

How to use online
marketing to
successfully grow
your homecare
business.



Components of online marketing for your home care business



Digital marketing is huge right now and with good reason. The 2016 Home Care Benchmarking Study states SEO is the leading source for consumer marketing with 15% of participants citing it as their number one source. Online reviews are extremely important and an effective catalyst to growth.

However, if you are like most home care providers you may be completely overwhelmed as to how to put it all together. SEO, blogging, social media, getting online reviews...how and where does one start? That is what this whitepaper is all about – a concise guide to managing your online presence to get more leads, conversions and growth.

Good content is key

Most successful online marketing efforts are based on a foundation of good relevant content updated regularly with a judicious sprinkling of effective keywords. Both social media and blogging need to be fed on a diet of fresh, relevant content. Showcase your company, news and culture on social media while your blog can have a more professional outlook. Post on both regularly and your online rankings will gradually increase building a powerful online presence.



CONTENTS

Your main website: the face of your business	4
Use social media to increase home care inquiries	6
Latest online marketing trends	8
Be found online with local SEO	9
Content marketing: keep them coming back for more	11
Reputation management counts	12
What about a custom home care video?	13
Generate more home care leads with PPC advertising	15
Consult with the experts	16

**Your main
website: the face
of your business**



Does your website present your image/brand professionally?

Your website must represent an extremely professional image. At the same time it must convey caring and warmth as part of your branding. Reassurance, credibility and a high level of care are the attributes that need to come across. Content, colors, graphics must be pleasant with lots of clean white space.

Does your website capture leads effectively?

Some simple mechanisms can ensure your website is ready for the serious business of capturing leads. Some basic elements you can put in place:

- Telephone number and email can be prominently displayed
- A form to capture information on every page
- Testimonials and photos of clients establish credibility
- Relevant videos can work wonders to increase trust

Optimize your website for your local area

Local SEO is extremely critical for your home care site since your business likely serves a very focused geographic area and most of your potential customers will be in the vicinity. Local SEO would include:

Intelligently written Meta Tags and Descriptions

- Make it a point to include the name of the city your business operates in and/or the area your business

serves if you are targeting local customers. (e.g., “Home care services for Rochester and New York”).

- Use at least one specific keyword and place it as close as possible to the start of the tag as possible.

Listings on top online business directories

- Get your business listed on prominent directories like Yelp, Merchant Circle, Angie's List, Citysearch and others.
- Zero in on reputable local directories and get listed there. You can refer to your local newspaper's website or Chamber of Commerce for suitable local business directories. Do a keyword search with terms like (your city) directory to find local citation sites and directories.
- Online directories and Citations: List your business's name, address and phone number (NAP) on prominent citation data sites like Infogroup and Neustar. Check and double check that there are no discrepancies like abbreviations, spelling mistakes and wrong phone numbers. Keep information correct, consistent and updated at all online listings.
- List your business on Google. Google+ local listings use Google maps to generate locations and information for customers to locate the business and how close it is to their current location. You should integrate location based keywords in your local listings to generate effective search results.

- Ask customers to leave reviews on your Google+ platform or platforms like Yelp. This helps increase your rankings on Google SERP. Include the URL to your Google+ page on your company collateral like business cards, newsletters and brochures.

Make your website mobile responsive

According to Google, 1 in 3 customers will do a local search on a smartphone before a purchase. It becomes very imperative to create a responsive website that displays well on all mobile devices.

Is your website displaying a clear call to action (CTA)?

What is the action you want the user to take on your website? This might be filling up a form, making a purchase or keying in an email for a newsletter subscription or simply to call you.

Make your CTA very visible:

- Display the CTA prominently above the fold (in the first screenfull) in a central location.
- Make the button big and 'clickable'.
- Use white space around the call to action for extra visibility.
- Make the CTA area/button a different color from the rest of the site to make it stand out.
- Place your call to action on every page.

Add unique weekly content

- Update your website with fresh content every week.
- Write frequent articles, downloads and new web pages and update your website. This encourages search engines to stop by to index your site more frequently usually leading to higher rankings. Remember Google loves updates!
- Keep the content high quality and relevant. Quality trumps quantity here.
- Good content positions you as an 'Authority' by Google and a higher number of pages get indexed.
- More articles mean more keywords surface into your website.
- Content build credibility and trust -the more often you write, the more clients trust you.
- Answer questions on forums, post well-written articles

on your blog or just comment on other's blogs. This can really build up your reputation.

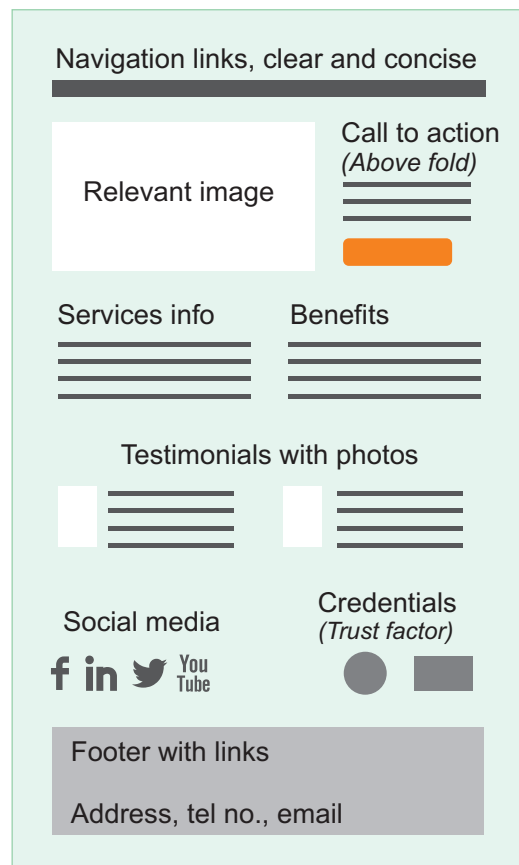
Get a tracked phone line to check ROI

- You may have provided your phone number in multiple locations like PPC ads, billboards, radio ads, email campaigns etc., so when a potential customer calls you, it makes sense to know where he got your number. You can track calls for free with Google Analytics and PPC platforms, and spend a bit on helpful software solutions.

Why track calls? This helps to:

- Determine what is working -which medium/ad is more effective?
- Concentrate marketing efforts on what works.
- Measure your ROI on promotions.

Sample homepage design



Use Social Media to increase Home Care inquiries



Using social media to market your home care business is an absolute must for online success. Where do you start? For one you need to get a presence on social media channels like Facebook and LinkedIn. They are the most important ones. Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest can also be useful but if crunched for time, you can leave them out.

Why include Social Media

- **Effective SEO:** Having a strong media profile is a great way to enhance local SEO. Google searches often return social profiles and content in the first page of results.
- **Build a community:** Share research, tips, news and encourage discussions -this increases audience engagement
- **Connect with clients:** Social media is more about sharing than selling. Your clients will turn to your social media pages for information and it works to your advantage if you can keep these pages regularly updated and keep your clients always in the know
- **Boost your authority quotient:** Post useful information and articles on home care. This will position you as a knowledgeable resource and expert which will gather more attention and trust - key to building up your client base
- **Give your business a personality:** Share pictures and posts about events and relevant topics and let potential

clients and existing clients see the 'human' side of your business. Give people the feeling that they 'know' you. This builds trust and persuades people to sign on with you.

Starting with social media

Social Profile pages

Start with creating social profile pages on all the social media channels you are interested in. We suggest Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for starters.

Write a good bio

Write an engaging bio about your company – your vision and mission and what you are seeking to do and what your followers can expect from your posts. At the end add your website link for easy access.

Be consistent

Make a timetable and follow it. update and post regularly.

Know your updates and tools

Get to know your social media platforms, their updates and related features and tools so you can get the most out of them.

Finish with a Call to action

Each of your posts should have a call to action -either to like your page, follow it, respond to a post or visit your website.

What should you post?

Posts from your blog or others

This should be useful information your clients can use. This will help users see you as an authority on home care related topics.

Upcoming Events

In case you have an event coming up, create an 'Event' on Facebook and invite your clients to it. Keep clients updated on event developments and post teasers to get them excited!

Create a video

Create a video about yourself and your business documenting how you started and what drives you. Post the video on your social media accounts to give clients a closer look at you.

Post Awards and their details

If you have awards from reputable sources, display them – they will serve to convince potential clients that you are a trusted home care provider.

Press Releases

If you have been mentioned in the press, highlight it on your media pages.

White Papers

When you post white papers that are well written and informative, clients perceive you and your team as knowledgeable individuals who are trying to learn and sharing relevant information with them about the home care industry.

About your content

The main thing to remember about content is that it should be fresh, informative, fun and regularly updated. On social media you can show your personal side a bit and let your audience bond with you.

Facebook tips

- Post your article to your blog and then post the link to Facebook. This ensures your social media visitors will visit your site and view information about your services, offers and contact details and keep coming back for more.
- Include photos with posts, the bigger the better. People like viewing photos especially if they have a fun element.
- Intersperse educational, informative articles with fun content. Tone down the seriousness. Seniors like a laugh too!
- Ask people to 'like' your FB business page. Help people with advice and connect. More fans means more business.
- Boost your posts on Facebook to your local audience
You can pay Facebook \$5 and ensure your content is being seen by people in your local area. Otherwise there is a chance they may never ever see your valuable content.





Marketing Content

As usual content is king and even more so in the home care industry. Make sure your potential clients receive content that is relevant and of value whether it is an article, downloadable tips or checklist or a regularly updated blog.

Automated marketing

Now you can automate emails and marketing promotions through software. If a user clicks on a link in your newsletter about a certain topic, the software will tag that link and send the user an article on the topic he clicked creating a cycle where more such information will be regularly channeled to him.

Include Social media

Social media is big now and must play an integral part in your online marketing. More and more platforms are now charging for ads to be seen by people but it is still well worth the price.

Videos rule

People prefer watching a video about a product than reading about it. Video is a fast, effective method of getting your message across. It doesn't always need a high-priced setup and equipment. Even a mobile phone can work provided you have something of value to say.

SEO is here to stay

Organic search engine optimization (SEO) rather than pay-per-click ads (PPC) makes the cut now. Reason being a lot of people are using ad blocking technology which makes your PPC ads invisible.

Marketing with Mobile

More and more people are surfing the Web on mobile phones. This means your website needs to be mobile-responsive. Sending alerts, push notifications and messaging are all part of reaching out to potential clients.

Are you sending the right social signals to the search engines?

When it comes having a presence on social media, the amount of likes, shares, votes, pins, or views your business gets on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn really matter. These are recognized by search engines that your brand is popular and being talked about by consumers. Search engines rank your brand higher due to these signals.

How do you climb the ladder of social media for better ranking?

For starters create social media accounts and company pages on channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, and YouTube. Start sharing content on these sites and update frequently. Give people a chance to know you but putting up personal content as well possibly caregivers' work anniversaries and birthdays, a company picnic etc. Don't forget about home care related informative content for e.g. 'Ten tips to look after an aged parent with senile dementia' etc.

Be found online with Local SEO



Home care businesses typically target local audiences and as such your Local SEO strategy needs to be spot on. Here are some tips.

Take ownership of your Google My Business page

If you search for home care services in your area, you will see Google My Business listings on top. To add your name here, do a search for your home care business on Google Maps to see if Google has added you. If you find a Google My Business Listing, click on the 'Manage this Page' link. You will have to sign in with your Google account or create one and then sign in. You will need to verify you are the business owner by calling the number they display or sending a postcard to the address they have listed along with a code you need to key in for confirmation.

Can't find a Google My Business page?

In that case, you will need to set one up. Go to google.com/places and click on 'Get Started for Free'.

Fill out your Google My Business Page accurately

After claiming or creating your Google My Business page, make sure all your information is completely filled out without any mistakes. Report any discrepancies to Google support.

Your home care agency name, address, phone number, website should be correct and in the format that Google provides. Add categories that best describe your agency (Home Care). Include working hours and photos for customer convenience.

Keyword research is important - do it

See the Related searches feature at the bottom of search pages when you search for home care related keywords like 'home care services'. This will show you the terms consumers are searching with.

Optimize your homepage for a particular keyword

Google cannot read images. It makes sense of your website by reading its HTML code and text content. Google analyzes your HTML tags and cues in content to know what the page is about. Once you do your research and zero in on your preferred keyword, optimize your homepage with it, using it in strategic places -in content, tags etc.

Post fresh home care content weekly

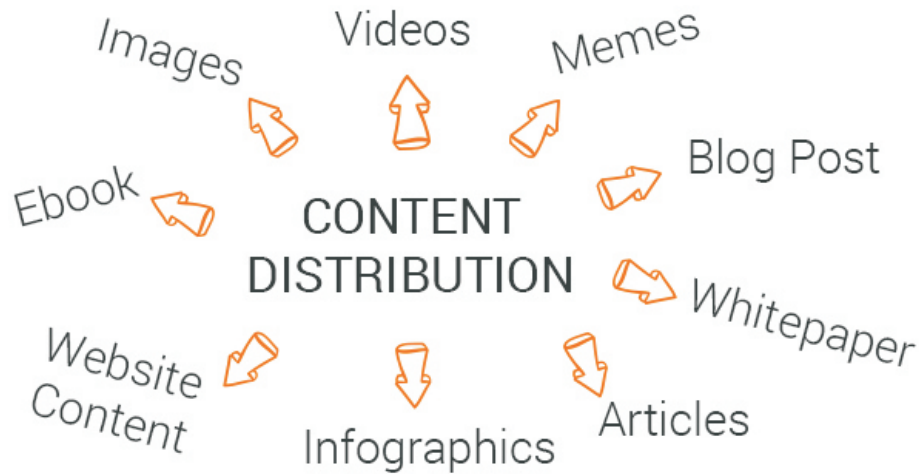
Update your content on a weekly basis. For good local SEO, use different types of content like videos, Slideshare and new landing pages. Add pages in different formats to various sections of your website. This will encourage indexing of your site by Google and other search engines. Make sure you are adding the correct Meta information to your visual media for maximum value. Start with your blog. Create shareable content that attracts search engines. Aim to publish at least a post every day or at a minimum at least once a week.

Local business directory listings and citations

Claim and complete local business directory listings. Remove duplicate listings – this increases the search engine's assurance about your contact information. Here are some citations you should claim on these popular directories.

50 Local Business Directories and Listings for Local Marketing

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ Google | ■ CitySlick | ■ MojoPages |
| ■ Bing | ■ USDirectory.com | ■ Brownbook |
| ■ Yahoo! | ■ Dex Media | ■ Magic Yellow |
| ■ Yelp | ■ BizJournals.com | ■ CitySquares |
| ■ Facebook | ■ TeleAtlas | ■ Map Creator |
| ■ Better Business Bureau | ■ Discover Our Town | ■ Judy's Book |
| ■ Angie's List | ■ EZ Local | ■ TripAdvisor |
| ■ Merchant Circle | ■ Kudzu | ■ Thumbtack |
| ■ LinkedIn | ■ CityVoter | ■ YellowPagesGoesGreen.org |
| ■ YP.com | ■ Manta | ■ Home Advisor |
| ■ Whitepages | ■ UsCity | ■ ShowMeLocal |
| ■ Superpages.com | ■ Advice Local | ■ ChamberofCommerce.com |
| ■ Yellowbook | ■ InfoUSA | ■ Yellowbot |
| ■ CitySearch | ■ Infignos | ■ Hotfrog |
| ■ MapQuest/Yext | ■ Get Fave | ■ Brownbook |
| ■ Local.com | ■ My Huckleberry | ■ InsiderPages |
| ■ Foursquare | ■ Yellowee | |



Content is everything. And no place to start better than with your blog. A blog that is well written and updated gives you authority and credibility in your clients' eyes. You are seen as the resource who has the answers and potential clients will very often go with the provider who seems to be the authority in the field.

Make your content unique

When you have relevant, unique and useful content your readers would like to share them with others and link it back to you. Have your share buttons ready with every post!

Some tips to remember while writing content:

Know your target audience (visitors to your site) as much as you can:

- Where do they stay
- What is their financial status
- Are their decisions influenced by their culture
- What is their age and demographic profile?

Race, religion, income and education also matter and it helps if you have a mental picture of the person you are writing for so you can write for them more effectively.

Decide on the tone

The tone you take on your blog should always be consistent. Is it funny, warm and empathetic or mentor-like? This tone or voice will define you and help to establish your

brand. Of course, the topic will also influence your tone a bit but it should not change radically. For your home care blog keep your tone compassionate and educative for a start. If you can't write, pay a high-quality content writer to write your blog.

Follow a posting schedule

Try to update your blog as frequently as possible. At least once a week is the bare minimum. More than that is preferred to get a good following. Try to post at such a time that your followers can read your post in the morning (most people usually read blogs in the morning).

Write on relevant topics

Make your content relevant and polished to keep your readers and to attract more. Discuss with your team the issues your customers give importance to and write on them. Build up a list of 6 months of blog posts and back them up as your posts proceed. If you are a specialist in caregiving for Senile Dementia, write posts on that more.

Be patient and keep writing

Results from blog posts are difficult to measure but believe us when we say a blog is integral to your online success. Patience and consistency are key, you could post regularly but it may take more than a year to discern any effect. Slowly but surely your online presence will grow.

Don't forget to link articles from your blog on social media. It's a sure-fire traffic booster.

Reputation management counts

Your reputation online adds tremendously to your trust factor.

What counts towards a good online reputation?

- Encouraging positive online reviews and testimonials
- Removal of negative reviews.
- Showing up in search results of towns where you are located.
- Distributing positive feedback to prospects and posting to Facebook

How to capture positive client feedback

Chances are if you are searching online for a service, the online reviews and feedback will be a huge influence on your behavior. That is why positive feedback matters, every little bit adds to building up a strong online reputation.

But how do you collect the feedback?

Create profiles on review sites

Create profiles on major review sites like Yelp, Google, Tripadvisor, Foursquare etc. so users can visit and put up a review without too much trouble.

Request politely

After your work engagement ask your customers if they are satisfied with your service. Request them to provide online reviews gently (in a non-pushy manner).

Follow up with email

Send a mail thanking your customers for the business and request them to give you feedback. Then send them links of preferred review sites to provide online reviews.

Thank customers for their review

When someone puts up a good review, thank them by sending a thank you response on the review site (if allowed) or a thank you card, discount or some other reward. This will encourage them to put up positive reviews in the future as well.

Show off positive reviews

Post positive reviews where your other customers can view it by creating a chart or a local area map of reviews. You will find other customers might get motivated to post reviews too.

Create a review area and display testimonials and feedback on your website

Allow customers to post reviews on your website or provide links to review sites so they can leave feedback there on your profile pages.

Deliver great service every time

The simplest and most direct way to get good reviews is by providing great service. Turn your customers into fans and then ask for reviews. They are sure to rave about you to everyone around as well!

Coping with negative reviews

Almost every business has a negative review sometime. Here's what to do:

Take it offline

If you have a negative online review, take the matter offline and contact your customer through phone or email. When the issue is resolved and customer satisfied, add a polite comment to the online feedback describing the steps taken and thanking the customer for his patience.

Be courteous

Remember to keep your tone polite. Listen to the customers' concerns and assure them that you would like to discuss the matter and they should contact you at their earliest convenience.

Be prompt in your response

Respond promptly to negative reviews or you may acquire a reputation for being unreliable and uncaring. Clients need to think their opinion matters to you.

Share reviews with staff

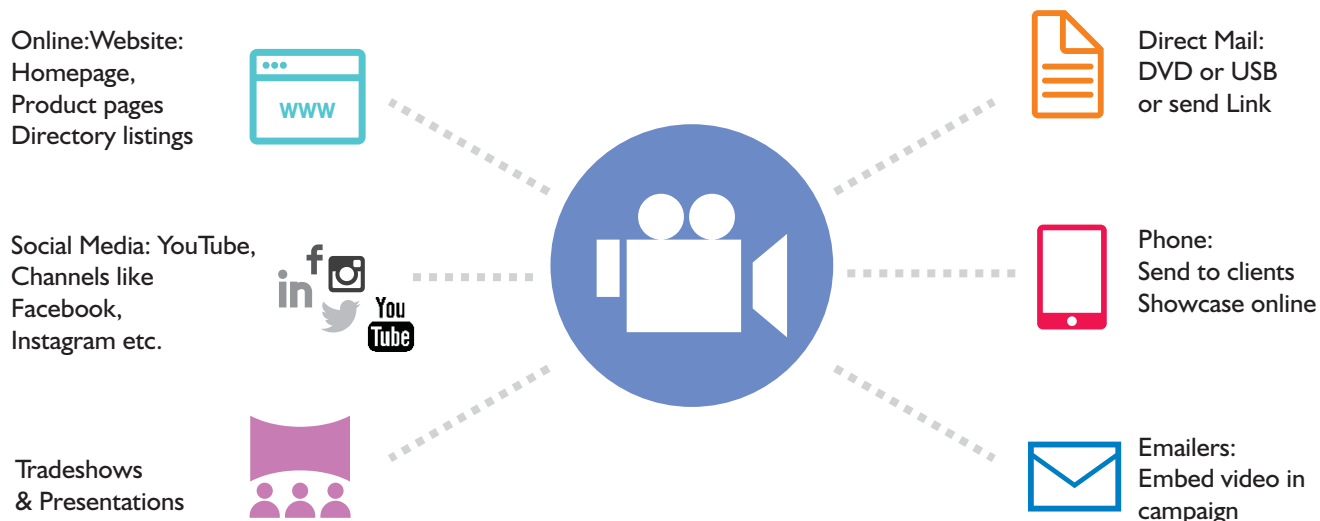
Ensure your employees -in the office or your caregivers are aware of negative and positive feedback. This will be helpful in preventing similar issues in the future and build client focus among employees.

Look at the bright side

Negative reviews are actually good in the sense they let you know what to fix in your operations for better working. A negative review or two can also add credibility. If all reviews are good, it raises suspicions that they might be fabricated and untrue – not a good image to have!

What about a custom home care video?

Where and how to use your video to promote your brand



Online videos marketing your services are good for business and online marketing. Here's why you should invest in an online video.

Video increases Conversions and Sales

Add a video showing the highlights of your service, interaction of caregivers with clients etc. Most people are visually oriented and prefer to watch rather than read so you can convey a lot more through video. Videos on landing pages have been known to increase conversions by as much as 80%.

Videos foster credibility and trust

A video brings customers face to face with you and they can actually view your setup, listen to testimonials etc. which builds trust.

Google favors videos

Sites with videos encourage visitors to stay longer on your site which tells search engines you have good content. After Google took over YouTube, videos are affecting search engine rankings very favorably. However, you need to optimize your videos on YouTube for SEO. Write keyword- rich, engaging titles and descriptions. Put in a link to your website and services so potential customers can sign up with you.

Tap mobile users with video

A lot of mobile users like to watch videos on mobile devices and this number is growing exponentially every year. From Q3 of 2013, mobile video views have grown more than 233 percent. Tap into this widening video audience to promote your business. Mobile users are also likely to feel more connected to you than users on other devices.

Video explains concepts better and builds a connect

Show and Tell works. When prospects can see in person what you are doing, they are more likely to go with you. Animated videos have been shown to be extremely effective when explaining concepts.

Videos can be shared easily

Videos that are engaging and fun are shared on social media even if they happen to be promotional videos for brands. People appreciate the emotion and humor. Social shares can also create traffic for your site.

Video advertising works

Video ads have the highest click-through rate of all digital ad formats. You can also include video in your email campaigns to make them much more effective increasing click-through by 96% and differentiate yourself from the competition.

Promoting your Video online

Make the most of YouTube

After Google YouTube is the next largest search engine and very effective for SEO. You can post a variety of videos here. Right from How-To videos, corporate videos, explainer videos and webinars. Make your videos interesting and regularly add more so users will want to subscribe to your channel. Don't forget to post the videos on your other social media platforms as well.

Sponsored video ads for social media sites

Include sponsored videos in Facebook posts. This will give you much more visibility and more user engagement. You can set 'audience targeting options' so the right audience sees your video ads. Make sure the video is crisp, relevant and has a strong call to action.

Short personalized videos for followers

Build a connection with your followers by sending them short videos instead of text. Not just to push your services but possibly to offer useful tips or talk about trends etc. The personal touch goes a long way to build bonds.

Make the most of user-generated videos

Ask your customers to send in videos in response to a promotion or possibly their own experience with you. If they appreciate your service-these videos can be surprisingly effective.

Instagram and Snapchat stories

Upload 'stories' on these two channels. Stories are short 10 second videos that disappear after 24 hours. They have no 'Like' or 'Share' buttons. Increase traffic to your site by posting a link at the end of the video.

Video marketing strategies can help you build a solid social following

By 2017, 74% of Internet traffic will be video according to Syndcast. You need to use videos as much as you can to attract followers. Here's what you can do:

- Put videos in marketing emailers
- Embed videos in landing pages
- Include videos in blog posts
- Post videos on social media

Activities involved in Pay-Per-Click Advertising



Generate more Home care Leads with PPC Advertising

When you need leads and brand recognition fast, PPC is the way to go. Pay-per-click is a form of online paid advertising. You can bid on keywords you think your audience will be searching with – for e.g. 'Senior home care' When someone searches with this your published ad will show up in the search results, depending on your bid and quality score. If someone clicks on your ad you will need to pay the bid amount.

Landing pages designed specifically for click throughs from your ads are also important in this scenario. They need to be well designed, have relevant content and be persuasive for your visitors to convert.

Why go with PPC

- You get a respectable amount of leads for your spend
- You can bid on competitive keywords that would be too challenging to optimize organically
- Retarget the people who have shown interest in your services with conversions of up to 70%.
- PPC ads offer the most predictable ROI among online marketing methods.

PPC is difficult for novices

We would always advise you to go with a high quality online marketing outfit with a good track record in PPC. It is very easy to overpay for keywords and still not get results in the PPC world.

Types of PPC ads

These could be text, images, or videos. They can appear on search engine like Google and Bing or even social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube or directory sites like Yelp.

Getting started with PPC advertising

Decide on a budget before anything else. Your campaign strategy will be centered around this. Decide on your goals and the keywords to be used. Fix on how many ads you need to run and how long.

After your strategy is ready, create a text or image ad or a video ad and publish it to your PPC account. You will need to specify the following:

- Start and stop dates
- Keywords
- Maximum CPC (cost-per-click) price for keywords
- Preferred Audiences (use the demographic filters)
- Geographic settings
- Various other settings

Once your ad is published, the work of campaign management will start. Remember to view your dashboard often to track the progress of your campaign and make adjustments. Fine-tuning will always be required in PPC campaigns.

PPC Advertising Platforms

The mainstream PPC ad platforms are Google (68% of all online traffic) Bing (18% of traffic). Yelp is a good platform for small businesses. Facebook 'sponsored ads' also offer healthy conversion rates.

Social Media PPC Platforms

- Facebook is the biggie here but a bit of research can throw up some other interesting options.
- Instagram especially if you have attractive images to share
- YouTube: Got engaging videos? Head for YouTube.
- Twitter: Good for branding and offering deals
- LinkedIn: Ideal for B2B advertising
- Pinterest: popular with women -website and app options exist
- Snapchat: Works well to display business announcements, press releases and specific calls to action

Paid Search or Paid Social?

Ideally it makes sense to combine both search engine and social media pay-per-click in your paid advertising strategy. With Paid Search, you can target customers and focus on intent with specific keywords. Paid Social cannot target people on intent but can appeal to highly individual audiences based on professional, personal, demographic and psychographic segments.



Like to consult with an expert?

All the details, effort and elements involved in crafting and carrying through a successful online marketing strategy can be daunting, especially when you have your own business to run.

Allow us to help.

Get in touch with us and let's talk. We have a full spectrum of online marketing services and we specialize in promoting home care businesses.

Call 866-308-6937 or

drop an email to sales@homecareonlinemarketing.com

Visit <http://www.homecareonlinemarketing.com> to know more.



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