



AN EVOLVING WORLD

[Introduction – Digital Minds v2]

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Introduction

The passage of time and growth of our world - its people, the environment and our technology - is a remarkable occurrence. For parents, watching a baby grow into an adult happens in the blink of an eye. Builders erect skyscrapers and condominiums faster than you think is possible. Companies like Tesla, with their electric cars and lithium-ion batteries, are changing the way our society perceives automobiles and energy. And the rate at which these fundamental shifts become realities increases with each passing year.

Don't worry, the book you are reading is about digital marketing, but I mention the way the world is changing because digital marketing and the Internet are at the core of these monumental innovations.

WSI has been around for more than 20 years, which is even longer than Google, so I like to tell a story about when we first started the company. By the mid-1990s, the Internet had started to gain traction. It was nowhere near what it is today or even ten years ago, but it was growing, and we saw an opportunity. We flew around the world evangelizing the Internet and convincing people to start paying attention to it.

When we had a room full of people, we'd ask them to take out their business cards and give a show of hands if they had a fax number on the card. Back then most hands went up. But when we asked this same question five years ago, there were noticeably fewer hands raised. And today? It's only the older generations who may keep a fax number on their card. In fact, if you were to ask some of your employees in the Millennial generation, they may not even know what a fax machine is or where to locate it in the office. And if you thought that was big shift in technology behavior you should have seen the blank stares and confused faces I'd get back in the mid-1990s, early 2000s when I'd say, "In the future, every one of you will have an email address on your business card."

Here's what happened: the Internet and email developed at warp speed, and with it came social media, blogging, and the entire industry we now call digital marketing. No matter what business or industry you're in, digital marketing, which exists in a perpetually changing state, is vital to your success.

Harnessing the Power of Digital Marketing

One of the biggest misconceptions about digital marketing is that it's only important for Internet or tech companies, or people with coding and design experience. Harnessing the power of digital marketing is a priority for every business. In fact, 75% of the digital economy is delivered by traditional companies in traditional industries.

I'll be honest: digital marketing is complex; it's important to every kind of company out there, but it's complex. In all likelihood, you'll need strategic help to successfully leverage digital marketing (especially if you don't have tech-savvy people or marketers in your organization).

This is where WSI, the largest digital marketing agency network in the world, steps in to be your digital marketing guide. We not only understand the complexities of digital marketing, we also realize the challenges traditional companies face when they try to implement digital marketing themselves. These are the reasons we wrote our first book, *Digital Minds: 12 Things Every Business Needs to Know About Digital Marketing*, an Amazon best seller. In the two years since *Digital Minds'* publication, the digital world has shifted; the old version remains useful, but we believe this updated and revised edition reflects just how quickly the digital world moves.

A critical component of digital marketing most companies overlook is strategy. Since businesses are often in a rush to catch up with the latest digital marketing trend, strategy is pushed aside. If you take one point from this book, let it be the following: *do not* forego the development of a digital strategy. To back this up, here's a look at WSI's Digital Strategy Map. It was designed to show businesses how many different paths one can take on the journey to defining a comprehensive and results-oriented digital marketing strategy.

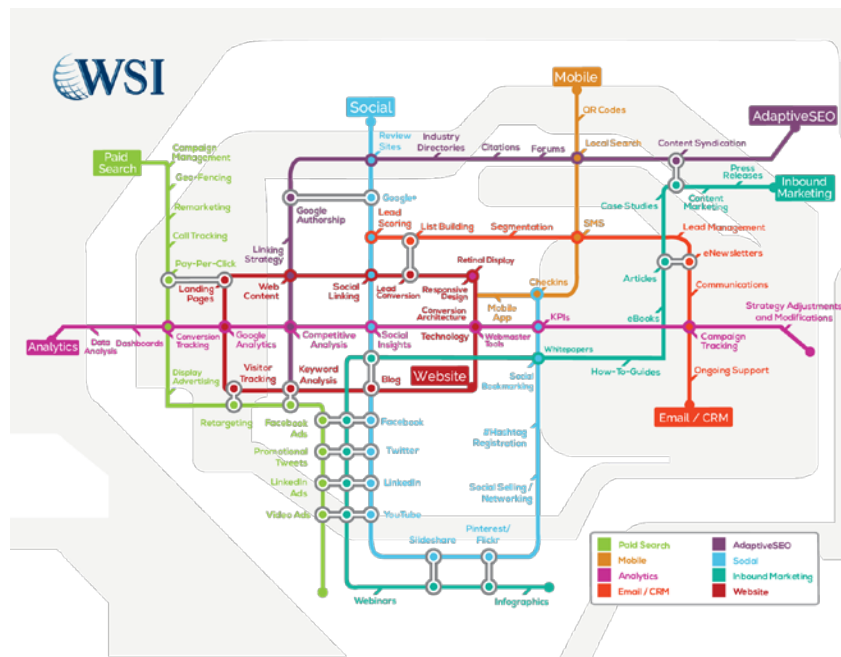


Figure 1: Digital Strategy Map

There's no shortage of complexity, with many elements overlapping or depending on the other in order to succeed. But, as with even the most complicated subway systems, if you follow the map, you'll get wherever you need to go!

At the center of the map is your website, which needs to be user-friendly, graphically appealing and most importantly, optimized for mobile devices. It's shocking how many businesses don't have a professional, mobile-ready website, even though it's easier than ever to implement one. With mobile-friendliness being a big part of Google's algorithm, which now essentially penalizes sites not optimized for mobile, a high-quality website is a requirement, not an option. Your website is the nucleus of your digital marketing activities.

Every other tactic on the Digital Strategy Map, each with a chapter later in this book, revolve around or lead back to your website. As a whole, the Digital Strategy Map represents opportunities for your business. When you consult the map and begin to piece together a strategy - whether it's on your own or with professional help - you're gaining a significant edge on your competitors.

It might sound simple, but thinking and strategizing about digital marketing before taking action is difficult, effective and just plain smart. Just like in life, where it's a good idea to think before you act, a little consideration goes a long way in the digital marketing realm. It'll save you marketing dollars, increase your return on investment and streamline your digital marketing process.

The rest of this book serves as a guide for helping you and your business understand what you want to accomplish with digital marketing. Whether you end up working with WSI or somebody else, remember to start from the top with a broad sense of your goals and strategy, and then work down into the tactics. The old saying rings true, even for digital marketing: measure twice, cut once!