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EXPERT VIEW on digital: Keith Feighery

Keith Feighery, of Digital Insights

IN THIS EDITION OF 'EXPERT VIEW', WE SPEAK TO KEITH FEIGHERY OF DIGITAL INSIGHTS.

The onset and spread of Covid-19 has resulted in a lot of changes around the world – both on a personal and professional level. And social distancing measures have seen many industries temporarily pivot their business to an online model.

Digital marketing expert, Keith Feighery, whose company specialises in 'the whole range' of digital marketing and advertising services, says during the current crisis, it's vital for businesses to be on top of their digital presence and be very focused on their target market.

"Your website is key so I would encourage people to invest in it; be aware of how it looks and ensure it portrays your brand in the best way possible," he says. "It needs to be functionally smooth, work well on desktop or mobile, be fast and easy to use and if there is a payment and checkout system, it needs to be optimised to make sure it's working smoothly and efficiently.

"And on top of the website being fit for purpose, it's vital to look at how accessible it is – it could be the most wonderful site in the world, but it will be no good if people

don't know about it – so use digital marketing and social media to make sure it's findable online. This can be done through paid media on search and social or using search engine optimisation to ensure your site ranks well with Google and other search tools."

The digital expert also says it's important to measure activities to find out what is working or not working for you. And he believes there's something for everyone online, providing they know how to target their audience.

"Some businesses have been slow to move online, as they previously may not have been in a position to deliver their service digitally," he says. "But they can pivot towards a service-based website and look at how they can capture leads, generate calls and process bookings through their site. And those offering a service will also need to look at how they are generating business, how easily they can be found and how well they are getting the message across about what they do.

"The delivery mechanism is also important – most consultancy and training businesses, whether they wanted to or not, have had to move online – and for those who were caught on the hop when the crisis started, now is the time nurture their business, expand it and learn how to market themselves efficiently online."

Social media plays a key role in this and Feighery says rather than creating a presence on any or every platform, businesses should take a step back and look at how they want to be perceived, who their target audience is, and where this demographic gravitates to online.

“It’s important to understand your audience and their informational needs, provide value to them online, nurture the relationship over time and ultimately provide an excellent end-to-end service whether that be selling a product online or generating and delivering services to them.”

And while many companies have had to pivot very quickly to an online model, the Dublin-based expert says working remotely is something everyone needs to get used to as it’s here to stay. “The genie is out of the bottle for a lot of industries as while many people were resistant to working remotely, we now know the ability is clearly there,” he says.

“Obviously there will be a move back to a physical type of work but the crisis has sharpened people’s focus on the need to really improve their digital footprint as behaviours have changed since the onset of Covid-19, as has their threshold for accepting businesses online.”

Feighery says the accessibility of the Trading Online Voucher, available from Local Enterprise Offices around the country, has been of huge benefit.

“Covid-19 has impacted everyone, some more than others, but no-one has got away unscathed from its effects,” he says. “Everyone, from our neighbours to our colleagues, are now working from home, where possible, and from our perspective, the training side of the business has been very buoyant as more and more people have been looking intensively at the online side of their business.

“And this is where the Trading Online Voucher is proving invaluable. It has always been a great offer where LEOs would match 50% of the cost of helping companies build a digital presence and footprint - up to €2,500. But now they are offering 90% of the funds, again up to €2,500, so businesses only have to come up with 10%. This is fantastic. So, I would definitely encourage businesses to look into this.”

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Key Advice:

- All eligible businesses employing up to ten people should avail of the Local Enterprise Office Trading Online Voucher Scheme. Second vouchers are also available, for upgrades.
- Being aware of target market and understanding how to reach them is vital for all businesses working online.
- A good website and the right social media marketing will help businesses to make the most of their online presence.
- Remote working is here to stay, so it is important to be digitally prepared for the long term.

Keith’s Website Checklist

1. Ensure it’s Mobile friendly and it loads fast
2. If trading online ensure you have a SSL certificate
3. For ecommerce sites ensure a smooth checkout process
4. If you’re a service based business develop lead capture forms
5. Invest in great imagery that best represents your business [compressed in file size]
6. Ensure your content is written for humans but also optimised for search engines
7. Remember your website should evolve over time. Keep it fresh and update it regularly
8. Research using Google and Social ads to drive the right audience to your website.
9. Connect your site to Google Analytics to measure performance
10. Publish a data privacy policy on your site