The Big Dog Authority Marketing CHECKLIST

Position yourself and your company as experts
and you will be seen as the big dogs

JOHN MCDOUGALL

The Big Dog Authority Marketing Checklist

Position yourself and your company as experts and you will be seen as the big dogs

I started selling websites in the dark ages of 1995 at McDougall Associates Advertising. I drove around with a laptop and a phone jack and dialed-up over AOL in people's offices. One guy called me a snake oil salesman and said this internet thing isn't going anywhere kid and threw me out of his office. At times, I felt like a Chihuahua.

In spite of that, I quickly fell in love with the internet and search engine optimization.

I've built a multi-million dollar agency through hard work and long hours but knew there had to be a more streamlined way.

So i decided to write a book.

I hired an editor who told me to write a short first book but instead, I took three years to write a 420 page college textbook on the ever changing digital marketing!

And yet i discovered a book is not nearly enough.

It got me many new customers but I made a lot of mistakes along the way that I want to help people avoid and so I created the Authority Marketing Roadmap.

The 6 essential steps to becoming a VISIBLE expert are

1. Picking a target market or niche
2. Writing yourself into existence
3. Turning your blog into eBooks and a short book
4. Blogging your way to LASTING SEO, social media, PR and link building success
5. Doing regular public speaking
6. And building an email marketing list

Authority Marketing is the systematic process of building your personal brand in a way that positions you and your company as the big dogs for Google and your customers.

If you are feeling like a Chihuahua and you'd rather be seen in your industry as a Great Dane, then this checklist will help you quickly get an overview of the most important things you need to build your thought leadership and authority.

You can also take the Big Dog Authority Marketing Quiz but it's important to have this checklist as a continuing reference.

Before we get started, let's expand the six essential steps into the 12 most important tactics.

1. Branding via specialization and picking a niche to call your own

One of the biggest mistakes people make in marketing is assuming that narrowing your focus will limit your results. It's usually the opposite. When you narrow your focus by selecting a niche or by targeting a specific industry, people want to work with you more not less.

2. Blogging regularly

These days most thought leaders have a blog. If you want good search engine optimization success, a blog is in most cases a requirement. If you're not blogging regularly, how else will you add regular fresh content to your website?

You can certainly add resource pages which are fantastic and an FAQ section but having a popular blog can help skyrocket your website's traffic and perception in your industry of you being an authority figure.

3. Writing a book, even if it is very short

Nothing says that you are an expert better than being an author of a book. In addition, being a best-selling author of a book or even an e-book in a specific Amazon category makes you famous in your space.

The big mistake I made here was not blogging my book first and then after three years of writing practically in a cave, expecting it to sell without a systematic book marketing process and platform.

4. PR – media mentions

If you are seen on TV, interviewed on the radio and featured in publications, people trust you more. Few people would argue with this and yet many experts don't put in the effort required to get regular media mentions.

Tools like helpareporter.com and PRleads.com along with submitting meaningful press releases can help you get started quickly.

5. Public Speaking and hosting events / seminars that show you are a dedicated thought leader

Some people fear public speaking more than death itself. If you are seen regularly as a prominent public speaker, people will line up to do business with you. If you study this tactic and prepare regularly for your speaking engagements, you have a great chance of overcoming your anxieties and performing well.

6. SEO – "owning" keywords that are part of your positioning statement

If you're not popping up in organic search results for keywords relating to your topic, you are missing out on the largest media platform in the world.

Google became much more complicated in 2011 with the Google Panda algorithm update that requires high quality content and in 2012 with the Google Penguin update that requires high quality back links.

Google now judges your website based on their EAT acronym. This stands for expertise, authoritativeness and trustworthiness. Numerous Google patents elaborate on their ability to judge who your authors are and if your company is trustworthy.

Having regular content is no longer good enough. It needs to be tied to specific people that they trust and not just your company name.

7. Social Media – being deeply involved in online relationships not just sharing content

Social media influence is no longer an optional part of becoming a persuasive authority. If you want your writing and blog content to get a lot of attention from Google, then people need to be sharing that content.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when doing modern search engine optimization is to assume that merely selecting long tail keywords for each of your pieces of content is enough to drive traffic.

In this day and age, your content needs to be highly shareable. Sharing photos of your company Christmas party and charitable events are certainly nice things to put on your Facebook page but if you want social media to work at a higher level, you need to tie it to your content promotion strategies.

This works best if you have a list of influencers that you regularly quote and for whom you regularly comment on their blog posts. If you do not build relationships and engagement with important influencers and people in your topical area, your social media would be built on shifting sands.

8. Link building with influencers via relationships

Getting people to link to you is one of the hardest things to do in digital marketing. It becomes so much easier when you create relationships with journalists and influencers. Interviewing others in your space in a podcast and turning that into a survey with an info graphic is a great way to build links.

If you don't have various types of link assets, you won't get the right type of links.

And if you engage in low-level link building such as article submission sites or weak directories, you will trigger a Penguin manual penalty or algorithm problem that you will live to regret for years. Trust me, it's happened to me and you don't want to be in this situation.

9. Sales Influence – the power of being a niche expert with content to persuade

Cold calling isn't dead but it's not what it used to be. When you tie sales and marketing together - Smarketing - you will have much better results. For example, having great content on your website that you can share with your prospects is a much better way to open a conversation than simply asking them to buy from you or meet with you.

The various factors in this checklist will help you to appear larger than life and increase the likelihood that people will want to work with you 100 fold. Your salespeople are going to love this, especially if they take part in the content development.

10. Conversion Optimization – having eBooks / content offers, media mentions and various trust signals

If you do not have clear calls to action on your website, you will miss out on a large volume of leads. Many people simply expect customers to call them or fill out a long form after the first visit to their website.

Google has developed a highly sophisticated system of analyzing what they call the buyer's journey. In the early stage of the buyer's journey, customers are at the top of the funnel and will respond well to something along the lines of an e-book or a white paper download rather than a request to buy from or work with you. As they move down the funnel they might download a case study or a comparison chart. Finally, at the bottom of the funnel, you can offer them a free consultation form or ask them to call you.

Improving not only the usability and quality of your website but having offers at the various stages of the marketing funnel will deeply improve your conversion rate.

Being an authority and having the visible faces of your thought leaders on your website is also a great way to improve

conversions. Videos, podcasts and blog posts from your experts are a sure way to get people to engage with you rather than just giving them sales material.

11. Building a platform and email marketing list

Top experts have large email marketing lists. When you have a large email list you have an incredible amount of power regardless of whether you get any traffic from Google or social media.

Building your email list should be one of your top priorities and it gets a lot easier when you have a substantial amount of gated content. For example, HubSpot says that you get a massive increase in leads when you have 30 or more e-books.

12. Tracking and analytics to determine your new levels of influence

Recently I met with a company who said they want to go from making a couple hundred thousand dollars a year to $1 million a year in sales on their website. They not only did not have conversion tracking set up but also were not aware of what setting up goals in Google analytics meant.

Examples of goal conversions and key things to set up for analytics tracking

- Email Subscribers
- Ebook / whitepaper downloads
- Form submissions
- Shopping cart orders
- Live Chat
- Phone Calls
- Event Tracking
- Attribution Tracking (HubSpot)

Not only do you need to get serious about tracking conversions but you will also want to look at the various factors that relate to building your authority and track in analytics.

The following are just a few of those factors authorities should track beyond the standard goals:

- Unique Visitors
- Blog Visits
- Referrals
- Social media visits
- Domain / Link Authority
- Conversions from Content
- Bounce Rate

- Time on Site
- Conversion Paths
- Brand mentions and mentions of team member names

Bringing it all together

While it is possible that you could succeed in life and in your business just fine using only a few of the tactics above, if you work on each of them it will save you a lot of time because there are many interdependencies between them.

Never give up

One of the most common reasons people fail when building authority and blogging is to give up too soon. If you follow this roadmap and work on each of these categories you will feel like a king and get the lions share of the business in your niche.

Passing the test

Judging authority is not an exact science. Google's PageRank for example can't tell if you are an authority offline and even the best social authority tools like Klout are questionable. With that said, this checklist will give you a rough idea if you are a visible or invisible expert.

We welcome feedback and feel free to email me at jm@mcdia.com (John D. McDougall) or connect on Twitter @ mcdougalljohnd

The checklist starts on the next page so that you can print only the checklist if you so choose.

The Big Dog Authority Marketing Checklist

Position yourself and your company as experts and you will be seen as the big dog

1. Have you refined your target audience or niche?

- ☐ I am more of a generalist than a specialist
- ☐ I target specific industries
- ☐ I specialize in a niche

2. What is your level of education?

- ☐ High school
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ PhD

3. Approximately how many hours have you studied your subject?

- ☐ 100-1,000
- ☐ 1,001-5,000
- ☐ 5,001-10,000
- ☐ 10,000 + (Outlier)

4. Do you have any certifications?

- ☐ No
- ☐ 1
- ☐ More than 1

5. Have you won awards for your work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-3
- ☐ Numerous national awards

6. How many years have you been in business?

- ☐ 0-1
- ☐ 1-3

- [ ] 4-10
- [ ] 11-20
- [ ] 20 +
- [ ] 30 +

7. Do you have a website?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Yes and for more than 10 years

8. Roughly how many website visitors per month do you get?

**Compete.com will give you a rough idea or you can estimate*

- [ ] 1-100
- [ ] 101-1,000
- [ ] 1,001-5,000
- [ ] 5,001-100,000
- [ ] 100,000 +

9. Roughly how many pages of content are on your website?

**Searching Google for site:yourdomain.com will give you a rough idea.*

- [ ] 1-10
- [ ] 11-25
- [ ] 26-100
- [ ] 101-500
- [ ] 500-1,000
- [ ] 1,000 +

10. Roughly how many quality backlinks (individual "root domains" not links on many pages from the same site) point to your website?

**Ahrefs.com will give you a rough idea for free or you can estimate.*

- [ ] 1-25
- [ ] 26-100
- [ ] 101-500
- [ ] 501-10,000
- [ ] 10,000 +

11. How often do you blog?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] A Few Times a Year
- [ ] At Least Once a Month
- [ ] 4-8 Times a Month
- [ ] 9-16 Times a month
- [ ] More Than 16 Times a Month

12. How often do people comment on your blog?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] A Few Times a Year
- [ ] At Least Once a Month
- [ ] 4-16 Times a Month
- [ ] More Than 16 Times a Month

13. How often do people share your content?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] A Few Times a Year
- [ ] At Least Once a Month
- [ ] 4-16 Times a Month
- [ ] More Than 16 Times a Month

14. How often do you guest blog post on other websites?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Once in a while
- [ ] At least once a month
- [ ] More than four times a month

15. How often do you speak publicly at events or conferences?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] At least once a year
- [ ] At least once every six months
- [ ] About once a month
- [ ] 3 or more times a month

16. How much do you get paid to speak per event?

- [ ] $0
- [ ] $1- $5,000
- [ ] $5,001-$10,000
- [ ] $10,000 +

17. How often are you featured or mentioned in the news / media?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] At least once a year
- [ ] At least once every six months
- [ ] About once a month
- [ ] 2 or more times a month

18. How often do you update your social media profiles by sharing content of your own or others?

- [ ] Yearly
- [ ] Monthly
- [ ] Weekly
- [ ] Daily

19. Approximately how many Facebook followers do have?

**Robert Scoble allows public following and has 661,896 Followers https://www.facebook.com/RobertScoble*

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1- 100
- [ ] 101-1,000
- [ ] 1,001-10,000
- [ ] 10,000 +

20. Approximately how many Twitter followers do have?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1- 100
- [ ] 101-1,000
- [ ] 1,001-5,000
- [ ] 5,001-10,000
- [ ] 10,000 +

21. How many connections do you have on LinkedIn?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1- 500
- [ ] 500 +

22. How often do you publish on LinkedIn Pulse?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Once in a while
- [ ] Monthly

23. Do you have a Google Plus account with at least one status update?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Power user

24. Are you active on YouTube?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Power user

25. Do you have a podcast?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Podcast influencer

26. How many eBooks have you published?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2-3
- [ ] 4-10
- [ ] 11-30
- [ ] 30 +

27. How many books have you published?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2-3

- [ ] 4-10
- [ ] 10 +

28. Is your book a bestseller?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes, on Amazon in a niche category
- [ ] Yes, on a high level list like The New York Times bestseller list

29. How many books and/or eBooks have you sold?

**The average books sells less than 2,000 copies.*

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1-100
- [ ] 101-2,000
- [ ] 2,000 +

30. Are your books available on Amazon.com?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes

31. Are your books available in physical bookstores?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes

32. How often do you hold a public event or webinar?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] About once a year
- [ ] About once a month
- [ ] More than four times a month
- [ ] Have a national level event

33. How big is your email list?

- [ ] 1-100
- [ ] 101-2,000
- [ ] 2,001-10,000
- [ ] 10,000 +

34. Do you show up top ten in Google for a search for your name?

**Using your middle name or initial is acceptable.*

☐ No

☐ Yes

35. Do you have a community or forum on your website?

☐ No

☐ Yes

36. How often do you write?

☐ Yearly

☐ Monthly

☐ Weekly

☐ Daily

37. Are you known for starting a movement or coining a popular term in your industry or niche?

☐ No

☐ Yes

38. Extra Credit: What is your Klout score?

**The average Klout Score is 40. Users with a score of 63 are in the top 5% of all users.*

☐ I don't know

☐ 40 or less

☐ Above 40

Visit authoritymarketing.com/quiz if you would like to see your score on the items above.