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#### LinkedIn 101: Personal Profile vs. Business Page



LinkedIn is one more of those social media platforms that continues to grow. Using it can get your company name out there, and get potential employees in contact with you along with possible new clients.

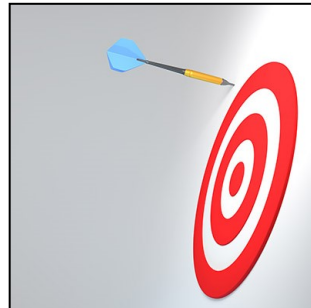
The benefits of using LinkedIn is that it is based more for professionals and businesses to get in touch, not like the other social media platforms where it's more of a social forum to chat with friends. You can also create pages that are specific to your...



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### MSP Marketing: How To Bounce Back From Marketing Failures



Marketing success for your MSP is never a sure thing. While it is understandable to want to give up if you don't see success, the reality is unless you market your business, potential leads won't know your MSP exists. Here are 3 takeaways to learn from your unsuccessful marketing campaigns.

#### Do You Feel Your MSP Marketing Isn't Working?

In today's business environment, marketing, specifically online marketing, is more critical than ever. As so many businesses come online, your competitive advantage can be blunted by the sheer volume not only of competitors but the overall "noise" of activity.

We recently asked if you felt your SEO strategies weren't working for your MSP. SEO is only a part of marketing and relies on other methods to develop a complete marketing campaign. With this in mind, we're asking you if you feel that your overall marketing strategy has provided tangible results.

If the answer is no, instead of quitting and leaving your business to fate, or, worse, your competitors, now is the opportune time to reevaluate what happened, learn from it, and change your strategy. Here are five takeaways to learn from an unsuccessful marketing campaign.

#### 1. Give Your Marketing More Time to Work

We get it; you need to have the phones ring. However, even in the best business environment, generating leads takes time. For example, the rule of thumb is that your audience needs at least seven exposures to your advertising before they even notice it, let alone take action, even for well-understood industries. With so many things vying for your audience's attention, breaking

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### Performing a SWOT Analysis on a Marketing Novice



If you've never really marketed your business, you've probably had a reason that you've avoided it. These reasons are likely quite valid...but we have a few reasons that you'll want to reconsider that decision.

Let's go over these reasons with you, framed in a specific way that we'll explain later.

#### Why Never Really Having Marketed is a Good Thing

Let me ask you this: can you have any bad habits if you don't have any habits at all? Nope—by definition, you can't. This means you have a clean slate to work with as you cultivate good marketing habits moving forward.

It also means that you have the opportunity to start off on the right foot, taking the time to really research your area, establish who your target market is, and evaluate how well your target market is represented in your selected service area before you start trying things that ultimately won't work. This saves you money, and primes you for success.

#### Why Never Having Marketed Puts You at a Disadvantage

Of course, you have to also consider that you don't have any good habits, either. Anyone who

*(Continued on page 2)*

## MSP Marketing: Can Your MSP Content Pass Google's Helpful Content Update?



Is your MSP's marketing plan taking your content for granted or worse, "phoning it in"? As Google continues to

focus on user experience, they have implemented **"The Helpful Content Update."** The goal of which is to ensure content provides users with the information they are searching for, while penalizing organizations that fail to do so with reduced page position.

### Have You Been Giving Your MSP Marketing Content the Attention it Deserves?

Recently Google announced an incredibly significant change in their algorithm. Called the helpful content update, this change will target websites whose content doesn't inform or help searchers who visit

their site. Google said this update will **"tackle content that seems to have been primarily created for ranking well in search engines."** Many content creators don't understand that just because content ranks well for the algorithm doesn't guarantee it will provide a good user experience. This is because what may appeal to Google's A.I. doesn't ensure that it will resonate with your target audience.

Google is telling us that they will watch how users interact with your content, and if there isn't real engagement, Google will no longer reward the website, even if they are hitting the right A.I. metrics.

Google's goal with this update is to ensure that searchers can find the information they are looking for, and in many ways, it is similar to the previous Panda update from over a decade ago. The Panda update filtered out websites that offered thin, low-quality content and represented Google's first display of its commitment to

the user experience. The effect of Panda and now the Helpful Content Update was that Google penalized websites that provided poorly constructed, spammy content with reduced visibility while enabling higher-quality websites to rise to the top.

This update solidifies Google's emphasis on ensuring that searchers see "more original, helpful content written by people, for people, in search results." As such, this update further reinforces the need for high-quality and engaging MSP-focused content to promote your MSP, attract an audience, and gain a high-ranking page position.

### Why Does this Update Matter to Your MSP Marketing Goals?

First and foremost, as an MSP, you are...



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## Performing a SWOT Analysis on a Marketing Novice

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has successfully marketed their business in the past will tell you that one of the most important elements to marketing successfully is to have been doing so *consistently*.

So, if you've yet to start marketing, you've got a ways to go before you'll see the kind of results you'll want to see. After all, your intended market will need to see your brand and marketing materials somewhat regularly before your materials will make them aware of your business and services. Therefore, making an impression is going to take longer.

### Why Beginning Your Marketing Effectively Creates Possibility

Let me ask you this: who would you rather investigate, a business that says nothing about what it offers, or a business that has publicized an assortment of offers—who perhaps has even come and spoken about them at an event you attended, or sent out mailers that you found in your mailbox?

I mean, it really is the core purpose of marketing. You want to draw people who are interested in the services you offer to your business and what you specifically offer, reeling them in until they are convinced to sign up for your services—ideally, much to their delight. Therefore, by marketing, you are inviting your prospects to come in and have that conversation.

### Why Not Marketing Your Business Puts You in a Tough Spot

Let's go through a little thought experiment...let's say that three children were to each open lemonade stands in a small town, close enough to each other that they were effectively competing for customers. One of these stands served watered-down lemonade from a mix, the next served run-of-the-mill homemade lemonade, and the third served an artisan homemade lemonade, using only the finest lemons and introducing unique flavors through the use of different fruits and herbs. However, the first two had their stands set up on a high-traffic street,

whereas the third had her stand down a side street. If stand three doesn't do any marketing, it's completely possible that nobody would ever wander down that side street to try her lemonade in the first place.

While MSP services and lemonade are certainly very different things, the same concept applies...if people aren't aware of your services (or indeed, what "managed services" are) they aren't going to consider them as an option. Properly marketing helps to reduce this danger.

### This Has Been Something Called a SWOT Analysis

When we create marketing plans for our clients, we ask them to take an introspective look at themselves and fill out a SWOT analysis...an evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that apply to their company. The...



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## MSP Marketing: How To Bounce Back From Marketing Failures

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through the noise can be difficult, especially for a poorly understood service such as managed IT.

This means you must be more patient before declaring your marketing a bust. For example, if you're interested in SEO which is essential for bringing your MSP services in front of searchers, it can take up to six months before you see any results. So, yes, it is understandable after spending six months stuck on page two of Google for MSPs to feel that SEO doesn't work. However, quitting won't bring you any leads. While easier said than done, you're going to have to keep at it.

### 2. It's Time to Think Like a Customer

When you create a campaign, there's a chance that you are too close to recognizing the shortcomings in your marketing strategies. This can make it difficult to understand why your campaigns aren't gaining traction and generating leads. To overcome this, developing a buyer persona makes sense.

A buyer persona allows you to view your marketing materials through a customer's eyes and take an honest look at your product. This means if you, as a customer, find that your marketing materials need to provide the answers you are looking for, you need to evaluate your messaging. The reality is if you can't find the benefit in

your services, neither can potential customers.

### 3. Study Your Data

In today's digital environment, your data is the most effective tool you have to understand your customers. Whether it's when your data drops or increases, it's essential that you track your website's data. Your data will tell you the customers' who, what, and where, allowing you to tailor your marketing to gain their attention better the next time you run a campaign. Some things to look...



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## Are You Starving Your MSP's Pay-Per-Click Campaigns?



Is Google telling you that you don't have enough budget to run your ads? Unfortunately there are

negative consequences to not having enough budget to fund your campaigns. Here are some steps you can take to keep your PPC running when you don't have enough budget.

### How To Determine a PPC Budget For Your MSP

When deciding whether to run a PPC campaign to generate leads for your MSP, the first question is, "how much will it cost?" While it is tempting to develop a complicated formula, the simplest method to determine this is by deciding how much a lead is worth to you. For example, if a sale generates \$1,000 a month in revenue, you should be willing to pay at least that much to acquire a lead.

The next thought concerning an investment in PPC is usually, "if I pay \$1,000 to run ads and I get a client who generates \$1,000 in revenue, then I'm just breaking even! What's the point?" The answer to this question is that the goal of

advertising your MSP isn't to obtain only one lead. Even if you only close two sales, that's an additional \$1,000 you didn't have before you started running your ads.

One thing to remember is the primary goal of your marketing is to bring the services you provide as an MSP to the attention of businesses that may need your services. The next important thing to consider is that marketing, including online marketing, can take time. It is essential to not only adequately fund your Google Ads but invest in them over time because an ad needs to be seen several times before it can break through the noise and enter the consciousness of potential customers.

Your PPC success is intrinsically linked to how much you spend, as well as how long you spend it.

### How Too Low of a Budget Prevents PPC Success

It's important to understand that Google Ads operates under an auction model, in other words, a bidding system. While having the highest bids doesn't necessarily guarantee your ads will be shown more...



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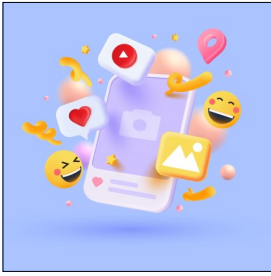


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## Why (and How) to Use Personalized Social Media Images for Your MSP



We haven't exactly been shy about how important social media is for the modern business—including a managed service provider—to be using as a part of its marketing

strategy. On top of that, we've been vocal about how important images are to include in your social media for nearly a decade...but you can still do better.

Let's explore why it's so important to personalize the images you post on social media.

### Images Hold Power in Your Marketing

When I say we've been talking about images in your business' social media for so long, I'm not kidding. Not only have we mentioned social media marketing and the importance of images and visuals in this strategy for about as long as we've been sharing marketing best practices, we have done so consistently.

Year after year, we have published blogs that at least refer to the use of images in your social media. There's a reason for this: they work.

If you took two identical blocks of text and posted them on your social media with one of them featuring an image, I'd bet the farm that the one with the image would get more engagement and stick in a prospect's mind more effectively. Research released by LinkedIn revealed that posts on the platform that include images have a 98% higher comment rate on average.

So, if images really have so much potential, why not tweak them a little to help boost your brand recognition? After all, if these images are going to be so impactful, it only makes sense to direct as much of that impact as you can to the awareness of your company and its services...right? So, let's discuss a few considerations to keep in mind as you personalize the images you share on your business' social media pages.

### How to Personalize Your Business' Social Media Images

There are a few steps you should go through in order to properly and most effectively utilize personalized social media images.

#### Where Will You Source Your Images?

First, you're going to need some images to use. There are a few ways you can acquire these images. Stock photo websites can be an effective and affordable way to obtain some high-quality images—just make sure to check that your license allows you to edit them. You can also hire a photographer or take some photos yourself, whether that's just around the office or at events you attend, to share. We recommend a healthy mix of photos sourced from both.

A quick, not-legal-advice word on photographs: Copyright laws are cut and dry. Legally speaking, whomever it was that took the photo, owns that photo, so you'll want to make sure you outline your acceptable use terms if you hire a photographer to produce any of your photos and get your agreement in writing. The same goes for stock image websites—check to...



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