A BOTTOMS UP APPROACH TO DIGITAL MARKETING

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Our Recipe

Digital marketing is an ever-changing environment that requires continuing research and education. It also demands passion. Well, passion and great beer. Insert Site-Seeker. We have high standards and are never satisfied with "good enough." We create fully integrated marketing strategies that are uniquely developed for each client through extensive industry and competitive research. We drive leads, build brands, achieve success, and ultimately help you reach your business goals.

Our staff has amassed years (and years and years) of digital marketing experience. What sets us apart is our experience in the brewery industry. Our team has learned firsthand how to help a brewery improve its digital presence through marketing.

It is our goal to help more breweries in our state reach and surpass their marketing and sales goals! This resource was created to assist breweries in several areas of marketing. Looking for assistance and growth in these areas and more? Contact us today and we can have a conversation on how to start the path to marketing success.

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Beer is popular. This we know. Because beer is popular, breweries are popular. Each brewery has its own unique story and beer. Those stories (and beer) bring customers through their doors and have driven a (relatively) new subset of tourism industries - both local and regional.

The brewing industry has grown so much recently that it is shattering records, some of which are over **130 years old!*** This national popularity can also be seen and replicated right here in New York State. From a growth standpoint, the number of breweries in our state has grown in the past 7 years by **over 330%**!

While location, ambiance, story, and, of course, taste are most important for your brewery's success, quality marketing is right up there as well. As we pointed out, there are more and more people out there looking for breweries like you.

The question is: are they finding you?

Just like how brewing techniques, beer styles, technology, and ingredients have evolved and changed over the last 150 years, so has marketing your beer. Just think - advertising your beer as a great remedy for sleeplessness in infant children was once an acceptable practice. Not anymore, and the same can be said for newspaper and radio ads.

In conjunction with the New York State Brewers Association, we surveyed breweries throughout the state to get a better idea of their digital marketing strategies - or lack thereof. Breweries of all sizes, styles, and ages filled out our survey and we wanted to share that information with you. This data will help you understand what areas of digital marketing you should focus on to take your brewery to the next level!

*In 1880, there were more than 2,200 breweries in the United States. From the end of Prohibition (1933) through 1994, that number never surpassed 756. It took 132 years for the number of breweries in the United States to pass that 2,200 figure. By 2015, the United States had the largest number of breweries operating in its history. Today, there are over 6,700 breweries operating in the United States.

Section I - Website

The purpose of digital marketing is to spread awareness about your brewery and beers to those who know and love you as well as those who haven't met you yet. Being able to tell stories, talk brews, promote events, give updates, and get feedback all in real-time is a priceless tool. Your website is the engine that powers the success of your digital efforts.

When looking at your website, you have to keep in mind the experience you're creating for your customer. This is why it is important to look at User Experience, or UX. Since the beginning of 2017, more than half of all online traffic has been from a mobile device. Knowing this, it is crucial to make sure your website is mobile responsive, or that it reformats the layout for a smoother look on a phone or tablet.

However, of the breweries surveyed, only 83.3% had (or knew that they had) a mobile responsive site. With a recent study showing that 94% of people left or mistrusted a website based solely on its design, you want to make sure people can seamlessly access your site from their phone.

How can you make your site mobile responsive if it isn't? Unfortunately, there isn't a button you can press to make a non-responsive site display better on mobile. But, there are ways to create the website that perfectly represents your brand while also being a good experience for your user.

Ask us about how you can get a properly laid out site.

How do you make your site faster?

One area can be the sizes of files on your site. If you are adding print-quality packaging images or event posters that display in a 2" x 3" space on the site, you might have a 6MB file when a 300KB file would do. Multiply that by every image on your site, and it starts to add up.

When thinking about a user's experience, time is also a factor. People like things fast, and they don't want to wait. This is where site load speed comes into effect, and the faster that load time is, the better. Studies have shown that **53% of visitors will abandon a website if it takes more than 3 seconds to load** and, for every second thereafter, another 10% will abandon the site. Asking to rate their sites' speed on a scale of 1 (slow) to 10 (fast), only 14.6% of the breweries surveyed felt they had a fast site [a 9 or 10]. How many visitors could your site speed be costing you?

It is crucial, when looking at user experience, to think of all users visiting your site. We've recently seen, especially in the New York State beverage industry, a number of **lawsuits arise specific to ADA** (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. You may wonder how ADA laws extend to your website but it's simple: your site is an extension of your physical location, bound by all the same requirements it has. This is a very important topic and you should ensure that your site is compliant. However, 66.7% of the breweries we surveyed stated that their site isn't compliant or they simply don't know.

While there isn't a way to create an air-tight, 100% compliant site, a combination of best practices, ongoing efforts, and reachability can be your answer. For example, you should have a dedicated page as a part of your footer (where you might have your FAQs, or Awards, or Privacy Policy), called *Accessibility*. This page should explain that if someone is having trouble finding a page, brew, topic, or piece of information on your site, to contact you. This could be via a phone number or email, as long as someone is able to return the call to that individual in a reasonable, clearly defined amount of time.
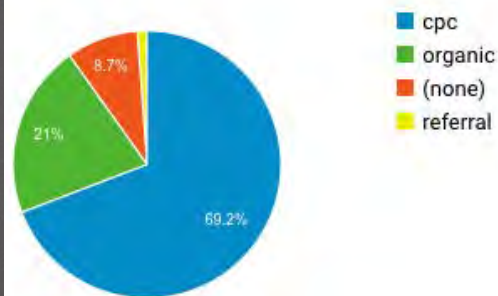
Since we're still thinking of your users, you also need a secure site (of course). How do you get a secure site? **With a valid SSL Certificate** (Secure Sockets Layer). This is especially crucial if you are selling products (merchandise, brews, event tickets, etc.) on your site, which 24.5% of those surveyed stated they are.

However, of all breweries surveyed, only 27.1% knew if their site was secure, with an SSL Certificate installed. If you don't have an SSL Certificate on your site (or have one that is expired) and one of your visitors receives a security warning, there is a 43% chance they will leave your site at that moment, which can cost you traffic and, ultimately, business.

Now, let's talk about that traffic, the actual interactions people are having with your site. Through tools such as Google Analytics, you have the ability to see how many people are on your site, what pages they're on, how they got to your site, and if they're taking the actions you want (placing an order, signing up for an event, finding your hours, etc). You can also use this information to see what efforts are working, where you might want to change your approach, or where you might want to "double down." For example, if you're running a [paid] Facebook ad and trying to drive people to your website to learn more about a new beer, event, location, or anything else, you can check just how much traffic came from Facebook and what those people did once on your site. When asked if they're tracking website information, **60.4% of the breweries surveyed stated that no, they do not have access to or track this information.**

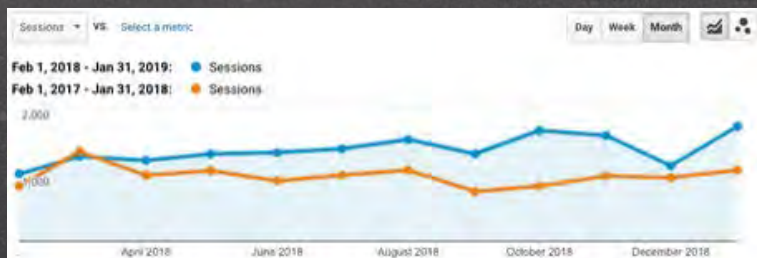**Here are some examples of what Google Analytics can track on your site:**

You can view exactly which type of traffic is bringing people to your site. This can include paid, organic, referral, or direct to name a few.

You can see what percentage of your traffic is coming from mobile vs desktop and how that has changed over time.

You can also view the trends of the traffic to your site. How have things faired over the past week, month, year, or years? Look at trends with your goals and see which digital efforts are really working.

Section II - Social Media

If your website is the engine that powers your digital success, then social media is the battery that keeps your customers energized. Over 210 million Americans used social media in 2018, and that number is expected to grow to over 220 million by 2022, creating a perfect tool to deliver your message to your customers quickly!

Currently, New York breweries have done a great job of getting into social, with 100% of those surveyed having an active Facebook listing (the only unanimous answer received). **The question becomes, however, how well is it being used?**

For a business, the biggest benefit to social media is to inform and interact with your customers. This can be promoting a new brand or event or just keeping them in the know as to what you have going on. There are ways to ensure your social presence does stand out, however, and here are some things to keep in mind:

1. **Use visuals.** Posts that include some sort of visual (picture, video, infographic, ect) are 40 times more likely to get shared on social media.
2. **Include links.** Have a plan for where you want to drive someone from your social post. (e.g. Beer page or event posting on your website) Remember, link clicks account for 92% of interaction with Twitter posts.
3. **Be active.** 78% of people who contact a brand (specifically with a complaint or concern) expect to be answered within 1 hour.
4. **Be connected.** On Instagram, higher engagement was seen when another user (56% increase) or location (79% increase) were tagged.

With high usage of Facebook (100%), Instagram (93.9%), and Twitter (63.3%) of those breweries surveyed, we know social is a driving force of brewery messaging throughout the state. With 46.9% posting on a daily basis and 48.9% posting weekly; the correct amount of activity is there. But is it the right content?

Top social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) allow you the ability to spread your message - beyond just those who are following you - with targeted ads. Targeting gives you the ability to select specific criteria users must match in order to see your ad. This is a great way to locate the customers in your [target] area who might not already be following you to:

1. Introduce them to your brewery and your selection of beers
2. Showcase an event you're hosting (running) that they'd be interested in
3. Get them to like your page to learn about future releases or events

Currently, 73.5% of those breweries surveyed are running paid ads on one social media platform or another. Similarly, 67.3% are using social media to run promotions, sales, or contests. When running these promos, putting a paid ad or boost behind the post can drastically increase how many people are seeing it and interacting with it, directly increasing its success.

Like it or not, other New York State breweries are your competitors. Your competition is actively using social media and most of your competition is advertising on social media. Are you?

The most important part of making sure you are successful on social media is having a developed social media marketing plan. It's all about being proactive rather than reactive and having a purpose for every post. Once you've posted your content, follow-up and engagement is just as important, as that is how most people will contact you. Talk to us if you need help with engagement or developing a strategic plan.

Currently, only 61.2% of brewery's surveyed are active in following up to questions, comments, or reviews on Facebook.
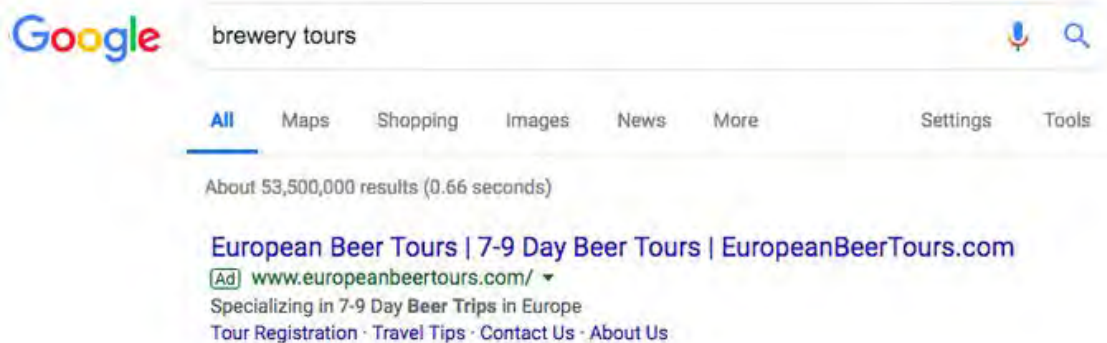
Section III - Search

So you've perfected your brew and you've cultivated the experience that keeps your customers coming back. Digitally, you have your website and a social media presence to support it. That's everything, right?

Well, no.

While it's important to make sure all those elements are in place, we're forgetting one little, multi-billion-dollar-company: Google (and their friends Yahoo & Bing). **89.9% of all online searches happen on one of those three search engines.** How are you ranking on those platforms?

When someone searches on Google, there are three primary types of listings that could be shown: a paid ad, an organic listing, or a local listing. Let's look at what each of these are:
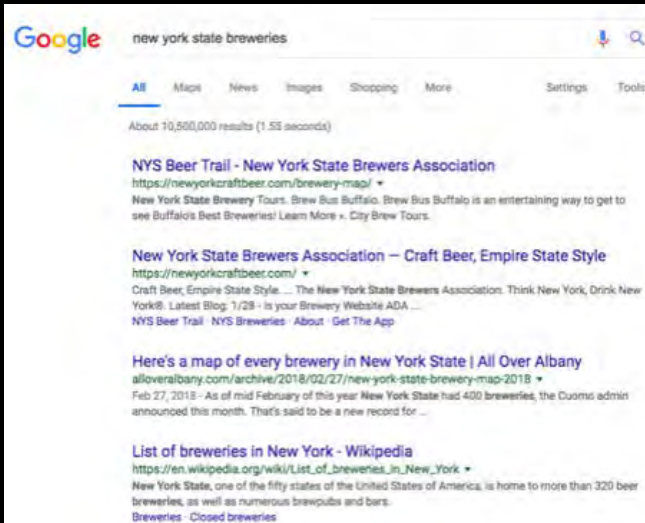
1

Paid Ad. A paid as is when you are paying for the clicks that are driving people to your site. You pick the keywords, you pick where you want your ads displayed, and you pick the page your customer will be sent to. Based on the keyword and competition, you bid for impressions and pay each time someone clicks on your ad (and goes to your site). 87.8% of those surveyed stated that they don't currently advertise on Google, Bing, or others.

Google   brewery tours

All   Maps   Shopping   Images   News   More   Settings   Tools

About 53,500,000 results (0.66 seconds)

European Beer Tours | 7-9 Day Beer Tours | EuropeanBeerTours.com
Ad www.europeanbeertours.com/ ▾
Specializing in 7-9 Day Beer Trips in Europe
Tour Registration · Travel Tips · Contact Us · About Us

Here is an example of a Paid Ad on Google when searching for 'brewery tours'. Despite being in Upstate New York, the only (and therefore, first) listing to display is for a travel agency pushing extended European Tours.

Organic Listing. After the paid ads in your search results, you see the organic listings. These are based upon how much Google values the content on your website compared to the search query. This comes from SEO (Search Engine Optimization) tags as well as the content visibly on your site. The higher quality the content, in both information and relevance, the higher your page will be listed.

2

Depending on what is being searched, Google will look through your content. This includes the content on your site as well as the meta data you set up throughout your site.
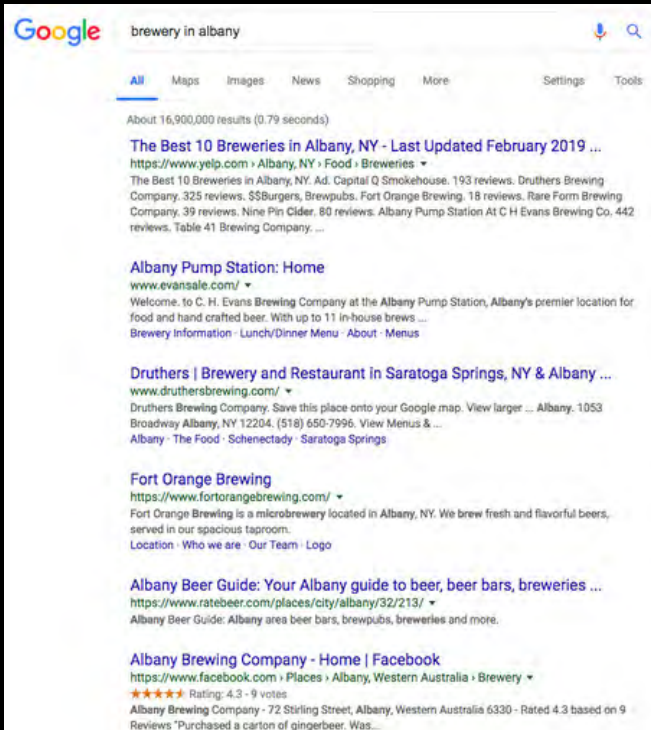
Here you can see a search for 'New York State Breweries' shows us results of the New York State Brewers Association and other results that display a list or map of 'New York State Breweries', just like we searched for.

When a Google search is targeted, perhaps when someone is searching for only one place while their traveling, Google results will point to matching locations.
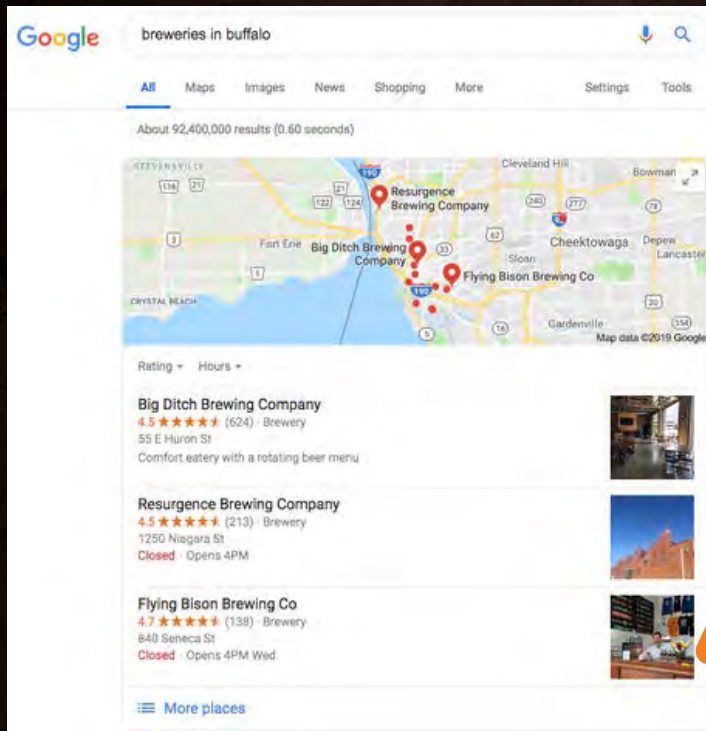
When searching for 'brewery in Albany', we're first directed to a Yelp page with breweries listed. However, 4 of 6 top results are the website or Facebook for specific breweries in Albany.

There are 10 results on page 1 of Google, how many people do you think are going to page 2 to find you?
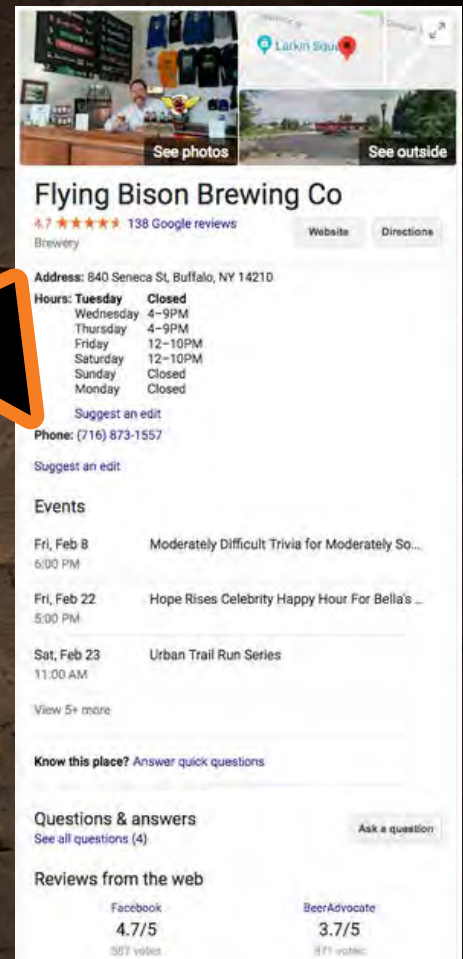
3

Local Listing. Ever look for a nearby place to stop for dinner or drinks, and you use Google to find out locations, their hours, website, phone number, and all relevant information? Well, you're checking out a company's Google My Business account, where they control that information. Extending your hours next Friday? Update your listing so people looking for you on Google know! You can also add pictures and get reviews, so people can really see what there is to expect when they visit you, and let others know about the great experience they had. Given that studies have shown that 86% of consumers are looking up the location of a business on Google Maps, it's important to make sure you control your presence.

For location searches, such as 'breweries in Buffalo', Google will display a map with location results based on relevance, reviews, and content. If you select a listing, it will take you to a breweries business listing.

Within a Google My Business listing, people can view your pictures, get directions, see your hours, upcoming events, and read reviews, as well as navigate to your website or social pages.

Of those NY breweries surveyed, 79.6% had control of their Google My Business listing but only 44.7% noted that they're updating it as needed.

Looking to build out your paid and organic presence, or get control of your Google My Business listing? Send us an email and we'll help you get started.

Section IV - Events

People love to party. People love good beer. People love spending time with friends (and strangers). So, it's safe to say that people love partying with friends while having good beer! Events are a driving force in the brewing industry to generate excitement, awareness, and regulars.

Raise your hand if you have a weekly 2-for-1 night, or trivia night, or beer release night. Not doing any of those? Okay, what about happy hour specials, or pint club specials night, or discounted growlers (or crowlers) nights, or live music night? It is likely, in one way or another, that you have a series of recurring events that are drawing people to your taproom. If you're not, step 1 is to get on that. If you are, how are your spreading that awareness?

During our survey, we found the following about events and excitement generation:

- **40.8%** have ongoing weekly specials
- **61.2%** regularly have live music at their brewery
- **67.3%** are running co-ops with local bars and restaurants
- **67.3%** run promotions or specials on social media
- **85.7%** have public tasting or beer releases
- **89.8%** are a stop on a beverage trail
- **75.0%** list events on their website

Events (and promotions) are clearly an important tool to generate that excitement and awareness, but digital is the way to spread it! By adding all your events to your website, Facebook or Google My Business, people have the ability to see, share, or RSVP and much more likely to attend. You can also sell tickets to events directly through your site or on a tool such as Eventbrite. When someone who is going to be traveling checks out your website, they might decide where to go based on who has something entertaining going on, and might pass on you solely because it wasn't listed.

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Section V - Email

You send emails.
You get emails.
You hate spam emails.
You love your customers.

These are things we know. Email is one of the highest and most commonly used forms of communication. Believe it or not, email marketing is still one of the most effective strategies to communicate to your current customers and prospective customers.

To be specific, 205 billion emails are sent every day, and that number is expected to grow to 246 billion by the end of the year! Just think: everyone who filled out our survey learned about it by way of email.

Email is a very powerful tool, and provides a higher conversion rate than Search and Social. However, some breweries view email marketing with reluctancy due to a fear of spamming or overwhelming your customer. As with any business tactic, email marketing is effective when done correctly.

Knowing how, when, and what to email your fans and customers, you can actually generate interest, engagement, and most importantly, revenue. Notifying your customer of an upcoming event (beer release, concert, special pricing, ect) is likely something they want to know and might otherwise miss. You also can ask your customers for input via email; such as which beers they'd like to see back (or introduced), certain merchandise options, or labels designs to name a few. Engaging your customers and making them feel like an extension of your brewery family can only compliment your additional efforts.

Currently 65.3% of New York Breweries surveyed stated they do not participate in email marketing. With affordable email marketing tools and customizable messaging opportunities, the sky is truly the limit when it comes to how much you can accomplish with a successful email marketing plan.

88% of smartphone users are actively viewing their emails directly from their phone and 61% of consumers have stated they enjoy receiving a weekly promotional email. Creating personalized, targeted emails to your customers can increase awareness, excitement, engagement, and revenue for your brewery.

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LAST CALL

The brewing industry in New York State is continually growing while creating jobs, excitement, tourism, economic stimulus, and opportunities. You've gotten past the difficult part of opening and perfecting your brews. You've likely created a local buzz and have your regulars you see weekly (or nightly!).

But what's next? How do you reach everyone else, how do you get people to slice out trips to visit you or lock in the "Next time I visit _____, I need to stop by ____!" and actually have them follow through? Well, digital marketing is your answer. Digital will connect you to those who already know you (to keep them engaged) and will help those who don't know you find you and get through your door.

Being able to communicate with New York breweries through the New York State Brewers Association provided us with a snapshot of what our nearby breweries are doing, what is working, and where there is room for improvement. Using some of the advice in this document, you should be able to enhance your digital presence.

Interested in taking those digital efforts to the next level? Get in touch with us to learn more about the vast opportunities in the digital space that can get your name and beers out to those who are looking to spend their hard-earned money with you!