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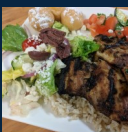
Start Telling Your Customer Success Stories!

### Getting Healthy Starts in the Kitchen!

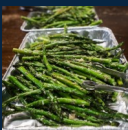
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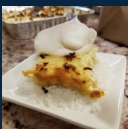
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**Cucumber/Tomato Salad & Tahini Chicken**  
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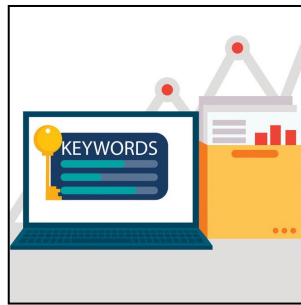
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### The Role Keywords Play in SEO and Content Marketing



You may already know this, but keywords are an important part of any search engine optimization (SEO) strategy. The question is: are you using them effectively?

#### What Are Keywords?

As the name suggests, **keywords** are the main topics and ideas - the “key” words - that define what your content or service is about. When it comes to your SEO, keywords are the words and phrases (also known as “search queries”) that people enter into a search engine when they are looking for a solution to their question.

From a business perspective, while keywords are part of your SEO strategy to drive quality organic traffic to your website, which in turn increases your ranking and lead generation; they are not a magic bullet. There is no one keyword that will unlock the gateway to unlimited traffic. For keywords to be effective they must be part of your overall SEO **and** marketing strategy. One of the goals of an SEO plan is to use keywords to not only drive traffic, but to drive the *right* people to your website.

#### What Keywords Should My MSP Be Using?

Unfortunately there's no 100% correct answer, but let's go through how you can determine what keywords will work for you and how you can use them to improve your overall MSP marketing strategy.

#### Utilize Your Biggest Asset: Your Sales Team

Your sales team is your first source to determine which keywords are being used by potential customers to find your site, but you have to have a system in place to collect the data. Train your sales team or any team member who interacts with the public to ask what keywords or

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### When Marketing as an MSP, Keep “as an MSP” in Mind



Your MSP's marketing strategy and implementation is an important factor to its success. This means that it is just as important to find the right agency to assist you with your marketing - especially if marketing isn't necessarily in your wheelhouse.

Here, we'll review a few considerations that any MSP should keep in mind as they seek out a marketing resource to offer them some assistance with their strategy.

#### What Marketing Does Your MSP Need Fulfilled?

The point of marketing is to spread awareness of what you can offer as a managed service provider. However, to leave it at that is an oversimplification. While you may be targeting a specific audience as an MSP, this audience isn't going to be made up of a bunch of people with identical personalities and content consumption preferences. While there will be some similarities, some may respond better to Marketing Method A than to Marketing Method B, and vice-versa.

Some may not respond to anything but *Marketing Method J*.

As a result, it's generally considered best practice to incorporate a variety of marketing methods into your strategy - perhaps focusing more on particular methods, but not really neglecting any,

*(Continued on page 4)*

Have Marketing Questions?  
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## How to Build a Newsletter Audience that Mailchimp Will Like



Mailchimp is an email marketing platform that offers businesses quite a bit of utility and features, which makes it a

popular option among them. However, this popularity means that Mailchimp needs to be particularly careful that its users abide by email marketing best practices. As someone who just wants to market your managed services, where does this leave you?

In order to effectively leverage Mailchimp, you will need to have a list (or as Mailchimp now refers to it, an “audience”) of contacts to send your marketing messages to.

### Why Your Audience Needs to Give Their Permission

Sounds simple enough, but there’s a catch: this audience needs to stand up to Mailchimp’s Terms of Use, which are built around anti-spam policies. This is increasingly important to abide by, as spam is treated as no laughing matter by Mailchimp... which only makes sense. After all, Mailchimp’s business model relies on their emails being deliverable. They certainly don’t want their clients’ messages being blocked.

### Blocked?

Let’s pretend for a moment that you weren’t afraid to break a few rules, and you decided to start sending emails without the recipients’ permission. Chances are, these recipients will mark your messages as spam - after all, they didn’t ask for them. Not only can these spam reports make it less likely that your legitimate subscribers will receive your marketing materials, but they also reflect poorly on Mailchimp... which could lead to additional complications.

Of course, an email user doesn’t have to be the one to block your content. If your emails are deemed too spammy or contain sloppy code, spam filters could

also flag your campaigns as spam. In fact, if enough of your campaigns are flagged as spam, you could even be blacklisted by the Internet service provider - and since ISPs communicate these kinds of things with each other and anti-spam services, you could be blocked by multiple providers. This is no easy thing to have undone, so you will want to avoid it at all costs.

### Acquiring Permissions

Fortunately, Mailchimp offers a few methods that make it relatively simple for you to collect permissions, either through their signup forms or through offline methods. You can even require a double opt-in to ensure that your subscribers are truly interested, as well as to keep your list clean.

Under Mailchimp’s Terms of Use, this prohibits you from acquiring and leveraging lists from third-party sources as well.

The easiest way that you, an MSP, can collect permissions is to have a sign up form for your email list on your website, and include ways to opt-in (such as a checkbox) at the bottom of other forms on your website. Make sure you keep proof of permission in case Mailchimp ever questions you.

### Is Your Audience Compliant?

There are a variety of circumstances that you can collect your audience through. However, not all of these circumstances are considered legitimate by Mailchimp.

### Non-Compliant Collection Methods

As referenced above, purchasing a list doesn’t fit into Mailchimp’s Terms of Service, as the contacts on this list wouldn’t be given the opportunity to opt-in to your correspondence. The same can be said of lists of attendees that you are given at events, or lists provided by an organization (even if you happen to be a member). Even the email addresses on business cards you’ve collected as a part of a contest don’t count (but more on this later). The same could be said for anyone who used Facebook to sign into your

service, and by doing so, provided you with their email address.

***You aren’t allowed to reach out to any email addresses collected in these ways via Mailchimp.***

Why?

It really all boils down to permission. None of the above methods involved getting permission to email someone, whether or not you wind up with possession of an email address. Besides, without a contact’s permission to email them regarding your services, there’s a fair chance that the contact wouldn’t be a good fit anyway, rendering your efforts wasted.

### Grey-Area Collection Methods

You will want to be very careful about utilizing any email addresses collected in the following ways. It isn’t that they’re necessarily bad, but the risk is definitely there. For example, consider how old your audience list is. Older contacts frequently don’t offer much return on your investment, unless you’ve sent them a reconfirmation email to make sure they are still interested. You might also assume that a prior business relationship means that you are free to email a contact, and you wouldn’t be wrong, but it’s still better to double-check with a quick confirmation email.

Remember the business card example we kiboshed above? If you were to explicitly inform the people who dropped off business cards that you were going to email them (or collected the cards for this purpose in the first place) you could send them emails. However, you will want to retain these cards as proof of permission, just in case.

Mailchimp does allow a business to send out mass updates, like announcements and changes of address, on the...



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## The Role Keywords Play in SEO and Content Marketing

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phrases a client used to find the site. You will be surprised at the amount of insight that can be gained by speaking with a real person in regard to developing your keywords.

Next, take a moment to brainstorm with your entire team and ask for keywords they would use to search for your services. Once again, you will be surprised at the insights you have right at your fingertips.

### Keyword Research

You want to pick the best keywords that

will help you improve your ranking, but what is your target audience searching for in terms of IT and technology-related topics?

Before we explore that, it helps to know the five main types of search queries:

- **Local** - The searcher is looking for something in the local area (e.g., a nearby restaurant or store)
- **Informational** - The searcher is looking for a piece of specific information (e.g., the year a movie came out or how many seasons are in a particular TV show)

- **Navigational** - The searcher is trying to get to a specific place on the Internet (e.g., a company's Facebook page or a website's blog page)
- **Transactional** - The searcher wants to do something (e.g., watch a video or purchase a particular thing)
- **Commercial Investigation** - The searcher is trying to compare two or more different things to see which is the best fit for their needs (e.g., PlayStation 4 vs. Xbox 1 or iPhone vs...



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## Why Scaling Back Your Marketing is the Worst Strategy in a Slump



One of the first reactions that many businesses have to reduced operations is to reduce their own costs.

While there isn't anything wrong with this strategy, per se, it is important that you don't set your business back further by limiting its marketing. Let's explore why this is.

First, let's consider what it is that makes a business so comfortable with cutting their marketing, as compared to cutting some of their other expenses.

### The "Logic" of Scaling Back Your Marketing

Of all the expenses that you can eliminate, your business' marketing seems to be the simplest. After all, most of your costs are likely tied up in your business' operations, which would appear to make marketing the easiest expense to reduce. However, it is important to look at the bigger picture as well.

There's a reason that people say you have to spend money to make money - without making any investments into your marketing, you won't be able to see the benefits that these kinds of investments can bring. Even in times of economic

challenges, cutting your marketing budget for more than a short time will deliver no benefits to your bottom line.

Besides, the whole point of marketing is to make enough impressions on your target that they approach you for your services. Without marketing, these impressions can't be made, and fewer prospects will come to you. You'll be relying on word of mouth and luck, and only word of mouth if you are doing a great job making your clients happy.

Going further, historical evidence reveals that doing so may actually cause greater issues. A study that examined the recessions of 1949, 1954, 1958, and 1961 revealed that the companies that reduced their advertising during these events not only saw reduced business during the recessions themselves... this reduction in business carried over to the years after the recessions as well. A similar pattern could be seen after the 2008 recession.

On the other side of the coin, McGraw-Hill Research examined the recession of 1985, and found that maintaining a marketing budget during that time allowed companies to increase their sales by 256 percent as compared to those who cut their budgets.

Of course, knowing this doesn't exactly tell you how to make the most of your

marketing budget when push comes to shove. Fortunately, there are a few ways to do so that are relatively simple to implement.

### How to Make Your Marketing More Effective

As you reconsider the approach that your marketing takes, you need to really focus on three aspects: what your marketing talks about, how it says its message, and how you are spreading that marketing.

### What Your Marketing Talks About

If you want your marketing budget to work harder for you, you may want to reconsider the message that your marketing is built around. Let's assume that you have been marketing your managed services with a focus on the general benefits that you offer. A recommendable shift may be to instead focus on some of the less-frequently-offered services that set you apart from your competition. Maybe you offer Hardware-as-a-Service, or virtualized desktops. Maybe you offer part-time onsite staffing services, or ongoing Dark Web monitoring.

Whatever the case may be, adjusting your marketing to highlight your valuable...



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## When Marketing as an MSP, Keep "as an MSP" in Mind

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either. This means you will want to seek out a marketing agency that has experience with as many forms of marketing as possible.

### What Does This Entail?

To put it briefly, quite a bit. A quality marketing agency will be proficient in a wide variety of activities that promote awareness of your brand and a sense of reliability in your services. On the digital side of things, that could include:

- Creating and maintaining a quality website that showcases your capabilities as an MSP
- Providing content, like blogs, brochures, and case studies, that support your experience as an MSP in your marketing
- Understanding the concepts of inbound...



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## Start Telling Your Customer Success Stories!

**Case Studies**, or customer success stories, are a great marketing tool because they combine compelling storytelling with key informational content about your business. These valuable pieces of marketing collateral provide your MSP with the opportunity to expand upon and analyze a customer's problem, going on to explain how your business helped by providing a solution.

### Order the Case Study Creation Service!

The point of having success stories is to tell them! When your company helps someone achieve success, you should show this off and share with your prospects. Let us help with the creation of case studies for your business!

### The Case Study Creation Service Includes:

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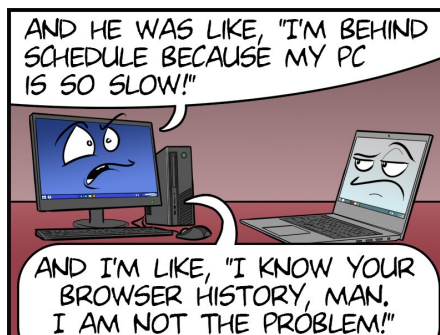
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