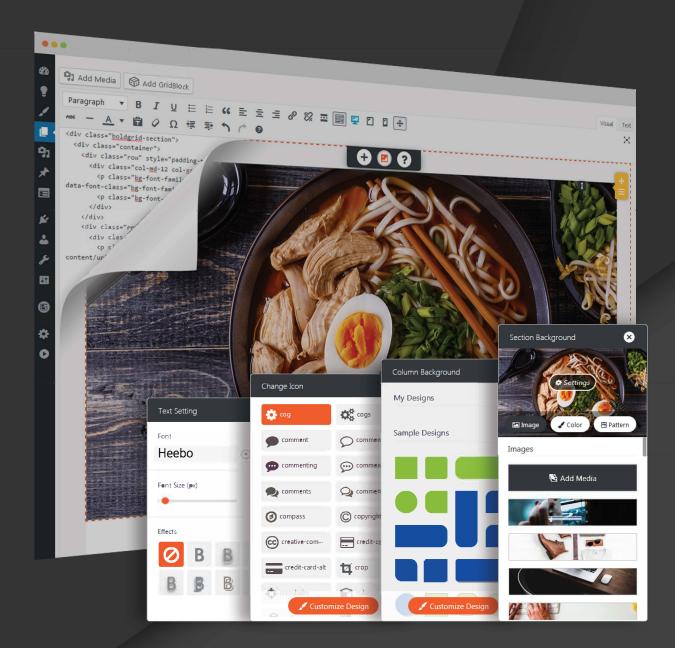# BOLDGRID

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
BUILDING AND MARKETING
A SUCCESSFUL RESTAURANT WEBSITE

Christopher J. Pendergraft

Introduction

Building and marketing a website often seems like a daunting, near-impossible task. I'm not going to pretend like it's not difficult -- because it can be. However, with the right guidance and the proper tools, you'll find that the process is extremely fun and rewarding -- intellectually, emotionally, and financially.

I started my digital marketing career over a decade ago in an era that -- looking back -- seems like the Wild West. We didn't have helpful guides (like this one) to carry us past all the misinformation and sometimes dangerous "tips." We also didn't have intuitive, inventive website creation suites like BoldGrid to make the process as easy as possible.

So, believe me when I say that it could be worse. You're now in an era of technological empowerment, where anyone, including yourself, can most definitely build AND market a beautiful restaurant website using BoldGrid. This guide will point you in all the right directions to find success.

I recommend reading through the entire guide once to "see the big picture," and then go back and follow along. **Let's get started!**

Building Your Site With BoldGrid

What Pages Will I Need?

Every restaurant's needs are different, but you'll most definitely need the following:

Homepage

Your homepage needs to make an immediate impression on your potential customers. The easiest way to accomplish this is through photographs of your food selection or, if your restaurant has nice ambiance, photographs of the establishment itself.

Examples

http://junctionmoama.com.au/
http://www.pixel-industry.com/html/royal-plate/
http://www.pennquarter.citytap.com/

The homepage also makes an ideal place to **INTRODUCE** your restaurant's "mission" or guiding principles. For example, if your restaurant sources all its ingredients locally and adheres to sustainable practices, introduce that on the main page as a value proposition. You don't want to go into too much detail here -- save that for the "About Us" page. However, you definitely want to capture the attention of the audience you're targeting.

About Us Page

On the "About Us" page, you'll reiterate your restaurant's driving mission and history. You'll want to include standard information like operating hours and restaurant policies. If there's a dress code, or if you require reservations, make sure this is where you

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You might want to include a small image gallery with your best food selections. Some people won't want to navigate through the entire website to see pictures of your food. Thus, you could argue that pictures of your food might sometimes be even more important than the menu. However, the main page probably shouldn't be monopolized by a huge gallery of pictures, as it is extremely important real estate. Generally, 4-8 pictures should suffice, but choose wisely.

put them.

An About Us page also makes a great place to discuss any services your restaurant offers, like catering for events, space for weddings, etc. Take a look at the examples above for more information.

The best place to show off images of your restaurant's food selection and ambiance, creating a large gallery of images on your About Us page makes a lot of sense. Just make sure it's after the basic information about your restaurant.

You may also want to post short profiles of your staff and their backgrounds--especially if you're building a website for a restaurant operating in the fine dining marketspace. Testimonials are also very helpful.
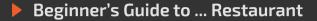
Menu Page

Every restaurant website needs a menu page. It doesn't have to be complicated; just a list of your food selections and prices. If you want to give this page some extra flair, place an image of every menu item beside its listing.

In some cases, if you have a digital copy (an Adobe pdf, for example) of your in-house store menu, you can link to that directly.

Contact Us / Reservations

Your contact page should include a web-based contact form (included with BoldGrid), your restaurant's phone number, and its physical address. In most cases, if you properly filled out these fields in the Inspiration phase, your pre-built Contact Us page that comes standard with BoldGrid themes should fill in

these details for you automatically. If it does not, you may need to add information about booking reservations.

For More Information on Editing Your Contact Page
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/editing-your-pages/editing-the-contact-page/

For More Information on Embedding Forms on Other Pages
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-boldgrid/how-to-embed-wpforms-on-pages-and-posts/

[Optional] Order Online
You may also want to build an "Order Online" page to sell food and merchandise through your website. OpenTable is a popular online reservation platform that allows you to take reservations or sell food through your website.

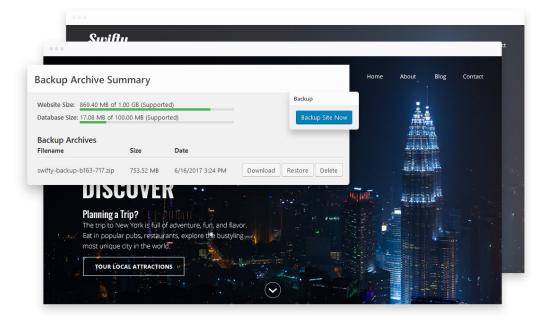**For more information on WooCommerce, click here**
http://www.opentable.com

Configuring Automated Backups

Website crashes can be extremely stressful, with the potential of throwing your entire business into disarray. If your web host uses cPanel or Plesk, you already have backup options available to you. However, these backup tools aren't necessarily the easiet to use -- especially for beginners. For more information on using those backup solutions, contact your web host's support team.

BoldGrid's Backup Plugin is an automated solution that allows you to secure, restore, or move your website with ease. Before you even begin to build your site, let's go ahead and configure BoldGrid's built-in automatic backup feature.

Use the following guides to configure the backup plugin for WordPress. We recommend performing daily backups using the BoldGrid plugin, and using the plugin's download option to store the data locally on your computer at least once a week. The premium version of the backup plugin allows you to automatically store your backups on Google Drive, Amazon S3 or Dropbox.

For More Information on Configuring the Backup Plugin with WordPress
https://www.boldgrid.com/wordpress-backup-plugin/
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/advanced-tutorials/how-to-configure-backups-in-wordpress/
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/advanced-tutorials/restoring-boldgrid-backup/

For More Information on BoldGrid Premium
Sign up for an account at BoldGrid Central, your central hub for all things related to your BoldGrid account -- https://www.boldgrid.com/central/
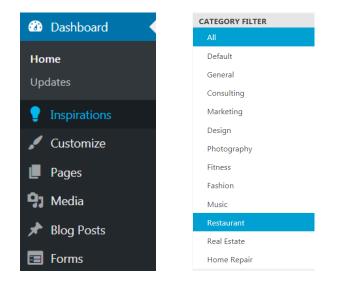
Choosing an Inspiration

Choosing your website's design can be a nerve-wracking experience, and isn't one to be taken lightly. After all, your website may serve as a person's first exposure to your restaurant.

There any many ways to approach the issue -- here's one method. Start out by visiting the websites of other restaurants that are similar to your own and note what you like and dislike about them. From your notes, develop a list of three "I love this / must haves," and three "I hate this / can't haves." Now you have a baseline to work from. Whether the "can't haves" are absolute deal breakers (or you can't live without the must haves) are up to you -- but now, you have guidelines that allow you to judge designs or themes.

BoldGrid helps alleviate some of the pressure with its Inspirations Plugin. Inspirations are BoldGrid's collection of themes complete with pre-made content tailored to every industry. From the Inspirations panel, you can browse and preview 200+ responsive BoldGrid themes, as well as desktop and mobile views. You can also use the Inspirations panel to select page sets and install your theme.

To get to the Inspirations page, login to your WordPress administration panel, then click the "Inspirations" setting on the left toolbar.
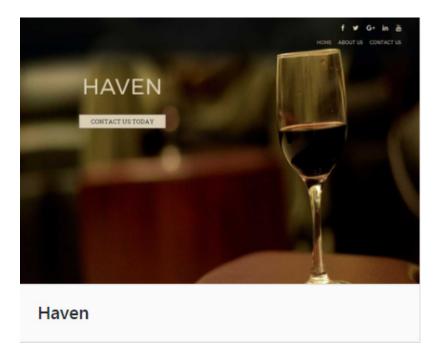

Simply click on the "Restaurants" tab under the "Category Filter," then browse through the wide selection of Inspirations until you find one that fits the "personality" of your restaurant.

💡 Pro**Tip**

If your establishment offers upscale dining, you may want to choose an Inspiration with a focus on clean lines, simplicity and a heavy focus on photography ("Haven," for example). Gastropubs and sports bars may opt for something edgier. Or, you can mix it up however you like. Once you reach the Customization Phase, you'll be able to fine tune your website however you see fit.

Click on your preferred Inspiration, then click the "select" button at the bottom of the page.

After selecting a pageset, which allows you to choose the default pages that will be installed with your Inspiration, click the "Next" button at the top of the page.

Once you select your Inspiration, BoldGrid will prompt you to enter in a bit of basic information: your company name, e-mail, phone number, address, etc. Your responses will integrate into your selected Inspiration, automatically adding Google Maps functionality, contact forms, and more.

Pro**Tip**

Including your physical location and details will allow you to properly show up in a Google search for something like "restaurants in my area." BoldGrid makes this easy for you by allowing you to fill out a single form and then populating the proper areas on your site with the information you enter.

You can learn more about Inspirations from the following resources:

https://www.boldgrid.com/wordpress-page-templates-inspirations/

https://www.boldgrid.com/support/getting-started-in-inspirations/

Staging or Live

Once you've chosen an inspiration and installed it, you'll be asked if you want to make your site live or put on staging. BoldGrid's staging functionality allows you to build your website in a sandboxed environment -- meaning, the general public can't browse and see the website until you make it public. This way, you can develop your website without worrying about anyone stumbling across it before it's done.

The Customization Phase

Once you've chosen whether to build on a staging or live site, you'll be directed to the Customizer. Here's where the fun begins. The Customization Phase allows you to easily edit your website using a simple, point-and-click interface that lets you see the results in real time. Take a look at the short video [or animated image] below for a demonstration:

Using the Customizer, you can easily change logos and color schemes, adjust fonts, edit page widgets, and more. See the three clickable icons at the bottom of the Customizer? These switch the "view" of the Customizer, allowing you to see how your page will look on a desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

Pro**Tip**

If your restaurant has any media buzz surrounding it, it may be wise for you to use a "splash page" plugin to advertise your restaurant's launch, give out contact information, etc. You won't want to lose any potential media contacts or business opportunities because your website isn't complete.

Starting with the **Site Logo tab** -- here, you change the site title, add taglines, change the font and position of the taglines, add shadow effects, and more. You can also upload your site logo and site icon, which will appear in the upper left corner.

The next tab, Colors, is an extremely useful tool that's unique to BoldGrid. The Color Palette tool lets you change your entire website's color scheme with a single click. You don't even have to worry if the colors "match" or not. BoldGrid handles all of that for you. You simply choose from the four default palettes (under the "Saved Palettes" section), or use the "Suggest Palettes" button to have BoldGrid generate a beautiful color scheme for you. As you click through the various color schemes, the preview area of the Customizer will update, allowing you to see your new color scheme in real time.

Pro**Tip**

I'm going to assume that you already have a logo for your restaurant. If you don't, here's a few resources to help you get one designed:

https://www.designcontest.com/
http://www.99Designs.com
http://www.designcrowd.com

Design Contest, 99 Designs, and DesignCrowd are marketplaces for graphic designers. Basically, you set a budget, and designers will send proposals for your business. Visit their websites for more information.

Pro**Tip**

If your establishment offers upscale dining, you may want to choose an Inspiration with a focus on clean lines, simplicity and a heavy focus on photography ("Haven," for example). Gastropubs and sports bars may opt for something edgier. Or, you can mix it up however you like. Once you reach the Customization Phase, you'll be able to fine tune your website however you see fit.

For more information, click here: https://www.boldgrid.com/support/customizer-how-to-use-the-colors-tab/

The Background tab allows you to choose, edit, and modify your website's backgrounds. While there's an incredible number of options and possibilities in this section, don't become overwhelmed. The interface is very intuitive, self-explanatory, and easy to use while still giving you complete control of your website.

Pro**Tip**

Remember that your background will most likely be the first thing a visitor sees, as it's the largest element on your site. If you're going with a food selection, make sure it looks absolutely delectable. A visitor should want to come to your restaurant just because it looks that delicious.

For more information on **backgrounds**, click here: https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-the-customizer/customizing-the-theme-background-with-the-wordpress-customizer/

The Fonts tab allows you to change all the fonts on your website while seeing those changes in real time. When you click the Fonts tab, you'll be taken to a sub-menu where you can choose to adjust the fonts for either the Menus, the Headings, the Subheadings, or the Main Text. From there, you can choose from over 200 Google fonts, as well as change the font size and capitalization options.

Pro**Tip**

If you need help with selecting fonts, visit http://fontpair.co/. Font Pair makes suggestions on Google Fonts that complement each other, as well as allowing you to edit the text for a live preview.

For more information about changing fonts from within the Customizer, click here:

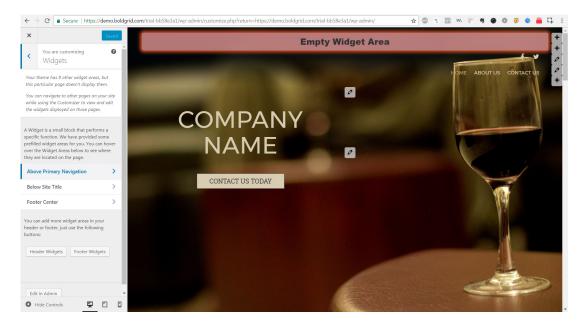https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-the-customizer/how-to-change-typography/

The Widgets menu allows you to add various widgets to your website. Widgets are small "blocks" that perform specific functions. For example, many blogs will place a "Recent Posts" widget on the sidebar that'll show recently posted articles. When you click the Widgets tab, you'll be taken to a submenu listing the available widget locations on that particular page.

Holding your mouse over the various submenu items will bring up an indicator on the Customizer live view highlighting the widget space's location. Clicking a location will then allow you to add available widgets to that location. You can also click the "Header Widgets" and "Footer Widgets" buttons to increase the number of widget slots in those locations.

For more information on adding widgets using the Customizer, click here: https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-the-customizer/how-to-edit-widgets-from-the-customizer/
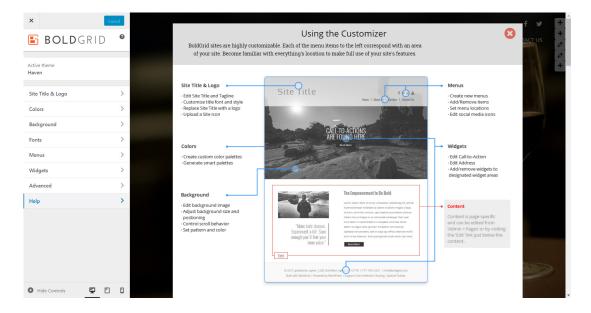
The Advanced tab allows you to change which page visitors see when they visit your domain, how many widget slots are available for the header and footer, and also add custom javascript and css modifications.

For more information on the Customizer's advanced settings, click here: https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-the-customizer/advanced-customizer-options/

And last, but not least -- you can always click the "help" option to get a quick guide on using the Customizer.

Building Pages

While the Customizer will allow you to edit many of the more global settings on your website, you'll need to use the Page Builder to create new pages or fine-tune the content on existing pages. You'll also need to use BoldGrid's included Image Gallery plugin to create stunningly beautiful galleries to showcase your food. Let's take a look:

The Page Builder

Once you've finished adjusting settings in the Customizer, you'll want to build, edit, and fine-tune your website's content. That's where the Page Builder comes into play. BoldGrid's Page Builder Plugin is completely unique, providing a true drag-and-drop WYSIWYG experience for WordPress without having to deal with shortcodes.

Using BoldGrid's Page Builder, you can easily drag-and-drop text, rows, or columns of content, as well as resize and rearrange them -- all from the WordPress frontend.

An integral piece of BoldGrid's Page Builder. Gridblocks are pre-built page sections of varying layouts comprised of pre-populated content. You can edit Gridblocks with the visual editor, or switch to the text editor and edit the HTML and/or CSS directly. You can also save Gridblocks you've created or edited in your Gridblock Library, allowing you to easily place those Gridblocks on other pages.

For more information on the Page Builder, click here:
https://www.boldgrid.com/wordpress-page-builder-by-boldgrid/
https://www.boldgrid.com/adding-items-with-boldgrids-page-builder/
https://www.boldgrid.com/editing-sections-with-page-builder/

Image Gallery Plugin

Beautiful photos of your restaurant and its food selections will be integral to the success of your website. BoldGrid's Gallery Plugin seamlessly replaces the standard WordPress Create Gallery feature, making it an intuitive and easy upgrade. Simply choose the images you want to display and the style in which to display them. Then drag and drop your new photo gallery exactly where you want it.

For more information on using the Image Gallery plugin, click here:
https://www.boldgrid.com/wordpress-gallery-plugin/
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/working-with-media/how-to-create-image-galleries-for-your-boldgrid-site/

What Pages Will I Need?

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On the "About Us" page, you'll reiterate your restaurant's driving mission and history. You'll want to include standard information like operating hours and restaurant policies. If there's a dress code, or if you require reservations, make sure this is where you put them.

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For More Information on Embedding Forms on Other Pages:
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/using-boldgrid/how-to-embed-wpforms-on-pages-and-posts/

[Optional] Order Online

You may also want to build an "Order Online" page to sell food and merchandise through your website. OpenTable is a popular online reservation platform that allows you to take reservations or sell food through your website.

For more information on WooCommerce, click here:
http://www.woocommerce.com
https://www.boldgrid.com/support/e-commerce/quick-start-e-commerce-with-woocommerce/

Marketing Your Site

Introduction

Congratulations! By now, you should have a basic, functioning website. Before you launch it, however, there are a couple of things you'll need to set-up and configure to maximize its success. First, you'll want to use BoldGrid's SEO Plugin to ensure all your pages follow proper Search Engine Optimization principles.
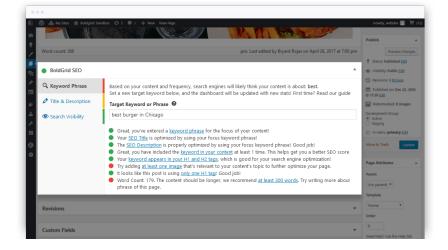
What is Search Engine Optimization?

You've probably already heard of search engine optimization, or "SEO." SEO is the philosophy and methodology used to optimize your website so it'll rank higher in search engine results. Following proper SEO procedures can lead to an increase in "organic," or "natural" website traffic consisting of people searching for relevant terms in a search engine.

Pro**Tip**

Delving too deeply into Search Engine Optimization is beyond the scope of this guide. However, for more information on the art and science of SEO, check out: https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo

Fortunately, BoldGrid has a full featured search engine optimization tool built into it. BoldGrid's SEO Plugin analyzes your page content in real-time and makes recommendations to help you maintain best SEO practices. On-page content is one of the most important factors in SEO, and BoldGrid's SEO Plugin grades your content to make sure your site will qualify as a relevant search result for a particular phrase. All you have to do is set a target keyword or phrase, and BoldGrid's SEO dashboard will automatically give recommendations.

Before launching your site, you'll want to go back and use BoldGrid's SEO Plugin on every page to make sure each of your pages follow proper SEO Principles.

Need Help Determining the Best Keyword Phrase for Your Page? Start Here

https://www.boldgrid.com/support/seo/keywords/

https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo/keyword-research

Get Started With BoldGrid's SEO Plugin

https://www.boldgrid.com/support/seo/

Collecting and Converting Leads

So, your restaurant website has been running for a few weeks. You're steadily A/B testing the various elements and slowly, but steadily, improving your website's overall performance. What's next? Now, you'll want to start collecting LEADS and converting those leads into PAYING CUSTOMERS.

Pro**Tip**

We recommend conducting a bit of keyword research to see which keywords are most popular and for which keywords your competitors rank. You can either conduct super low-level keyword research and search for something like [your area + type of restaurant] (for example, "denver steakhouse"), or you can invest in an keyword research suite, like Moz's Keyword Explorer (which lets you search 20 keywords a month for free): https://moz.com/explorer

The strategies here are endless, but most of them start with a single basic principle: offer your website visitors something valuable in exchange for their contact information.

Collecting the information is easy enough -- you can use WPForms (included with BoldGrid) to create contact forms to collect the information, or you can use one of the many "pop-up form" plugins available on the web. Many email marketing service providers (which we'll go over in a minute) include pop-up functionality, as well.

For the Plugin Route, We Recommend "Ninja Popups," Available Here
https://codecanyon.net/item/ninja-popups-for-wordpress/3476479

Remember, people won't just hand over their contact information without good cause. You'll have to offer something worth their trouble -- and in the long run, collecting this data is worth it. There's an old marketing adage that says, "the money's in the list." By list, they're referring to your customer list. As you collect these e-mails, you'll want to import them into an e-mail marketing suite, preferably one with email automation functionality.

E-Mail automation allows you to setup automated mailing campaigns that go out to your e-mail list over a set time period or if your customers takes certain actions. For example, you could setup a campaign that emails your customers a coupon immediately after they sign up on your website, and if a customer doesn't open that email, send a follow-up email three days later to remind them of their coupon.

Pro**Tip**

The valuable thing you use to induce customers to give you their contact information should be something with a minimal soft cost. For example, in exchange for their e-mail address, you could offer a one-time use coupon for a free appetizer or free drink with the purchase of a meal. The acquisition cost of that lead would be extremely low, and once they redeem the coupon, you've not only successfully converted that LEAD into a SALE, you can also send them future promotions and information since you've collected their contact information.

A Few Popular eMail Marketing Suites:

Mailchimp: www.mailchimp.com

   Arguably the easiest and quickest to start using

Aweber: www.aweber.com

Constant Contact: www.constantcontact.com

GetResponse: www.getresponse.com

   Known for their amazing e-mail automation tools

Most of these services offers free trials and plenty of help integrating with your website. All of these services offers e-mail automation, but GetResponse is known for it's advanced automation functionality. If you're just starting out with lead collection and email marketing, you might want to give MailChimp a try. It's easy to use and great for beginners, while still maintaining enough features to appeal to power users too. Give them a try and see what works for you.

For More Information on E-Mail Marketing

https://mailchimp.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-field-guide/
https://blog.kissmetrics.com/beginners-guide-email-marketing/

So, What's the Next Step

Now that you've finished and launched your site, it's time to start getting in front of people. After all, your end goal is to get people to see your website and ultimately become a customer.

Run, don't walk to: www.google.com/analytics and sign up for Google Analytics. A FREE, full-featured analytics suite, Google Analytics allows you to track and report your website traffic. It's the most widely used analytics service on the Internet -- over thirty million websites, according to BuiltWith. Google Analytics will help you track, measure, and analyze your visitor traffic. It's easy to use and incredibly powerful.

Once you sign up for Google Analytics, you'll have to add a small snippet of javascript code to your website before you can track your visitors.

Need Help Installing Google Analytics? Here's a Great Guide to Show You How
http://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-install-google-analytics-in-wordpress

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💡 Pro**Tip**

Google offers completely FREE beginner and advanced courses on using Google Analytics. You should definitely take advantage of them. https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/

Advanced Marketing Techniques

All About A/B Testing

A/B testing allows you to test various forms of marketing material against one another to determine which is more effective. For example, in a basic A/B test, you'll determine a goal, like increased reservations, or online food purchases. Then, you'll send equal amount of traffic to two variations of the same page with minor changes, recording which page performs the best.

What can you A/B test? Anything that could potentially affect your visitor's behavior. That list includes (but isn't limited to):

Headlines
Website Copy
Testimonials
Links
Buttons
Images
… and more!

Check Out These Guides For More Information on A/B Tests
https://www.optimizely.com/ab-testing/
https://vwo.com/ab-testing/

Example A/B Tests
A basic A/B experiment for a restaurant, for example, could test the background images on the homepage to see which variation prompts a higher numbers of reservations. Or, you could switch out various pieces of copy and see which performs better.

A more advanced A/B test could examine positioning of food listings on the menu page (more expensive items first or last). Or, if you're really adventurous, you could play around with food prices.

Ultimately, you want your A/B test to show you the effectiveness of a particular marketing decision and decide how to proceed in the future. Called "data-driven marketing," it's arguably the most effective marketing philosophy of the modern age.

When conducting an A/B test, it's crucial that you don't get emotionally attached to a particular outcome. Once you start testing, you'll find that many of your experiments don't go as planned, that the variation you thought was going to win ends up losing significantly (or vice versa). Ideally, it won't matter to you which variation wins, because you're going to then test that winning variation against a new idea. In this way, you incrementally improve the performance and design of your marketing collateral over time. There are many services that will allow you to easily conduct A/B tests.
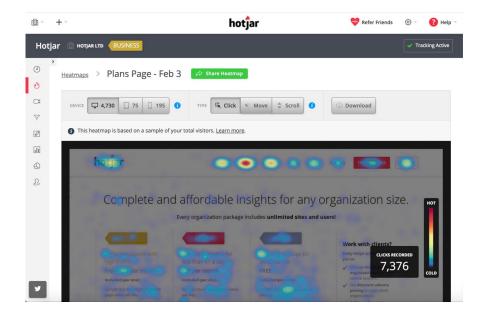

ProTip

We recommend Optimizely for running your experiments. Optimizely allows you to easily execute A/B tests by handling everything on their side. The service automatically segments and routes traffic to the test pages and records which page performs best. We'll let them market their own service, since we're sure they've conducted plenty of A/B tests and they know exactly what works! Optimizely also has a WordPress plugin in the repository, making it easy to get your experiments up and running. Check out Optimizely here: https://www.optimizely.com/

After the conclusion of an A/B test, you'll want to analyze the results and see if you can determine why a page failed or succeeded. Heat map analysis is a good way to start.

A **visual representation** of how people interact with your website, a heat map lets you see where they click, how far down the page visitors scroll, etc. In a nutshell, a heat map shows you what your users are most interested in -- data you can then use to adjust your website accordingly.

To Recap the Process

1.   Develop a goal for a particular page or piece of marketing collateral.

2.   Ex: Increased conversions, improved on-page engagement, etc.

3.   Develop the test variations.

4.   Set up the experiment in Optimizely or another split testing suite.

5.   Once your testing suite determines the winner, use Hotjar to assist in analysis of why that variation won.

6.   Your winning variation is now your new baseline. Create a new A/B test against that page.

For More Information on A/B Tests

https://www.optimizely.com/ab-testing/

https://www.shopify.com/blog/12385217-the-beginners-guide-to-simple-a-b-testing

For More Information on Heatmaps

https://www.hotjar.com/heatmaps

https://conversionxl.com/blog/heat-maps/

Pro**Tip**

For generating visitor heatmaps, we recommend using Hotjar: www.hotjar.com

Conclusion

Well -- that was quite a journey! It doesn't stop there, though. Marketing is always evolving. That's a good thing. There isn't a single "right" way to connect with people, because that's what marketing is all about: conveying a message that evokes an emotional response in your customers. Emotion is the prime mover of us all, and leads to ACTION.

Marketing is about exploration of self and others. Don't be afraid to explore. Don't be afraid to get things "wrong." As long as you keep exploring, you'll eventually find treasure after treasure after treasure.

So… get out there and make mistakes, learn lessons, and make money!

Hope you enjoyed the guide, and make sure signup for our newsletter at http:// www.boldgrid.com/blog for the latest BoldGrid news, marketing tips and more.