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Talents pour le monde

**ÉPREUVES D'ADMISSION
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SESSION 2020

ANGLAIS

Read the following article then complete the exercise below.

Choose your weapon: SEO or social media?

Digital marketing is critical to the success of most businesses, but what is the best way to spend limited resources? And why is Google+ worth exploring?

Tim Anderson for the Guardian Online



For today's connected consumer or business, a Google search or an Amazon user review is just a tap or a click away, and digital channels like these play an ever-increasing role in purchasing decisions. What is the best way for brands to drive web traffic and, ultimately, sales in this new digital landscape?

The traditional answer was SEO (search engine optimisation), which is the art and science of getting your website ranking high enough to be noticed in web searches. In the past couple of years, though, social media marketing, which means engaging with customers on sites like Facebook and Twitter, has grown in importance. Social media interaction done right has the power not only to drive traffic to a website, but also to change the public perception of a brand and to win fans who will recommend a product to their friends.

SEO is changing though, as the algorithms used by Google to determine which sites are shown in response to a search evolve. What is SEO like today? How does the rapid ascendance of smartphones and tablets affect marketers? Where does Google+, the search giant's answer to Facebook, fit in? How do you go about winning trust on social media? These were among the questions debated at a recent seminar, hosted by the Guardian and held in association with Salesforce. The seminar began with a discussion from an expert panel, followed by questions from the audience.

Those present were keen to emphasise that both SEO and social media have key roles in digital marketing strategy. That said, the benefits of social media are more often missed, according to Paul Smith, EMEA vice-president of salesforce.com's ExactTarget Marketing Cloud. "Most organisations have a pretty good handle on their SEO strategy, but are comparatively under-resourced on their social strategies." Although an average of just 1% of marketing spend goes towards social, analysts say that one third of new content discovery involves some form of social engagement. "There is a discrepancy there that people need to start addressing," he said.

Engagement is vital

For those companies who do embrace social media, it is vital to interact, by replying to users rather than just posting marketing messages. "If you are a brand and you are just listening, you are not dealing with any issues or any problems that may arise. You don't really have a voice – you are not engaging with the customer," said Ian Duncan, from digital marketing agency MediaCo.

"As for Google's SEO technology, it has got smarter," Duncan continued. "Previously, SEO was about building links and about putting pages up with keywords so you can rank. Now it is about content that is engaging, great site design, pages that load fast. The old-fashioned and dishonest methods are starting to die away. It is becoming much more difficult for people to get any sort of results doing that, which is good for the industry."

It remains critical for businesses to think about what potential customers are searching for. "One of our clients is ExxonMobil," said Lister. ExxonMobil's site used to talk a lot about 'commercial vehicle lubricants' whereas people were searching for 'best oil for a BMW'. "It was really as simple as saying, you have to stop talking in this corporate-speak," said Lister. "We did some very simple keyword matching and said that you need to develop content around those search terms. They went from position 100 for BMW car oil to the top five."

How is SEO changing in a mobile world? The starting point is to have a true mobile site, said Neil Walker, marketing consultant at Quaero. "If you don't have a mobile site it converts at half the rate of your standard desktop site. That's a problem for any business."

The more profound change, though, is the impact of mobile devices that know your location. "We are now able to map the client journey from beginning to end," said Hugo Pinto, a communications manager working on big data at Telefónica. "If you are walking in front of a John Lewis and you go in and buy, do you search before you go into John Lewis? Maybe you search while you're inside to compare prices with other retailers? This capacity of measuring reality through digital measures is bringing us more insight and more data." By analysing that data, he added, "you can understand if it is better to spend on search or create an app or go on Facebook because that's where people are".

The importance of apps on mobile devices means that people may use web searches less frequently. "There is actually more time spent inside the Facebook mobile app than on Google or the browser," said Smith. "If you want to reach people in a mobile environment you should be thinking first: 'How do I reach people in Facebook?'"

Getting the right blend of SEO and social can be challenging. One company that's getting it right is luxury fashion brand Burberry, according to Lister. "Type Burberry into Google and you'll see a fantastic example of how SEO and social media work together in harmony," he said. "You will find authorised retailers in their paid search profile, their UK website, and then Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, every one of their social channels."

"How does the company achieve that?" asked an audience member.

"There are three things Google is looking for when it looks at the website and evaluates it. The first one is: can it navigate your site? The second one is content and is it relevant? The third is social. What Burberry recognises is the need for really good content across all the significant digital and social channels – content that people want to share and distribute," said Lister.

Another attendee asked how to get non-marketers within a company, such as those in sales and finance, to embrace social media. "It is a cultural paradigm shift," said Pinto. "People that are in their 20s have used social media all their lives. People that are 40 or 50 and have been doing business in a very non-digital way have a clear separation of personal and professional profiles." For the latter group, the only way forward is to demonstrate the business value of engagement. "They have to get value they can't get elsewhere," he said.

Search can drive traffic to social media, and social media can enhance search; they are not alternatives. The challenge and opportunity for today's marketers is to reach people where they are, which is as likely to mean working on your Facebook presence as topping the Google rankings.

Exercise

You have been approached by some founders of a start-up specialising in designing and manufacturing custom-made trainers/sneakers: their target audience is young professionals/recent graduates (late twenties to early thirties) who care about fashion but are not into luxury brands. The founders of the company need help with their digital marketing strategy but as their company is still a relatively modest start-up they do not have a level of funds available.

Based on some of the ideas in the article above as well as your own knowledge of the digital world and any online examples you can think of, what advice would you give them? Would you point them more in the direction of spending on SEO or focusing on social media content?

You should write no more than 500 words.