

Keeping Your Customers Engaged



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Maintaining engagement with your customers online can often seem like a never ending, Herculean task to achieve. It's true that it does require ongoing attention - after all engagement isn't exactly a task that has an end date. However, it doesn't have to be a complicated, monstrous task.

In fact, there are a number of simple ways that you can continuously engage with your customers or audience of prospects without stressing yourself out. In this ebook I will look at the following areas:

- Your website
- SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)
- Blogging
- Social media
- Email marketing
- Google AdWords

I will take you through each area, explaining how they influence engagement and how to optimise your approach to each to ensure the best levels of engagement possible. So without further ado, let's take a look at how to keep your customers engaged with your business online.

WEBSITE

When it comes to engaging your customers on your website, much of it comes down to design. You want your website to immediately capture someone's attention. However, there are good ways and bad ways of going about this.

What do people want to know?

That's easy. They want to know what your business does. They're less interested in bells and whistles as they are in knowing - in as little time as possible - what you have to offer. If they've clicked onto your site they've shown a level of interest. So on your home page include a succinct and easy-to-understand explanation of what your business does. Also include links to pages that they may find useful, such as "About Us" and "Contacts".

What do people expect from a website?

It's simplicity. You'll find it hard to keep people engaged if they don't know how to navigate your website or where they should go if they want to learn more. Ensure you have a simplistic navigation structure to your site, an internal search bar so they can outright type in what they're looking for, and don't clutter your website.

Utilise white space in an effective manner so that your viewers are never overwhelmed by walls of seemingly endless text. Use images where they're appropriate and try to avoid gratuitous animations.

Sure, animations capture people's attention - but only at first. The chief problem with animations is that they increase how long it takes for your website load. And if someone's computer isn't in the best of conditions it can slow down their computer or even freeze it. Also, animations distract people from what matters - your business and the message you're trying to convey.

If you do decide to still use animations, keep them simple so that they don't impact on the viewer's experience. Another thing, allow them to choose to view the animation - don't force it on them.

Same goes for videos. They shouldn't start automatically. Ever been on a site and heard some audio that you can't find the source of the problem to? I know I have. My solution is usually to close any tabs I've opened recently until the audio stops. You don't want your website being just another tab someone closes.

Engagement on your website comes from making it a simple, pleasant experience. Another way to keep customers engaged on your site is to incorporate a blog, which I will discuss later in this ebook.

[Home](#)[Our Story](#)[Services](#)[Our Work](#)[Our Blog](#)[Contact](#)

SEO [search engine optimisation]

Earning engagement on your website really couldn't work without SEO. In case you're not 100% certain on what SEO is, it stands for Search Engine Optimisation, and it is one of the most important things for making your website discoverable.

As the title suggests, SEO is all about optimising your website to earn it more authority and relevance on search engines such as Google. The more authoritative and relevant it is, the higher it will rank. So if your website currently sits on page 2 of Google search results, SEO can help you get to page 1.

You may be thinking that page 2 isn't that bad. It's certainly better than page 3, but it really isn't that ideal. This is because only 6 - 10 per cent of Google users go past the first page of results. If your website were to sit as the number 1 organic search result on page 1 of Google, you would earn 20 times more traffic than the site listed at the top of page 2. In short, SEO matters.

What can I do to help my site's SEO?

The current algorithm incorporated into Google search seeks to reward sites with quality content and appropriate keyword placement and punish those sites that spam keywords but have no quality content. Additionally, websites with a noted online authority - considered highly by other sites and users - will also see an improvement on their site's SEO.

So how can you go about all of this? Well, to help keep it simple, I've put some of the most important actions into three simple points.

1. Incorporate keywords

Google and other search engines have no issue with you incorporating important keywords into your website that you want to be found through. Perhaps you want your pest control site to rank highly for the keyword phrase "residential pest control". It'd be a smart idea to incorporate this copy through your site's pages, especially given you'd have some strong competition on such a term.

Just make sure you don't spam it. A good rule of thumb is that if your copy reads like it was written for a search engine and not for people, then you'll be punished for it by Google. You can also incorporate keywords into anchor text, your tags, headlines, meta keywords and meta description.

Meta Keywords

keywords, relevant, website

Meta Description

Find out how relevant keywords can increase the discoverability of your website.

2. Fresh quality content

This is an area that Google really want to promote to your websites - quality content now plays a large role in your website's SEO. One way of creating fresh quality content is through having a blog. It allows you to incorporate keywords, write about current news, and also create content that is unique to your site. The more dynamic you make your site, the more you stay relevant to search engines.

3. Social sharing and inbound links

If keywords and quality content make you initially discoverable, then social sharing and inbound links are what earn you a great deal of authority. Social sharing is just a form of inbound links. By having social sharing buttons incorporated into pages of your site, you allow people to easily provide immediate links back to your site on social networking platforms.



Any link that an individual or website provides that goes back to your site is known as an inbound link. Put simply, Google recognises when individuals or websites link something back to your site and consider this as proof to your site's legitimacy and authority. How do you go about earning inbound links? Be sure to check out our series of blogs on how to do so listed here:

- [Business directories](#)
- [Lists](#)
- [Contests](#)
- ["How To" guides](#)
- [Social networks](#)
- [Inspire debate](#)
- [Guest blogging](#)

BLOGGING

Incorporating a blog into your website is a great way to inspire engagement with your visitors. Whereas most other areas of your website will remain chiefly static, your blog is ever-changing, offering people something new to read and learn about.

How much engagement you earn, however, is inherently dependent upon the quality of your blogs themselves. Quality is important, but relevant quality is paramount. Whatever you're blogging about - make sure it revolves around your industry. People who come to your site are immediately expressing that they care about the industry you're involved in, so it only makes sense to write blogs that matter to your field and your readership.

Here are five elements to quality blog content:

Relevant content: As I've already said, make sure the content is relevant. You want traffic that cares about your business and industry. Because if they care, it will be easier to engage them. Note that this isn't about getting readers for the sake of readers.

Newsworthy: Newsworthy articles are engaging because you're talking about an event or incident that has occurred in your industry that people are currently talking about. It inspires discussion, opinions and sharing.

Educational: Educational blog content holds a lot of weight. Many of your readers will want to learn new things about your industry. Perhaps it's a new concept (even one of your own bold devising) or step-by-step guide to an often misunderstood topic. By helping your readers out and building their knowledge on something, they'll be more inclined to comment on and share your expertise with others.

Visual: Just like a visually unpleasant website can impact on engagement so can visually unpleasant blogs. Make sure to avoid cluttering your blogs and incorporate images and other helpful visual aids such as graphs, videos, etc. Also, some blogs can be dominantly visual, such as infographics.

Statistics: Blogs that include statistics can inspire a lot of sharing and valuable use from your readers. For us at Margin Media, our monthly Australian Internet and Social Media Statistics blogs earn us a lot of social sharing and page views. People find statistics extremely valuable because it gives them a general impression on the state of certain subjects.

Remember to blog on a consistent basis and remain relevant. Discussing your industry with readers and customers who care about your industry is a definite way to keep engagement levels up.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember when online forums or chat rooms were dominant areas where people had discussions about any number of topics? Nowadays, both forums and chat rooms are still popular but certainly not the most. They've been topped by social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Social networks are where millions of individuals can interact with one another and the brands they love. If you search for world famous brands such as Coca-Cola, you'll basically find them on every social network conceivable. This is because businesses and their respective brands understand that social networks are now one of the most - if not the most - dominant ways for them to engage with their customers and fan base. Suffice to say, if you're not doing the same with your brand, you should be.



FACEBOOK: The last official count of active Facebook users worldwide was measured at 901 million. In Australia alone, there are over 11 million. So essentially, at least half of Australia's population is using Facebook. That's an incredible figure, but more notable is the fact the Australian user count typically keeps increasing each month.

By setting up a Brand Page on Facebook, you have half of the Australian population to speak to. If your business offers international services, then this increases substantially. In terms of engagement on Facebook, there's still the rule of ensuring your content is relevant.

Along with that, though, you can take on a more conversational tone on Facebook. Ask your fans questions, inspire discussion, post photos or videos that discuss your industry, try your hand at humorous posts, run competitions, etc. There are many approaches you can take. Keep in mind that posts with photos and videos typically inspire the most engagement, though.



TWITTER: Twitter does work to different rules of those on Facebook. For one, you become discoverable via using hashtags. Second of all, you have a 180 character limit to every post (tweets, as they're known on Twitter) you make. However, you can still post links, videos and photos. All you need to do is be mindful of your character limit. If you're worried about links you provide impacting on your character limit, remember that you can shorten your URLs with websites such as TinyURL.

Use similar engagement methods as those on Facebook. But also Tweet clever comments about your industry within the 180 character limit. It forces you to be succinct and clever. Another great thing you can do is run competitions among your followers where you get them to make a Tweet using a specific hashtag of your choosing.



LINKEDIN: LinkedIn differs from most other social networks because it is a professional social network built purely for building connections among business peers. However, it is still important to engage with others on this network - after all, business relationships matter just as much as more personalised business to customer relationships.

There is a LinkedIn feature known as groups. Groups can be created by anyone to encourage people from the same industry to discuss what's currently happening in their field. Much like other social networks, too, you can provide links to relevant content. Especially here, keep things industry-focused to build your professional presence.

By doing this, you'll have people from other companies interested in sharing your content and engaging with you. This can only be good for business.



PINTEREST: Considered more of a baby of the social networking world, Pinterest separates itself from the rest by being a dominantly visual experience. In essence, Pinterest is a digital pinboard where you can "pin" images to different allocated pinboards. Brands have started using the platform that is now over 30 million users strong.

Given its visual focus, it's all about posting images that will inspire discussion. So find creative ways to represent your industry or take candid photos of your staff. By being creative and showing the people behind your business on Pinterest you'll inspire comments, "repins" and more engagement.



INSTAGRAM: Facebook is currently in the process of acquisitioning Instagram - a move that cost them \$1 billion to do so. And given the fact that Facebook also released their own iPhone app to rival the social network, it shows just how much of an issue they have with someone else coming in on their turf.

How can you blame them, though? According to reports, since its start-up, this purely smartphone-based social network has exceeded 50 million users and is adding 5 million on average per week. That's a crazy amount of growth. But in a lot of ways it makes sense. The concept is simple but undeniably clever. An app that utilises smartphones' cameras and presents people with a photo sharing social network.

Here at Margin Media we've been in the process of earning new Instagram followers by running competitions that encourage us to use the mobile-based social network to take creative photos based around themes. It's relevant because our business handles social networking as part of our inbound marketing expertise, and it gets us out there encouraging likes, comments and follows. So far our first month has earned us 30 new Instagram followers.

Much like Pinterest, Instagram is visual, but it's much more immediate. Once again take photos that show employees, paint creative images of your business, run competitions - both internally and externally - and hashtag away to increase your reach and discoverability. Instagram is all about sharing fun pictures and engaging with fellow users.

EMAIL MARKETING

What separates email marketing from everything else I've discussed so far is that for anyone to be on your email subscription list means they did something that proved their interest in your business. Perhaps they downloaded a piece of free content, subscribed to your blog or directly put their address down in your email list. Regardless of how they got there, you know this one simple fact - they're interested.

However, just because they were interested in one thing on your site doesn't necessarily mean they'll care for emails sent to them. That's why you should always (and it's a legal requirement) have an unsubscribe button on your emails. That way they can freely unsubscribe and you know not to worry with them anymore.

For those that remain, it's easier to engage them because you already know they have some form of interest in what your business is about. However, you can improve your chances of pinpointing their interest by looking at how they became an email subscriber in the first place.

Did they subscribe to your blog? Then emails that promote your blog is the best approach with them initially.

Did they download your ebook about "Optimising your Facebook Brand Page"? Then perhaps emails with social media relevant content will appeal to them.

By figuring out what interest brought them to you, it allows you to create customised emails for them. Of course, I don't expect you to create specialised emails for every single subscriber you have. Instead, divide your subscribers into groups by seeing who share what common interests. So you may have five defined groups. From there you can create a custom email for each of these five groups and send them out.

For those users who just signed up to your list but you may not what their specific interest is, it's better to send them emails with a range of subjects. For example, you provide blurbs to five different blogs with links to each. If they happen to click on any of them, see what type of blogs they go to. Or maybe they click on that call-to-action and they become a conversion by downloading the free guide that CTA led to. From there you can then gauge their interests, too.

Simply put, your email marketing efforts will not be effective in terms of engagement or sales if you keep sending out the same broad emails to all your subscribers. If you speak to their specific areas of interest they will notice.

It's just like a conversation with a friend. If you talk about stuff they don't care about they won't listen as closely or converse as much. But if you start talking about something they like, they'll be attentive and will gladly take part in discussion. In other words, they'll engage with you more.

GOOGLE ADWORDS

AdWords is a service provided by Google that allows you to run PPC (pay per click) advertisements on the search engine and substantially increases the exposure of your website. The ultimate goal of AdWords - much like any form of advertising - is to increase your traffic, leads and customers.

While you can't engage with your customers as much through an advertisement as you can through other marketing methods, the increase in traffic and leads an ad brings you allows you to apply the other methods of engagement I have mentioned throughout this ebook so far to a greater audience.

However, there are still ways to make your ads engage your target audience more effectively. Consider the following:

KEYWORDS: AdWords allows you to choose a series of keyword phrases that you want your advertisement to be discoverable through. Sit down and think about how you believe people would search for a business in your industry. For example, one of Margin Media's services among many is web design and we're based in Brisbane. So a keyword phrase we may use is "brisbane web design".

Google itself can offer you a quick preliminary proposal of an AdWords service for your business by you simply typing in your URL and the location/geographical region you want to advertise to. From here they will show popular keywords and the costs per click for given search terms.

Keywords	Monthly searches 	Each click costs you (CPC) 
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brisbane web designer	12,100	\$4.38 - \$5.30
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> web design in brisbane	18,100	\$1.66 - \$1.91
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brisbane web	22,200	\$1.44 - \$1.77

So if someone finds your ad through a search term that has high competition, then it will cost you more if they click on your ad than if they found your ad through a search with less competition. Because the less competition a search term has, the cheaper its PPC cost is. Through utilising the right keywords you bring in traffic that is more ideal and more likely to engage with your website and business.

GEOGRAPHY: Don't forget to refine the geographic boundaries of who you're trying to reach. You're going to earn more engagement from locals if the nature of business runs on a local basis. If your business offers a nationwide service, then you can be more broad. But it would be pointless to advertise your Brisbane-based local fish shop to someone in Tasmania.

Web Pages: <http://www.marginmedia.com.au>
Country to advertise in: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
Australia

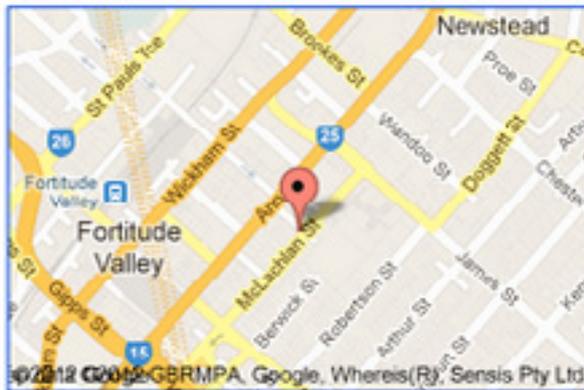
You can further refine your geographic information on AdWords if your business is already signed up to Google+ Local. Information such as your location (as shown on a map), phone number and hours of operation can more easily be displayed. By defining your business as either local or national, you further refine your traffic to more quality candidates.

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www.marginmedia.com.au/

Margin Media is a leading Digital Agency specialising in Inbound Marketing and Online Marketing Strategy.

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AD AND LANDING PAGE DESIGN: The third aspect is in regards to your ad and landing page. Your ad is your call-to-action, it's what gives people incentive to click through and see what's on the other side. Along with attracting people with keywords and a refinement of your location, you also need to compel them to take you up on your offer.

So with your ad, make sure you clearly describe the value of what you're offering - whether it's a paid service or a free download. The more value you tie to it, the more they'll consider it. Also, use action-oriented words to get your customers or prospects amped up about the offer (e.g. "**Generate more leads**" "**Drive traffic to your site**").

In regards to your landing page, it should act as the complementary piece of your advertisement. Its copy should reflect that of your ad as to show the visitor that you didn't mislead them. Keep external links in your landing page to a minimum and make sure your form or button they need to click on to complete the action stands out from the rest.

There's more you can do to make your AdWords and landing page work in harmony, and you can find these things out by checking out our blog [Google AdWords: 7 Steps to an Effective Landing Page](#).

Make your ads compelling. Give your prospect/customer a reason to click through and reach your landing page. By doing it correctly, you'll be speaking very specifically to their interests. And if you've targeted someone with the right interests, then you've also targeted someone who is far more likely to engage with your brand both now and in the future.

In the end, engaging with your customers, prospects, leads - whoever they may be - is all about giving them a reason to care. Be it through content they find valuable, blogs that discuss current events or teach them something new, or by building a rapport with them through social media. It's about discoverability and maintaining contact with them so they know that you care.

Most importantly, engagement is about understanding how the online world of marketing focuses on speaking with your customers rather than speaking at them. Online everyone has a voice and you need to remember that. So cater to their voice. Never be afraid to interact with them. All it does is give your business a more personable feel and earn you more traffic, leads and sales.

This is ultimately what you want.

From all of us here at Margin Media, we hope you have found this ebook informative and helpful in your efforts to improve your inbound marketing strategies. If you would like to learn more about the world of inbound marketing and how we can help you, [contact us online](#) or call us on 1300 798 848.