

INSIDE: Focus on Wyomissing & West Reading • New Online Marketing Plan • Steps To Closing Your Small Business

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JUNE 2019

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BRIAN WELCH
and **TIRAS BUCK**



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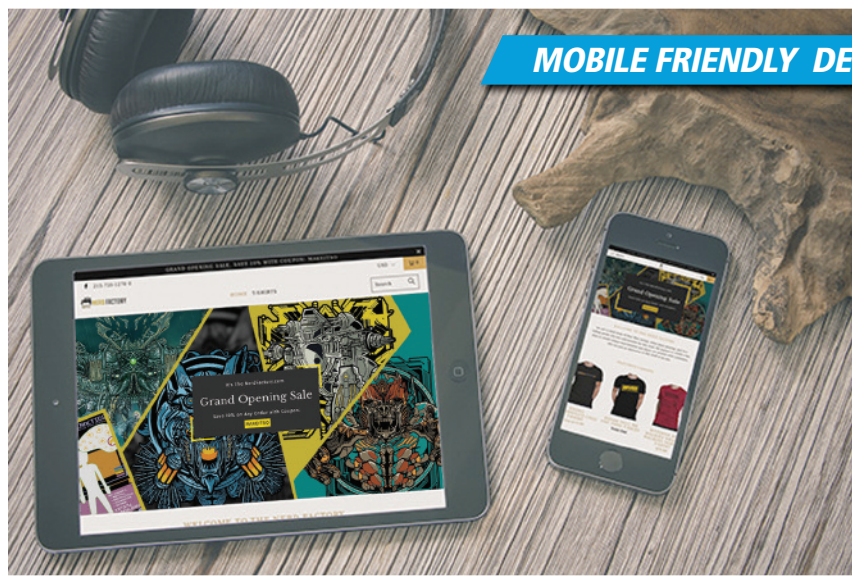
Whether you are a white or blue-collar professional services provider, a contractor or subcontractor, a restaurateur, a retail business, or virtually any type of small business owner — the digital marketing landscape can be confusing and daunting. You have a company website, but how do you optimize it in terms of functionality, mobile-friendly design, and SEO to generate business leads and attract new customers? You have social media accounts, but how do you manage them effectively utilizing frequent organic posts with relevant content and paid advertising to grow your client and customer base? As a service provider or retailer, how do you generate positive reviews for your business to cultivate your online reputation and enhance your Google SEO ranking? And how do you do all this within a manageable monthly budget and realize a significant return on your investment?

Enter Amity Digital, experts in all aspects of digital marketing, from website design, hosting and maintenance, to local and global SEO, to branding, to reputation and social media management and online advertising, to ecommerce services and more — Amity Digital does it all!

Amity Digital's approach is based on building a relationship with clients. They want to work with you to ensure your website is a profitable extension of your business. "For us, it's not about building a website, set and forget it, and move on," explains Amity Digital Founder and President Brian Welch.

"There are a lot of companies that will charge you a super low price for a cookie-cutter website and then you never hear from them again. Our whole approach is that the website is the beginning, not the end of the relationship," he explains. "We have to do a great job on that website. We have to deliver on time. We have to be communicative. We have to build it to the standards that we recommended. But after the website is built, the customer has to have a good enough experience to say, 'I'm also going to pay you to do the local SEO,' and it has to pay off for them.

MOBILE FRIENDLY DESIGN



They have to get a 10 times return on their investment in us," Welch said. "For us it's about making sure that that customer is happy, that it's working for them, and that they are interested in continuing to do business."

The birth of Amity Digital, launched in February of this year, is the stuff of legends. The company founders were owners, managers, and employees of the largest Superhero Ecommerce store in the world — SuperHeroStuff.com. In ten years, they went from employing three people working tirelessly in a basement, to thirty-five people working in a 15,000 square foot facility, growing the business nearly 5,000 percent before selling it to another ecommerce company. Having succeeded in this unique business endeavor, they were ready for their next adventure — Amity Digital.

So much has happened to the online business world in the last 10 years, and Brian Welch and his team were there to see it all. Experiencing growth at an unprecedented rate, they were constantly learning new things, executing new strategies, and reaching — and shattering — all sorts of expectations. Collectively, the professionals at Amity Digital have a lifetime (in Internet terms) of experience, and they want to put that experience to work for you. Combining their years of experience in operating web-based businesses with their knowledge of current trends, technology, and digital marketing techniques, they are ready, willing, and able to serve your needs in this exciting, ever-evolving marketplace. They have perfected strategies for applying a wide range of digital services and techniques to present your products or services effectively to a broadening online audience.

SERVICES OFFERED

BRANDING

Your brand will be one of the most important things you build and cultivate for your business, and it all starts with a well-designed logo. "For us, the website design will all start with the logo," said Brian Welch. "We take the logo first. If they already have one, we base the design off how that logo looks. If they don't have one, we work with them to come up with one. A good website design starts with the logo and name of the business, so people remember who you are and what you do. The brand has to have something substantial there that makes people recognize you as you and correlates to what you do, and all of your marketing gets built off of that — your banner ads and your Facebook presence should have your logo on it."

No matter the size of your business, it's absolutely necessary to have a brand.

Your brand is the summation of everything you are as a company. Don't settle for an uninspiring logo that fails to stand out. Invest in your business and develop a brand identity that will help people remember who you are — an instantaneous and captivating representation of your services that will become immediately recognizable to new and proven customers.

WEB DESIGN

A successful presence online starts with a good design. Your website must inspire confidence, be easy to navigate, and work equally well on thousands of mobile devices while guiding visitors exactly where you want them. "But it should also be driving sales," Brian Welch explains. "It's not just a digital post card that people look at to verify who you are. It should also be a way people are finding you."

(Continued on page 8)

FREE WEBSITE EVALUATION



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COVER STORY

(Continued from page 7)

DIGITAL MARKETING

And that second piece is where a lot of local small businesses that don't have a technical background fail. For us, the website is step number one, but it's only the beginning. The next step is making it work. Driving real leads to the business."

Responsive Design has never been more important. Most people – at least 50 percent – are viewing your website on a mobile device. Your site must be able to conform to the various display screens of mobile, hand-held devices. You have one chance to make a first impression, so make sure your website looks equally fantastic on smartphones and desktop computers.

"Mobile is actually important for two reasons," Welch said. "One is usability. People want to be able to look on their device. Google recognition is a second and maybe even a bigger reason because they went to a mobile-first index, meaning they decided that they're going to stop paying attention to your desktop website because more than half of their traffic is being done on a mobile device. Because of this, they're going to rank you based on the quality of your mobile site. Can the content be read without pinching and expanding? If not, you're not going to come up on mobile results nearly as often as your competitors do that might be mobile friendly. So, it's important because people are not going to navigate your site, but it's also important because they are not going to find you. Google is going to drop you or push you down in the rankings."

No matter what stage your business is in, Amity Digital can help – whether it's a face-lift, a simple update, or a complete, from-the-ground-up web design. Amity Digital wants to be your partner, and that partnership starts with building a website that actually grows your business.

A website isn't enough. You need targeted traffic that converts. Today, the Internet boasts over one-billion websites. Your website is just one tiny bubble in a vast, bottomless sea. It should be an incredibly powerful, feature-filled extension of your business, and it should drive real traffic to your doorstep. The tools and resources are there, you just need to know how to use them.

Amity Digital is a full-service digital marketing agency and they are ready, willing, and able to help drive customers right to your new digital doorstep. Their team has extensive experience in the digital marketing world, and they overcame every conceivable challenge accompanying the creation of a successful online business by implementing aggressive but very effective digital marketing strategies, including: Local SEO; Reputation Management; Social Media Management; Facebook / Instagram Ads; Paid Search; Email Marketing; and Content Marketing.

"We can manage the social media accounts where people will send us the content, or we can create the content," Welch said. "It comes down to time. People don't necessarily have time to do a post and to write, so they'll just take any old picture, post it, move on with their day. We take the photos. We make sure they look presentable. We post them on Instagram. We use the right hashtags. And then we follow up with it. We're staying on top of comments, likes and engagement. The more you engage with those posts, the more Facebook's algorithm says, 'OK let's show it to more people.' We would consider that organic social media, meaning free. That can only get you so far. Facebook's algorithm has ensured that only a certain percentage of your audience will ever see it if it's free," he said.

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"Then we manage the ad spend," he continued. "We come up with a strategy. Boosted posts are always a small part of the strategy, and that's just to help engagement on the page. That's to say 'We posted something new. Please come look at it because you'll never see it unless we pay for you to look at it.' And then we place actual Facebook ads. That's more outreach. We're hitting cold audiences with an offer or something to introduce them to that thing, or we're targeting people who have visited their website and had a great experience. We do both the paid and the organic. In this day and age, you can only get so far with organic. If you want to have a big impact on social media, you almost have to have a paid strategy. There's no way around it anymore, especially on Facebook," he said, adding, "Facebook's ad platform is what powers Instagram's platform. When we talk about Facebook ads, it's really Facebook and Instagram. Facebook is on the decline. Instagram is on the rise, but you really have to do both."

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Never has your online reputation mattered more than it does today. Prospective customers and clients expect an established business to have online reviews, and if they can't find those reviews, they'll immediately question the legitimacy of

your business. And if you have reviews but they're mostly negative, potential customers are never going to reach out to you no matter how inaccurate those reviews are. It's imperative in this day and age that a company controls its destiny and manages its own online reputation.

"About 89 percent of consumers go online to check reviews before they contact or hire somebody," Brian Welch said. "If you look at just millennials and younger, that figure jumps to 97 percent. They are brought up with reviews and there is nothing that they are buying or doing without looking first to see what your reviews are online. And they want to see that you have multiple reviews, and that they are recent," he said, adding "You have to solicit those reviews."

Amity Digital's reputation management system makes it easy to request reviews from your clients, but there are several more advantages to utilizing this proven system. In addition to requesting a review, it guides clients in a way that encourages positive feedback to be left online for all to see. Negative feedback is sent to you first and privately, so you have the opportunity to respond before the review goes public. This clever review structure will never eliminate negative reviews, but the flow of this system gives you a chance to rectify a customer's questionable experience before

they act on their perceived anger and provide a spiteful, perhaps hostile review.

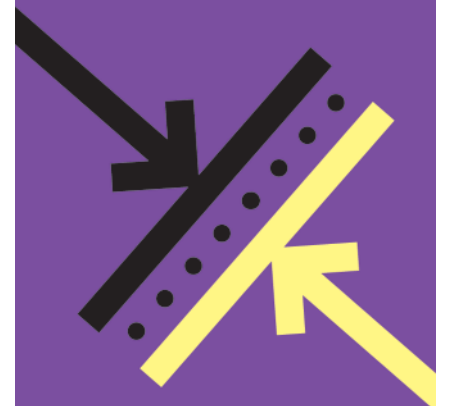
Good online reviews deliver a one-two punch for your business. The most obvious benefit? Consumers want to see reviews before giving you their money. The second benefit, and equally important: Websites with good reviews rank higher on Google. Google looks at your overall rating, how many reviews you have, and how recent your last review was when determining how to rank you. "Google wants to see that you have high reviews, and that you have a lot of reviews," Welch said. "And it will use that to determine how to rank you. It's a factor but not the only factor. It's one of the factors particularly for local listings. It's much more important for local than a national search result."

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

The whole point of SEO is to optimize your website for Google's algorithm — this helps rank your site in the top of the search results for keywords you want to appear for. Sounds simple enough, but it can become rather complicated. Google is an ever-evolving search engine that uses well over 200 signals to determine how your website should rank.

(Continued on page 10)

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COVER STORY

(Continued from page 9)

Some of those signals appear on your website, while others appear on other websites in the form of citations, back links, and social media mentions. Some of these signals are things that are harder to control, like the age of your website and the history of your domain name.

“Google wants good user experience,” Welch explains. “(Your website) has to be fast. There has to be social signals, whether it is you or other people talking about your site, mentioning it, interacting with your posts on Facebook and Instagram and Twitter and any social media. If there’s no social media presence and nobody’s talking about it, then Google’s algorithm is going to say, ‘If nobody’s talking about it, why should we?’ They want you to go to their website. They want you to search for something. They want you to find what you wanted. And then they want that website to deliver and be fast enough. If any of those pieces are broken, then Google didn’t deliver the user experience it wants and it’s not going to show that site as often.”

At least 75 percent of all traffic for a particular search goes to the results on the first page, and the majority of that traffic goes to the top three results. Amity Digital has industry veterans who have been working in this field since before Google was a thing. Their process starts with an audit which leads right to an actionable plan to tackle the changes and improvements you can make to better rank your website. They will discuss your goals and formulate a strategy that makes sense for your business and your area of service.

LOCAL SEO

Local SEO is a subset of SEO, but for a local business, it’s an important aspect that should be handled differently. When we’re talking about ranking a site locally,

we’re not talking about the regular search engine page results – we’re actually talking about your listing on Google Maps. When someone searches for a local service (e.g., a restaurant or store in the area), Google generally places what is called the “Local Pack” at the top of the page. When you click through one of the results in that local pack, you’re looking at Google Maps. These same results are an indication of how you would rank if people were using the actual Google Maps app to look for your service in their immediate vicinity. Ranking in the Local Pack and on Google Maps is an essential part of any local business’s online strategy, and Amity Digital specializes in helping clients with their on-page and off-page optimization to rank well locally.

If you run a business that primarily serves a local customer base, your main priority in terms of your digital marketing strategy should be to rank in the Local Pack. Keep in mind that results are personalized to every individual that searches, so you may not show up in the same position for everyone in your service area that performs a search; however, you can show up for the majority of those people looking for your business.

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"We focus on local service companies like plumbers, HVAC, landscapers, architects, anybody providing a service to other people where somebody would be searching for them" Welch said. "Google has something called Google My Business. It's a pretty important piece to optimize. It's what shows up when they show Google maps. You have to be optimized on Google My Business. That's one of the many signals that are out there. There's tons of stuff to look at but you have to pick your 15 that you're going to be good at and hope that the rest fall in line," he said.

ECOMMERCE SERVICES

Turn your products into cash by selling them on your own online store. No matter how big or small your operation is, Amity Digital wants to help you grow. They don't have any scary agency minimums, and no shop is too small or large for them to consider. If you have a pesky problem that needs fixing, or an inspiring idea that needs expressing, the professionals at Amity Digital will put their hard-earned experience, creative thinking, and collaborative, client-focused strategies to work for you. They have experience in every aspect of Ecommerce, including design, technology, cataloging of products, warehousing, fulfillment, product development, and more. Ecommerce was their first love and they want to put their passion and experience to work for you.

"Ecommerce is where we have the most experience" Welch explains. "We have a photo studio so we can do all the product photography. A big part of selling anything is to have good clear images. We have people who can write the product descriptions that are compelling, with good grammar, SEO friendly. We will do all the web design. Shopify is our preferred platform. So, if somebody comes to us because they want to set up an ecommerce store, nine times out of ten we're going to set them

up on Shopify. We will do all the design work and maintenance, SEO, and then we also do a lot of the paid marketing. We can do paid Facebook ads. Google has an extension called Google Shopping. Those are all paid. You can't get any traffic unless you are paying. We can do pretty much everything from soup to nuts. From starting the website, designing it. Maintaining it, helping them do their social media, and doing all their advertisements and product photography and product descriptions, however much or little they want us to do," he said.

WEB HOSTING

Amity Digital Web Hosting offers a safe and secure home for your website. They know that uptime, reliability, and support are the cornerstones to a phenomenal web hosting experience, and that is exactly what Amity Digital aims to deliver each and every day. They have packages to suit every stage of your business, from inexpensive starter accounts to fully managed dedicated servers. Don't see a package that works for you? No problem. Contact them with your specific needs and they'll create a custom web hosting plan that works for you and your website.

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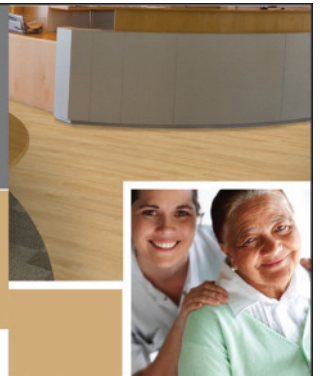
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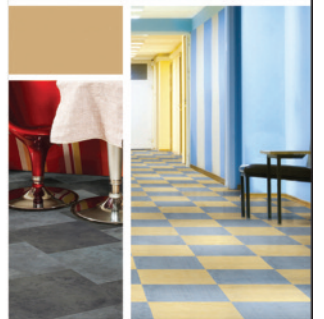
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