

Digital Marketing for RIAs & IARs

SOCIAL
BUSINESS
NETWORK
MEDIA
SEARCH
INNOVATION
WEBSITE
MARKETING



PALADIN
DIGITAL MARKETING

Investors use the Internet to find, screen, validate, and select financial firms and their advisors. This means every firm should have a strategy for building Internet visibility, disseminating information, increasing credibility, and generating new clients.

The advent of Robo and Virtual advisors makes the Internet an even more important priority for RIA digital marketing strategies.

On the surface, the Internet appears to be a free, easy-to-use communications tool that gives you access to millions of people. Frankly, that is what we thought in 2004 when we launched our first Paladin website. We developed an investor education website and waited for the traffic to show-up. It did not take long to realize websites do not produce Internet visibility and traffic. Their role is to disseminate information to visitors after they find you on the Internet.

Building Internet visibility and website traffic was tough 12 years ago and it's even tougher today. You can blame Google. In its quest to monetize its own traffic, Google has created an Internet jungle where only the strong survive.

You need Internet visibility and traffic to your website to be successful. You also need a website that converts visitors into prospects for your advice and services. This is the power of the Internet if you do it right.



Your Website

A 2014 Paladin survey of 325 financial service websites identified several concerns.

- 100% said they had to have websites
- 42% paid more than \$7,500 for their websites
- 36% paid less than \$3,500 for their websites
- 87% said website visitors already knew them
- 63% said they had no strategy for creating traffic
- 91% believed websites increased their credibility
- 8% said they derived new clients from their websites

The Gorilla



The Internet is ruled by a 2,000 pound Silverback Gorilla named Google. The Gorilla dominates the jungle we call the Internet. Its power is unparalleled. It has no significant competition. You ignore the Gorilla at your own risk.

The Gorilla exercises some of its awesome power when it updates company algorithms that re-rank websites approximately 500 times per year. While most of the changes are minor, there are usually two major updates per year that have a significant impact on your digital marketing results.

Google's algorithm adjustments:

- Penalize websites that try to manipulate page ranks
- Black list websites that use deceptive business practices
- Severely penalize websites that are not mobile responsive
- Reward websites that practice online transparency
- Reward websites that have proven authority (relevant links and content)
- Reward companies that have web publishing capabilities

Page rank, based on Search Engine Optimization (SEO), became more expensive and time consuming. Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the only quick way to achieve page one visibility. The result: SEM advertising produced extraordinary revenue growth and profitability for the Gorilla.

Google Algorithms

In the past, website authority and social influence could be artificially manufactured using link farms and other deceptive tactics. However, Google's most recent updates (Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird) have made these practices obsolete. There are no shortcuts for Internet marketing success.

The Gorilla guards its algorithms the same way Coke guards its formula for its primary beverage. You may never know why your website does not rank on page one for key words that drive the best traffic to your website.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising is also called Search Engine Marketing (SEM). You advertise your services on a search engine and you pay every time someone clicks on your advertisement. Google has no accountability for quantity or quality of clicks. You select a daily-spend and pay in advance. Your advertisement disappears until the next day when your daily-spend runs out.



PPC positioning is based on bidding by hundreds or thousands of advertisers – it depends on the keywords. The highest bid, that represents the most revenue for the gorilla, gets top listing for its advertisement on page one. There is a broad range of prices based on the popularity of the keywords. For example, cost-per-click for high traffic, keywords like “Financial Advisors” (short-tail marketing) might be \$25. Cost-per-click for lower traffic keywords (long-tail marketing) might be \$1.

How have PPC charges risen over the past ten years? Paladin started using Google’s Pay-Per-Click (PPC) service in 2004. It paid 35 cents per click for the best keywords. 1,000 clicks cost Paladin \$350 per day, \$10,500 per month, or \$126,000 per year. Today, the same keywords and the same positioning are \$25 per click or more. 1,000 clicks cost \$25,000 per pay, \$750,000 per month, or a whopping \$9 million per year.

In today’s jungle, the advertisers with the deepest pockets dominate the top positions for the best keywords. Smaller firms are priced out of the SEM competition for top keywords and top positions.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Every website owner wants top ten page one ranking for important keywords that impact their businesses. This creates an extraordinary amount of competition for a limited amount of space.

Don't make the mistake of thinking SEO is a cheap alternative to SEM. You will need an optimized website and blog site, consultants who have technical knowledge that drives the development, content, and optimization of your sites, and writers who are sources of frequent, relevant articles.

What Google Wants

If you want to pursue a high visibility SEO strategy you will also have to build an authoritative website. This Google definition means your site contains a substantial amount of relevant content and services that are constantly changing and expanding.

An authoritative site is not enough. You also need an influential site. Google can measure the content on your site. It can also measure your influence in the social networks by tracking numbers of followers, comments, re-tweets, and engagement.

Blog Sites

In modern times a content rich blog site is more important than a website. That's because most of your constantly expanding content will reside on your blog site with back links to your website. Your blog can also have more impact in the social networks.

Google knows anyone can publish on his or her own blog site. If you don't plan to publish content on a regular (weekly basis), you are better off posting to a third party site that has higher traffic and social Klout. This will help you grow your inbound links and establish your domain authority.



Social Networks

The social networks represent major challenges for many advisors or firms who do not have compliance approval to develop a presence that Google can measure (Influence). The most important social sites are Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook

Every advisory firm needs a social media strategy!

Investors

The Internet is the easiest way for investors to learn more about financial firms. They can:

- View profiles on Paladin's Registry
- Visit websites
- Conduct Google name searches (professional and firm)
- View FINRA and/or SEC data
- Read online articles written by your firm
- Read articles about your firm that are written by third parties



Investors can maintain their anonymity when they use the Internet to learn more about your firm. This is a big reason why it is a popular way to research advisors. 94% of the time investors, who become prospects, initiate contact via email.

Your Challenges

There are five important challenges that impact your firm's Internet marketing success:

1. You need visibility on the Internet
2. You need traffic to your website
3. Your website has to provide the right content
4. Your Internet presence has to be a source of credibility
5. Your website has to convert traffic into prospects

Sounds easy enough, but don't forget the gorilla that dominates the Internet jungle. Thousands of firms and advisors have the same goals you do.

Paladin Digital Marketing

Paladin provides qualified referrals to vetted, rated members of its Registry.

Paladin Digital Marketing provides web-based services to RIAs and IARs that increase Internet visibility, website traffic, and website visitors who become prospects for firm services.

**We have marketed financial advisors and firms
over the Internet since 2003.**

Paladin services include:

- Digital marketing strategies
- Design and development of websites
- The right messaging and content for websites
- Social and blog site services
- SEO, SEM, and social strategies
- Hosting, maintenance, and training



Have a question? Contact Paladin at Info@PaladinDigitalMarketing.com or 916.253.3334 (PT).

About Our Founder

Jack Waymire is the founder of www.PaladinRegistry.com and www.PaladinDigitalMarketing.com. He spent 28 years in the financial service industry and is the author of *Who's Watching Your Money?*

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