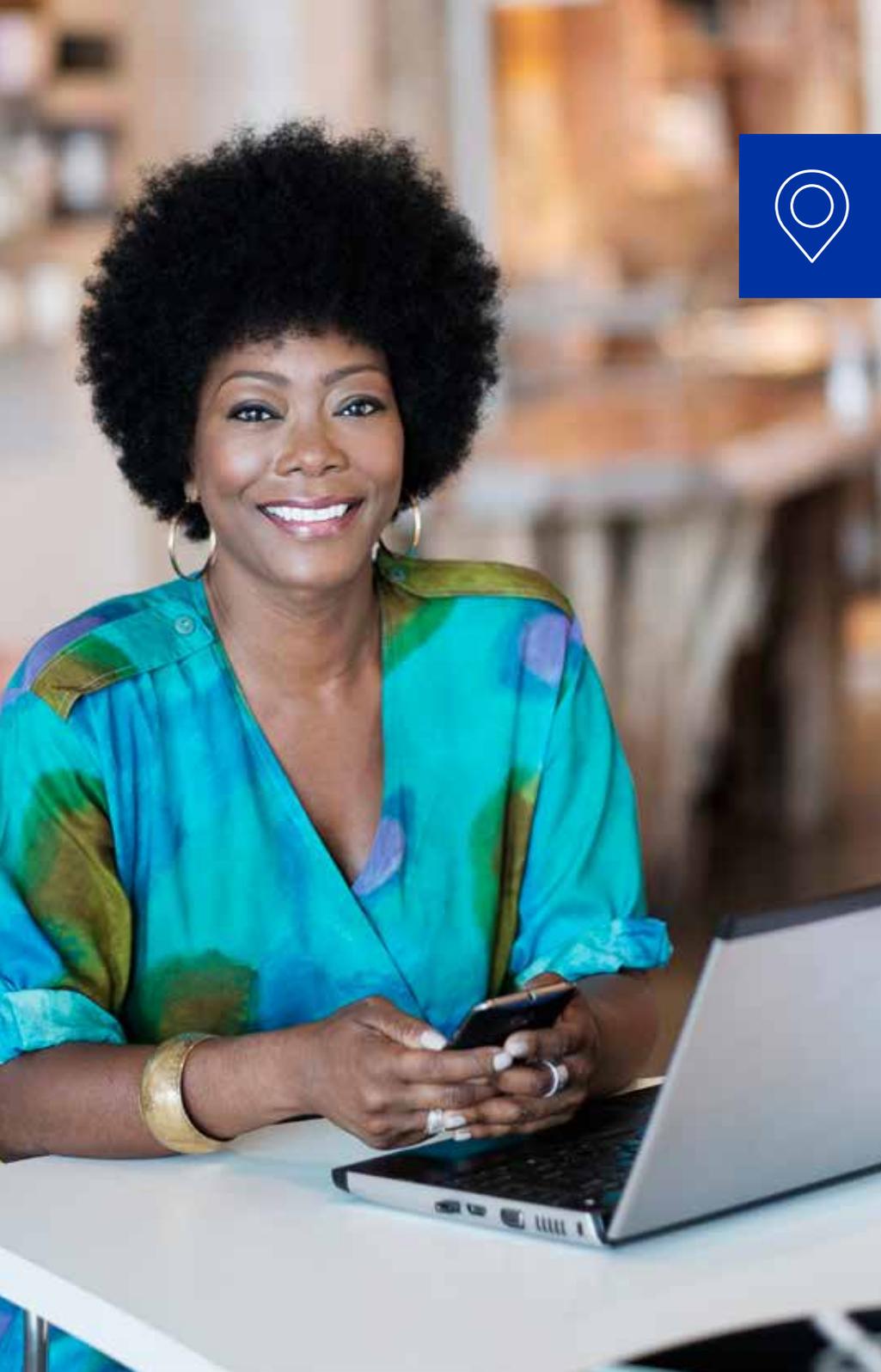




DIGITAL MARKETING INTRO

7 WAYS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR ONLINE STORE

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BLUTM



CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	03
Build your online store with SimplyBlu	
1. CONTENT MARKETING	04
Attract and connect with your audience with compelling content	
2. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION	07
Leverage SEO tactics to drive free traffic to your store	
3. EMAILER MARKETING	11
Grow your database and entice customers to return to your store	
4. SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	20
Gain new fans and followers	
5. YOUTUBE VIDEOS	25
Show up on the world's second largest search engine	
6. PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING	28
Use sophisticated targeting to buy clicks or views	
7. SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING	30
Acquire new audiences by advertising on social media platforms	
CONCLUSION	32
Keep learning	

DISCLAIMER: Standard Bank has not vetted the service providers listed in this guide. The content in this e-book is offered as an information service only, readers are advised to complete their own due diligence.

INTRODUCTION

Build your online store with SimplyBlu

SimplyBlu is an all-in-one e-commerce solution that enables you to start and manage an online business all from a single, secure platform.

Whether you're a budding entrepreneur with a new idea, a business owner looking for a new sales channel or you're just wanting to turn your hobby into a profitable side hustle, there is no doubt that online businesses offer access to a new world of customers and sales 24/7.

But if you're new to digital business, setting up an online store can seem like a daunting and expensive task. You may have to hire a designer or developer, and integrating payment gateways can be complex, right? Wrong!

Standard Bank's SimplyBlu provides you with a simple, one-stop e-commerce solution, with all the features you need to build and customise your online store.

Best of all, the platform is safe and secure and all card payments are 3D Secure authenticated and PCI DSS compliant, giving your customers peace of mind knowing they can transact with confidence.



WATCH THE VIDEO TO SEE HOW SIMPLYBLU WORKS

Create your own online store and start selling in no time:

- Link your own custom domain to your store or use a free SimplyBlu domain
- Customise the design of your store by selecting your preferred design from the available templates, upload your own logo and make colour selection preferences
- Finalise your terms and conditions using the pre-populated guides as a reference
- Load an unlimited number of product categories and products
- Upload product variations, such as size of colour variants, with ease
- Use discount promotions to drive sales
- Keep track of your inventory with SKU numbers and stock volume control
- The platform includes a secure, integrated payment gateway, to accept and manage payments seamlessly
- Card sales are settled into your Standard Bank account overnight
- Our sophisticated system enables you to detect and block fraudulent transactions
- You can also use the sales dashboard to view transactions and monitor trends
- The invoicing module enables you to quickly and easily invoice online and offline sales
- Share your products and online store to social media
- Download email addresses of customers to keep in touch via email
- Finally, if you are not near your laptop, the SimplyBlu mobile app, enables you to manage your online store from the palm of your hand.



SIGN UP TODAY Visit www.standardbank.co.za/simplyblu for details



1

CONTENT MARKETING

Attract and connect with your audience by serving up content on topics they care deeply about.



1

CONTENT MARKETING

What is content marketing?

Content marketing is a tactic used to attract potential buyers by attracting them with content in the form of articles, newsletters, website content, e-books or videos – where the majority of the copy; 80-90% focuses on insightful or informative information on a topic related to the product that the browser cares about and only 10-20% focuses on the product itself.

You can think of it as a 'soft-sell approach'. Where a 'hard-sell' will push information about your products with features, benefits, specs and price, and emphasise a strong sales focus like 'buy now' – content marketing takes a softer approach.

The idea is to attract your audience by educating, advising or inspiring them with quality content they are interested in first – and then once you have their attention, they will be open to learning more about how your products can help solve their challenges and pain-points.

Content marketing can help you to:

- Educate your prospective buyers about what your products and services can do
- Build customer relationships by familiarising potential customers with your brand
- Help boost sales in your online store
- Connect with your audience on a human level, not simply by hard-selling but by showing that you understand their challenges.

CONTENT MARKETING EXAMPLE

Most people have heard of the UK chef Jamie Oliver. We've seen his TV cooking shows and we may have even bought his cook books or used one of his online recipes.

If Jamie Oliver wanted to promote a new line of high-end organic herbs and spices for example, that he was selling, content marketing tactics may include videos or articles looking at specific health benefits of certain herbs and spices in curing common ailments, such as beating the common cold or healing a skin rash, and new recipes for

how to treat these ailments with herbs and spices.

At the end of this content piece he may look at how and why organic products are superior to the alternative, and then introduce the browser to the new product.

In this way, the browser is first attracted to content that helps them solve a problem, e.g. beating the common cold, and once you have shown browsers how they can solve the problem, you introduce them to your product and potentially win a new customer.

PRO TIP

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VIDEO

According to research by HubSpot, 54% of consumers wanted to see more video content from a brand or business they support.

How to apply best practice to content marketing

What type of content will you create?

First, know what products you are trying to sell. Because 'content marketing' is about providing valuable insights to gain attention and trust, think about the topics your audience cares about.

So as an example, if you are selling kitchen crockery, your content topics may be; *How to prepare the perfect Sunday roast* or *What's the fuss all about with cast-iron Dutch ovens?* or even *How to tackle that Christmas lamb roast with culinary flair.*

Consider these important questions:

- What does your potential audience need from you?
- What challenges or pain-points could they be facing?
- Why would they need your product?
- How can you help them to overcome their challenges?

Next, consider the type of content that will help you to better build a relationship with your prospect and educate them about your products.

For example, you could choose a video showing how to cook a cake in a cast-iron Dutch oven, podcasts on 'what's for dinner' inspiration or blog recipes, or a combination of all of these.

Mediums through which to publish your content marketing:

1. Blog content marketing

Blogs, which consist of articles that educate or inspire your audience are excellent for attracting an audience to your website and providing your customers with quality information – that will keep them coming back to your site for more!

2. Video content marketing

Video marketing can help you to not only boost conversions but also improve ROI, and help you build relationships with audience members.

3. Podcast content marketing

Increasing numbers of people are listening to podcasts, offering your business an opportunity to improve brand awareness, build relationships with your audience members, and promote your products.

4. Paid Ad Content Marketing

Paid ads can help you reach a larger audience online.

Wait! Before you begin...

Before you start creating content, it is wise to understand which keywords and topics your potential buyers are most interested in. That's where Search Engine Optimisation comes in! So, let's continue to the next chapter.

PRO TIP

NOT COMFORTABLE CREATING YOUR OWN CONTENT MARKETING?

Some people are natural content producers, others are not. But don't worry there's a fix for that!

Platforms like **Fiverr.com** link online store owners like you to highly-rated, reliable freelancers who can assist with fast, and affordable digital marketing services – from writing to video production, social media to email design.



2

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Drive free traffic to your online store and land new customers by harnessing the power of SEO.



What is SEO?

SEO is an acronym for Search Engine Optimisation, which is really all about increasing the amount of traffic you get to your website via organic (free) search engine results.

SEO is essentially all about knowing what people are searching for, or what answers they are looking for and providing them with content that can give them those answers or information.

This also means enabling search engine spiders, or crawlers, to find the information on your website and deliver it to your potential audience.



WHY IS SEO SO IMPORTANT?

Millions of people conduct millions of online searches every day. If you want your site appearing on the first page of Google's search results so that browsers find your products, thereby driving free traffic to your site, then SEO is important!

Online traffic is driven by search engines

Paid advertising and social media do generate significant amounts of traffic, however the majority of online traffic comes from search engines by searchers searching for a specific phrase, or keyword, and clicking on links to websites.

Organic search results cover more 'digital real estate'

When you look at a search page on a search engine, you will probably see 'Ads' at the top, while the rest of the page is made up of organic search results. This means that more real estate on the page is taken up by the non-paid for sites that have appeared organically.

PRO TIP

SEO CAN SEND FREE TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE

According to Moz, SEO offers 20 times more traffic opportunity than paid advertising on both mobile and desktop.

This means that you can drive more traffic through search engines to your site, if you invest the time in optimising your website, rather than if you were to pay for advertising alone.

Applying SEO best practice to your SimplyBlu store

1. Conduct keyword research

If you sell hybrid bicycles, you'll want potential customers to find your store when they are searching for information on hybrid bicycles.

But before you spend a lot of time writing articles on the topic, you'll need to make sure you've researched the most common keyword search terms used by browsers in your location.

Finding search terms or keywords that a person might type into a search engine, that are also relevant to your page are important when optimising your website for search engines. By finding the right keywords, and including them in your pages, you can attract the right browsers to your web page.

Importantly, you should also consider the browser's intent – why they would be searching for that specific phrase and what result they are after.

For example, someone searching for 'best urban bicycle' is likely still researching products and may not be ready to buy yet. While someone searching for 'Cube hybrid bicycle 2020' is searching for that exact make and model and is probably much closer to buying the product.

- So, if your primary objective is to drive ready-buyers to purchase a product on your online

store, the keywords used should be directly related to the product being sold. Because your browser's intent in this case is to buy a bicycle, your keywords zone in on the model, make and specs of the product.

- If you are wanting to attract a wider audience however, who may be interested in your content marketing, like educational blog pages, you look for keyword phrases like 'What is the best urban bicycle of 2020'.

2. Optimised 'on-page' SEO

Broadly speaking, there are two categories of search engine optimisation. The first is classified as technical SEO. This aspect looks at factors like the page load speed, data categorisation, site maps and other technical issues.

The second aspect, is referred to as 'on-page SEO'. In a nutshell, this means including the right search terms (keywords) in various places in your page, like the back-end meta data (used by search engines like Google) as well as on the front-end, like in the actual copy on your pages and the titles of your image file names.

Implement on-page SEO by doing the following:

- Place target keywords in the URL of your product pages and your blog posts
- Place target keywords in the body copy
- Place target keywords in an image alt text, such as those of your product images, and target keywords in the meta data of all of your pages.

PRO TIP

ALIGN KEYWORD RESEARCH TO BUYER INTENT

Consider what your potential customer's 'buyer intent' will be and target these customers.

To do this, project yourself into the mind of your customers, and consider which keywords they might use if they were searching for a product you could sell them.

The more specific the keyword the more likely your searcher will find you.

SEO tools for keyword research

There are several tools that can help you find keywords to include on your web pages. Here are a few to help you compare:

1. SEMrush.com

- Helps you to find keywords and ad group ideas
- Provides you with yearly keyword trends
- You can access the complete keyword research toolkit
- Provides keyword difficulty analysis and organic traffic insights
- SEMrush offers a limited free option, but you will need to invest in the paid subscription to derive value from the platform.

2. Ahrefs.com

- Provides an accurate keyword difficulty score
- Offers 1,000+ keyword suggestions
- Supported in over 171 countries
- Provides a Search Engine Results Page (SERP) overview
- Ahrefs offers a 7-day trial period, but you will need to sign up for a package to use.

3. Google Keyword Planner ([ads.Google.com](https://ads.google.com))

- A simple option providing a few basic features
- Help identify commercial keywords using 'top of page' bid range
- Accurate search volume provided directly from Google's search engine
- Visit Google's support for more information on how to use the Keyword Planner
- Google Keyword Planner is free to use, as long as you have a Gmail account.

4. LongTailPro.com

- Generates long-tail keywords for niche sites
- Provides in-depth keyword metrics
- Enables you to find long-tail keywords
- Provides recommendations for attracting highly convertible organic traffic
- You can use LongTailPro for free, however it has limited capabilities so you would need to select a Paid plan to access all of the features.



PRO TIP

FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS & ENERGY

Keyword research can turn up hundreds, sometimes thousands of keywords and phrases you could target.

To get the best return on your time and energy, focus your efforts on only targeting on a handful of keywords where you believe you can have the most impact.



3

EMAIL MARKETING

Grow your database and entice browsers to visit and customers to return to your store.



What email communications can do for you

The challenge

The tricky thing about any website, whether it's an online store or a regular website is that most new visitors to your site will probably not return – unless there is a compelling reason for them to do so.

So how do you get them back?

Email marketing can help. By building a mailing list and providing your audience with attractive offers and interesting information, you'll be able to convert new customers and once-off browsers into returning visitors.



Email communications help you to:

- Attract potential customers to your online store without having to spend on advertising
- Drive sales to your website on an ongoing basis
- Build lasting relationships and ongoing loyalty over time.

PROMOTIONAL MAILERS THAT DRIVE SALES

What should you include in your email marketing to make it compelling?

There are several ways you can entice your customers through your email communication:

- Include special sign-up offers or discounts
- Run seasonal promotions for special occasions, like Valentine's Day, Mother's Day etc.
- Entice interest by running contests or competitions
- Provide educational content that will interest your audience on topics related to the product you sell, like fashion advice if you sell clothing, or DIY tips if you sell crafting or related products etc.



PRO TIP

BE PURPOSEFUL ABOUT YOUR EMAILER FREQUENCY & MESSAGING

Your audience is precious – treat them this way.

Sending unrelated emails to your potential customers at the wrong time will result in a quick unsubscribe.

Be purposeful about what you are communicating and always keep top of mind what the benefit for the audience will be.

How to build your database

So, how do you go about enticing browsers to your store to provide you with their email details?

This is a good question. Most browsers are wary of getting spammed and might not be willingly to provide their details without some sort of sweetener.

To make it attractive for your audience to 'opt in' (meaning to willingly join your database), offer them an incentive, such as discounts off their next purchase or a special offer that will make it more attractive.

Always consider how you can continue to build your email database, both pre-sale and post-sale:

Pre-sales:

- **Discounts and gifts:** Offer a discount coupon or a gift to new browsers
- **Newsletter:** Entice your audience with the ability to join a newsletter to stay up-to-date with new products and promotions.

Post-sales:

- **Checkout:** Your checkout process will probably include having to complete an email address field. Don't waste the opportunity to use this information – continue to add shoppers to your database.
- **Referrals:** Offer discounts to customers who refer a friend to your website.

Using social media to grow your email database

1. Content and giveaways to grow subscribers

- Content that is useful and engaging to your audience on your social media platforms can help to grow your audience.
- Consider competitions or giveaways that encourage signing up to your email database and sharing the link with friends to help accelerate your audience growth.

2. Partnering on social media

- You could also partner with similar e-commerce brands who sell to customers like yours and access their followers by sharing content between you.
- This will help to access new audiences and provide you with an opportunity to grow your own subscribers through initiatives like competitions or special promotions where people will willingly give you their email addresses and opt-into your database.

3. Advertising

- Another way to quickly grow your email leads is by spending a bit of money on advertising (see chapters 5 and 6 for more info).
- Through advertising you'll be able to target a particular demographic, enabling you to quickly find and attract the right audience, but remember to ensure that your advertising drives your targeted audience to a specific sign-up page so you can capture their details.



PRO TIP

GROWING YOUR FANS & FOLLOWERS

Social media platforms can help drive engagement with your audience and for your email database.

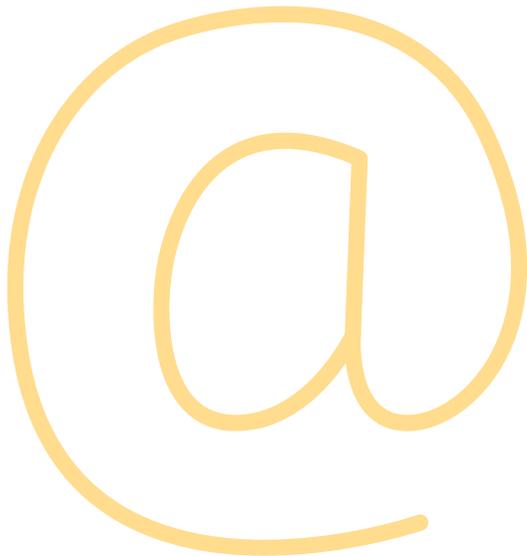
Think of creative ways to attract new audiences through promotions, like giveaways, that encourage your existing fans and followers to send your link to friends and family.

What email tools will you need?

To get started with your email marketing, you will need to find the right software to build your email marketing list and send out your mailers.

CHOOSING AN EMAIL SERVICE PROVIDER

There are a variety of email marketing services that you can choose from, and although most will provide you with the same basic features, it's important to check that they meet all of your needs.



Some of the features you should be considering include:

1. Pre-built email template that you can easily customise for your needs
2. In-depth analytics and reports to enable you to monitor and assess the effectiveness of your email marketing campaigns
3. Allows for importing of an excel database so you can easily upload customers between your SimplyBlu store and your email marketing services software
4. Advanced features may include audience-segmentation features to enable you to send targeted emails to your subscribers, for example, if your online store sells clothing, you may want to differentiate between men and women so you can send different emails containing unique content and promotions to each audience.

IMPORTING YOUR CONTACT LIST

SimplyBlu enables online store owners to download their list of customer contacts. These databases can be uploaded to your email service provider.



PRO TIP

INTEGRATING EMAIL WITH SIMPLYBLU

Opt-in forms that can be embedded with HTML code on your website or integrated into your SimplyBlu store.

Email marketing service provider options

There are various email marketing service providers to choose from. At first, this may seem daunting but remember that you can always switch providers down the line.

For your first software rather choose a service provider that comes recommended and ticks all the boxes for your specific needs.

1. MailChimp.com

This simple-to-use email marketing tool is ideal for smaller websites. It comes with both free and paid-for plans and both provide social media integration. They also provide a template selection, all of which are easily customisable.

MailChimp also provides advanced email marketing features, such as contact segmenting, auto-responders, service and app integrations, time-zone based sending, A/B testing etc.

2. Omnisend.com

Omnisend will be perfect for you if you don't want to spend much time building automated email campaigns. It is considered to be one of the

pricier email marketing providers, however it does provide a lot of easy-to-use features that make it worth the spend.

Their automation and workflows make it quicker and easier to build an email sequence, that might be a more manual task on other platforms.

3. Klaviyo.com

Designed specifically for e-commerce, Klaviyo provides you with powerful segmentation tools to pull in data from across your store, while also helping you to better easily segment.

Klaviyo also provides seamless email flow and automation that are quick and easy to set up.

4. Conversio.ca/en

Conversio is a powerful tool for building the full customer journey. With powerful segmentation features, you are able to build both cross-selling and up-selling capabilities with your audience.

Another notable feature of Conversio is that the platform helps build customer loyalty by encouraging your audience to leave reviews and post photos of the products they have purchased.



PRO TIP

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

When you are starting out in email marketing, it's best to test out various options before signing up for a paid service.

Most email service providers offer a free trial and some even provide entry level subscriptions that are free to use forever.

DISCLAIMER: Standard Bank has not vetted the service providers listed in this guide. The content in this e-book is offered as an information service only, readers are advised to complete their own due diligence.

Email content tips

Running promotional campaigns will help encourage your subscribers to actually start buying from your store.

There are various ways that you can continue to connect and encourage your audience to shop.

1. Start with a welcome emailer

According to research, 42% of subscribers read welcome emails more than they would any other regular promotional email.

The 'welcome email' presents an opportunity to encourage your audience to check out your products and even take advantage of a 'welcome' offer that you could present to a newly subscribed potential customer.

For example, providing a coupon in your welcome email could influence subscribers to visit your store and use the coupon in their first purchase.

2. Take advantage of themes or topical events to push product promotions

Whether it is Valentine's Day, Christmas time or Black Friday, events can be leveraged to drive more buys. The idea though is to showcase your products and not to drown them in copy-heavy mailers.

Themes can also help you to attract customers to your stores, so give some careful consideration to how you can group your products into relevant themes.

Themes could be straight forward, such as:

- 25% sale on items
- New spring collection.

Or your themes could be more creative, for example:

- Vintage wear inspired by classic movies for a clothing store
- Weekend craft projects for an arts and crafts supply store
- Punk hound fashion for a dog accessories store.

BE PROACTIVE:

Plan your themes out for the year in advance

Take the time to plan your themes in advance so that you can leverage a 12-month period to constantly draw your subscribers back to your store each month.



PRO TIP

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SIMPLE 'WELCOME' EMAIL

According to Campaign Monitor, welcome emails have an average 26.9% click-through rate.

And can generate up to 320% more revenue than promotional emails.

3. Weekly or monthly newsletters – which is best?

You probably want to engage with your audience on a regular basis, or only once a month.

The question is, which will be better to drive sales on your website?

Too many emails and you may land up with unsubscribes, too few and you could lose out on driving more sales.

Niche stores with specialised inventory

- Regular newsletters tend to suit stores that appeal to special interest / niched audiences. For example an online store that specialises in selling gadgets or kitchen utensils.
- Consider your own products and whether you can spin off content that will be engaging and insightful for your audience.
- If you sell kitchen utensils, your audience may be interested in cooking techniques or even recipes.

General stores with large inventory

- If your store has a more general offering or even a larger offering, you might want to provide daily newsletters with dedicated mailers to advertise each of the many categories you support.
- These could also tie in neatly with trends, topical subjects and themes, like 'Flashback Friday', Summer Season, etc.

4. Keeping your content fresh and interesting

The key thing is to understand your audience and their specific interests to provide them with fresh, engaging content. Topics you could leverage may include:

- Recipes / DIY instructions
- Hacks and trends
- Tips and advice
- Inspiration

Remember though, that writing a regular newsletter will involve time commitments on your part, so decide whether you can commit the time to producing weekly newsletters or whether you could only manage monthly newsletters as you establish and build your e-commerce offering.

5. Re-purposing your content

Make the most of your content that you have created by not only including it in your newsletter, but if you have written articles or filmed videos, include these on your website too.

That way you can not only leverage your content to engage with your subscribers, but also to attract online traffic via Google.

Any content you write for newsletters can also be used to create social media posts.



PRO TIP

MAKE YOUR CONTENT PERSONAL

Humanising your email content means moving away from that 'one-size-fits-all' concept and embracing contextual marketing – to make your content even more relevant for your subscribers.

This will result in increased engagement, building better relationships and building loyal customers who enjoy receiving your content.

To do this, create emailers tailored to different subscriber segments.

Mailer design tips

1. Your subject line matters

It's not the most glamorous place to start with your design – but the subject line of your email is the first thing that your subscriber will see and could either mean an instant open or an instant delete.

- Avoid use of CAPS and unnecessary punctuation, as it could trigger spam filters.
- Keep your subject lines short. Your subscribers will use a variety of different browsers, email software and devices like mobile or tablet to view your email.
- Also, keep it interesting and attention grabbing – using an emoji in your subject line where relevant can work well too.
- Personalise your emails to subscribers by including their name – or go a little deeper with your personalisation, such as based on their previous purchases at your store.

Hey Kylie, check out our offer on sneakers!

Did you know? According to research by Experian, emails with personalised subject lines are 26% more likely to be opened.

2. Selecting and optimising images

Keep in mind the following when selecting images:

- **The right images:** The image you choose should complement your mailer and your brand, and must not distract from the message or products.
- **Finding stock images:** When choosing images from websites that provide either free or paid-for images (known as stock images), make sure that you are keeping the look-and-feel on brand. Try to build your own imagery look-and-feel so that you keep each email on point with your brand.
- **Dimension:** Most emails are 600px or 640px wide. But to keep your image crisp on high-resolution displays ensure that your image is 2x the size (ie. 1200px).
- **File size:** Don't forget to check the total file size of your email. Images that have been saved as hi-resolution files, tend to have larger file sizes. The larger the email the longer it will take to open – which could result in your subscriber quickly moving on.

Images checklist:

- Find images relevant to the content
- Choose images that complement the text
- Use a good balance of text and imagery
- Compress images to ensure small file size and quick load time.



PRO TIP

CONNECT EMOTIONALLY TO GET ATTENTION

Don't be afraid to use an emoji if it is relevant.

They can take the place of words and be attention-grabbing in your subject line – resulting in an increase in open rates.

Complying with the law

What is the PoPI Act?

The Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act in South Africa ensures that personal information is protected and that your right to privacy is upheld.

The Act provides requirements on how information is organised, stored, secured and discarded.

Certain sections of the PoPI Act came into effect in 2014, while the rest of the Act has come into effect on the 1st of July 2020, which means that you should already be complying with the regulations within the Act.

Failure to comply with this new legislation has serious implications and could result in prosecution, with a possible prison term of up to 12 months and a fine of up to R10 million.

POPI ACT COMPLIANCE & EMAIL MARKETING

To comply with the PoPI Act, you need to do the following when marketing to your subscribers and customers:

- You must obtain the consent from your customer / subscriber, such as clicking on a consent button when subscribing to your newsletter that states 'Sign me up for your weekly newsletter'
- Your customer must opt-in to each channel before you can contact them. For instance, you may not send marketing to a customer if they have only chosen to receive your newsletter and not your your marketing or products information
- Where the customer has requested a change, or opts out of your channel, their request must be honoured immediately. Most good email marketing software solutions will automatically include an 'unsubscribe' link within their templates
- You can only collect personal information for specific, explicit and lawful purposes
- You can only process personal information if the customer consents
- Don't retain personal information for longer than necessary
- Ensure that personal information remains accurate and updated
- Protect the security and integrity of the personal information
- If you have a 3rd party / operator, they must contractually comply with PoPI.



PRO TIP

ENCOURAGE BROWSERS TO OPT-IN WITH TEMPTING OFFERS

Many online retailers successfully use promotional discount coupons to entice browsers to opt-into their newsletter and marketing mailers.



4

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Connect with new audiences, gain fans and followers to win more customers.

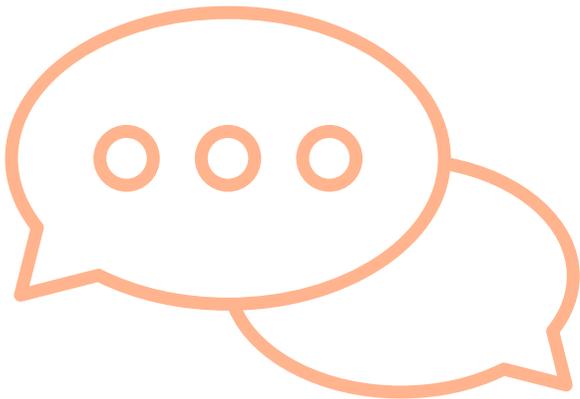


How Social Media can drive free traffic

Capturing your audience's attention

Social media can be a significant driver of traffic to your store. Social media can not only help your store to capture your audience's attention, but also drive them to your store.

One of the main reasons why social media is so effective is because of the massive numbers of users that access and engage with social media every day.



Social media boosts engagement with brands

According to BigCommerce.com, research has also shown that customers spend 20-40% more with companies that they have social media engagement with.

Social media posts can improve your ranking on Google's organic search results

Social media content published regularly can help you with driving organic traffic results from search engines like Google.

Social media posts are also crawled by search engine spiders and are indexed as well – making you more findable by your audience – and potential customers.

Social media can also help your store's content get indexed quicker by search engines.

So, if your blog post on your website gets a lot of attention on social media, it will be indexed at a quicker speed because search engine spiders are able to find the content quicker.

If your content is indexed faster it is then more discoverable to searchers online and on social media.



PRO TIP

SOCIAL MEDIA IS ABOUT COMMUNITY

Create posts that are of interest or are inspirational to your audience to make them more shareable.

If your audience comments on your approach, respond to them – as your posts are shared so too will the comments, so it's important to maintain a good conversation with your audience.

How to build a large following on social media brand platforms

Building your brand presence is an important piece of the puzzle to ensuring that you have a steady stream of traffic to your website.

After all when customers recognise and remember your brand, it is more likely they will return to it if they have positive association with your brand and store.

Social media channels provide a great avenue to connect with new audiences – and can be the quickest way to build excitement around your offering.

There are various social media platforms to choose from, such as:

1. Instagram
2. LinkedIn
3. Facebook
4. Pinterest
5. Twitter
6. SnapChat
7. TikTok

1. Choosing the right social media platform

So, how to choose the right ones for your store?

Focus your efforts on the platforms that your target-audience is most active.

- In South Africa, **Facebook** is still the biggest platform, with a penetration rate of 53%.
- **LinkedIn** is the runner-up with 18%
- Followed by **Instagram** (9%)
- **Twitter** (4%) is used more by males in South Africa than females
- **SnapChat** (3%) is predominantly used by females.

2. Encouraging social media sharing and reviews

Social media is effective for e-commerce businesses because users of the platforms share information with other users – which could result in referrals and ultimately potential new customers for your online store.

Leverage this sharing behaviour to grow your audience online.

Every time a post of yours is shared – you are also potentially gaining at least one more customer – if your messaging resonates.

PRO TIP

TAILOR YOUR CONTENT TO SUIT EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

The type of content that you can post to different social media networks will vary.

Some may lend themselves more to short form content (e.g. Twitter) or even video, while others will be predominately images (e.g. Instagram and Pinterest).



How to build a large following on social media brand platforms

Boost social sharing

It's all very well to grow your fan-base on social media, but how do you get your followers to share your posts to reach new audiences?

This is where you need to know your audience very well so that your messaging is so compelling they cannot help but share it.

1. Get to know your audience intimately

The better you know your audience the more relevant and niche you will be able to make your content.

2. Add highly visible links to your social media platforms and newsletter or mailers

Provide every opportunity for your audience to share your content. Add your social media links to your website and newsletters to enable visitors to quickly connect to your accounts, comment and share.

3. Keep on engaging with your followers

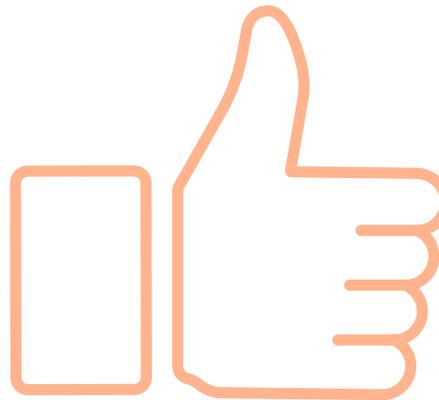
Keep the 'social' in social media by continuously engaging with your audience. Your messaging should always maintain that human element and not err on the side of sales punting.

4. Use well-timed posts

Understand when your audience is most active and leverage this data to your advantage. By leveraging the most productive post time platforms, you'll engage with more followers and drive more traffic to your store.

5. Use images and videos

Users find rich media much more compelling than text. Ensure that your content gets more shares by including images and videos. These may be product demos or useful tips related to themes that support your products.



PRO TIP

LEARN FROM THE BEST

If you're starting out in social media and digital marketing, often the best way to learn is to see examples of how the experts do it best.

Find the leaders in your online store niche and follow them on social media. See which posts get the most engagement (shares and likes) and get a feel for how often they post and what they post to get ideas for your own activities.

Tools to manage your social media accounts

To create content that resonates with your audience across your social media platforms, you will need to be consistent and on-brand across all of your platforms.

That's a lot of work if you plan on logging onto each individual platform every time. This is where social media management tools come into play.

Social media management tools help you to manage multiple platforms from a single interface. They not only simplify how to run your social media platforms, but also provide you with insights into your audience and your posts, from being able to schedule posts in advance to generating reports and responding to your audience.

This means you can invest less time each month on social media scheduling than if you had to post manually each day.

There are a variety of social media management tools you can choose from. Here's a selection:

1. Buffer.com

- Mainly for scheduling of posts.
- Supports Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Pro users can schedule Pinterest updates too.

- The free service can connect up to three social accounts, including Facebook pages and groups.
- Includes limited insights into post performance.

2. Hootsuite.com

- Compatible with over 35 social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- Can schedule posts and even create your own scheduling.
- The analytics tools help you understand your social results. Reports can be generated and exported either as Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, and CSV files.
- You can also run similar reports to measure team or individual performance.
- HootSuite can also monitor the social web with custom social streams.

3. SproutSocial.com

- Compatible for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.
- Sprout Social provides a full suite of scheduling tools, such as being able to post to several social media platforms at once.
- You can also tag updates so that these can be easily recalled for analytics later on. You can track entire campaigns, post types of subject matters as well.
- Included 'listening tools' for building queries for keywords, hashtags, and mentions.

PRO TIP

SOCIAL MEDIA IS ALL ABOUT BEING SOCIAL

Being social means regularly engaging with your community and answering their questions, concerns and even complaints.

Think about the tone that you want to implement across your social media platform and keep it consistent in your responses and messaging.





5

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Post videos to the world's second largest search engine to get more customers to find your products.



Why promote your store on YouTube

It's one of the most popular sites on the Internet, where browsers go not only to be entertained but to search for information and products.

YouTube might not be the first platform you would have thought of for an online store, but it can help to attract and drive new customers to your store.

YouTube was acquired by Google a while back, but the relevance of this is that it has massive search and keyword capabilities.

In a nutshell, this means YouTube is a powerful channel for you to build your brand and access your target customers.

If you're not convinced that YouTube can do anything for you? Well, consider this:

- YouTube has 2 billion users worldwide
- 79% of Internet users say they have a YouTube account
- Eight out of ten (78.8%) marketers consider it to be the most effective platform for video marketing
- Everyday, one billion hours of videos is watched by viewers on YouTube.

YouTube can help give your products that much-needed exposure. When you're trying to target a new market, or increase your brand awareness, a high-quality video of your product, or educational content for your target audience can drive both awareness and engagement.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT SHOULD YOU POST ON YOUTUBE?

If you want to create a YouTube video that resonates with your audience, it should always deliver on at least one of these three factors:

- Inspirational,
- Or educational,
- Or entertaining.



PRO TIP

YOUTUBE IS A POWERFUL SEARCH TOOL

YouTube is more than just a channel to watch videos. It's also the second-largest search engine in the world.

According to research by Google and Magid Advisors 90% of global audiences say they discover new brands or products on YouTube.

Video production considerations

To deliver superior videos for your audience consider the following checklist for YouTube success:

1. Post new videos regularly

- **Post as frequently as you can**
Try to post as often as you can, but remember to also re-purpose your content across your various platforms too. Try to go for content that will have more longevity if you will only be able to create a few videos.
- **Be consistent**
It is recommended that you also post at the same time every week so that people know when to expect your content.

2. Sound, lighting and editing matter

- **Pay attention to sound**
Choose an environment that is quiet and where you won't be interrupted. Shooting a video outside, as an example, might be a bit noisy and unpredictable if the neighbour's dog starts barking or children come out to play. You will need to invest in quality sound and lighting to produce high-quality videos – and attract an engaged and loyal audience.

- **Lighting is important**

Where you set up your video shoot should be guided by what lighting is available. Once you are well into your video-making, consider investing in some budget-friendly but good lighting to ensure you get the best out of your shoot.

- **Editing software**

There are various user-friendly video-editing software options you can use to get that professional look for your videos.

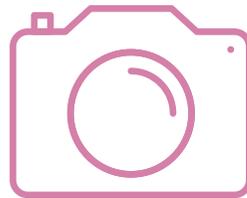
3. Plan ahead

- **Film several videos in one go**

Making videos is an arduous task and takes a lot of pre-planning. Rather shoot several videos at once so that you can continue to build a library of videos for scheduling.

- **Stick to one location**

Create a space where you can leave everything set up and return to whenever you need to shoot more videos.



PRO TIP

MAKE SURE YOUR VIDEOS ARE VISIBLE TO YOUR AUDIENCES

Video production takes time and effort, but getting views on your videos also requires energy and focus.

To give your videos maximum exposure, add highly visible links on your online store, your product pages – and to your social media platforms, newsletter and mailers.



6

PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Use sophisticated targeting to buy clicks or views through paid media.



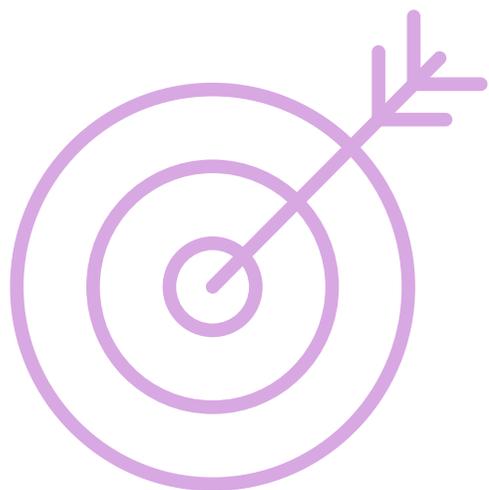
What is paid digital advertising?

Pay-per-Click advertising (PPC) is an important element of targeting your audience and driving traffic to your online store.

How does paid advertising work?

There are various types of PPC advertising you can buy on different platforms, but the most popular channel is Google.

How it works is that you would pay an ad network, such as Google every time one of your adverts is viewed or clicked on.



Google advertising options

The following options offered by Google are particularly well-suited to promoting e-commerce stores:

1. Google Paid search:

Have you ever noticed when you search on Google that there are a few ads which appear at the top of the page? These are Google Paid search ads. They don't include any imagery, only text.

2. Google Display advertising:

These are also referred to as banner advertisements and follow the user around based on their past browsing history.

Display ads are good to build brand awareness. They enable you to promote your business to online browsers, when they are watching YouTube, or even checking their Gmail accounts.

According to Google, the Google Display Network reaches more than 90% of all Internet users worldwide, through websites, blogs and Google's own sites.

3. Google Shopping campaigns:

Also known as product listing ads, these ads display your products directly within the search engine results.

PRO TIP

LEARN MORE ABOUT GOOGLE ADS

There's a lot more information available on Google advertising.

Fortunately, Google makes it easy to learn and get up and running as quickly as possible with step-by-step advice.

For more information visit ads.google.com



7

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Acquire new audiences through paid social media platforms.



Social media advertising

Just like Google advertising, you can also purchase ads on the various social media sites. Social media advertising uses pay-per-click (PPC) and / or cost per thousand impressions (CPM) models. Your ads will appear on a user's feed or timeline.

1. Facebook ads

- With Facebook Ads you can create and run campaigns using their simple self-service tools.
- You can also track the performance of your ad with Facebook's reports.
- Visit the 'Facebook for Business' site for step-by-step information about how to set up Facebook Ads.

2. Twitter ads

- Twitter provides you with objectives-based campaigns (also known as actions-based campaigns), where you only pay when browsers take the action you want, such as following you on Twitter, clicking a link to your website, or engaging with one of your tweets.
- Website click campaigns can be most effective for online stores.

3. Pinterest ads

- Pinterest ads are designed to boost the visibility of your Pins, giving them more exposure.
- There are several different Pinterest Ads Manager campaigns that you can run, including:

- Sending potential customers from your Pinterest ads to your website
- Displaying your Pinterest ads to new audiences, not already following you
- Encouraging users to engage with your Pinterest ads.

Influencer marketing

Kim Kardashian is one of the world's most successful influencers. With a following of over 175 million fans on Instagram alone, companies pay a lot of money to have celebrities like the Kardashians post product plugs or endorse their brands.

Simply put, with influencer marketing you leverage the reach that an influencer has developed. They would have a large following that you could use to support or endorse your brand.

So, say for example you sell hybrid bicycles in South Africa. You might want to reach out to a social media user with substantial influencers who reviews bicycles or blogs about cycling routes across the country. You could offer to loan them your latest hybrid bicycle to use on one of their adventures, and pay them to provide a review of how the bicycle performs, or simply pay them to post a link to your online store in their feed.

This will in turn create engagement around your bicycle, and will hopefully result in clicks through to your online store and potential sales.

PRO TIP

WATCH YOUR BUDGET

Although Google and Social Media offers instant access to large and targeted audiences, it can also result in spending a lot of money for little result when initially starting out.

The trick is to always test your ads with a smaller budget first to see how they perform.

Then make adjustments to your ads to see which works best for your products.



CONCLUSION

This e-book serves to provide an introduction to digital marketing tactics. Specialist knowledge is required to fully understand how to set up and run effective campaigns.

We recommend reading articles and joining online groups to learn as much as possible to further develop your knowledge.



MORE INFORMATION

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