

Spring Cleaning Your **MARKETING STRATEGY**

Refreshing your brand's presence with a renewed perspective



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When winter moves on, leaving warmer temperatures and brighter days in its wake, we tend to think about refreshing our looks and clearing out the cobwebs. That's right – *it's time for a little spring cleaning!*

And while the term is usually applied to our homes and offices, there's no reason why you can't utilize that regenerated energy in revamping other aspects of your environment, too.

Post-holiday season and during the first half of a new year is ideal for tidying up your marketing strategy, and maybe even trying something new.

The online scene is constantly changing and evolving to reflect current events, social changes, trends, and sales tactics. When brands don't readjust their digital marketing strategies to accommodate these transitions, they tend to fall behind and become less and less relevant among consumers and clients. The same can be said for traditional outlets as well; Since your audience is more aware of typical brand selling tactics, it's more important than ever that you focus on the type of messaging and imagery that will keep your audiences engaged rather than simply bombarding them with the same campaigns over again.

Whether it's been months or years since you first initiated your business's marketing plan, there's no time like the present to roll up those sleeves and dig back into it with a fresh perspective! Our team uses a number of strategies to keep businesses on top of their marketing game, so these are just a few approaches you may consider when it's time to spring clean yours.

Branding

You probably already know just how important **brand identity** is to the success of your business's marketing plan, and in turn the retention of your audiences.

Because without a clear idea of who you are and what you're about, how are any potential customers or clients supposed to identify with your goals and trust you to help them reach theirs?

Unfortunately, we tend to get caught up in other objectives and sometimes let our branding slip in the process. So this spring, take a moment to reexamine the many different pieces that make up your brand's public image and personality. Reinforcing key identifying traits as well as internal messaging habits is always more effective when you've clearly defined the rules and guidelines for any and all communications.

If you do decide to go with a new approach with your brand specifics, we recommend starting with a close look at all of your creative assets and the choices you or your marketing agency initially established in your brand style guide. From there, you should be able to see the first signs of a worn-out marketing plan, and be able to delve into other areas based on whatever problem signs you come across.

Remember that when it comes to a **brand**, it's all about being able to represent the business as a whole with one cohesive identity. If yours isn't doing that, then it's long overdue for some creative scrubbing.





Style Guide

Every good marketer knows that the style guide is the company go-to for everything from fonts and brand colors, to grammar choices and messaging tactics. So how do you go about cleaning it up when the time comes? How do you even know when it needs a touch-up?

One of the best ways to figure out where your style guide stands is to browse through it and start asking yourself some tough questions:

- Is it all still working for you as far as the aesthetics are concerned? There's no point using the same colors and fonts if you don't like the way they look.
- If you were your customer, would you respond to each element in your style guide? Or would you look at certain aspects and think that this business could have done something differently and crafted a better image?
- Are some of your guidelines irrelevant now that your business has grown or changed its products or services?
- Have your overarching goals changed? Is it still mostly about making the sale, or are you in a place that allows some room for cultivating company culture?

There are no definitively right or wrong answers to these and many of the other questions that may come to mind as you think critically about your style guide. There are, however, considerations that need to be made with both your current customer base and your company's long-term aspirations in plain view.

Best practices are to include as many of the business's departments in on the discussion, and to have your marketing team come up with a few options for rebranding based on what you all agreed needed some extra attention. That way, you can rest easily knowing that every facet of your brand is representative of the company as a whole, and presents your publics with the right idea from the get-go.

Personas

When you first set up your marketing strategy, you likely sat down and came up with a couple of personas that matched the type of customer or client you wanted to work with, who would have the most to gain by getting involved with your business.

These personas can end up being some of the most helpful starting points for any future marketing campaigns.

But, that only works for you if the personas were developed correctly from the start. If not, and if you haven't gotten into the habit of revisiting them every time you create a new campaign, then they aren't really helping you reach company goals. In cases like this, we've found that it's usually time to go ahead and start from scratch, or at least identify the main problem areas and how they can be tweaked to suit your needs.

As you reconsider these new personas, remember to think of them as if they were real people. For us here at Sage Island, it helps to give them names, familial ties, jobs, and clear goals that fit their made-up lifestyles and that we can link to a brand's overall purpose. The more specific you get, the easier it is figure out how you're going to speak to each potential client in a way that makes you as a brand much more relatable.



Logo Design

Depending on how long your brand has been around and what sort of community you've built, you may or may not benefit from trading in your old logo for something new. When you first had one drawn up, it was likely in reference to your company name or maybe something iconic to your industry.

Logos, by nature, should be like snapshots of the brand, or a quick visual explanation of what it is you do for your clients. Even if you opt for something simpler like a company signature or the business's initials, there should be no question in the average customer's mind as to what the logo references. So if for some reason yours no longer conveys the right idea just at a glance, then we would definitely recommend changing up the look.

Before you even get a graphic designer on drawing something new, it'll help to think through these major points and come up with a few creative checkpoints for the professional to work with during his or her own process:

- Does the company name lend itself well to a particular symbol or mark? If not, don't be afraid to branch out and find something more general to represent the overall objectives that your clients have when they come to you for your services.
- What visuals would make sense in representing your brand? Or rather, what imagery or elements of design definitely don't communicate an accurate portrayal of your business? If you can first weed out the things that won't work for you, sometimes it's easier to pluck out some genius ideas in what's left over.
- Where will this logo appear? Knowing where your branding is going to go can help you decide on how detailed the image needs to be, or if you're better off with something more understated.
- Is this the same type of logo you've seen used by others in your industry? Or, do you need to craft one that will help set you apart from the rest?



Website

Your website should be constantly evolving in order to get you the best results. That doesn't necessarily mean that you have to redesign it every year in order to keep a steady flow of traffic, or even that you need every new bell or whistle to draw attention to your business. In fact, sometimes less is more!

But the main thing to keep in mind if you set out to create a new website – or even just spruce up what you currently have – is that it is essentially your brand’s business card for the digital realm.

Not only does it need to be able to explain what your company does and why a casual web user might want to dig a little deeper and learn more about your products or services, but it helps establish your brand identity and build trust between you and your audiences. It sounds like a lot to ask from one domain, but trust us when we say that it's certainly within the realm of possibilities when you go into the project with a clear set of ideals and the right creative team.

And it's actually for this reason that many existing companies choose to boost the websites they have before even approaching the idea of creating brand new ones. There's nothing wrong with taking that direction, as more often than not, the things that absolutely need to be changed for optimal results are fairly easy to understand even if you're not a tech whiz.



Whenever you hear a marketing expert or a programmer talk about your sitemap or your website's meta data, you might start to zone out. But before you begin mentally perusing your to-do lists or making weekend plans, take a second and hear him or her out.

Sitemaps are exactly what they sound like: the outline for a [website's layout](#). Think of these as the road maps that show you how to get from one page to the next based on your website's priorities and how the pages are then organized. If your website operates on a user-friendly program – we're fond of WordPress – then you can log in at any time and see exactly how its pages are laid out. This may even help you feel more involved if you do opt for a website redesign, as you'll be better equipped to look at the pros and cons of building out some pages and condensing others alongside your marketing team.



Landing Pages & Content Articles

When properly written, designed and organized, landing pages and content articles are a website's best friends.

Not only do they contribute to your brand's credibility, but they can optimize your site and therefore make it easier for the average web user to find you out in the digital world.

As part of a revamped content marketing strategy, we always recommend that our clients invest in the creation of these website elements, even if it's just adding a **blog post** every month or so. You can use this method to answer those questions that you get all the time from your customers, bolster your brand's backstory, or even just put out your company's collective take on something new in your industry. In any case, publishing new articles on relevant topics provides you with evergreen content for social media promotions and email marketing campaigns.

When working with a marketing agency to add these pages to your website, you and the pros can put together a tentative content calendar as it applies to your business's needs and industry concerns. It makes it easy to keep track of when certain topics will be explored, when the copy will be available for sharing across social media, and how you can refer it to current and potential customers as an extra tool in his or her arsenal as well. If done correctly, adding in these extra articles and pages helps to both attract and retain just the type of clientele you could hope for.

Social Media

Just like your website, your **social media** platforms and messaging ought to be continually evolving and refitting themselves to the needs of your business and your audiences. Otherwise, it's easy to fall into a rut and post the same things over and over, or stop utilizing the opportunities for advertising and direct communication altogether.

For company accounts, there are usually two main reasons to maintain your presence on social media: notoriety and lead generation.

As a business, you want to attract new audiences so you can sell your product or service. But as a brand, it's just as important to reinforce that sense of identity and unique character so you don't find yourself fading into the background. It's a fine balance, and it's usually made a lot easier if you have a specific team or representative taking care of that aspect of your marketing to keep posts fresh and relevant.

If you've noticed a drop in your social media engagement or the number of users trying to get in touch via these platforms, break out the metaphorical sponges and Dustbusters. There are a few things you or your marketing team can try to get the ball rolling again:

- Refocus on the voice behind your messaging. Sometimes, all it takes is loosening up your verbiage to grab your followers' attention.
- Get some new graphics. There's no reason you have to keep cycling through the same photos and infographics every month, especially when **video** is making a splash across platforms.
- Test out some of that rebranding we mentioned earlier. Social media is a great place to let your brand's personality shine through because you're interacting directly with the kinds of people you want to work with later on.
- Decide whether or not you're on the right platforms at all. Just because they exist, doesn't mean that every social media outlet is perfect for every type of business. Check out how each of your accounts is doing and try to look at them from a casual observer's point-of-view. Does it make sense for your company to be on Facebook and Twitter? Some of your resources could be reallocated to the platforms that will benefit you the most in the long run.



In Conclusion

Whether it's now, when the flowers are ready to bloom, or when there's snow and ice on the ground, we hope you never miss an opportunity to reevaluate your marketing strategy.

Sage Island's marketing team keeps an open line of communication with our clients to better facilitate priority changes, service adjustments, and general campaign retargeting so that our methods work for the brand, not the other way around.

And with so many innovative marketing tools gaining ground, we never run out of new ways to develop a business's image and personality.

You don't have to do all of the heavy lifting and intensive cleaning all by yourself. Marketing is a group effort, and one that never really ends, so [contact Sage Island](#) for a few extra sets of eyes and hands to help you spring forward this year!



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