

Trends Within SEO Marketing in the MENA Region 2024

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SEO is proving to be more important than ever in 2024 and I see more and more businesses realizing it.

In 2022 and 2023, the reality was that business owners and larger corporations predominantly focused on social media for generating awareness, revenue, and sales. Expectations were so high for an Instagram shop for instance, and these channels did not meet targets 99% of the time - leaving marketing teams feeling deflated. However, these strategies were always missing the biggest opportunity of all - your website being the core of all marketing activities and SEO - ensuring it can be found on Google, the biggest lead generator for leads and sales as well as awareness.

Google, time and time again is the place where B2B or B2C audiences will go when they are ready to buy or learn about a brand. Social media is heavily awareness-based and people may not be ready at that specific time to make a purchase or fill out an enquiry lead form. The opportunity, impact, and growth of Google is huge, and it is what businesses in the MENA region should be focusing on in 2024.

I come across different businesses each week, hundreds each year which have invested massively into a website with no core customer experience strategy and say, "The developer will include some SEO in the back end". This never includes any strategic SEO, brand strategic website positioning, the sales funnel, CRO (conversion rate optimization strategy), and customer experience. SEO is its own channel and requires most of the strategic work to happen prior to the website build, so developers can be briefed, and the website is set up for success from day one. Many times, I see websites with no Google Analytics set up, no tracking, and no indication if it is working correctly.

With the basis of market challenges, there are always opportunities to grow and achieve targets. Here are some 2024 trends that will support SEO management in the MENA region and beyond:

Google Marketing Opportunities

The power of Google can be misinterpreted as it is generally seen as just Google Search and Paid Search (Google Ads) when it is actually way beyond this. Google's marketing power encompasses SEO (Search Engine Optimization), websites, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and other platforms. Each component plays a crucial role in creating a successful online marketing strategy and are all partners or part of the Google Network. They all show up in Google Images being a HUGE search tool for MENA region users.

The power of Google marketing lies in leveraging these platforms cohesively to create a broad online presence that increases visibility, engages with a target audience across different mediums, and drives traffic and conversions. By understanding and utilizing one SEO strategy across websites, social media, and video content, businesses can significantly enhance online marketing effectiveness, lead quality, and sales.

SEO Strategy VS Technical SEO

What I find Leaders in Digital up against is being compared to any other SEO company which predominantly offers mainly technical SEO. This is a very small piece of the puzzle that I learned 22 years ago on my first SEO projects. A holistic approach is required to generate maximum impact.

Chat GPT & Google

A question we are asked regularly is, "Is AI content accepted by Google and for SEO?" The quick answer is yes - Google loves content but it does not rank high. SEO is massively accountable for delivering what's needed to meet E-E-A-T standards: Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness. This is not met in any AI content after substantial tests via these tools. AI as of today is unable to humanize articles or posts and this is where humans are still needed.

On average up to a 10% increase in sales was accounted for by strategies using AI, complimented by humans when using tools to strategize and analyze data. AI is also an excellent tool for all businesses to understand data science analytics which is a significant part of designing an effective SEO strategy.

The truth is, there is no quick fix to relying solely on AI for SEO, however, it can enhance human intelligence if you know how to use it and how to implement it into your strategy.

Local SEO Opportunities

This is a huge 2024 opportunity for all businesses with local locations. In 2024, specific local content with a correctly SEO-optimised mobile website will impact SEO ranking significantly. 99% of the time when Google My Business or Local SEO is mentioned - it is understood by Google review which is a small part of it.

What needs to be managed is a social media type profile through Google and the impact will be huge. Just like any algorithm, it needs updating monthly, the content needs to be optimized, and it needs to follow a SEO strategy. This is usually left to business owners; however, I think it should be for all SEO packages.

Local SEO (and Google Maps) with multilingual campaigns or presence can increase a business's visibility and revenue, regardless of size or growth. When you search "interior design," Google returns mixed search results in many formats with competitors pumping large budgets into it:

- Google Ads
- Traditional links like Amazon, Noon
- Google Shopping images & links
- Local search (paid)

Local organic (free) search with multi-language pages will give a competitive advantage to multi-national brands advertising in the region. Tactical SEO still promises to evolve as one of the most scalable and cost-effective investments for any type of business.

If you want to generate leads and hit your sales target, now, more than ever, is the time to focus on your SEO channel. Use it well and get all eyes fixated on your business!