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Black Hat vs. White Hat SEO Part 1: Understanding the Difference



When it comes to marketing your MSP, there's good SEO, and there's bad SEO. Knowing the difference determines whether your search engine optimization strategy sets your company up for long-term ranking growth...or failure.

This blog series will examine the difference between ethical and unethical SEO strategies to help you make informed decisions about your SEO marketing strategy. This first part will compare these two strategy types, and explain why you...



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jmct.io/blackwhiteseo1



"Be present in all things and thankful for all things." - Maya Angelou.

Using "The Pull" Strategy To Generate Leads for Your MSP



The current crisis has undoubtedly caused many MSPs to struggle as their traditional methods of finding leads are no longer as effective due to social distancing. Fortunately, there is a solution to this problem, and if you have a modern marketing strategy in place for your MSP, you should already be using it. Learn more about "The Pull" marketing strategy.

Traditional (Old) Marketing

When we discuss traditional marketing strategies, we usually refer to any marketing that pushes services or products to consumers. This push is accomplished by interrupting what a person is doing to get their attention. For example, a commercial interrupts the show you're watching, or an article has an ad in the middle of the content, forcing you to read the ad. The goal of these interruptions is to

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First Impressions Matter, Especially When Onboarding a Client



This phrase may sound familiar to you: "You don't get a second chance to make a first impression." There have been countless psychological studies that have shown how important it is to put your best foot forward when you first meet someone if you want to leave a positive, lasting impression.

The same is true for your business: if you want to successfully onboard clients, you need to make a good first impression. Even if you do manage to onboard these clients after a bad first impression, they might not stay clients for long.

Pre-Onboarding

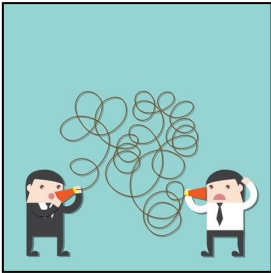
It's not just your onboarding process itself that you have to worry about, it's everything that happens before too. In a way, the onboarding process starts before you even get in contact with a decision maker interested in your company's IT services because a client has to find you, and then make initial contact with your sales team.

What is the initial first impression that a client is going to develop before they even contact you?

In the vast majority of cases, it's your company website. If it's not the first instance of them learning about your company and service offerings (and it may not be if you are properly

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The Importance of Following Up With Your Clients



There is an old saying that says, “the fortune is in the follow-up.” The saying is actually pretty accurate.

Follow-ups have the potential to influence a customer’s overall experience with your company. How frequently you follow-up and the quality of your follow-ups can be beneficial - or detrimental - to your MSP’s long-term success.

Why You Need to Follow-Up

Keeping in touch with your clients in a non-marketing-related fashion should be something that you are doing. Follow-ups can help you:

- Provide a better customer experience to your clients
- Differentiate from your competition
- Identify changes in a client’s business and/or processes
- Increase your customer retention rates
- Address your company’s ‘problem areas’

- Upsell your clients
- Generate testimonials and referrals

Despite the numerous benefits that following up can bring, too few small businesses will do it. That’s because it can be very time consuming to do: you probably have a relatively big employee-to-client ratio due to the nature of providing managed services. But as you can see from above, it’s definitely worth spending the time and effort to do it.

Frequent Follow-Ups

So, the question you might have after reading that: when should you be following up? *How?*

The answer to that question does vary and is dependent on your internal capabilities. Depending on what the topic is you are following up on, the method you use might also be varied. But, here are some possible options that small-to-medium-sized managed service providers should be able to handle:

- **After Onboarding:** This is a VERY important one. The onboarding process can be pretty overwhelming,

especially for a company who hasn’t outsourced their IT to another company before. Even if your onboarding process typically runs pretty smoothly, it doesn’t hurt to check in to see if they have any questions or concerns.

- **After a Client Purchases a New Product or Service:** You can follow a similar follow-up procedure when one of your current clients purchases an additional service from you that they didn’t previously use.
- **After Any Customer Service Experience:** If you’ve helped a client with a particular issue they were having, be sure to follow up shortly after to ensure that things are continuing to work properly after you helped them. This may also help you identify weak spots in your customer service. Asking for feedback and then acting on that feedback when appropriate is a great way to show your dedication to keeping your clients satisfied.
- **After ‘Radio Silence’:** Every now and then, you’ll have those clients that...



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First Impressions Matter, Especially When Onboarding a Client

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marketing your company), they’re likely going to end up on your website before they first reach out to you.

What does your website say about your company’s ability to provide Managed Services and other related IT services to your local area? Does it do a good job in showcasing your expertise? We’re not just talking about the words you type, but also the impression it leaves the user through its performance, appearance, and the other types of content on it.

A good website will take you to the next stage. A bad one will lead to a lot of potential customers bouncing before they get the chance to see what you can do for them.

Initial Communications

Another first impression you’re going to be leaving is through the first actual touchpoint had with your company. It’s one of the reasons that we suggest automating some of your marketing. For example, if a client fills out a form on your website or messages your Business Page on Facebook letting you know they’re interested in Network Security, you should set up an automated response letting them know that you’ve received their message, and a representative will be getting back with them shortly. This is recommended, especially because you might be getting some of these inquiries outside of normal business hours. You don’t want them waiting for days to receive anything from you if they contact you right before a holiday or late Friday night.

Once you receive something like this, you need to have your sales team follow-up with that person as soon as possible. Waiting too long may cause them to start looking toward other Managed Service Providers in your area (if they aren’t already), and you don’t want to lose them to your competition due to slow response times!

When a member of your sales team gets in contact with them for the first time, be sure they:

- Are on time
- Speak, and (if meeting in person) dress professionally
- Ask questions to really learn the in’s...



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Using “The Pull” Strategy To Generate Leads for Your MSP

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continually push a product in front of you (also known as the rule of seven).

While there is decades of data showing outbound marketing to be effective (there’s a reason why businesses still pay millions to have their ad run on the Super Bowl), there has been considerable resistance against push marketing. Many of the targets find them to be intrusive and often unrelated to their immediate needs. Moreover, modern technology such as ad blockers, VPNs, and the ability to pay to opt out of receiving advertising, reduces the opportunity for advertisers to have the type of captive audience needed for push marketing to be effective. Ironically, due to the coronavirus forcing many people into their homes, advertising management technology prevents

advertisers from taking ‘advantage’ of what is, for the most part, a captive audience. The solution to the firewall surrounding potential leads is embracing new marketing strategies. Unfortunately, for MSPs that have rejected modern marketing tactics such as understanding SEO, custom MSP content creation, and have found excuses not to use social media, may find themselves unable to compete with any MSP who did invest in new marketing strategies when it comes to generating leads.

What is Pull Marketing?

When we talk about ‘new’ or pull marketing, we’re discussing the type of marketing which came to age during the digital era. You’ve also probably heard it called ‘Inbound Marketing.’ In particular, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) has come

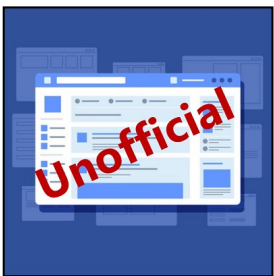
to the forefront to generate leads by increasing your MSP website’s ranking. Pull marketing differs from push marketing tactics as it is designed to **earn** a potential lead’s interest in your services instead of trying to “buy” it as paid advertising strives to do with commercials or print ads. Simply put, the goal of pull marketing is to use content to literally ‘pull’ leads to your website.

Pull marketing/inbound marketing is useful because your content (blogs, social media, white papers, etc.) provides answers to your customers’ questions. Your content must be consistently high-quality and informative. Potential...



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Your ‘Unofficial’ Facebook Page is Hurting Your Business



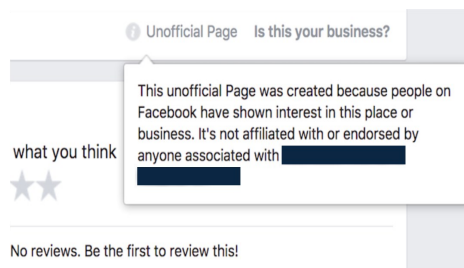
There are many Managed Service Providers out there that have decided, “we’re not

going to bother with social media at all.” We understand where they’re coming from: managing multiple social media channels on top of handling all the day to day business processes can be overwhelming for a small business. Instead of even attempting to, some companies of smaller size won’t even bother setting up accounts for their company across the major platforms.

While we don’t agree with these businesses’ decision to not create company social media pages, we understand that maintaining an active social media presence isn’t for everyone. But, we still have a message for those business owners: your company may **ALREADY HAVE** a Facebook Page. It’s just not an official one.

What Are Unofficial Facebook Pages?

Unofficial Facebook Pages exist typically because someone tried to ‘Check In’ to your business but either couldn’t find your Facebook page or you didn’t have one for them to check into. A page that is unofficial will be identified by an ‘Unofficial Page’ label underneath the cover photo to differentiate these auto-generated pages from official Facebook Business pages.



Facebook will create the page so that the user is successfully able to check in, and that page will remain live and accessible via a search through Facebook itself or through Google. Facebook’s official reasoning for creating these pages is “because people on Facebook have shown interest in this place or business.” The

pages themselves are essentially a ‘placeholder’ for locations that don’t have business pages so that individuals who have worked with this business or are interested in doing so have a mini community set up centered around that business.

You may be wondering, “what does it matter if I have an unofficial Facebook page if I don’t intend to use it anyway?” Maybe it doesn’t matter now, but it may matter a lot more in the future.

Unofficial Facebook Pages can include information on the following:

- Your business’ address
- A link to your website
- A phone number
- User ratings
- User comments and posts

Because this page is unofficial, there is no way to update any of the information about your company if you move, get a...



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2020 MSP Marketing Guide Part 2 of 4: The Bare Essentials



Continuing our discussion from our previous blog, "2020 MSP Marketing Guide Part 1 of 4: Your Marketing Budget", let's discuss the basics of what your MSP's

foremost, you need a good website. It doesn't need to be a complex dog and pony show, but you do need to show off your services, your expertise, and offer incentives to try your services. Of course, you can go down the custom website route if you have the money to spend, but a prebuilt solution like our Ultimate MSP Website is a fine place to start.

marketing should entail.

The Baseline, Absolute Minimal Amount of Marketing You Should Do

Let's establish the very bare minimum of what you need to do for your marketing. This is the never-compromised, always-running background marketing that supplements your more aggressive campaigns.

The Obvious Stuff

There are a few essentials that your MSP needs to have for your marketing to work. First and

Obviously you need a logo, a domain name, email, a local phone number (and possibly a toll-free number if you work with non-local businesses). Always have a pocket full of nice, heavy business cards with all of this information on them.

Free Offers

Be prepared to give something away to...



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