

## West Lothian Start Smart Programme Week Three

### AI Generated Recap

#### **Quick Recap**

Gary delivered a comprehensive session on Digital Marketing Essentials, covering fundamental requirements for businesses to succeed in the digital space and discussing various marketing strategies including SEO, content marketing, and email marketing. He emphasized the importance of a business website as a central hub for digital marketing efforts, while highlighting the risks of relying solely on third-party platforms and the need for strong customer engagement across multiple channels. The session concluded with discussions on social media platforms, engagement metrics, and content creation strategies, including upcoming training on AI tools for content development and homework assignments for participants.

#### **Next Steps**

- All participants: Complete the assigned homework task by selecting four potential digital marketing channels (including a website and one unfamiliar platform), and for each, describe the platform, target market, and objective; submit via the provided website.
- All participants: Review the additional video resources on LinkedIn and social media for selling that will be sent as part of the follow-up materials.
- All participants: Attend the upcoming session in one month focused on AI tools for digital marketing.

#### **Summary**

Gary delivered a session on Digital Marketing Essentials, discussing the fundamental requirements for businesses to succeed in the digital space. He emphasized the importance of a business website and linked social media accounts, and highlighted the need for connectivity and broadband. Gary also covered various digital marketing strategies, including SEO, content marketing, and email marketing, while stressing the importance of prioritizing efforts for small businesses. He concluded by introducing the concept of the customer journey, often referred to as the marketing funnel, and explained its stages: awareness, interest, desire, and action.

#### **Optimizing Digital Customer Experience**

Gary explained the digital customer journey, emphasizing the importance of awareness, trust, and customer service. He highlighted the need for a well-optimized website, active social media engagement, and quality content to build trust and maintain customer loyalty. Gary also mentioned that he would focus on AI and generative tools like ChatGPT in the coming weeks to enhance content creation.

#### **Digital Marketing Fundamentals for Businesses**

Gary discussed the digital essentials for businesses, emphasizing the importance of a website as a central hub for digital marketing efforts. He highlighted the risks of relying solely on third-party platforms like Facebook, noting that businesses can lose access to their accounts due to algorithmic decisions. Gary also touched on the benefits of organic search engine optimization, social media, and email marketing, while suggesting that email campaigns may not be essential for new businesses. He concluded by mentioning the potential for offline and online integration, using examples like QR codes, and encouraged prioritizing key digital strategies.

## **Website Building and SEO Basics**

Gary discussed various website building tools and systems, including Wix.com, Canva, Squarespace, and Lovable, emphasizing the importance of having a basic website to increase business visibility. He explained the concept of search engine optimization (SEO) and highlighted the need to understand the customer's journey and the keywords they use to find products or services. Gary also provided a simple example of how customers progress through different stages of awareness, consideration, and purchase, using specific search terms to illustrate the process.

## **Customer-Centric SEO and Social Media**

Gary discussed the importance of understanding customers and tailoring website content to match their search terms for better SEO. He emphasized the need for websites to consider the entire customer journey, not just the sales stage. Gary also covered various social media platforms, explaining their unique purposes and user demographics. He highlighted the importance of using authentic and honest content on social media to build trust and brand awareness. Gary recommended LinkedIn as a powerful tool for business development, particularly for B2B interactions, and encouraged participants to explore its potential for their businesses.

## **Social Media Marketing Strategies**

Gary discussed the various uses and demographics of social media platforms like LinkedIn, TikTok, and Instagram, emphasizing that TikTok has a broader audience than the teenage stereotype, with an average user age of 27. He highlighted the potential for businesses to use these platforms for direct sales and encouraged participants to explore resources on social media selling. Gary also criticized "lazy marketing" by urging businesses to tailor their messaging to each platform's unique audience rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach.

## **Social Media Algorithm Engagement Strategies**

Gary discussed the challenges of social media algorithms, explaining how they determine content visibility based on user engagement. He highlighted the low organic reach on platforms like Facebook (2%) and Instagram (15%), emphasizing the importance of engagement to increase content visibility. Gary also shared examples of successful posts on LinkedIn and Facebook, illustrating how high engagement can lead to broader reach. He encouraged the group to explore trending hashtags and popular content ideas to boost engagement and visibility on their social media channels.

## **Social Media Engagement Strategies**

Gary discussed engagement metrics on social media platforms, explaining that engagement includes any customer interaction except scrolling and pausing. He highlighted the importance of "silent engagement" activities like saving content or sharing with private contacts, which platforms now prioritize. Gary emphasized the need for strong video content within the first few seconds, especially with captions for viewers watching with sound off, and suggested analyzing analytics to replicate successful content.

## **Engaging Social Media Content Strategies**

Gary discussed the importance of creating engaging content for social media, emphasizing the need to balance clickbait tactics with meaningful content to maintain audience trust. He highlighted the significance of unique, fresh content for business marketing and the challenges of creating it, while also explaining the role of curated content and the importance of not infringing on copyright. Gary

advised businesses to play to their strengths when choosing content types and platforms, whether it be blogs, videos, or podcasts, to effectively reach their target audience.

### **AI Tools Training and Strategy**

Gary discussed upcoming training on AI tools for content creation, emphasizing the need to consider ethical use and potential risks. He assigned homework for participants to develop a digital marketing strategy focusing on four channels, including their website and at least one unfamiliar platform, describing each channel's target audience and objectives. Gary also mentioned a future session dedicated to exploring AI in more detail.