

SPRING CLEANING GUIDE

4 Ways to Spruce Up
Your Digital Marketing Efforts



— Marketing That Sells® —



Spring has sprung! And with it, our favorite seasonal pastime - spring cleaning!

It's something most of us do at least once a year. The changing weather and longer days motivate us to start new projects and hit refresh. You tidy up your garden, donate those jeans that you've been hoarding since freshman year, and finally dig through the boxes in the basement that you meant to clean out last year, but somehow never got around to tackling.

But, beyond the carpet shampoo and fan dusting, the concept of spring cleaning is also applicable to digital marketing. Your **website** should be cleaned up; **SEO** swept and polished; **marketing tools** cataloged, tested, and some thrown away; and **social media** evaluated, checked, and updated. Just like sorting through the pile of junk in your attic, figuring out where to start when re-evaluating your marketing program may feel overwhelming. To help you out, we've compiled a list of our suggestions for a few pieces of your marketing mix to audit and reset for a fresh start.

Click to spring to a section!



Website



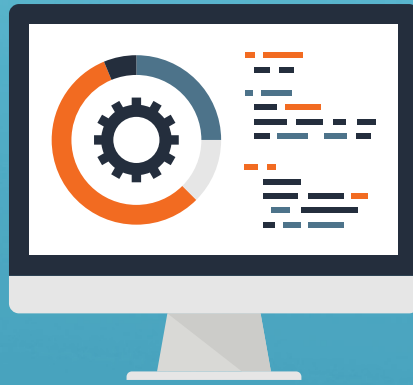
SEO



Tools



Social Media



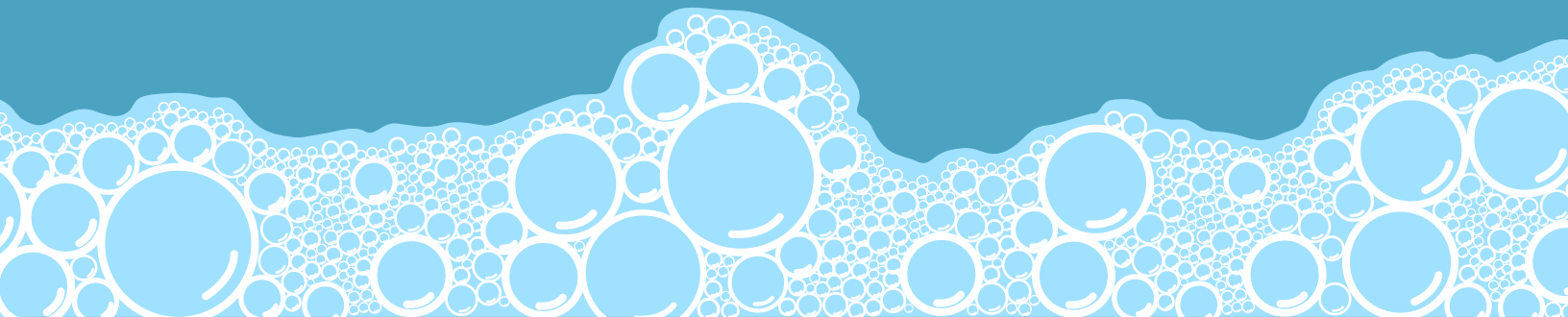
Website

A website has three primary purposes for a B2B company:

- 1 Provide useful information, organized in an easy-to-use structure, to visitors
- 2 Convert visitors into contacts through calls-to-action
- 3 Put the company's best foot forward to make a positive first impression

Each contributes to attracting potential clients by improving search engine results, providing meaningful information on how the business solves business problems, and driving visitors through the marketing and sales funnel. Regular analysis and maintenance of structure, content, and appearance are essential to ensuring that the website is an integral, useful part of the company's total demand generation strategy.

Websites should be fully audited at least annually, although 2-3 times per year is ideal if resources allow. During a website audit, content, web traffic, and conversion data should be analyzed to determine what information needs to be updated or changed.





Evaluate Content

Up-to-date content means a B2B website will be considered relevant by search engines and visitors. Data collected by Stanford University indicates that people assign more credibility to sites that show they have been recently updated or reviewed. Regular updates and corrections to information on a company's website create a good impression on visitors and prompt search engines to re-crawl pages for indexing.

Here is a checklist that should take approximately 1-2 hours to complete and ensures your content is as up-to-date as possible.

- 1 Update the year on all pages.** For example, update the copyright year at the bottom of the page. Use the shortcut [control + F] to search for the previous year on website pages.
- 2 Review services/products pages for accuracy.** Make updates to pricing, remove content that is no longer pertinent, and make a list of content that needs to be created.
- 3 Review that company "About" information.** Ensure that the company address, phone number, and other contact information is correct. If a team/employee page is present, determine if anyone should be added or removed.
- 4 Examine resources on the website** such as case studies, white papers, and use cases. Create a list of resources present, and use the traffic analysis to determine if certain pieces of content should be updated or replaced.
- 5 Perform an SEO check.** Using a crawling tool like Screaming Frog, ensure that all pages have H1s and H2s, all images have alt-text, and no links result in 404 errors. Use the traffic analysis we discuss later in this whitepaper to prioritize changes that need to be made.



Analyze Traffic

A full website content audit is an extensive process. But, web traffic analysis allows for prioritization of updates to content that cannot be edited in a few minutes.

After determining what edits can be made, use a tool like Google Analytics to determine which pages of the company website receive the most traffic. Use this information to prioritize the changes determined from your content analysis. Once prioritized, you can take an Agile approach to updating the website and content.

If using Google Analytics, you can easily pull and export information on [web traffic to pages](#).

- 1 Open Google Analytics and navigate to the appropriate property view
- 2 Under *Behavior*, select *Site Content*, then *All Pages*
- 3 Pages are typically sorted automatically by page views

This view shows which pages are most viewed on the website. You can prioritize changes depending on which pages are viewed most by visitors and what changes will be most noticeable.

Prioritization should also take into consideration landing pages and exit pages. Landing pages are pages that users first see when visiting a website. For instance, the report will show which page visitors most often see first.

To access [top landing pages](#) in Google Analytics:

- 1 Go to *Behavior*
- 2 Click *Site Content*
- 3 Click *Landing Pages*

Pages are automatically sorted by page sessions, but information is provided on the pages' bounce rates and conversion rates. This report is helpful for identifying which pages are effective at converting visitors into contacts. You can prioritize changes based on the most valuable landing pages.

Exit pages are the pages that users last see before leaving a B2B website. Prioritizing work based on exit pages allows changes to be made to pages that are not engaging. Content on these pages can be edited to be more engaging and keep users on the website longer. Consider adding additional offers to infographics or blog posts on these pages as well.

To access the [exit pages](#) report:

- 1 Go to *Behavior*
- 2 Click *Site Content*
- 3 Click *Exit Pages*

Also, consider evaluating visitor behavior on high traffic pages. Tools like Hot Jar provide heat maps of areas seen most by visitors. The heat maps can be used to determine if visitors focus on one part of a page more than others. For example, if users rarely scroll down the home page, be sure to move important CTAs to the top.



Review Conversion Data

A website is only as valuable as the demand it helps generate. The critical component of **monetizing a B2B website** is using it to collect information on new contacts. Relevant and updated content should be compelling enough to get users to supply their emails via calls-to-action (CTAs).

The first step to cleaning up CTAs is to map all of them currently on the site. Use a spreadsheet to record the page URL, page title, and CTA copy, link, views, and clicks. Once each CTA has been mapped, cross-reference the page URLs with the data collected in the traffic analysis. Page views and conversion rates from the page analytics will help **determine which pages are highest priority for updated calls-to-action**.

Consider a website home page that receives 3,000 views per month. The page features a prominent CTA towards the top of the page, and the CTA has only received three clicks. With a click-through rate of 0.1%, this CTA is not doing a good job at converting visitors to contacts. The high traffic of the home page and the poor performance of the CTA place this as a high priority fix.

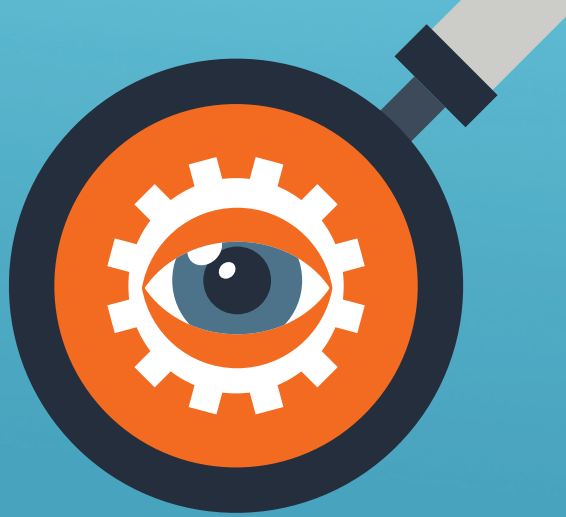
After prioritizing CTAs that should be changed, brainstorm better incentives that can be added in their place. Are there CTAs that perform really well that could fit? Is there a case study that better supports the information on the page? Should you create new content or CTAs?

With regular maintenance of these three core categories, any B2B website will be primed to drive leads and make lasting positive impressions.

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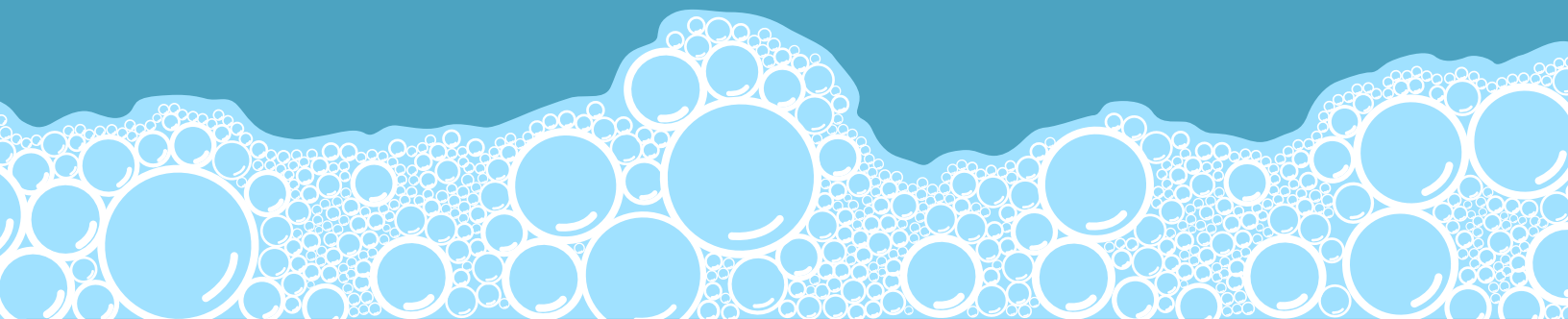


SEO

Over the years, “SEO experts” have tried to find shortcuts to influence search engine rankings. Examples include hiding keywords in the background of websites and hiring hourly workers to create new backlinks all over the internet. Each time a new scheme is developed, search engine algorithms are updated to punish offenders.

The most dangerous SEO shortcuts often result in bad backlinks: those haphazardly scattered across the internet, sometimes by an “SEO expert,” with no rhyme or reason. Search engines penalize websites for bad backlinks to encourage the creation of useful, reliable content.

Even if you’re not engaging in link schemes, bad backlinks can occur by mistake. Without proper monitoring, they can accumulate like dust. If that’s the case, it’s important to grab a feather duster, roll up your sleeves, and get to cleaning.





Identify Bad Backlinks

Before hopping into the bad, let's focus on the good. Good backlinks are those from trusted sites. For instance, a mention in the Harvard Business Review that cites your recent study on improving supply chains is a great backlink. This is due to influence. The Harvard Business Review is a trusted, known entity for business intelligence, and to have your study mentioned means that they, in turn, trust your information.

Now for those bad backlinks. To begin cleaning them up, you need to choose a tool to identify and organize the backlinks your site has accrued. Depending on the level of information and analytics you require, you can choose from among many tools. They include Ahrefs, Monitor Backlinks, and Majestic SEO, which focus on backlinks, and services such as Hubspot, which are more comprehensive marketing platforms that also have built-in backlink tools.

After choosing the right backlink tool for your company, one that aligns with your goals and budget, the next step is to delve into the data. Here are a few quick ways to start separating the wheat from the chaff.

1

Check the country of origin by looking at top-level domains (TLDs). The legitimacy of these backlinks will vary based on the nature of your business, but let's assume, for instance, that you're running an ice cream shop in San Diego, California. It would stand to reason that any backlink from Antarctica (TLD - .aq) might be a bit out of the ordinary and need further review.

2

Sort your results by domain quality. Most backlink tools will provide a way to rank the domains that are linking to your website (sometimes called a domain rating or domain authority). Sort based on this criterion to determine backlinks that are not providing value. If your tool doesn't provide this capability, you may be able to determine if a backlink is good or not by looking at each URL or visiting the site (Tip: Be careful about visiting URLs that you are not familiar with).

3

Identify links from blog comments or other links that seem out of place. There may be instances where the link comes from a quality domain, but doesn't make sense for your company. These, too, should be prioritized for cleaning.



Request Removal

After you've identified the backlinks you'd like removed, having the links taken down comes next. Because the links exist on web properties that you do not control, the path becomes a bit thornier. In fact, you may not be able to remove all your bad backlinks (you can and should, however, disavow any bad backlinks, which we will cover in the next section).

You'll need to contact the webmaster of each of the sites where you have a negative backlink. In some cases, you may be angry that the link is there in the first place, but **remain polite, and, most importantly, be specific about the link you want to be removed.** This will save the webmaster time and increase your chances of having it taken down. Finding webmaster contact information may be another roadblock, but free services such as ICANN's and WHOIS can enable you to search for registered domain owners. If you're having difficulty writing an email, there are multiple templates online you can use to get started.

Allow some time for the webmasters to respond to your request – as you can imagine, it might not be at the top of their to-do list. If they respond with a request for payment in exchange for removing the link, move on and mark that one to be disavowed. **Never pay someone to remove a bad backlink.**

Requesting removal of backlinks is a lot of work (and in the end, you may only get between 10% to 20% of the links removed). The process, however, is necessary in cleaning up your site. One last step to removing stubborn backlinks is creating a disavow report for Google. Think of it as dusting those hard-to-reach areas behind the refrigerator.

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Disavow Bad Backlinks

The Google disavow tool is a way for webmasters to tell Google which links are good and bad. It should be used only after all other steps are taken to remove unwanted backlinks.

As Google notes:

This is an advanced feature and should only be used with caution. If used incorrectly, this feature can potentially harm your site's performance in Google's search results. We recommend that you disavow backlinks only if you believe you have a considerable number of spammy, artificial, or low-quality links pointing to your site, and if you are confident that the links are causing issues for you. In most cases, Google can assess which links to trust without additional guidance, so most normal or typical sites will not need to use this tool.

To use the tool properly, you'll need to create a text file containing only the links you want to disavow. You can also renounce entire domains if you have tried to remove multiple links from a single source.

Now that you have a clean backlink profile, it's important to continue using a tool to monitor new links to your site on a more regular basis. Develop a process and cadence that is easy to repeat to keep your backlink profile dust-free.



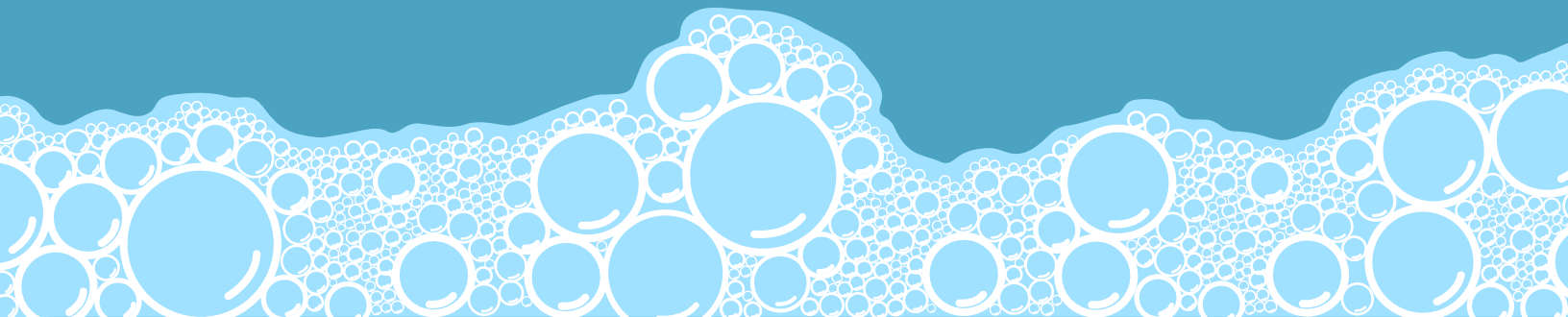


Tools

We've entered into an era of technology abundance that helps us do our jobs more efficiently, improves collaboration, and provides important insights to help us stay more competitive. In fact, Gartner has predicted that CMOs will spend more on technology than CIOs in 2017, with larger firms spending on average 13% of annual revenue and smaller companies spending 10% of annual revenue on marketing technology.

However, even though spend and adoption are increasing, the ability to utilize these tools is not. Walker Sands found that only 59% of companies surveyed rate their ability to fully leverage their tools as "excellent" or "good." That means organizations are leaving money on the table.

We have every tool imaginable at our fingertips – project management, collaborative, social, PR, email, content – and the proliferation can become overwhelming. To rein in the chaos, look at your current tools to ensure that your company isn't wasting money, letting old programs collect dust, and missing opportunities by not using your tools to the fullest.





Run an Audit and Declutter

1 Run a Tool Audit

To help you find out which tools you have and which you regularly use, run an audit. In a shareable spreadsheet (such as SmartSheets or Google Sheets), document each tool, who has access to it, logins and passwords, pricing, date your subscription ends, features, how often you use it, and what the tool is used for. This audit will help your organization keep track of all the necessary information about your tools, especially if the employee who originally set up the subscription is no longer available. Share this spreadsheet with your entire team and ask people to update it every time a new tool is added.

2 Declutter

Unlike an overabundance of forms, landing pages, or contacts, too many tools will end up costing your company money. Utilize the tool audit spreadsheet to help your team evaluate each tool. Discuss which are driving your company forward and increasing efficiency and which are not being used and wasting money. Also, check to see if any of your tools overlap and offer the same features. For example, are you using three different social media tools that allow you to schedule posts, engage with contacts, and monitor your channels? If so, it's time to consolidate and choose the tool that will bring the most value to your organization.





Look at New Technology

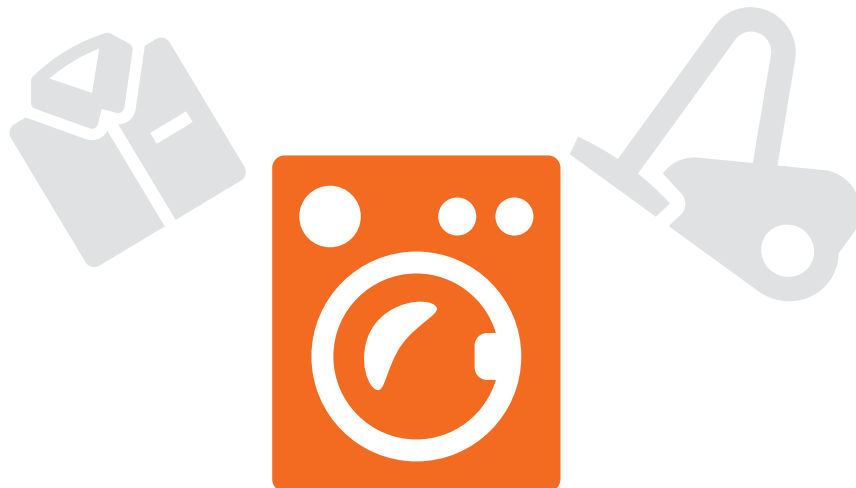
1 Conduct Research

While reviewing your tool audit, look for gaps in your tools. Could business processes be automated to improve efficiency and save your employees time and money? If so, research platforms that could fill in the gaps. You might also find new tools that also accomplish what a current tool does. This is a strategic way to consolidate and bring additional value to your organization. Also, look into the platforms you use and see if they've released any new features. Most software programs release updates and features you can add throughout the year.

2 Evaluate New Opportunities

HubSpot has found that one top marketing challenge for companies is identifying the right technologies to fit their needs. To make that process easier, build a spreadsheet that outlines pricing, features, the length of subscription, and how a tool could benefit your organization. Before deciding, establish a budget, have multiple team members try a demo or free trial, and research whether it integrates with your existing tools. That way, employees who would be using a tool can help determine whether it would increase their productivity and fit your organization. Make sure to be strategic when adopting new technology and establish a process for adding tools in the future.

Going forward, maintain your tool audit and evaluate new software thoroughly before adoption. Also, add training and adoption documents for each tool so new employees can easily get certified in each platform.

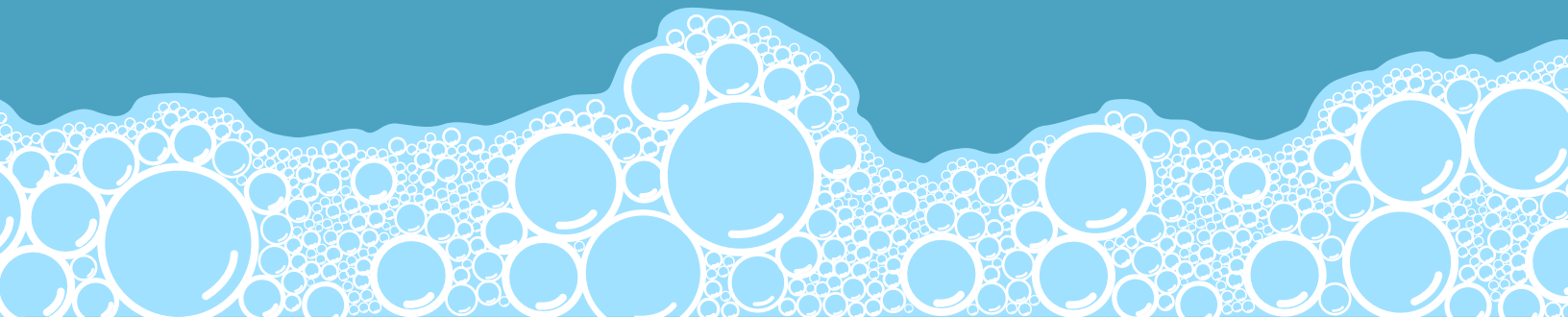




Social Media

Your organization's social media profiles are an important part of your marketing mix. They increase brand recognition, often serve as the first point of contact between your business and prospective clients, lend credibility to your reputation as a thought leader, and provide your customers with an easy way to communicate and stay up-to-date on the latest news from your organization.

However, when other initiatives are competing for your time and attention, it can be easy to take a "set it and forget it" approach to your social media accounts. As a part of your marketing spring cleaning, now is a good time to take a step back and see what's working or what needs a refresh.





Assess Platforms and Content

1

Evaluate Platforms

Start with a quick audit of all the social media platforms your company is using. Do you have an old Google+ profile that hasn't been active in the last six months? How are each of your profiles performing? Look at metrics like referrals, engagement, and audience growth. Are you in the right place to reach your target audience? Make sure you're clear on your goals for each platform, too. Do you care mostly about growing your following, or are fewer, more meaningful interactions with the right people your focus? Don't get caught up in all the analytics, but do take some time to make sure the broader social media strategy you have in place is still right for your company and its goals.

2

Identify Top-Performing Content

Time to dive a little deeper into the data available to you from each social media account. Pull data from the past six months and look at the content that provides the most shares, engagement, likes, etc. See if you notice any trends. Do posts with photos outperform posts that are just text? Does your audience get more engaged when you ask a question or post a relevant stat? What content are they consuming the most – videos, white papers, infographics? Identify a few topics that also resonate with your audience so you can be sure to frequently incorporate them into your social content. Check out what your competitors or influencers in your industry are doing with their profiles. They might provide fresh approaches to content that you can adapt and make your own.

3

Check Your Branding

You should have consistent imagery, colors, branding, and messaging across your social accounts. There's a little wiggle room for variation (for example, your tone on LinkedIn might be a little more formal than on your Facebook page), but people should experience the same brand voice no matter what platform they use to engage with your company. If you've recently gone through rebranding or updated your company's messaging, your social accounts need to reflect those changes. You should also check for updates to social media platforms to see if they made any changes to image size or profile layouts. You may need to resize profile images or add page background images depending on the updates the platforms have implemented.



Update Passwords and Automate

1

Update Password Logs and Users

Security is a big concern with online activities. Make sure you have all logins and passwords documented securely for employees that may need access to social accounts. If you've had employment changes, add the appropriate new users and remove access for people who no longer need access to your accounts. Check the admin and security settings of your accounts to ensure that backup email addresses or the main point of contact for your accounts is up-to-date and assigned to the right person.

2

What Can I Automate?

A final step is to make the management of your social media accounts easier. Can you automate posting with a tool like Buffer or Hootsuite? Do you have any automated response messages set up for Twitter followers? Many tools can help with different aspects of your social media, but that doesn't mean they're all right for your company. Go back to those goals you set for yourself, and see what tools can help you more effectively reach them.

If you follow the steps above, your company's social media will operate more smoothly and you can be confident in how your company will be represented if prospective clients are researching your brand. You should look at the performance of your accounts on a monthly basis, but consider doing this full audit every six months or so to keep your accounts clean and up-to-date.

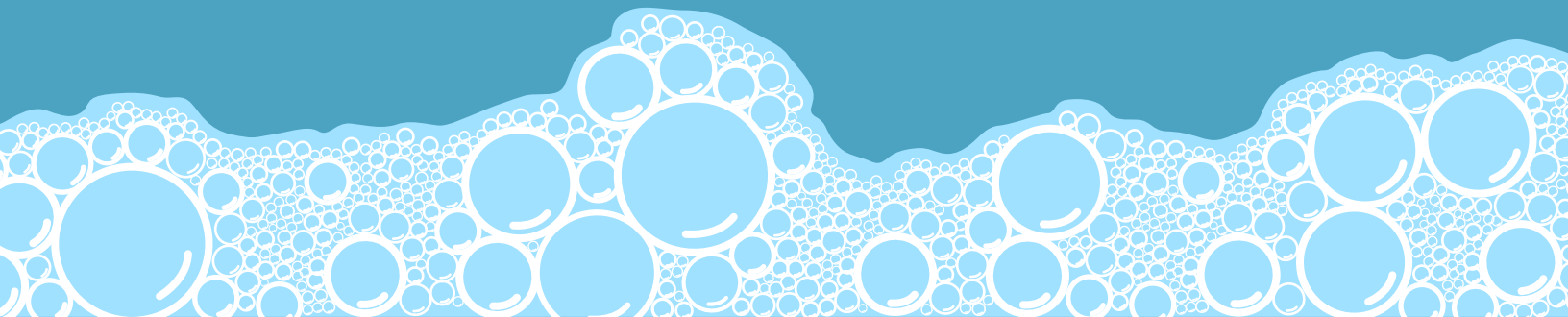


An illustration of a white hand with an orange sleeve pointing its index finger towards a single white bubble. The background is a solid blue color.

Your marketing program deserves the same love and attention as your home.

Likewise, it's easier to do small chores regularly than undertaking a massive clean-up every few years. But if this spring cleaning list is too much for you to handle all at once, break it up into smaller pieces and address one area at a time (Tip: one per season). Or delegate to your team members and have them report back on their findings so you can make more strategic decisions about what is working and what needs to be tossed.

**Now, go shake the dirt off that duster
and watch your marketing program bloom!**



About



— Marketing That Sells® —

B2B companies seek out Marsden Marketing's results-focused expertise as a full-service digital marketing agency that integrates digital marketing and PR to accelerate clients' brand positioning and propel their lead generation programs. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Marsden Marketing serves both emerging and established B2B clients with a strong focus in the technology and professional services markets.

To speak with a marketing specialist to learn more about how we can help drive marketing success in your organization,
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