



**EMPOWERING
BRANDS DIGITALLY**
SEO | SEM | CONTENT MARKETING

**10 Marketing Strategies You Can Learn
From Fortune 500s**

By Cap.TaiM



Let's be honest, most entrepreneurs and small business owners want to get the highest search ranking possible, with as little monetary investment as possible. Sounds like having your cake and eating it too, but with a little time and know-how, you can you achieve Fortune 500 results, without the Fortune 500 budget.



Outline



The following are 10 hugely impactful, low budget strategies you can employ to sky rocket your business.

1. Teach Something
2. Market to Behaviors
3. Understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach
4. Think mobile
5. Think local in your messaging
6. Think first impressions
7. Use Trend Measurement Tools
8. SEO is more than keywords - Learn the rest!
9. Make Sure Search Engines Can Find You
10. Try, Measure, Analyze and Update



1



Teach Something

Use the Educational approach

When a consumer has questions, they want to be helped, not sold to. And they are acutely aware of the difference.

"But wait, I need to sell. That's how I keep the lights on!"

Of course, but remember that you're far more likely to make a sale if you give the customer what they want.

They want to be educated, not pushed. Advised, not harassed. They will instinctively ignore an onslaught of advertising, but engage with content that brings them value.



Be the face in the crowd that is educating and delivering real value. Provide tips, news and ideas relevant to your brand, product and target market. What are your client's pain points? What are they stressing about? Create content that addresses these issues.

When you are seen as a source of knowledge, you are seen as an expert. When they feel that pain, they will also feel that you understand it and can help with it. And all that great, educational content? Search engines love it too.



2



Market to Behaviours

Stop marketing to consumers. Marketing to behaviours brings much better results.

From a marketing standpoint, behaviours are a collection of data and patterns from a consumer's everyday life. Understanding what people *do* will give you a far better idea of how to influence them than trying to understand who they *are*.

Where we once relied on surveys and feedback to gather that data, today's digital tracking tools allow you to accurately track and interpret actual behaviour and patterns in real life and real time.

Free and low cost tracking tools include Google Analytics, Google Insights, Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, Web Trends and Google Trends. These powerful tools provide of wealth of extremely valuable market data without a high price tag.



The behaviours you want to look for include:

- **Social Inputs**

- Likes
- Dislikes
- Favorites
- Follows
- Unfollows
- Comments
- Tweets and retweets
- Watching/videos
- Pages
- Shares
- Chats
- Messages
- Pictures
- Sites and web properties
- Visits
- Time spent on a site
- Bounces
- Sources of traffic

- **Subscriptions and feeds**

- Email sign-ups
- Site registrations
- Feeds/RSS

- **Conversions and traffic flow**

- **Attributions and attribution modeling**
- **Interests and browser preference and language tracking**

Once you have the data, you can start to predict behaviours, understand them and influence them through your marketing.



3



Understand that
there is no one-size-
fits-all approach

What you want to achieve and when you want to achieve it will be different from other businesses in your market. Your messaging will be different. Your creative will be different. Your

corporate culture, quarterly objectives, and staff resources will all be different.



What works for one business won't necessarily be the right fit for your business. Approach all your marketing, including SEO and search marketing, in a way that makes sense for your business.

For example, building organic SEO establishes long term visibility, typically with higher conversions, but it takes commitment and time before you see results. SEM (search engine marketing), on the other hand, delivers results only for your period of investment, but the results are more immediate.

What do you want to achieve? What are your resources? When do you want or need to see results? Understand this first before making any investment of time or resources.



4



Think mobile

The thing about mobile devices like smartphones and tablets is that they're... well... mobile. That's why most mobile search results are location based.

Search for restaurant recommendations while you're at the office, for example, and you'll get results for restaurants in the immediate area. And when someone is looking for a good lunch spot while on the go, they're not going to go home to check their computer. They're going to whip out their phone.

That's why a responsive, easy to navigate, mobile-friendly site is an absolute must.

As an extra bonus, Google factors mobile-friendliness into their search rankings, so a mobile-friendly site can also improve your overall search rankings.

Check if your site is mobile friendly here: <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly>.

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Think local in your messaging

Your messaging - the words, phrases and sentences you use on your site - has a big impact on your search results. Be sure to work your location into your messaging.

For example, if you are a Montreal-based photographer specializing in headshots, use phrases like "Montreal headshots", "Montreal headshot photographer" and "headshot photography

Montreal". More generic phrases, like "headshot photographer", are too broad, difficult to rank for and don't capitalize on your location.

Think local in your messaging and you'll not only get much more relevant results, you'll also save time and money by not trying to rank for those broad, highly competitive terms.

6



Think first impressions

For most businesses, brick and mortar storefronts are no longer a customer's first impression. People today go online to find virtually everything. Your website is now your first impression. And just as in real life, first impressions are everything on the internet.

Be ready for your customer's arrival. Just as you would keep a physical store looking its best, make sure your website is giving off the right impression and highlighting your most important information. That may be your mission statement, a call to action, instructions for how to contact you, a login form - whatever is most important for your customers to see first and foremost.

7



Use Trend

Measurement Tools

There are four critical reasons to use trend measurement tools:

1. Understanding trends empowers you to leverage opportunities your competition might be missing.
2. Trends help you prepare for downturns. For example, knowing about a potential market slump in advance lets you better prepare for it.
3. Trends give you insight into how often people search for your brand vs competitors, so you can understand the lows and highs of the competition and plan accordingly.
4. Trends provide insight into your industry overall. If you're just starting a business, this helps you enter the market strategically. If you're up and running, it enables you to tailor

content to your market.

“Hmmm... that sounds pricey.”

Not at all. My top three recommendations for trend management tools are free:

- Google Trends
- Google (Yes, plain old Google. Start typing a phrase into Google and the autocomplete suggestions and related search results show you all the similar things people are searching for!)
- Google AdWords



8



SEO is more than keywords - Learn the rest!

There is so much more to boosting your search rankings than keywords. And you can take advantage of many of these elements with little to no financial investment. It takes time and dedication, but most entrepreneurs can easily learn and capitalize on the basics.

The following are some simple, low-investment SEO elements to look into. Some may require a bit of technical know-how, but most can be acted on without a 'techie' background.

Competitive analysis

- Who is your competition?

- What are your competitors ranking for?
- What backlinks do they have?
- What is their paid search strategy?
- How saturated is your market?

Keyword research

- Determine your most relevant keywords
- Ensure these keyword have considerable volume
- Ensure you are not targeting overly competitive keywords with little chance of ranking
- Map keywords to specific pages, posts, sections, and categories of your site
- Implement keywords in an organized manner, across all on-page tags

Reputation management

- Monitor mentions and links in comment sections, blogs, social channels, news sites and forums
- Respond accordingly to ensure your brand is upheld and issues are appropriately addressed

Site crawlability

- Ensure your site is indexed and crawlable
- Ensure private pages, personal information and any other non-public information is effectively blocked from search engines

Link building

- Pursue quality backlinks
- Guest blog or write for related and relevant sites
- Avoid black-hat or questionable techniques
- Create content that attracts quality backlinks

Community management

- Monitor and participate on social media channels
- Manage Facebook and Twitter environments
- Provide relevant content that generates shares and likes
- Moderate and respond to concerns, inquiries and comments
- Ensure social channel details, bios and info are SEO friendly

Content marketing

- Create an editorial calendar
- Recommend on-page SEO content changes when necessary or beneficial
- Recommend content for new pages
- Identify content creation opportunities
- Ensure current, past and future content on web properties is aligned with your brand

identity, business interests and conversions

Image optimization

- Properly name images
- Add relevant tags to all images (Title, ALT and Description)
- Ensure images are properly structured and you have a clean image sitemap submitted to search engines

Schema optimization (Schema markup helps search engines provide useful results by telling them where data is, what it stands for and how it can be used.)

- Use the right rich snippets on the right properties
- Add the necessary microdata tags to the right sections of your site

Video optimization

- Provide recommendations to creative teams on trending or in-demand topics
- Optimize videos on YouTube and Vimeo by providing relevant and SEO friendly meta-tags, titles and descriptions
- Host on-site videos and ensure they are structured, organized and a video sitemap is submitted to search engines

Local SEO optimization

- Create an optimized, well rounded, complete and verified Google My Business page
- Create the right schema data associated with your local content and pages
- Utilize local content in page tags (Titles, Headers and Alt Tags)

eCommerce search optimization

- Ensure pages are perfectly canonicalized
- Ensure there are no broken links
- Structure, structure, structure
- Control site indexing and crawling, especially for dynamic pages and auto-generated content
- Block all admin, customer or other private content
- Capitalize on reviews
- Utilize schema markup for reviews, products and services
- Generate mobile friendly content and design

Do your best to take advantage of as many of these elements as possible, and you'll start seeing significant improvements in your search rankings, without significant cost.



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Make Sure Search Engines Can Find You

Sounds simple enough, right? Unfortunately, there are small mistakes you could unknowingly be making that make it impossible for search engines to find your website. And if Google can't find you, neither can your customers.

Make sure you aren't making the following 3 classic SEO mistakes. Verifying and fixing them may require some technical knowledge, but they are quick fixes, so if you do need to bring in outside help, the cost should be quite low.



Mistake #1 - Forgetting to make a site crawlable or indexable

Any effort you put into SEO will be for nothing if search engines are unable to index or crawl your site.

Here are 3 ways to check that you aren't making this mistake:

1. Make sure robots.txt is not blocking your site

What's robots.txt? This is a file that tells search engines where to enter your site, how to enter, and where not to enter. It's your site's gatekeeper. Search engines know to look for this file.

The easiest way to check your robots.txt file is to type your domain name into the address bar, followed by "/robots.txt".

Example: <http://www.exampleyourdomain.com/robots.txt>

There should be some text content displayed on the page. If you see nothing but a blank page, no page or an unattended to page, contact your SEO specialist to update it, immediately.

The robots.txt file is good for both indexing good content, and de-indexing harmful content. If properly used, you will rank for the right pages. If misused, your site could be completely removed from search results. Not good!

2. Make sure the robots meta tag is set to index

There is a meta tag that could be added to your site head section that tells search engines whether or not to index your site. Setting it to "INDEX" is like putting out a welcome mat. Setting it to "NOINDEX" is like telling the search engines to get off your lawn. Make sure yours is set to "INDEX".

3. Make sure you have submitted your site and sitemap to Google and Bing

Google and Bing have tools called Google Web Master tools and Bing Web Master tools, respectively.

These tools will notify you if there is ever a problem indexing or crawling your site.

Mistake #2 - Duplicate content

When you think about duplicate content, you may think about copy and pasting from another

site to your own website. That's not a great practice, but it's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about duplicating your own content.

Here are 3 common scenarios of duplicate content:

1. Multiple homepages

This when you have 2 or more variations of your home page URL:

www.sample-your-domain.com
www.sample-your-domain.com/index.html
www.sample-your-domain.com/home
www.sample-your-domain.com/default

You would have the exact same content on all these different URLs, but search engines would see each one as a unique page.

This dilutes the strength of your homepage so instead of one homepage getting all the search love, you've got 2, 3 or 4 pages sharing the love. Your homepage is meant to be monogamous.

How to fix it:

Step 1: Choose the one URL you want for your homepage and create 301 redirects from the other URLs that lead to it. The preferable choice is the simplest: www.sample-your-domain.com

Why can't you just delete the other pages? Because the search engines have already indexed them. If you delete them, all that love is gone! Redirecting them sends some of that built up goodness to your main page.

Step 2: Create a canonical tag on your chosen homepage telling search engines to consider that one the homepage.

2. www. Vs. Non-www.

This is one of the most common mistakes. Having www. and non-www. sites is like splitting all your hard work in half.

Example:

sample-your-domain.com
www.sample-your-domain.com

If both versions of your site exist and are indexable, it's the same as having two websites and the search engine attention gets split. You have to tell Google which one to go to.

How to fix it:

In Google Web Master tools, simply provide Google with your preference.

You can choose either the www. or non-www. version of your site. Neither one is better than the other, but it is critical to choose only one

3. Slashes

For example:

www.sample-your-domain.com/services
www.sample-your-domain.com/services/

Once again, search engines will see two separate pages with identical content.

How to fix it:

Add a canonical tag identifying your page preference to ensure search engines only index one of the pages.

Mistake #3 - Ignoring the details

There are a lot of minor details that, if left unchecked, can add up to big problems. Most are easy to fix and cost nothing but a bit of time.

Here are the most commonly ignored details you should check out:

Meta Description:

Back in the day, the meta description had a direct impact on SEO. It no longer does, so many people (even specialists) ignore it. Big mistake!

There is still an indirect, but significant, impact. It is one of the main influences on click-through-rate (CTR)! Optimizing for CTR must be part of your SEO strategy.

Keyword Location:

Important keywords should always be in the first paragraph of your page.

Page Speed - Clean Code - Clean Site - No HTML Errors:

All of these affect the user experience and how browsers and search engines read your site.

Google can provide you with page speed insight to help you understand where to improve your site performance and speed.

Also try HTML W3 validator, a tool to assess your site and identify errors that browsers or search engines might run into. It will show you any errors that might prevent a page from loading fully.

Language Tag:

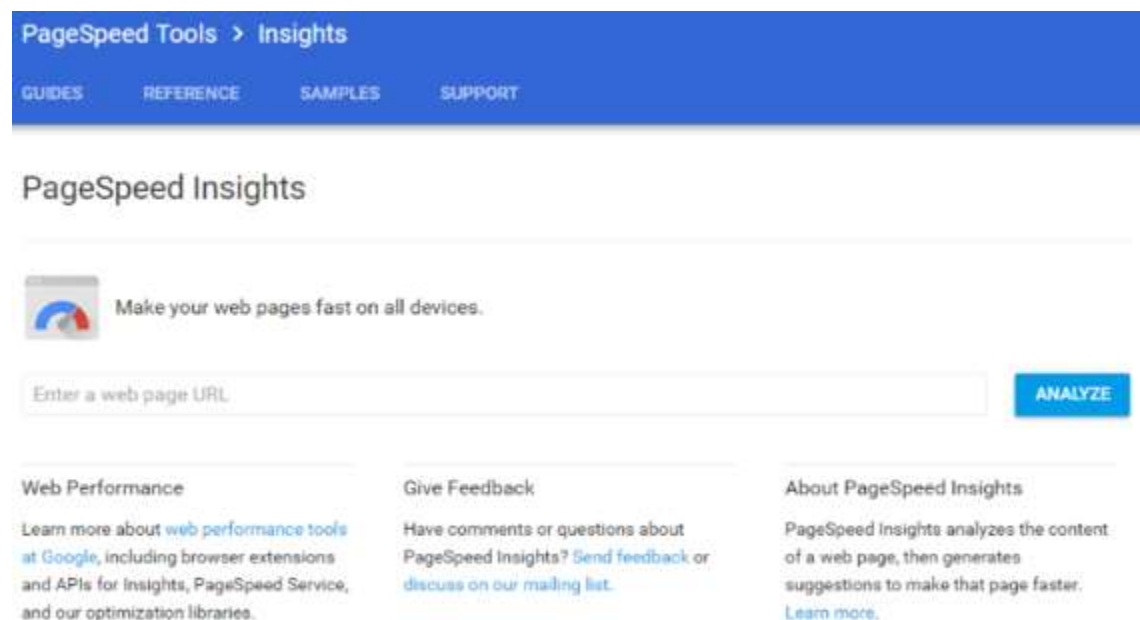
This tag tells search engines the language your page is in and will avoid any duplicate content in cases of similar languages such as UK, Canada and the US, or Mexico, Spain and Chili.

Site Speed:

There are two reasons to pay attention to site speed:

1. Making visitors wait even 4-10 seconds will likely lead to a lost conversion.
2. All search engines consider site-speed as a ranking signal.

The PageSpeed Insights tool will tell you what makes your site faster across all devices. You can find the PageSpeed tool here: <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>



The screenshot shows the PageSpeed Insights tool interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the text "PageSpeed Tools > Insights" and four menu items: "GUIDES", "REFERENCE", "SAMPLES", and "SUPPORT". Below the navigation bar, the main heading "PageSpeed Insights" is displayed. Underneath, there is a sub-heading "Make your web pages fast on all devices." accompanied by a small icon of a globe. A search input field is present with the placeholder text "Enter a web page URL" and a blue "ANALYZE" button to its right. At the bottom, there are three columns of text: "Web Performance" with a link to "web performance tools at Google", "Give Feedback" with links to "Send feedback" and "discuss on our mailing list", and "About PageSpeed Insights" with a link to "Learn more".

68 / 100 Suggestions Summary

! Should Fix:

Optimize images

• [Show how to fix](#)

! Consider Fixing:

Reduce server response time

• [Show how to fix](#)

Eliminate render-blocking JavaScript and CSS in above-the-fold content

• [Show how to fix](#)

Leverage browser caching

• [Show how to fix](#)

Minify JavaScript

• [Show how to fix](#)

Minify CSS

• [Show how to fix](#)

✓ 4 Passed Rules

• [Hide details](#)

Avoid landing page redirects

Your page has no redirects. Learn more about [avoiding landing page redirects](#).

Enable compression

You have compression enabled. Learn more about [enabling compression](#).



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Try,

Measure, Analyze
and Update



Marketing has always been about trying. Trying new approaches, new tricks, new creatives, new algorithms, etc. A great marketer knows that there is no magic trick; no ideal formula. A great marketer makes many mistakes, but always learns from them.

Your off season is a great time to test, measure, update, and prepare the ideal marketing-mix for your high seasons. When your high season comes around, you can focus all your efforts on capitalizing on the busy period without needing to try out new (and potentially ineffective) marketing strategies.

Testing could be as simple as splitting your email newsletter list and two different subject lines, or calls to action, then measuring and comparing the results from each test. Google even has tools that allow you to test multiple web pages, so you can test variations of your homepage or

a new landing page.

Your tests don't have to be complicated, or costly.

The key is to accept that it is not a one-and-done scenario. Change is constant. The only way we can stay ahead of the game is by continuously trying, measuring, analyzing and updating.

Remember, just because a strategy is free or low cost does not mean it's less effective. The strategies above are already being used by many Fortune 500 companies to drive big results. You don't need a big budget to see big results for your business too.

Take the time to learn, understand and IMPLEMENT. Go forth and grow!



Bio



Tarek Riman is Founder and Strategist at CapTaiM. He is experienced in working with both SMBs and Fortune 500s. His mission is to help clients who have a good product, but haven't yet reached their full potential to expand their reach, create a strong brand presence and increase onsite conversions. He enjoys taking clients to the next level in their business.

Tarek's approach is to educate clients so that, no matter their marketing knowledge or background, they understand how to identify and target their ideal clients in the digital world, using the latest technologies available.

He is the creator of Naturetraveller.ca, a site which collects photographs and art from travellers around the world. The proceeds from the photos and art go to the UN Refugee Agency and other causes. Tarek is also involved with NGOs and Charities, in Canada and worldwide.



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