Dear Client,

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

Best wishes

John Harrison

MICROSOFT OFFICE FOR ANDROID DEVICES

Microsoft has launched Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps for Android devices that pack all the tools a business user could want. You'll need a Microsoft account to use them; without one, you can only view files stored on your device or from your cloud storage accounts. This is quite different to other mobile office apps, such as WPS Office, which allows users to make edits without signing up.

Though each app has its own purpose and set of features, they all look very similar with a bright colourful design and simple layout. They have simple controls that will feel familiar if you've used Office on a desktop computer. For example, each app has a menu bar at the top of the screen containing formatting options and other editing tools. Additionally, if you have an Office 365 subscription (starting at £7/month for the cheapest plan) you can access advanced features such as 'Track Changes' and 'Page Breaks' (in Word).

Besides allowing you to open any Office files you have saved to your device, the new apps allow you to sign into your Microsoft account to open any Office files you've stored in OneDrive. You can also connect your Dropbox account to the apps in order to access any files stored there.

Despite some shortcomings, the apps are a significant improvement on 2013's Office Mobile, a free Android app that allows you to view and make small edits to documents. Historically, an Office 365 subscription was required to use Office Mobile but this is no longer the case. The app is still around for those with older Android devices running 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich and up, but if your device has Android 4.4 KitKat, the new Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps are intended to replace Office Mobile.

Microsoft's new suite of Office apps for Android devices delivers the robust features that earlier apps failed to. They are designed simply with smart, familiar layouts that mimic their desktop counterparts. For basic editing and reading files on-the-go, they do the job and then some.

GETTING YOUR CONTENT RIGHT

We often hear that content is very important for digital marketing, but sometimes it is difficult generate ideas for new posts. Here are a few ideas for content creation to help keep your customers engaged:

Product or Service Tips
Offering some quick tips on how to use your product or service will create content that's useful, practical and shareable. Tips don't necessarily have to include a specific call-to-action; instead they can be used to stay at the top of customers' minds, a useful ingredient in creating sustainable relationships.

Customer Stories and Testimonials
Customer stories and testimonials can be great sources of content because you don't have to do much of the writing yourself. You might also end up with more stories or photos than you can fit into one piece, so you can save some of this content for future posts. This type of content is effective because the customers who have submitted it will often want to share it around themselves. This is an excellent way to get authentic stories out there about your business.

A Piece on Trends
People always love hearing interesting facts and statistics. This type of information is also easily shareable, so a few simple and interesting stats or facts can go a long way. Perhaps your business can conduct a customer survey and share some statistics about your particular market sector.

Customer Case Study
If current or prospective customers are thinking about using your product or service, the best way for them to figure out if you meet their needs is to hear about a situation in which you helped another customer. Showcasing the story of a customer and how you helped to solve their problem can be ideal for painting the picture of how your business works. Case studies can take the form of an interview, visuals of the customer using your service, quotations about how they used your product or even a full presentation of their story.

Photos of Your Customers Interacting With Your Product
Not only do photos count as content, they can actually be the most engaging - in fact, over 80% of a Facebook Page's engagement happens on photo posts. That's a pretty astounding number - you'll find similar statistics for other social networks too.

Answer a Customer's Question
If your customers are asking you questions via your Facebook Page, Twitter, phone or in person, you have some idea of what people want to know. Take the opportunity to answer common questions you receive on your website, as this will allow people to easily access information about common questions.

MONTHLY NEWSWIRE

HOW TO DESIGN EMAILS FOR SMALL SCREENS AND MOBILE DEVICES

How do you check your email? If you're like most people, it's often on a much smaller screen than the one you were using just a few years ago. Today, more and more emails are opened on a mobile device. So, when it comes to your business's approach to email marketing, you need to make sure your messages look great no matter what size screen your audience is using. You also need to think about how people are reading and interacting with your emails in today's increasingly mobile world.

Formatting

An easy way to make your emails more mobile-friendly is to use a single-column template. This will make it easy for people to see all of your information without having to click to zoom in. People consume information differently on a smaller screen. One of the biggest differences is how quickly they can scroll through and scan information. As such, you should format your email content for people who like to scan. Start with a short header message that sets up the content people are about to read. The copy that follows should be clear and concise. Replace lengthy paragraphs with short, snappy sentences that let people know what you're doing, why it's important to them, and what action you'd like them to take. You should also avoid lengthy paragraphs that can slow down the reader and distract them from giving your content the attention it needs.

Images and Branding

Include an eye-catching image that helps the reader connect with the message you're sending out. Bear in mind that on many mobile devices, images won't display automatically and some will turn off displaying images by default. As such, it is important not to overload your email with too many images and to always make sure you have text to provide the details people need.

Strong Call-to-Action

Now that you've set your message up to work well on mobile, the last step is to make sure your readers clearly understand the action you want them to take. If you want people to show up to an event, or call to place an order, it is important to clearly state what you want them to do and give them the information they need to take action. If the next action is online - to visit your website, register for an event etc. then you should include a link that's visible and easy to click on any screen size. Remember that on mobile devices, your readers need to be able to use their finger to click or scroll. Avoid stacking multiple links or putting different links too close together. Whenever possible, add a button that's easy to click from a phone's small screen.

THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing has become a normal part of doing business these days. This kind of marketing has gained popularity because it is effective in reaching a wider target market, since a huge number of customers spend their time online. Mobile devices have made this even easier because customers and targets can access the internet on-the-go from any place and at any time. Here are a few of the benefits of digital marketing, as opposed to more traditional methods:

Reduced costs

An online marketing strategy is easy to put together and costs very little compared to traditional methods of marketing. Radio, TV and print advertising can be costly compared to digital marketing. Digital marketing levels the playing field for businesses, as it doesn't matter if your firm is small or large. With a solid marketing strategy, a small business can do just as well as larger businesses.

Real Time Results

One of the big advantages of digital marketing over traditional options is that it will offer you real time results. You don't have to wait for weeks to start seeing a result. You can monitor traffic to your website, click through rates, views and likes as they happen. You can then use this data in order to tweak your approach and improve your success rate.

Greater Exposure

By focusing on digital marketing you potentially put your business directly into the hands of your target market - through their smartphones, tablets and computers. Social media has made it much easier to reach your target market and more than ever, people are researching products and services online.

Greater Engagement

By visiting your website, reading more about your services and products, reviewing your business, rating your service and 'liking' your company updates your target market can engage with your brand in more ways than ever before. Digital marketing also helps to encourage prospects, followers and clients to take a particular action. With the right call to action, you can encourage your targets to make a purchase decision and potentially even buy directly from your company online.

John Harrison & Co
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Please contact a member of our team if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.