popup dialog that doesn't indicate it's a popup to help assistive technology users. The fix is to add an additional description to the popup to indicate what it does.

How to Test Your Website for ADA Issues

The <u>WAVE Web Accessibility Tool</u> has a suite of utilities that can check your website for common accessibility issues. You can access their <u>online tool from their home page</u> - just enter in your



website URL and it'll give you an interactive report.

The tool is also available in <u>browser extensions for Chrome, Firefox, and Microsoft Edge</u>. Once installed, the extension lets you run a report on any web page by clicking on the extension icon in your browser toolbar.

This is a screenshot of a report generated by the online version of the tool that was run against the wave.webaim.org home page.

- The left column has tabbed sections that let you explore the report details.
- Clicking the icons that are overlaid on the actual webpage will give additional information.

Tips for Fixing ADA Compliance Issues

Whether you have professional website help or if you operate your own website, the following tips will help you.

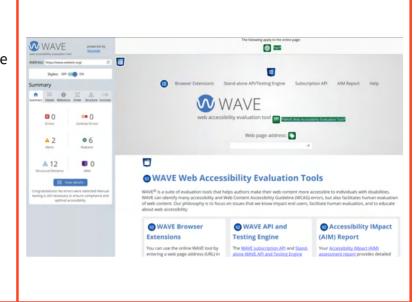
First address issues in the header and footer and other global areas.

Most websites are built with a template which means there are specific sections of the page that are global throughout the site, such as the header where the logo and main navigation are, as well as the footer where additional information can be found. When you fix ADA issues in the header and footer for one page, for example, those changes are reflected in the rest of the website.

If you're not too savvy about your website structure, launch the <u>WAVE tool</u> in two or more browser tabs. In the first tab, run a report for the home page; second tab, run a report for an internal page like the about us one; third tab, try a blog post. Issues common among those pages should give you an idea of what global changes can be made to quickly address issues.

Try to fix color contrast through global settings.





Tweaking the colors on the website is different among individual sites. Some sites and content management systems have a global settings area where text and background colors can be changed on a global scale.

For sites that rely on Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), which is a more technical aspect of how websites are designed, some site-wide color changes can be made in particular CSS files which affect the entire site. For instance, if your website has a styles.css file that defines a blue color that's causing contrast issues, changing the color in that one file will change it throughout the website.

Focus on high-value pages first

After issues that affect the global sections of the website template are taken care of, then work on individual pages. Start with the home page. Then maybe your services page and contact page. If you have access to your website traffic analytics, that will provide you with a list of most accessed pages.



Let's do this!

Now it's time for action. We're sure you have heard the saying, "Perfect is the enemy of done." At this juncture, you have a set of actionable steps to take to improve your business and start building powerful relationships with your customers.

So just get started. Make adjustments in your messaging, processes, and marketing materials and reap the rewards of having a business that understands your clients core challenges and delivers service to help solve their problems.

Need some help? Reach out any time for a free consultation or assistance implementing your plan.





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