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### I Don't Feel SEO is Working



There is no denying that SEO can seem to be a little... *nebulous* at times. However, there are many ways to measure if SEO is working for your MSP: your analytics, search position, and of course conversions. Despite these tangible measurements, many MSPs don't feel their SEO is working. Before you call it quits, here are some questions to answer before you give up on your SEO.

#### Have You Updated Your SEO for the Modern Age?

When developing their SEO strategy, many MSPs continue to fall back to the old tactics of yesterday. That is, focusing solely on or rather hoping for that silver bullet of a keyword that opens the flood gate of traffic and leads. However, that was nearly two decades ago, and the search engines, most notably Google, have abandoned the practice of using keywords as a primary ranking tool. In fact, when talking...



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## Your MSP Would Benefit from a Marketing Strategy: Why and How



It's possible most of the people you want to know about your managed services probably don't have a clear understanding of what it is that you do, what makes you different from any other provider of IT services, or what services you offer at all. So, how do you reach out to prospects like these and convince them to become clients?

This is why every business—especially a managed service provider—needs a marketing strategy.

### So, What is a Marketing Strategy?

We've talked in the past about the importance of a marketing plan, so we can hardly blame you if you assumed that these two concepts were one and the same. While they are definitely closely related to one another (and our marketing plans do actually outline a marketing strategy within their pages) there's actually a pretty significant difference between the two terms.

**A marketing *strategy* is your tactical approach to reaching prospective clients and customers and how you will convert them. A marketing plan focuses on the actual initiatives you will be executing upon in order to accomplish this strategy.**

Like we said, these concepts are closely related—it's really just a difference of what you want to do, and how you plan to actually do it. You can also think of your marketing strategy as your business' vision behind its marketing. As such, it is important to pay close attention to it so you can design your marketing to be as focused on your goals as possible.

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## Don't Slow Down Your Marketing in Summer



Instead of slowing down your efforts to market your MSP during the summer slowdown, there is a case for continuing to promote your services and keep your MSP top of mind. Here are some ways summer marketing can benefit your business and generate leads.

### Play into Pain Points that Businesses Face During the Summer

The most effective way to connect with potential customers (and Google) is to create content that addresses your target audience's concerns. The summer months provide a unique opportunity to get your MSP services in front of potential leads.

During this time, what issues could be top of mind for businesses? One issue many companies face is the temporary "brain drain" that occurs when their techs and other support staff become unavailable due to summer vacation.

If a company's tech support is out of the office for a week or two, what's their plan if something goes wrong? Remember Murphy's Law, which practically guarantees something will go wrong while their IT department is unavailable. While many businesses will power through and hope the situation doesn't get too bad, that is a recipe for disaster.

Your marketing goal is to educate them on how MSP services can help them during the summer. Co-managed IT, for example, is well-suited to provide support when their team is

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## Your MSP Would Benefit from a Marketing Strategy: Why and How

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### What Does a Marketing Strategy Do For You?

There are four real benefits of basing your actions around a set marketing strategy:

1. **Optimization:** With all your goals, strategies, and messages laid out clearly, it gives your marketing efforts a clear purpose to help guide them.
2. **Data:** By condensing the information you have into your marketing strategy, you can pull actionable insights out of your data to make better decisions in where your focus should be.
3. **Boundaries:** Without a strategy to help keep your efforts on track, there is a chance that your marketing could be diluted by less-effective efforts. The guidelines that a strategy incorporates helps prevent this kind of bleed.

4. **Efficacy:** With a direction for your marketing to follow, you can focus on your most promising leads and opportunities, making it more likely that you'll successfully convert them into paying clients.

### What Your Marketing Strategy Should Involve

So far, we've been pretty nebulous about what actually goes into an effective marketing strategy. Let's break down some of what we've already talked about in a bit more detail to make it that much more actionable for you.

### The Goals You Intend to Reach

There are numerous intentions that you can have for your company, many of which will ultimately be tied to its profitability. Having said that, there are

many other goals that your marketing can help promote—increasing awareness of your brand and services, for instance.

### What Your Market Looks Like

It's also important to fully understand the environment you're operating in, in terms of your competition, the conditions in your market, and the various circumstances that could impact your operations.

### Who Your Clients/Customers Are and What They Deal With

On a related note, your strategy needs to involve all of your insights into who you...



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## Don't Slow Down Your Marketing in Summer

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unavailable. This is an opportunity to take advantage of Google's helpful content update, a recent update of Google's latest algorithm, which rewards websites that provide valuable information by increasing their page rank.

When thinking about what type of content you should provide, it is helpful to create a buyer persona, helping you better understand what problems your customers are facing. Once you have your persons, consider what services you would value to support your business when your team is out of the office during their vacations. We mentioned Co-managed IT, but what about remote monitoring and maintenance or a help desk?

Lastly, leverage the flexibility in businesses' schedules during the summer. One of the biggest deliverables offered by MSPs is a complimentary audit (IT, network, or cybersecurity), and one of the pushbacks many MSPs receive is that "now isn't a good time." However, many businesses may now have the space to accommodate you during the summer slowdown, but only if you ask them. This is why marketing is essential; if you don't

reach out to them, they aren't aware that you can help them.

### Prepare for the Fall Surge

Even if you are generating few leads during the summer, you can begin to plant the seeds to grow your business and generate leads for the fall and beyond. One way to do this is by announcing any new products or services you introduce. While it may seem counterintuitive to introduce a new product when fewer people are paying attention, this tactic can provide long-term benefits.

First, instead of trying to break through the noise of the busy business season, you can take advantage of the summer season's breathing room. There are fewer competitors during this time, allowing you to have the marketing space to yourself. Additionally, marketing depends on repetition; by promoting your MSP multiple times during the summer, you are better positioned to be top of mind when the business begins to spin up again in the fall.

When we speak about marketing your MSP, we mean *marketing your MSP*, which means more than just having an MSP website. If you feel your MSP website

is all you need, you aren't marketing your MSP and are not alone. For example, when it comes to announcing something new, most MSPs either don't do anything or add a generic page to the news section of their website, where to be honest, no one will ever see it. Marketing your services aims to get your MSP in front of an audience.

This means anything that is of interest to your business needs to be promoted so it can gain the attention it deserves. So while it may seem that there's no point in promoting something few people may see during the summer, you have to remember the rule of seven. Simply put, it takes a person multiple times viewing your services before they even notice it, let alone act upon it.

### Marketing is a Year-Round Endeavor

Whether it's the winter holidays or summer break, marketing is a year-round endeavor. If you're like many MSPs, marketing your services is often treated as an afterthought or a necessary evil. Instead of treating your marketing as a...



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## DIY Marketing Your MSP

Are you considering bringing the marketing of your MSP in-house? Before you do, take a moment to examine the pros and cons of handling everything from your website, to your social media accounts, and your content yourself.

### Still on the Fence About Marketing Your MSP?

Hopefully by now, you have realized the need to market your MSP if you want your business to grow. The next logical step is to decide how to start. Marketing your MSP, like all business decisions, requires determining whether or not to do it yourself, or work with a partner. Here are some pros and cons of bringing your marketing in-house.

### Advantages of Bringing Your MSP Marketing In-House

#### No One Knows Your Business Better Than You

When you develop your marketing plan, you can be sure that your marketing "gets you" and reflects your brand. Many marketing agencies operate under the belief that all products are the same, and if you market one, you can market them all. The most effective marketing plan will have the best chance of success if you understand the product you are

promoting. No agency will have the same passion and knowledge of your business as you.



#### Communication is Key

Like you, most marketing agencies will have other clients and commitments. This means that what may be urgent to you could be placed into a queue, the same as in your business. Unfortunately, ASAP can have different meanings of urgency between the client and agency, which can lead to conflict. Intra-departmental communications ensure that important tasks and decisions can get the attention they need on your schedule, not the agency's.

#### Team Buy-in and Control

One of the most important things a business can have is control of: its destiny. By nature, when you outsource any aspect of your business, you will have to expect to give up some measure of control. Keeping your marketing in-house ensures your message and priorities will always be front and center.

### Disadvantages of Bringing Your MSP Marketing In-House

#### Lack of Marketing Experience:

Marketing is more than a website. If you want to market your MSP services successfully, then you need to be able to attract and engage an audience, and a website alone won't be enough. Marketing is a multi-step process that requires a plan.

Modern marketing depends on being able to connect with leads in a variety of methods, requiring you to...

- Manage your social media presence
- Consider Pay-Per-Click, or PPC
- Create content...



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## Is a Free Online SEO Audit Worth It?



Have you been running those free online SEO audits, and have been disappointed with the results? Instead of fearing your website is trash, take a moment to

understand the pros and cons of a free online SEO audit.

### Is a Free Online SEO Audit Worth It?

SEO, by its nature, is a long-term strategy, and it takes a long stretch of time (usually many months) for you to determine what is and isn't working. Fundamentally, an online SEO audit is a snapshot in time, often lacking the context needed to put your SEO in its proper historical perspective.

Moreover, there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what SEO is supposed to do. SEO aims to increase the opportunity for your website to be seen. SEO, like all marketing, can't guarantee a lead; all it can do is create an environment where a lead is possible, which can only be achieved if your business is seen.

### What's Wrong With an Online SEO Audit?

There's nothing inherently wrong with an online SEO audit, and most marketing organizations offer a complementary SEO audit as part of the onboarding process. The reason why is that they need a baseline to measure. However, there is a fundamental difference between the two. When you receive an SEO audit, for example, from a marketing agency, it requires access to your Google Analytics, Search Console, and Google My Business to place your SEO within its historical context.

In contrast, most online SEO audits can only examine your website superficially because they

can't access the information necessary to understand your SEO. This lack of understanding makes free online SEO audits not a valuable tool for determining which steps to increase your page position. The main reason is they lack the critical aspect needed for SEO success; personalization.

On top of that, these tools are just trained to spot things that the developers of these tools decided were issues. The tools aren't actually crawling the site like Google, nor are they associated with the search engines. They are using educated guesses to determine what to look for.

### Here's an example.

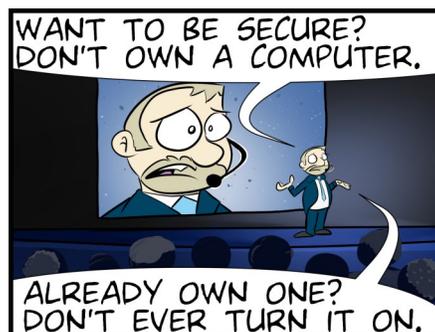
Let's say you run an SEO audit tool on your website. It comes back and says, "Uh oh, you don't have a custom meta description on the 37th page in your blog archive!"

If your blog is built on WordPress or Joomla, you can usually just input a generic global meta description for superfluous pages like that, so without doing some major overhaul, or installing plugins and spending a ton of time, that meta description will continue to be generic. If you were to fix the issue, you aren't making Google happy. You are making the SEO audit tool happy. It's not going to affect how you are ranking—in fact, your blog archive pages should be set to not get indexed anyway, so it shouldn't matter. Also, meta descriptions, while important for a very specific thing, don't really have that much weight on your SEO ranking anyway.

Meanwhile, if you spent a fraction of that time putting together some good case studies or...



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## Marketing Tips

Invest in search engine optimization (SEO) to improve online visibility.  
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