

PARADIGM'S MARKETING MONTH 2023

#2- IMPROVING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE



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Paradigm

Online Presence

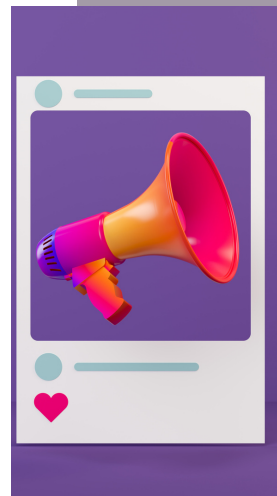
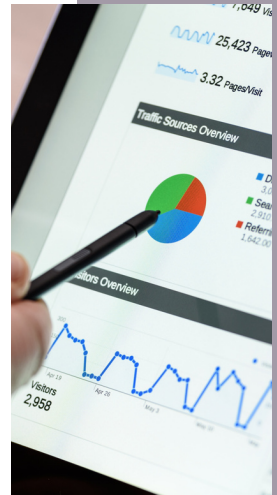
Welcome to Week 2 of our Marketing Month!

Although the pandemic now feels like a distant memory, it goes without saying it changed how the world operates, including everything becoming digitalised. This means having a good online presence is more important than ever.

You might be thinking... what on earth is an online presence? Simply put, your online presence is any information that is featured on the internet about your business, whether this is information you've put out, activities you've been involved with or even your accounts and assets. There are areas that you can control (like your website) and areas that are open for comments and discussions which are less easy to control (like social media).

You don't have to be a tech whizz to make some simple improvements to your online presence. As a starting point, it might be worth thinking about where you're currently positioned and noting all of the places where your business is currently featured. If you open up an incognito browser or search on a device you've never done a search about your business on before, what comes up? Use keywords or phrases that relate to your business and see where you currently rank. 75% of people only use the first page of Google, with 25% clicking on the first organic search result... so it's definitely some food for thought.

Before we get started, search engine optimisation (SEO) is a complex and broad topic which would take us hours (if not years) to provide a comprehensive explanation. Our Head of Marketing & Operations, Riona, has created a short blog on this with some handy links to help you get started on optimising this as well as signposting places where you can learn more about SEO.



“

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted, counts

”

Content, Content, Content!

This may be a bit controversial, but to us, content is at the heart of your online presence. You might be thinking "No, it's my website", but what actually is your website? It's information and content hosted all in one place that you can refer back to and guide people to. We have broken down online presence into different categories on the post-it notes below.

Obviously, each business is different and your online presence might include fewer or more channels than we've included. In marketing today, social media is arguably one of the main components of online presence and will be the focus of our guide next week.

Reviews

People react to people! It's a fact. Having reviews definitely makes your business appear more credible to someone who knows nothing about you. If you searched "coffee shops near me" and found a business with 23 reviews that were mostly positive or a business with no reviews at all, which one would you go for? It could be the difference between them choosing you or one of your competitors.

If your business currently has no reviews on Google or any other directories, it might be a good idea to incentivise reviews as part of your overall marketing strategy.

Accessible

We say the word accessible a lot throughout this guide, but it really is important throughout and it has an array of different meanings.

One way you can definitely improve your online presence is by making your site accessible to smartphone holders. On Google Analytics, you can find data on the number of people who visit your site from a mobile phone. On your browser, you can also change the settings to see how your website looks on mobile phones (or you can visit from your mobile!). This will enable you to see yourself from your customer's point of view.

Another thing to consider is how accessible is your online presence to someone with disabilities or impairments. For example, do videos on your site have subtitles for hearing impaired individuals? Do images on your site have captions for those with sight impairment? This is something that is often overlooked but can make a huge difference to your business.



Email marketing is a great way to stay connected to your customers and can help you establish ongoing relationships with them. It doesn't need to be daily or even weekly, but we would recommend staying consistent with the frequency of your emails and avoid spamming. Monthly or even quarterly newsletters are a great way to email and you can use this to summarise anything you've done during the previous month(s), without creating tons of work! Newsletters can be used to introduce new team members, talk about events you may be running or attending, any new services you offer, remind people how you can help, give economic or market updates that may be of interest and of course remind them of your contact details etc. This may sound obvious, but why are you emailing them? It's important to have a purpose for sending them the information. Are you looking to highlight a new service to your offering? Are you looking to place more protection business? It's important to have a clear goal in mind for your email marketing so you can determine if it's successful.



If you don't already have email marketing in place for your business, there are various options including MailChimp which has a free option and is user-friendly.



Our top tips for email marketing!

Stay on brand

Even if you are just sending emails via your email supplier, e.g. Gmail or Outlook, use the same colours, logo and font for every email so that people on your mailing list gain a sense of familiarity.

Testing testing

It's always good to experiment with your marketing activities (within reason!). Split testing allows you to send the same email to two different groups with the same messaging but slight differences to see which one gets more engagement. For example, you can test the same email but use two different subject lines, maybe one with emojis and one without. This means you can work out which subject line leads to more email opens and then use that knowledge/experience for all future comms.

Accessible

By the time you've read through this guide, you'll be bored of hearing about accessibility... but it's really important for email marketing too! Make sure you test how all of your emails look on both desktops and smartphones.



Remember: Under the GDPR rules, there are restrictions around marketing to your customers. Please be mindful of this when undertaking your activities, and don't forget it can take time... Don't worry if you only have a small number of subscribers, if your content is relevant and informative, it will grow!

Website

You will have probably heard people refer to your website as a virtual shop window, a way to display everything you do and how well you actually do it.

Whilst this is true and your website is a great way to showcase yourself and your services, it's a bit more complicated than just *"I do this really well"*. Potential customers visiting your website are looking to find out more information about you and have a positive experience with your business. It's therefore really important to understand what they are looking for and provide them with it. It sounds complicated, but it's just about putting yourself in their shoes.

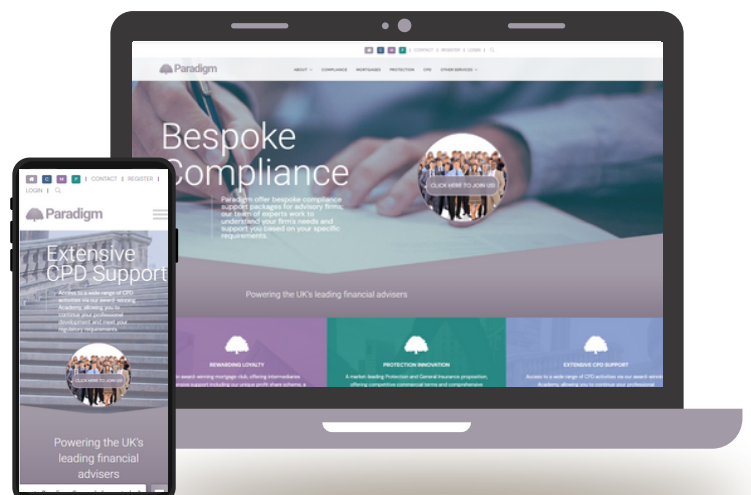
For example, if they want to get in touch, is this easy to find on your site? If they are visiting on their mobile, can they see all the pictures and text in the correct places? Ultimately, will they have a good or bad experience on your website? If they are negative, it's not going to leave a good impression which can be difficult to come back from, meaning they may begin to look elsewhere. Again, it might be a good idea to get an external perspective on this and ask somebody in your close circle to review your website, as it can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint improvements when you look at something too often.

Another important aspect of your website is ensuring all of the content is up-to-date and relevant. Whilst it's important to keep up-to-date with "hot topics" or trends, some of these can be short-lived and referencing them on your site can make it appear outdated or irrelevant if they stay on too long. For example, the pandemic was a monumental event that changed everyone's lives, but references to "lockdowns" are no longer relevant to people living in the UK and it may be better to remove these. We set aside some time regularly to review content hosted on our website.

Reaching a wider audience with your website



Whilst having a good website is important, it's only worth it if people are viewing your site and able to find it. We would definitely recommend setting your business up on high-ranking online directories. Think Google Business Profile, Yell, Yahoo, Bing and more! Make sure you cover all bases and ensure that the information provided isn't likely to change.



🔍 How do I know if something is working well?

Guess or just make it up

Analyse your data



Hope for the best

Clearly, if you're going to start investing time and possibly money into marketing your business, you want to know whether it is working and what your return on investment is. Value won't always be directly in the form of income or revenue, it could also be brand awareness, customer service or satisfaction. As a result, the ways in which you measure the success of your marketing activities may vary.

Google Analytics

Linking your website to Google Analytics will open up an incredible source of data relating to visitors to your website, the pages they visit, the 'journey' they take on the site and so on...

The tool is free to use and once you set up an account and add a simple piece of code on your website, data will start to be collected immediately. It would be virtually impossible for me to describe the level of detail and reports you can create from Google Analytics so I would recommend setting some time aside to explore the tool once you're set up and the code has been in place for enough time that the results will be meaningful (minimum of a week).

We have a Hints & Tips graphic to help you get started with Google Analytics which is available on our Marketing Month page. We have also listed some key features that we think you will find useful.

What can Google Analytics help me with?

- ▶ **Understanding which pages on your site are the most popular** (and then making sure all of the information is up to date and correct!), this can be based on number of total views, unique views (views from separate people rather than all views), how long people stay on the page etc.
- ▶ **Understanding the bounce rate for a website page or the entire website.** The bounce rate measures the percentage of people who land on a page of your website and do not do anything further such as click on to a different page. After visiting that initial page they then leave the website. Generally, this means there was no trigger to further engage them to either make contact with you or look further into the services you offer, so a lower bounce rate is better!
- ▶ **Understanding where visitors come from** – e.g. did they do a Google search and your website came up, find you via a blog or your social media accounts?
- ▶ **Understand more about visitors** – what times do they tend to visit, what devices do they view from (is your website mobile/iPad friendly if that's what's popular?), where in the country (or world!) do they visit from, are they viewing on Android or iOs...
- ▶ **Compare performance** – you can look at the performance of each of the pages on your site. You can also amend the date ranges of the data you are looking at (only as far back as Google Analytics has been tracking the website data) to compare things such as how your website performed in July vs June, or in the entirety of 2022 vs 2023.

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Tracking Links

It's a good idea to consider using tracking links with content that you are sending out.

Doing so will mean that you can monitor how many people have clicked on and viewed your content, allowing you to see how effective it was.

What does a tracked link look like?

- <https://www.paradigm.co.uk/CPD/events>
- [https://www.paradigm.co.uk/CPD/events?utm_campaign=SummerPush&utm_source=Socials&utm_custom\[email\]=](https://www.paradigm.co.uk/CPD/events?utm_campaign=SummerPush&utm_source=Socials&utm_custom[email]=)

Both of the above links lead to the same place, one is just collecting data that you will be able to use. For example, there are several sites that will allow you to track links for free (they might try and upsell their 'premium' versions though!), a quick Google of 'Tracking Links Free' or similar will come up with various options for you to choose from.

If you use software for your marketing emails, e.g. MailChimp, basic reports and tracking links are included even in the free version so it's worth checking if anything you currently use has this built-in (to save you time and energy!). We think it's really important to book some time to go through analytics to see how well your content is performing and ensure that your goals are being met.

We set calendar reminders and at the start of each month to create a report on this, meaning we have a full report at the end of the year when it comes to planning.



... week 2 over and out

That concludes our next guide!

As firms are regulated by the FCA, it is absolutely crucial that all of your communication with customers and financial promotions including marketing activities are clear, fair, and not misleading. At Paradigm, we understand how important it is to showcase your business to both your client bank and the general public, highlighting all of the services and support that you can offer in a compliant manner.

Our Technical Helpdesk team have been helping firms with their financial promotions since our launch in 2007, and can assist with your financial promotion procedures as well as helping you to draft and issue compliant promotions designed for your target audience.

Examples of items we get asked to check include:

- Websites
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Stationary
- Blogs
- Social media

Please get in touch on **03300 536061** or arrange a call back if you'd like to learn more about the support available.

We would love to hear your feedback and any questions you might have on the information included in our marketing month, so please don't hesitate to let us know your thoughts.

Thanks for reading,
Paradigm Marketing Team.





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