

How to Measure Your Digital Marketing & Set Some Goals

You can't make informed choices about your marketing efforts unless you have data to support your decision-making. Here are tips to collect meaningful data.

The most followed page on Facebook (other than Facebook's official page, which is very Meta) is that of Portuguese soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo.¹ He has more than 162 million followers, and every post he shares garners hundreds of thousands of comments and likes within a few hours.²

The most-liked social media post of all time³ is an Instagram post made by soccer player Lionel Messi, a native of Argentina, celebrating his team's victory in the 2022 FIFA World Cup.⁴ 75 million people have shared in his joy by liking the post.

Over on YouTube, the most popular video of all time is an instructional video on how to become a world-famous soccer player. Just kidding! It's the "Baby Shark Dance" video every toddler you know has watched at least 1,000 times.⁵ And those views are adding up. It's been watched 13 billion times over the past seven years.⁶

These statistics give you a sense of the scope and power of social media, but they can also give you unrealistic expectations about the attention you can attract by beefing up your firm's online marketing. It is unlikely that a few social media posts will make your firm go viral or that your website will immediately become your firm's primary source of new business – even if you have a robust content calendar that helps you consistently crank out quality information of interest to your ideal clients.⁷

So, what does a successful attempt at online marketing look like, and how do you know if the time and money you are putting into your online marketing is

paying off? Read on for some tactics you can use to answer these questions.

How are Potential Clients Finding You?

The most important measures of your firm's marketing tactics are the number and quality of the leads you are getting.

As part of your firm's intake process you should be asking every potential client who contacts you how they heard about you. Figuring out a way to capture, aggregate, and pull insights from this information is the best way to measure marketing. This may be as simple as adding a question to your standard intake forms or having your administrative assistant track in Excel the responses callers give. Do whatever works for your firm.

BY EMILY STEVER KELCHEN

Take a deep dive into whatever marketing data you have now and keep it as a snapshot of this moment in time. Collect the same data (and whatever new data you have) in a few weeks, a few months, and a year from now.



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There is no better way to know if your marketing is working than to ask the people who responded to your marketing. You will no longer have to wonder if anyone is seeing your social media posts or noticed the ad you ran in the local paper or met you at a Chamber of Commerce event, because they will tell you how they found out about you.

Look at the data you have collected every few weeks to see if you notice any patterns. Over time, you can compare your results on a month-to-month basis or track your year-over-year growth. This can help you figure out which marketing efforts are paying off.

After a few months of collecting this information, you can also start to look at what sort of clients specific marketing campaigns are drawing in. Tailoring your marketing so you are attracting your ideal clients is key. If you can identify how your ideal clients are learning about you, you can focus more of your time and energy on those tactics. You can also spend less time and money advertising in ways that attract the attention of potential clients you would rather not represent.

You might be surprised to discover how many clients are referred to you by

others. Whether you decide this means you need to adjust your marketing to appeal directly to clients, or spend more time and money cultivating these referral sources, is up to you.

The key takeaway here is that you can't make informed choices about your marketing efforts unless you have data to support your decision-making. The ways potential clients learn about you should match up with the time and money you put into various client-generation tactics.

Search Engine Success

In a world where the majority of all potential clients will use a search engine like Google or Bing to find a veterinarian, a roofer, or an attorney (or any other service provider), climbing the results page is crucial.⁸ Search engine optimization (SEO) is how you do it.

SEO is exactly what it sounds like: creating an online presence that appeals to search engine algorithms.⁹ There are all kinds of tips and tricks marketing gurus swear they can employ on your behalf to help you find a shortcut to good search results, but the search engines themselves say the best thing to do is to consistently post information

people will find helpful.¹⁰ Doing this on your website by incorporating a blog, and on various social media accounts, is the long-term path to search engine success.

It is a good idea to check every few months where you rank when someone in your area searches various keywords you want to be known for. If you are holding steady or rising in the results, what you are doing is working. If your firm is falling down the results page, it is time to switch tactics.

Google Analytics

Over 50% of all websites have the free tool Google Analytics built into them.¹¹ Your website's creator probably installed Google Analytics when they were setting up your site. If they didn't, you can have them do so now.

In Google Analytics, you can see:

- How many people are visiting your website;
- The most popular content on your website;
- How visitors to your site are finding it; and
- What search terms are leading visitors to your website.

You can use this data to figure out if the practice areas you want to highlight are getting hits and identify which pages you need to update, or blogs you need to write, to attract more of the attention you want.

You can also map the paths potential clients are taking when they visit your site to determine if your online materials are helping reel them in. Each page of your website should lead visitors to take the next step toward becoming a client. That could be reading additional information they can use to evaluate your experience, clicking on your contact information, or checking out your online biography. Google Analytics can show you the flow of visitors, which can help you identify pages people are visiting and then leaving without taking that vital next step toward becoming a client.

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Social Media Analytics

In their quest to dominate the market and capture advertising dollars, social media companies are giving business users robust tools for tracking their followers and measuring the effects of any ad buys.

If you plan to spend a large portion of your advertising budget on social media, you should take advantage of the training modules each of the major platforms offer to businesses so you know you are getting the most bang for your buck.

Below are three things to do to monitor the effects of your marketing if you are doing social on a shoestring budget or outsourcing the work to someone but want to keep oversight of what they are doing for you.

As discussed above, the number one indication of success is an uptick in the number of potential clients who mention during their intake that they checked out your firm online. Followers, likes, and comments are great, but they don't mean anything if those connections aren't becoming clients.

Search engine rankings are the second area to look for your social media impact. Posting on social media can boost your firm's online presence and help search engines find and share your content.

Third, look at the number of followers you have and how engaged those people are with your content. Followers and

engagement are important, but online popularity is just an illusion of success if it doesn't translate into contacts from potential clients.

Benchmarking

Most marketing tactics will not result in meteoric growth. Looking at your intake data each time you attend an event or post something witty on Facebook will disappoint you. Reputation building and client cultivation take time and are best seen by looking back over a longer period. This means engaging in benchmarking.¹²

Take a deep dive into whatever marketing data you have now and keep it as a snapshot of this moment in time. Collect the same data (and whatever new data you have) in a few weeks, a few months, and a year from now. Give yourself a pat on the back if things are going well. Figure out changes you can make if things are not moving in the right direction.

If you want to dig a little deeper, make a note of the publicly available information about your closest competitors. How well do they rank on various search engines? How many followers do they have on different social media accounts? Do their social media posts get good engagement? Make a note of this information each time you look at your own so you can compare yourself to them.

Key Takeaway

To determine if your firm's marketing is working, you should track the following:

- The number of potential clients who contact you
- The percentage of those potential clients who are ideal clients
- How those potential clients heard about you.

This will take some work, but it is essential to understanding the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns. **WL**

Kick Your Marketing Up a Notch

Every client-generation tactic can be tracked, counted, and analyzed. Discovering what marketing data you already have, and making an effort to collect more, will ensure you are spending your firm's resources wisely. **WL**

ENDNOTES

¹List of most-followed Facebook pages, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-followed_Facebook_pages#:~:text=The%20most%2Dfollowed%20person%20is,with%20over%20122%20million%20followers. All web pages in these notes were last visited on Aug. 14, 2023.

²<https://www.facebook.com/Cristiano/>.

³Lionel Messi's Instagram post is the most liked thing on social media – ever.

⁴<https://mashable.com/article/lionel-messi-instagram-record-egg>. (Here is the egg whose record Messi broke: https://www.instagram.com/world_record_egg/.)

⁵<https://www.instagram.com/p/CmUv48DLvxd/>.

⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-viewed_YouTube_videos.

⁷<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqZsoesa55w>.

⁸Emily Kelchen, *What Your Firm Should Have in Common with Sports Illustrated*, 96 Wis. Law. 41 (May 2023), <https://www.wisbar.org/NewsPublications/WisconsinLawyer/Pages/Article.aspx?ArticleID=29790&Issue=5&Volume=96>.

⁹According to an article published in 2015, 96% of people seeking legal advice use a search engine. *Legal Marketing Stats Lawyers Need to Know*, Nat'l L. Rev. (Oct. 1, 2015), <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/legal-marketing-stats-lawyers-need-to-know>.

¹⁰Christopher Cody Shattuck & Spencer X. Smith, *SEO 101: How to Drive Website Traffic*, 93 Wis. Law. 53 (Dec. 2020), <https://www.wisbar.org/NewsPublications/WisconsinLawyer/Pages/Article.aspx?Volume=93&Issue=11&ArticleID=28098>.

¹¹<https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/>; <https://tinyurl.com/5x8kypj9>.

¹²W3Techs, *Usage Statistics of Traffic Analysis Tools for Websites*, https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/traffic_analysis.

¹³David Stauffer, *Best Practices for Benchmarking*, Harvard Bus. Sch. Working Knowledge (Oct. 27, 2003), hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/best-practices-for-benchmarking. **WL**