Top 7 Ways to Become a Better Digital Marketer by @SEOBrock

With the digital marketing industry exploding and competition as fierce as ever, it’s important to be on top of your game.

Whether you’re just starting your career or looking to improve your skillset several years in, here are the top seven ways to become a better digital marketing expert:

1. Take Online Courses

You work online, so why not learn online as well?

There are countless resources out there, most of them completely free, where you can learn new skills, discover advanced techniques, and broaden your digital marketing horizons.

Not only will these courses and certifications help with the resume, they’ll also help you better accomplish tasks in your daily work life.

A great starting point is Google Academy for Ads, where you can get training on everything from Google AdWords and Analytics to the principles of mobile site design and digital sales.

I started this training back when it was the Google Engage Program, and the resources have only grown from there.

To learn more about SEO, take courses with the SEMrush Academy, or dip your toes into inbound marketing with HubSpot Academy – both free options.

Ready to learn code? Sites like Codecademy have good free courses, with paid portions for more in-depth training.

There are always paid sites (e.g., Udemy, Lynda) with hundreds of courses where you can learn everything from graphic design to project management.

The best digital marketers are sponges, absorbing any and all training available.

Whether it relates directly to your job or is tangential, don’t turn away an opportunity to learn.

2. Consume Digital Marketing Resources

Taking courses requires a pretty serious time commitment, but there are micro learning opportunities that you should embrace as well.

Read industry publications like Search Engine Journal on your morning commute. Follow industry leaders and experts in SEO, PPC, and interesting CMOs on Twitter and check in on your lunch break.

Set up Google Alerts for key terms in your industry. Keep a close eye on the company blog for big players like Google and Facebook.

Not only will you stay up-to-date on breaking industry news, you’ll also be exposed to really interesting concepts and conversation. Build on these ideas in your work life.

3. Speak at Events/Conferences

Speaking at events is one of the best ways to gain confidence and show your skills and experience in an interactive format.

Early in my career I attended a local SEMPO conference and was approached to see if I would be interested in speaking at their next event. This was exciting but scary as it would be my first major speaking gig, never mind in front of a group of experienced marketers.

In speaking at this one event, I had the opportunity to network with local marketers and learn from their experience.

As a young entrepreneur, this was crucial as I was trying to soak up all the knowledge I could and learn from the successes (and mistakes) of others.

It was a thrilling but intimidating experience. Your first presentation doesn't have to be in front of a crowd of experts.

Perhaps try doing a workshop with small business owners, doing a guest lecture with a small class of students, or just chat with people looking for introductory concepts in digital marketing.

Looking to get your foot in the door? Try starting out with a local digital marketing meetup which can expose you to networking and conversations without the pressure of a big talk.

Make relationships naturally and the opportunities will grow from there.

4. Be a Content Creator

There is no better way to improve your digital marketing skills than to create.

Writing and talking about digital marketing will help you refine your own concepts and values, and you're sure to do research that will expose you to new ideas as well.

- Maintain a personal blog or write articles for your company, if the opportunity is available.
- Host or guest on a digital marketing podcast.
- Do video, whether it’s something as simple as Facebook Live when you have something to say.
- Post on social media and engage with others.
- Host or participate in a webinar.

You don’t need to re-invent the wheel, just stay active and keep your mind open.

Also look for the opportunity to repurpose, expand, or condense content. If you write an in-depth guide, use the same concepts in an infographic or talk about them in your next vlog.

5. Volunteer Your Time

Volunteering is a great way to expand your horizons while making a difference.

If you work as an in-house marketer, volunteering can expose you to new industries. If your job is focused on one specific offering like social media you can get experience with another offering like paid ads through volunteer work.

In my early days as a digital marketer, I helped a local charity enroll in the Google Ad Grants Program. This made a huge difference for the charity, as they had few resources and no expertise in the fields of paid advertising digital marketing.

At the same time, it exposed me to another side of paid advertising and gave me the know-how to be able to recommend this amazing program to clients. This experience was also quite fulfilling, and there’s nothing better than making a difference while improving your own skills.

Volunteering provides networking opportunities and can lead to

future business. I can’t count the number of times I have helped a person or business with a small favor, only to land a big client due to the connection down the road.

6. Experiment

Experimenting is one of the best ways to expand your skills.

This is much easier to do early on in your career when you potentially have more time to play around. As your role or company grows, there tends to be less available time for experiments and fun projects.

One of my most successful experiments was when I did a live SEO case study and maintained a public journal throughout the process.

One day when I was browsing on Flippa I noticed the site FreeSEOReport.com had sold for over $100,000. Just out of curiosity I looked up FreeSEOReport.ca (as I’m in Canada) and it was available for registration.

That jumpstarted the idea of building a lead generation site and documenting the experience step-by-step. The live case study ended up being a pivotal moment in my career as it gave me exposure internationally within the digital marketing community.

The thing I’ve always disliked about SEO is many experts try to claim it’s some “secret” or “magic” offering. I strongly believe in process and transparency.

Anyone who is patient and follows a (very long) series of steps can get results.

The live case study reinforced these values by showing the exact steps needed and the results generated without any fluff.

This was an experiment that I conducted for myself and I learned a lot from the process of live journaling, built relationships with followers, and used the experience and knowledge I gained to further my career and grow my business.

There are many ways you can experiment, whether it’s simple A/B testing of copy, to launching a fun site where you can experiment to your heart’s content because there is nothing on the line.

The real thrill is that the principles you learn in the gimmick experiment could be applied to your work for a multi-national client, once the hypothesis is proven.

7. Get Experience

Experience comes with time, making mistakes, and learning from them. There are many traits that will help you gain experience in a meaningful way.

As a digital marketer, you will find success if you are:

- Dynamic.
- Open-minded.
- Inquisitive.
- Relentless.
- Resilient.

Eliminate “I can’t” from your vocabulary.

Refuse to stay in the comfort zone.

Embrace challenges as opportunities and be a problem-solver.

Challenge yourself to learn something new every day.

No matter how insignificant it may seem, when you reflect back these small accomplishments translate into meaningful skill development.

Conclusion

Nobody enters the workforce as an expert digital marketer.

Today’s industry leaders all started somewhere. They’ve risen to the top of their profession by embracing these principles and dedicating themselves to personal growth and evolution.

You can embark on the same journey.

Study and learn in your own time. Devour industry resources and follow thought leaders to stay on top of innovative developments.

Speak at events and create content to start contribute your own voice and ideas to the conversation. Volunteer your time to make a difference while growing your skill set, and experiment to learn what works – and what doesn’t.

Finally, embrace every challenge as an opportunity to get more experience. Look back, and you’ll see how far you’ve come as a digital marketing professional.

More Marketing Career Resources:

http://tracking.feedpress.it/link/13962/9012733