

DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Marija Mihajlović

Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia,
marija.mihajlovic@mgsi.gov.rs

Ljiljana Stošić Mihajlović

Academy of Technical-Educational Vocational Studies, Niš - Department in Vranje, Serbia
ljiljana.stosic.mihajlovic@akademijanis.edu.rs

Abstract: Just as in the field of architecture every detail is important, from the foundation to the roof every element must be carefully planned and executed, it is the same with digital marketing - every detail, from the creation of the website, its promotion, social networks to advertising, must be carefully planned and performed. Modern companies in the world of race are looking for a way to stand out and attract new customers, which is also true for companies in the construction industry. Today, if you want to expand your business regardless of the size of the company, it cannot be achieved without digital marketing and an adequate marketing strategy. In the world of architecture and construction, every project begins with a detailed plan. Without a plan, regardless of the quality of the materials or the expertise of the workers, a construction project will not be successful. It's the same with digital marketing – without a strategically designed marketing campaign and effective lease of media space, the online presence will not be able to compete with the competition. Creating quality content, publishing it and monitoring it is an indispensable part of a digital marketing strategy. In the construction industry, it has become very important to use content marketing as a way of informing and educating, gaining trust and attracting the target audience. Because today's customers expect and look for quality content and information on the Internet. In this paper, we aim to present the importance of digital marketing, then the organization of marketing campaigns and the rental of advertising space in digital media in the field of architecture and the construction industry. Digital marketing in construction offers an incredible opportunity - direct connection with target clients or customers. With the right strategy, using various digital channels, one can reach potential clients who are really interested in the services. In Serbia, there are tens of thousands of companies operating in the field of architecture and construction industry, including: consulting companies, design firms, contractors, suppliers of materials and equipment, sellers of tools and machines and related activities. However, it is certain that less than 50% of these companies do not have their own website. Even those companies that have their own website, or a large number of existing websites, are not optimized. At the very beginning, this leads us to the conclusion that digital marketing in construction is an underdeveloped area.

Keywords: digital marketing, architecture, construction industry

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing enhances and improves the company's visibility. Google is today what the business yellow pages used to be. People's first choice is to search the Internet to find architectural and construction services and products. For architecture and construction firms, this means that if they want to be found and hired, they need to be visible where potential clients are. A large number of construction companies and those operating in that field in Serbia do not use the advantages that digital marketing in construction has. Part of the reason for this state of affairs in this industry is that the construction industry is slow to accept changes, even when it comes to innovations in the field of new materials, tools, machines, technologies and software that can facilitate construction. It takes time to accept and widely use new things, especially in this industry where experience plays an important role and older masters have a hard time accepting innovations.

In addition, there are companies that believe they have no competition and do not need additional investment in any form of marketing. There are also situations where companies have a website and social networks, but do not deal with them, do not maintain and update them.

The fact is that the environment is changing rapidly, so the construction industry also faces constant challenges, and in such a challenging environment, people often don't have the ear, the will or the money for things related to good digital marketing.

This could mean that everything boils down to a misunderstanding of the importance, i.e. the necessity for construction companies to understand what digital marketing means and what they gain from it. From the point of view of companies in this branch of the industry, this means that digital marketing should be seen as an investment in the future, where concrete benefits can be seen more or less in the short term.

2. CHARACTERISTICS AND ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN ARCHITECTURE AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The first and biggest advantage of digital marketing is that it enables precise targeting of the audience. Namely, when targeting people who live in a certain city and surroundings or those who are looking for certain services in the construction industry, it results in a greater number of orders or purchases, because digital marketing makes it possible to reach a greater number of really interested clients.

Another important feature of digital marketing and its application in architecture and construction is measurability. For a long time, marketing in construction relied only on traditional methods, such as billboard advertising. The billboard still has great advantages today, because when the billboard is put up everyone can see it, but the question is how many people actually see it and remember the message, address or contact from the billboard. On the other hand, digital marketing allows the possibility to open the page in the browser several times and to realistically make contact between supply and demand.

In terms of measurability, digital marketing in construction enables the performance of marketing campaigns to be monitored and, most importantly, the results to be analyzed. That is, it provides an answer to what works and what doesn't and the ability to adjust the business strategy accordingly. An important feature in measuring the effects of digital marketing is that it provides a good basis for monitoring ROI (Return on Investment) - which specifically means how much money is received in relation to the money invested in digital marketing.

The third important characteristic of digital marketing is related to the fact that digital marketing enables the creation of a long-term relationship with clients and customers. Which is the basis of loyalty and long-term competitive advantage. Through e-mail marketing, social networks and other digital channels, contacts with clients and customers are maintained, even after the job is done. This leads to client and customer loyalty and referrals to others. The fourth important feature of digital marketing in construction is reflected in the fact that it provides a chance to overtake the competition. Companies that use digital marketing are already at an advantage and are one step ahead of the competition.

3. APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN CONSTRUCTION

The application of digital marketing in a specific branch such as architecture and the construction industry, in essence, boils down to how to reach as many potential customers as possible, but also how to make it easier for them to come and actually become customers. A good product or service is key, but they cannot sell themselves (Stošić Mihajlović, 2022). At the same time, every step on the way to the sale is important: from the first encounter with the company's website, navigating it, the ease with which the product can be ordered, but also what others say about it and how to behave after the purchase is completed. This implies specific tactics that can be applied in the field of architecture and construction.

The basis for good digital marketing in construction is customer knowledge and online presence. The basic step of a successful digital strategy is building an online presence while knowing the needs and specific requirements of customers. This means that companies must know their market, know what and to whom they offer their services, in order to know how to fulfill those needs and requirements to mutual satisfaction and benefit. From the point of view of marketing logistics, the task of digital marketing is to ensure the availability of the right product/service, at the right place, at the right price, for the right customer, of the right quality, in the right quantity (Stošić Mihajlović, 2022). Online presence primarily means a good website and profiles on social networks. A firm's website is a specific type of modern digital business card that potential clients will see when looking for construction services. At the same time, the likability of the site is an unusually important feature, because today people already decide after a few seconds whether they like something or not. That is why the first recommendation when applying digital marketing is to make a good first impression.

Another important recommendation refers to the fact that the site should be functional, reviewed and clear, so that people can find their way around it easily, that they immediately know what it is about and that they immediately know how they can contact the company and order the services or products that they need. needed.

Furthermore, the site must be optimized for search engines in order to be seen and visited by more people. Good SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a way for people to find what they need. In fact, SEO is the optimization of web pages for search engines, that is, placing the company's site in the best possible place, which is certainly the first page of Google. This means standing out in search for relevant keywords in the construction industry that have to do with the product or service the company offers. There are many factors that affect SEO, including keywords, meta descriptions, page titles, and quality content. It is recommended to leave SEO to the experts, because it takes a lot of time and knowledge to properly optimize the site, especially if the basics are wrong.

The next recommendation is related to content that stands out, because quality content is a way to create a brand as a professional in your field. Because a brand is also about creating a sense of connection with concrete content.

Content is the essence of digital strategy. Quality content makes it possible to declare expertise and knowledge in the construction industry, attract new clients and build client loyalty. The content that is published should educate and inform the audience about various aspects of the construction industry, it should emphasize trends, technology, processes, projects and everything that is important to the client. This means creating articles, infographics, video materials, blogs.

4. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES

Digital marketing does not mean replacing traditional marketing. On the contrary, traditional and digital marketing should exist simultaneously and complement each other. In the early stages of interaction between companies and consumers, traditional marketing plays a key role, and after the transaction develops and consumers demand a closer relationship with companies, digital marketing gains importance (Njegomir, 2020). Digital marketing refers to all activities undertaken to advertise, promote and sell products or services of a brand on online platforms (Banjai, 2021). Network marketing can give you anything you want out of life. If you simply want to an extra \$50 a week to pay for a car or vacation, then the option is available to you on this one to work. If, on the other hand, you want a complete change of lifestyle and wealth of what kind most people can only dream, and it is available to you. So before you go, there are two things you have to decide. The first is, what do you want from your life? That's the only, most important thing question you will ever be asked. The answer could determine the entire course of your life (Bremner 2002: 42).

Digital marketing in architecture and construction is largely based on the use of social networks, which serve to connect with the target audience, provide support and increase loyalty. Social media profiles help build a brand, but it's important to choose platforms that are relevant to the construction industry, product/service and target audience. Social media marketing originated from people's communication habits. Today, social networking platforms are essential in practice (Figuerola, 2020). An important prerequisite for using appropriate social networks is knowing customers and their habits.

LinkedIn is a platform specialized in business networking and is ideal for connecting with other professionals in the construction industry, as well as publishing content that is relevant to your target audience.

Facebook can be a great way to connect with potential customers and clients, where products/services can be promoted. Twitter can be used to connect and share company or industry news. Instagram and TikTok can also be used very successfully to represent a company, and it all depends on where the target group is located.

Digital marketing in construction also includes paid ads. Paid advertising allows you to target potential customers through paid search engine or social media ads. It requires financial investments, and a well-thought-out strategy of targeting people, in order to achieve results. In this way, the ads reach the target group and there are greater chances of new visitors to the site and new customers. Paid advertising includes PPC (Pay-Per-Click) ads - which means payment when someone clicks on the ad. With paid advertising, it is possible to know the exact number of those who were reached by the ad and who were interested in seeing what it was about.

Digital marketing in the construction industry involves advertising and publishing content on specialized portals. The reason for this is that these portals are visited by the target audience that a construction company or a company operating in the field of construction is looking for. On specialized portals, everything people need from construction can be found in one place: information about companies, news and current events, to find out about a product/service. The site Gradjevinarstvo.rs is the first and one of the most visited portals in the field of construction and architecture. There are also narrowly specialized portals within construction, such as Izolacija.rs, a portal that exclusively deals with insulation and insulation materials in construction.

Advertising and publishing content on specialized portals mean that the company will be presented to an audience that is most likely already interested in construction products/services. It allows to ensure:

- Greater visibility to the interested audience;
- A higher probability that the visitor will click on the ad and become potential clients;
- A better position in search results and more relevant links to the company's website, which contributes to a better ranking in searches;
- Monitoring the performance of advertising or postings on specialized portals allows you to know exactly how many people came from there;
- Creative approach through different formats, such as: videos, infographics, texts, images, etc.
- Digital marketing in construction, i.e. advertising and publication of content on specialized portals can be done through banner ads, video materials, promotional or PR and native texts.

Banner ads are static or animated, which can be of different dimensions and in different positions on the portal. Promotional texts are sponsored by advertisers, while native texts are also sponsored, but look more like an integral part of the content of the portal. Publishing content on specialized portals is done through the presentation of

products or services, interviews, company news, project reports, notes from events and other types of content that could be interesting to the target audience, where it is necessary to create quality content that will interest the target audience, attract them to click on the link to the company's website, to get more information and get to know the products/services and the company. This means that advertising and publishing content on specialized portals can be a very important part of the marketing strategy more.

Tracking marketing campaign analytics provides insight into data that helps companies better understand the behavior of potential customers. Analytics provide insight into the number of page views, visits and forms. For example, analytics allows you to get more traffic on Facebook, even though most of the engagement is on LinkedIn. This then means that you need to adjust your marketing strategy, because if Facebook gives you more traffic, then you need to place ads there. Recommendation is half the work to success, that's why you should always ask clients and customers for reviews and then post those reviews on the site, because 90% of consumers read reviews before buying. High ratings and good feedback from satisfied customers build trust with those yet to become one. Of course, you should not avoid negative reviews either, but respond to them with action. It is clear that there will be dissatisfaction, but that does not mean that criticism should be avoided. Especially if the criticism is constructive - it is information about what needs to be improved.

An e-mail list and newsletter are a way to keep in touch with existing clients and customers, because modern clients check their e-mail every day. This also explains why email marketing has the highest ROI. Through e-mail, old customers are reminded of the services used, new products are advertised and more traffic is sent to the site.

Communication with customers and builds a community on social networks, engaging followers, and not only about what the company does but what it stands for (socially responsible business), because the future of marketing is in brands that customers trust, not only for the quality of work, but and because they share values with them.

The video format is increasingly popular and serves to clearly show what is done and how it is done. As with written content, education and assistance are provided here by answering the doubts that bother them, while it is important to adapt the video format of the platform on which the information is distributed. For example, uploading a video to Instagram takes 60 seconds, but it can take up to fifteen minutes if you upload to Instagram.

Architectural offices and construction companies employ and hire expert people for construction and design, they are marketing agencies, because when you understand the importance of digital marketing in construction and what it can bring, it should be handled by people who are experts in that field and who will achieve results.

5. ORGANIZATION OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

A company is an organization whose basic postulate is the process of creating an organized state (Stošić Mihajlović, 2022). Building an effective marketing campaign is like building a building and requires: a clear plan, precise execution and constant follow-up. A digital marketing agency can take over this task, allowing the company to focus on what you do best: building.

In the organization of marketing campaigns, the first step is defining the objectives of the campaign. Here, answers should be given to the following questions: does the company want to increase awareness of its brand; to attract new clients; or to increase sales? Clearly defined goals are the foundation on which the rest of the campaign is built.

The second step is the identification of the target group, which involves answering the following questions: who are the people who are likely to be interested in the services/products; what are their needs; How can the company satisfy them? Understanding your target audience is key to creating an effective marketing campaign.

The third step is related to creating a message that will resonate with the audience and choosing the right channels for distribution. This step also involves answering the questions: is the target group active on social networks; do they prefer e-mail marketing or are they more inclined to search the Internet; do they often visit specialized construction and architecture portals? Choosing the right channels is crucial to the success of the campaign.

The fourth step involves monitoring the results of the campaign and making adjustments to achieve maximum effect. This step includes: data analysis; testing different approaches; and constant improvement of the campaign based on the obtained results. Just as choosing the right location is critical to the success of a construction project, so choosing the right advertising media is critical to the success of a marketing campaign.

Digital marketing agencies specializing in construction have the experience and contacts to secure the best ad positions at the best prices. They can negotiate terms on behalf of clients, ensuring they get the best value for money. The agency can also help to select the right media for the target group. It is important to collect data on whether the target group spends more time on social networks or on specialized construction sites. Choosing the right media can significantly increase the effectiveness of your ad. The issue of renting media space is not only about where the ad appears, but also when the ad appears. The agency analyzes the behavior of the target group and can determine the best time to display ads: for example, if the target group spends more time on the Internet in the evening, that is the best time to display ads. Choosing the right media can significantly increase the efficiency and

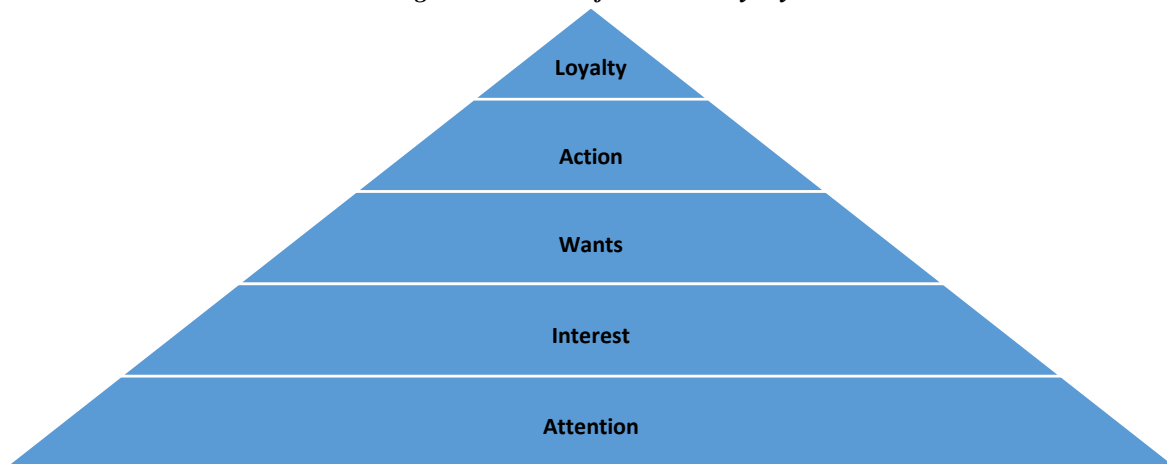
effectiveness of your ad. Namely, the agency can monitor the performance of the ad and adjust the media space lease strategy based on the results obtained: if a certain medium does not bring the expected results, it can be decided to redirect resources to other, more effective media. Marketing agencies specializing in construction understand the specifics of this industry. They know how to communicate with the target group, understand the technical aspects of the business and can create campaigns that will highlight advantages over the competition. Specialized expertise can be key to building an effective marketing campaign and optimizing media leases.

6. CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing is the publication of texts (blog posts, case studies, instructions...), video materials, infographics, newsletters and other content with the aim of providing interested parties with useful and credible information about services and products that solve problems, about their correct ways of use, about saving energy or time required for installation, compliance with standards and laws, about ecological advantages, etc.

This content must be accurate, technically correct, understandable, but also created in an interesting way. It must attract, and maintain the attention and interest of the target audience. In this content, the company does not seek to sell products/services, but to offer information and advice; it gives value and expects nothing in return. This concept is extremely helpful to build trust, develop relationships, attract attention and generate leads by answering the audience's questions. By publishing unique, high-quality and relevant content, in the right format, through selected channels, the company becomes credible and authoritative for topics in its field of business, while ranking better on internet search engines and attracting an even larger audience, thus the company, product or brand gains over time on the value. It is important that quality content challenges existing customers to return to the site, learn something new, find an innovative solution or advice. Every manufacturer and service provider in the construction industry who wants an active presence on the Internet must take content marketing very seriously, because architects, designers, investors, contractors, marketers - all are active in searching for information about products / services on the Internet, in a place where there is a lot information and great competition considering that some companies have already opted for a content marketing strategy.

Figure 1. Ladder of customer loyalty



The content offered should attract the attention of the audience and arouse interest in the company's product/service, with the aim of helping them to desire the product as a solution to the problem; to make a purchase decision; and to take action on the matter. Gaining and maintaining customer loyalty is certainly the greatest value of content marketing. In the following text, we will explain how the steps to the implementation from attention to loyalty proceed: 1. Precise definition of the target audience and their questions regarding the product/service; 2. Determine the best ways to answer these questions and solve the problem; 3. Create relevant content and become a reliable and authoritative source of information in the given field; 4. Build your online presence; distribution of content on different channels and formats; 5. In addition to being informed and educated, the potential customer is ultimately converted into a customer of products/services with the help of marketing content.

Relevant content and a reliable source of information. The content you create must be reliable and professional, it defines the company as experts in the field of insulation in construction, creates an image of the company as a credible and reliable source of information in the audience and instills confidence in the company.

However, these contents do not sell a product, only solutions, advice and answers are offered. When a potential audience perceives a company as professional and credible in the field of insulation, designers, contractors and customers will want to work with the company and buy and install its products. On the Internet, the border between marketing and PR is disappearing (Meerman Scot 2009). But only a few domestic companies use email marketing as part of the marketing mix (Cox&Koelzer 2005). Each of these audience groups, due to their specificities, requires special attention when creating, selecting the type, and also distributing the content. In order for the content to reach the desired audience, it is necessary to enable its distribution through higher channels. In addition to publishing content on the blog of the company website, the content can be published and advertised on social networks, sent to registered users of the newsletter, posted on informative and specialized portals. In order to convert potential interested parties into customers, it is necessary to offer the company's contact information with an invitation to contact them for any additional doubts and questions, specific problems they have in the given field of activity. The company must forward suggestions and advice, will post links to product/service pages, and the company's product will be the logical choice as a solution to the problem. We should never lose sight of the fact that the majority of the audience at the time of consuming the published content are probably not customers. The bottom line is that the company's products/services are their first choice when they decide to make a purchase.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Digital marketing in construction is essential to the advancement of an architecture/construction firm. It offers companies the opportunity to: connect directly with potential clients; improve the visibility of the company; address the target audience; monitor the performance of marketing campaigns and the results of investments in them; create long-term relationships with clients. All this leads to an increase in the number of clients and new business. Construction companies that do not use digital marketing are missing out on a huge opportunity to expand and grow their business. Building an online presence, using SEO-quality content, using social networks and advertising are just some of the tactics that can help a business become more successful in digital marketing.

The key is to understand the needs and wants of the target audience and adapt the content and marketing strategy accordingly. It is important for companies in this industry to follow trends in the construction industry, to adapt to new technologies and processes in order to remain competitive. Therefore, if a construction company is to be successful, it must understand digital marketing as a key element of its marketing strategy. One of the biggest advantages of advertising on the Internet is the low cost of advertising, especially when compared with the costs of advertising through other media, such as for example television (Ružić, Bilos and Turkalj 2003). However, it is important to remember that social networks transform, expand, and grow very quickly and that each social network requires specific marketing techniques - how would we derive the greatest benefit from her alone. (Quarantotto and Perčić 2013). Content marketing should be vital to the business of construction companies. Some companies have understood this very well and invest a lot of resources in its development. Its power is in the ability to raise brand awareness, increase company site traffic and, most importantly, generate a large number of leads. Defining an effective content marketing strategy for construction companies is a very complex process that needs to be carefully planned and implemented. With this work, we just wanted to take the first step towards getting to know this very important marketing concept.

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