

# a new arsenal of marketing weapons

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**M**any businesses are becoming involved in social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and blogging. These online mediums provide us with a new arsenal of marketing weapons, but simply participating in social media is no guarantee that you will get any business value from them.

There is no silver bullet in marketing, and social media is no different. It's a wonderful tool to manage and develop your online reputation, but as a stand-alone medium, social media networking has limited lead generating value. However, you can improve your returns by integrating it into your wider online marketing strategy, particularly through keyword search.



## Keyword search

Consumers are increasingly using keyword search through the major search engines like Google and Bing to find products and services. By tapping into this search dynamic you can increase the reach of your brand across a far wider target market than any form of traditional media allows. Developing a website that appears on page one in Google searches is the holy grail of online marketing, but achieving this is no pushover.

With millions of websites currently on the web and thousands being published every day, you have to be smarter than the next marketer if you want to appear ahead of them in online searches. A few years ago, optimising your website was something that only the enlightened few did, but today it is essential if you are to succeed online. The basis of optimising your site for search engines is to have a keyword strategy.

Researching and analysing a list of keywords relevant to your industry is the starting point. This can be done through Google's free Keyword Tool. Analysing the keywords and determining which ones are most relevant is critical, with niche words or phrases often generating better results than the most popular or common words. For example, it would be easier to be found for 'pure cotton tee shirts' than 'tee shirts', which is a very popular and competitive keyword. Once you have a solid list of keywords, you can put them to work in a number of ways.

## Website optimisation

You should use your targeted keywords to build related content pages on your site. The keywords should appear in the page URL address (e.g. [www.yoursite.co.nz/pure-cotton-tee-shirts](http://www.yoursite.co.nz/pure-cotton-tee-shirts)), page title and description tag as well as in the body of the page content. By carefully placing your keywords, you give Google a clear indication of what the page is about and for which search phrases you want to be found.

If you want to become more knowledgeable on this subject, do a Google search for 'search engine optimisation' or 'seo' and you will find a volume of free information. The process of website optimisation is quite technical, so you may want to get some professional advice to get the best performance from your site. A website that performs well in Google search is definitely one of the most effective lead-generating tools available to marketers. It may not be as trendy or cool as social media networking, but it will generate more traffic, have a higher conversion rate and continue to perform indefinitely.

## Driving website traffic through social media

Expand the reach of your keyword strategy by using your social media networking platforms. Whenever you publish any content through your website, online articles or blog posts, you should target each piece with one of your targeted keywords.

For example, let's say that you sell pure cotton tee shirts. You could take the keyword or key phrase 'pure cotton tee shirts' and create a marketing information page on your website. You could also write an article about how comfortable and longwearing 'pure cotton tee shirts' are and support this with a blog post and short YouTube video on how to care for 'pure cotton tee shirts'. All of these disparate pieces of information have a common purpose

– to drive qualified visitor traffic to your site in order to progress them down the conversion pathway to make an enquiry or place an order.

You can also use your social media sites to publicise the new page, article, blog post or YouTube video. Send out a tweet with the link, add a comment on your Facebook wall with the link and publish your blog post via RSS syndication. Each of these will reach a separate group of followers, extending your reach significantly.

## Email marketing

To expand the reach of your keyword-targeted content, you could also send out an attractive HTML-formatted email to your database with a short abstract, call to action and a link to the full content. Email marketing is low cost and enables you to accurately track and measure the outcome and performance of your campaign.

## When to use keyword search and social media

There is a fundamental difference between social media in its purest networking sense and using social media as part of a broader keyword search strategy. There is no hard and fast rule that dictates to what degree you should use either or both, but a rough rule of thumb is that the less frequently your target market interacts with or purchases your product, the more suitable is the keyword search.

'Top of mind' products that enjoy a regular interaction are well suited to social media with its online community nature. Between these two extremes lies the more typical balance where both tools have a valuable part to play, albeit in an integrated manner. 

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