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We often discuss your company's image in terms of presenting itself and yourself in the best possible light, talking up your strengths and the benefits of your services. However, what if someone else is actively doing the opposite? While the term "fake news" has been thrown around a lot in recent years, the damage that can be done to even a small business is not to be underestimated.

how you can fight back against it.

Let's go over the concept of disinformation and how it can be used to the detriment of your business—followed, crucially, by

Defining Disinformation

Disinformation, fake news... whatever you want to call it, it has certainly entered the public discourse in recent years. I'm confident that you're familiar with it already, but disinformation can be summed up as *the intentional spread of misinformation to mislead or manipulate*.

That's right, *disinformation* and *misinformation* are two related, but distinct things.

Misinformation is the thing itself—an untrue statement—while disinformation is the intentional

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The Basics of Boosting on Social Media



One of the things that is great about social media is that it is free for your business to use. However, as a company in the B2B space, you're greatly limiting the success of your company if you don't consider utilizing some of the paid aspects of these platforms. One way to get started is to consider promoting, or 'boosting', the posts you are already doing.

Why You Should Consider Boosting

Paid social advertising allows you to actually reach your desired audience. You may have noticed already on your social media

channels that a lot of your posts haven't been viewed that many times, even though you're doing everything right in terms of the content you're sharing.

So, what gives?

With social media, your audience is typically limited by the number of people who follow your page. And even if your page has a lot of followers, this doesn't guarantee your followers will see your posts: your post may not show up in their feed because of the platform's algorithms, followers may miss out on posts relevant to them because they're too busy to check social media, and so on.

To sum it up, unless an individual is actively going out of the way to visit your business' page (typically only business decision makers considering doing business with you), the majority of your posts won't receive much traction.

Note that boosting your post is different from running a paid campaign on social media. Also, with any boost that you do, make sure there is an image or video included with your text. Posts

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7 Ways to Run a Non-Sales-Related Promotion



Like most people, when you hear the word "promotion," you probably associate it with the words like "sale" and "discount." And, while those words are often synonymous with promotion, they shouldn't always be. Here are some examples of some non-sales-related promotions you can run to promote your company and its products and services.

Why You Should Consider Non-Sales-Related Promotions

Like we've discussed before...



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How to Optimize Your Google Business Profile: Part 1



When it comes to your business' visibility online, your search engine optimization (SEO) strategy plays an

absolutely critical role. While SEO is influenced by a lot of different factors, we wanted to focus on one way you can boost it: your Google Business profile.

Let's go into how you can really shape your Google Business Profile listing to make the most use of its many available features.

What is a Google Business Profile?

A Google Business Profile (GBP) is a business listing that you provide to Google to share in the search results and Google Maps. Previously known as Google My Business, and Google Places before that, your GBP enables you to share all of your business' most pertinent information and react to customer and client feedback—all in a

convenient place for your audience to find you.

However, that's just the start of what makes a Google Business Profile—and a good one, at that—so important for your business to have.

A QUICK DISCLAIMER: A Google Business Profile is only available to a business that actually has contact with its clientele, whether that's in its own location or as a consultant that may visit a client's place of business.

So, while your MSP consulting business shouldn't have a problem using this tool, it won't work if you want to publicize a property you have available for rent, or some other similar purpose.

Okay, So... What is a Good Google Business Profile?

Good question! Tricky question, but still good! In order to answer this, it is important that we recognize that your Google Business Profile is being viewed by two distinct, yet equally crucial audiences.

First, you have the obvious audience—the people searching for the goods and/or services that you deliver as a managed service provider. Of course, these people would (ideally) be viewing your GBP... you want them to start recognizing and investigating your brand so that you can draw them in with the rest of your marketing. You want them to see your business as the best (and by their perspective, their *first*) option.

Second, you have the audience that ultimately controls whether or not your first, more obvious audience will see you in their searches at all: Google. Your GBP is also your opportunity to impress Google and convince the search engine to feature your business first.

So, a good Google Business Profile is one that provides searchers with the information they need, while also complying with the practices that will impress the almighty Google Search...



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The Basics of Boosting on Social Media

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with images or videos perform drastically better across all social media platforms. And, since you're paying to have your post reach a larger audience, you want your money spent to be worth your while.

Boosting on Facebook

If you're going to consider paying to promote on any social media platform, Facebook is where you should start. Facebook is the ideal platform to be boosting your posts because it's the platform that most of your target audience is on and checking regularly: 68% of U.S. adults have Facebook accounts, and 74% of those adults are checking their Facebook at least once a day. And, because approximately one-third of Facebook users engage with brands on a regular basis, marketing your company through Facebook is a good investment.

You can boost in three different ways on Facebook: to people who like your page, to people who like your page and their friends, and to a selected audience based on criteria like age, job roles, interests, and location.

After you've begun promoting your posts on Facebook, you can use Facebook's remarketing tools to reach more people. There are two options:

- **Custom Audience:** Target people based on people who have interacted with your brand before. Options include people who have visited your website, people who have purchased on your website, and people on your email list.
- **Lookalike Audience:** Target people that are similar to your current audience, introducing you to new users who are likely to engage with you.

When promoting your posts, you set a budget. Once that budget runs out, your post will no longer be promoted.

Promoting on Other Social Media Platforms

Facebook isn't the only social media platform in which you can pay to promote your company on. You can also consider the following:

Twitter

Twitter can be good for businesses to use because the number one reason that people use Twitter is to discover something new and interesting. Twitter users do this often by searching for their topic of interest. Because they are searching for information, Twitter is able...



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3 Ways Businesses Can Tackle Disinformation Campaigns

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spread of it. The key here is the intent... misinformation isn't inherently malicious. Someone could simply be misinformed. Disinformation, on the other hand, is intentional and resultantly quite dangerous.

Despite this, there has been little discussion about how disinformation can play a role as a malicious threat to businesses specifically.

In our data and information-centric society, disinformation can be a very powerful weapon. Content is available in all shapes and formats, for and against every conceivable stance and belief. Heck, what you're reading right now is an

example of content... but, unlike what we share with you through this blog, not all content is good and trustworthy.

How Much Can Disinformation Really Impact Me and My Business?

You might be thinking, "Sure, disinformation is probably a big problem for the big brands, the corporations and such, but do I really have to worry about it?"

While it may not be on the same scale as it is for these large corporations, disinformation can easily impact an SMB. How so? There are a few ways, unfortunately. For instance, consider the possibility of a smear campaign on social media. Particularly in the case of SMBs, a

bad enough rumor could pull the curtain on the business.

Let's examine a hypothetical scenario to review how such a campaign might impact a small business—in this case, we'll assume that this business is a small managed service provider.

Disinformation in Action

ACME MSP operates in Smalltown, providing its services to the other organizations that function there. Their success record is pretty impressive, save for one unhappy former client that...



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What Type of Newsletter Should Your Company Distribute?



As you probably know, newsletters are a staple part of content marketing for B2B companies -

83% of B2B marketers use newsletters for content marketing. That statistic is made up of people who do things the old-fashioned way - printed newsletters - and the newer, tech-savvy way: eNewsletter. You should be using at least one of these to market your company: 90% of people prefer to receive company updates from newsletters, compared to 10% for social media.

Regardless of the type of newsletter you choose to send out, newsletters can:

- Help you generate awareness about your company and your product and service offerings
- Add an additional touchpoint
- Establish yourself as the local industry expert
- Increase your brand recall and association
- Advertise your promotional campaigns

The decision of which to choose is pretty neck-and-neck: when given a choice, 51% prefer reading company information on print, and 44% prefer email. This may shift as the younger generation enters the workforce: younger people respond better to emails and information on a company's website better than they do direct mail appeals.

Both Newsletters and eNewsletters have their advantages and disadvantages. So, which should you be using to market your company?

Why Printed Newsletters?

Advantages:

- **Higher perceived value:** Not every company invests in printed newsletters anymore. When your recipients receive your printed newsletter, they'll recognize the effort you put into producing them.
- **Reliable delivery:** Unlike eNewsletters, a printed newsletter won't be caught in a spam filter. You can be pretty certain that your printed newsletters will reach your mailing list's mailboxes, as long as you maintain your lists.
- **Greater stickiness:** According to research, pass-along readership can be as high as four-to-one for printed

newsletters. And, even if they don't share it, recipients may hang on to your newsletter for future reference, as many people do with direct mail pieces they receive.

- **Increased coverage:** Want to touch a couple of potential leads? Mail them your newsletter. You can't add a random potential lead to your newsletter list in case they opted into your eNewsletter in some way.

Disadvantages:

- **Time:** It takes quite a bit of time to design the perfect print newsletter. Even worse, when you have your design perfected, you may find that it looks better on your computer screen than it does once it's printed out.
- **Access:** Unlike digital marketing, recipients of direct mail can't just click on a link to learn more about the topic you're discussing. You may include QR codes and shortened URLs so they can learn more about whatever you're discussing. But, some people will be too lazy to use them.

Printing cost: To ensure that your...



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Are There Bots In Your Google Analytics?



Are you seeing strange spikes in traffic? This could be an indication of bot traffic. Bot traffic can skew your data, making it more difficult to determine which content or

services your real human customers are interested in. Here are some ways to recognize bot traffic and what to do about it.

The Internet Is Mostly Bots

There is a widespread belief that nearly half of all internet traffic comes from bots, good and bad. An example of a good bot would be Google crawling your site for changes, while a bad bot or group of bots might try to overwhelm a service's host (this is called a botnet). So, while it is understandable to have a feeling of concern at the thoughts of bots crawling around your data, the reality is there's more to bots than you know.

Should You Worry About Bots?

Many businesses think that traffic bots are generated by some hacker trying to gain control of your data. In the case of traffic bots, these bad actors aren't interested in gaining control of your website; most of the time, they are simply a nuisance and should be considered and treated as another form of spam.

Traffic bots operate by automating ping hits to your Google Analytics account, which populates your reports with a URL to their website. Their goal is to fool you into visiting their websites, which ironically is designed to increase their traffic. As noted, these bots are not dangerous most of the time, but they can and do affect your traffic. Traffic bots can inflate your data, causing you to focus on the wrong

area to invest in based on how much traffic it receives.

Google Analytics provides a wealth of insights to your business, including seeing which pages are receiving the most traffic. When it comes to determining which services you should focus your marketing efforts on, monitoring which pages receive the most visitors is a good place to start. For example, if a service page is getting a large amount of traffic, investing resources to promote the service makes sense. However, if the data is artificially inflated due to a traffic bot, your conclusions could be wrong, and you focus on the wrong service.

Clues There Could Be A Bot In Your Data

The most common method of identifying that a bot is in your analytics is by looking for unexplained spikes in traffic. For example, if you've historically had 1000 visitors on average to your site and suddenly you have significantly more, chances are there's a bot in your analytics. This is especially true if you haven't been doing any marketing to justify the spike.



Other signs to look for include:

A high bounce rate with less than zero time on site.

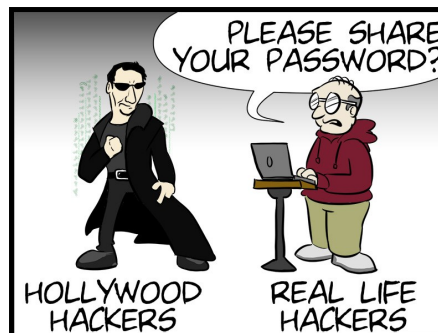


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