METRO DETROIT'S TOP ORGANIZATIONS
Website Performance Report

Website and digital marketing analysis of Southeastern Michigan's top organizations

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INTRODUCTION

Whether you work for a business, nonprofit organization, or professional association, your website plays an integral role in how well your audience is able to find and share your information.

At a time when 89% of B2B customers search the Internet before making a purchase decision,[1] your website is likely the first place that prospective customers, donors, partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders will learn about your organization and your services.

But it's not enough to merely have a website. Your organization's site should be structured with user experience and ease of use in mind. It should be optimized to attract new visitors via search engines, and should have an attractive and engaging design.

According to Stanford University, 75% of web users say they make judgements about a company's credibility based on its website design.[2] British researchers conducting another study found that 94% of first impressions generated by website visitors are design-related.[3]

Therefore, a compelling design is vital in appealing to visitors early in the buying process and allowing them to easily learn about your brand, find enticing calls-to-action, and make a conversion to become a lead.

Effective web design also provides more than an enticing layout and functional navigation. It helps attract new visitors through search engine optimization (SEO) practices, protects the information users share, and minimizes load times – a key influence on whether visitors will abandon a site or stick around to learn more about your organization.

In addition, evolving technology and consumer behavior has shown businesses and organizations in all industries the growing influence of mobile devices, pointing out the need for responsive design and mobile-friendly websites. Since 2014, mobile usage has exceed PC usage,[4] and 85% of buyers of B2B products and services said they require content on B2B sites to be optimized for mobile devices.[5]

So what does all this mean for your organization?

It means you want to make sure your website is optimized for search engine rankings, features sleek design, performs quickly and effectively, and has adequate security in order to attract and engage potential customers.

This report compiled data from more than 375 business, nonprofit, and professional organizations in Southeastern Michigan to discover trends in website performance, security, design, and marketing efforts. Combined, these characteristics can help determine whether your website is functioning in the most user-friendly manner possible.

Our research utilized HubSpot's Website Grader platform (www.website.grader.com), which analyzes websites in four key areas (performance, mobile optimization, search engine optimization, and security) to generate an overall score. The data is accompanied by analysis from HubSpot's Marketing Grader tool, which examined industry use of marketing tactics like blogging, automation, and social media.

With this report's insight into trends surrounding website design and related marketing efforts, organizations across all industries can find valuable information on creating fully-optimized websites and discover useful topics that can guide future website improvements and marketing campaigns.

RESEARCH METHODS

Our research examined websites from 379 organizations representing professional associations, nonprofit groups, and businesses serving manufacturing, automotive, information technology, healthcare, and construction industries across Southeastern Michigan.

We used HubSpot's Website Grader to analyze each website's performance, mobile capabilities, search engine optimization tactics, and security. All these factors combined to provide an overall website grade.

As a certified HubSpot partner, we also have access to the company's Marketing Grader, which allows us to look at how well each website is implementing key marketing strategies like blogging, social media tactics, search engine optimization practices, lead generation, and mobile-friendly design.

Scoring averages for website and marketing grades, as well as explanations of the ranking process and some helpful tips, are all covered in the ensuing pages of this report.

To check the specific score of your organization's website performance, visit www.website.grader. com to utilize HubSpot's Website Grader.
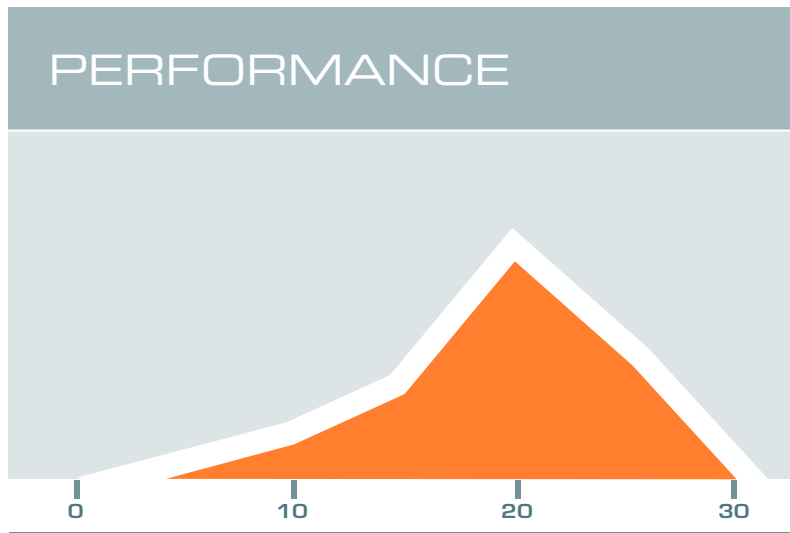
WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

A website's performance is essential to driving increases in traffic, improving conversion rates, generating more leads, and boosting revenue.

The performance ranking provided in this report analyzes key metrics that can affect a web page's speed and load time – critical factors in determining if visitors will remain on a website after arriving at it. According to Kissmetrics, 47% of consumers expect a web page to load in two seconds or less, and 40% of visitors will abandon a site if it takes more than three seconds to load.[6]

Recognizing the importance of not only attracting visitors, but getting them to stay and engage with the site, HubSpot's Website Grader analyzed each organization's website page size, page requests, page speed, and other factors that can hinder a web page's load time and affect the visitor's experience.
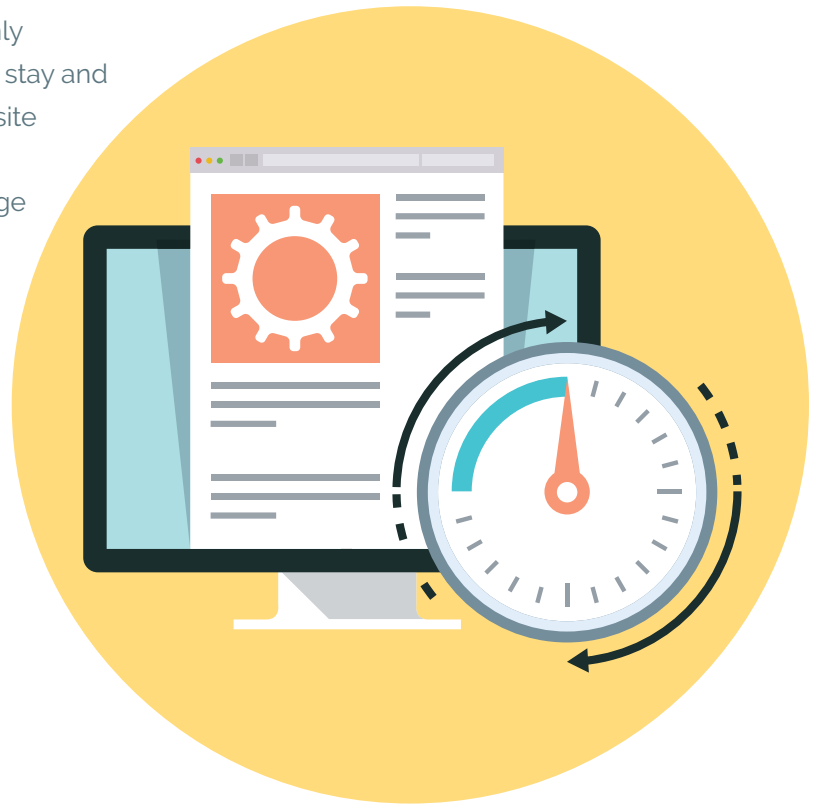
PERFORMANCE SCORE (30 POINTS)

PERFORMANCE

Average	**19.74**
Median	21
Mode	24
Highest Score	27
Lowest Score	1

Website Grader analysis suggests that websites from all industries could benefit from performance-enhancing upgrades. No websites received a perfect score of 30; the highest performance score obtained by any website was 27. The average score for all websites was 19.74.

Overall, most sites received performance grades that suggested functionality, but also pointed to some areas where upgrades could enhance the user experience.

Optimizing a website's performance for quicker page speed and load times can help increase traffic, improve conversion rates, generate more leads, and grow revenue.

PERFORMANCE SCORE CRITERIA

The categories that Website Grader analyzes to deliver the final performance score give organizations an idea of how they can improve their website's functionality. Each website was graded based on the following criteria:

PAGE SPEED: Top web pages should load within three seconds. The slower your page, the more likely it is that visitors will abandon your site.

Page size is the biggest factor impacting a website's load speed, but speed can also be improved via optimizing and scaling down images, streamlining CSS to remove any unnecessary code, and keeping JavaScripts below the fold so they will load after the rest of the page.

Page speed also affects a website's search ranking, as Google includes loading time as part of its ranking process. With Google searches now taking place on mobile devices more frequently than desktop computers,[7] it is also important to make sure a page is able to load quickly and function properly in cases where mobile devices encounter spotty Internet connections and slow data speeds.

PAGE SIZE: For optimal performance, page sizes should be below 3MB. Measurements of page size examine all the files used to create web pages, including HTML documents, style sheets, scripts, images, and other media.

A website with large page sizes will generally struggle with long loading times and less-than-optimal browsing experiences for visitors.

PAGE REQUESTS: The more HTTP requests a page makes, the slower it becomes. An HTTP request occurs when a web browser (Chrome, Firefox, etc.) sends a request for a file, pinging the server that hosts the web page a visitor is trying to access. The HTTP request asks the server to send any text, images, and multimedia files containing content for the site.

PERFORMANCE SCORE CRITERIA

A browser needs to make a separate request for every single file on a website, so the greater the number of website files (and the larger these files are), the longer a site will take to load.

By combining CSS files, removing unnecessary images, and reducing the file size for remaining images, a website can reduce the number of HTTP requests required for loading.

BROWSER CACHING: Enabling browser caching allows you to temporarily store some data on visitors' computers so they don't have to wait for components to load every time they visit your page.

PAGE REDIRECTS: A 301 redirect is a permanent redirect from one URL to another. If a web page has changed its URL, a 301 redirect will send visitors who type in the old URL to the new web page. While redirects are useful in instances where a page has been moved or a company name (and URL) has been changed, having too many redirects can significantly slow down a website.

Redirects can also disproportionally affect mobile users, as spotty Wi-Fi and mobile networks can cause load times to balloon as users are redirected from one page to another.

COMPRESSION: Enabling compression allows web servers to deliver smaller file sizes that load more quickly. All modern browsers accept compressed files, returning the smaller file when a request is made to your server. Compression can reduce HTML and CSS files by 50-70%.

RENDER-BLOCKING: Rendering refers to loading, so if something is render-blocking, it is keeping a web page from loading as quickly as possible. JavaScript is a common culprit in render-blocking, often loading large files before they are needed.

By moving JavaScripts from headers to individual sections of HTML, a website will be able to load more quickly.

READ

MOBILE & RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Mobile traffic to websites has been steadily increasing in recent years. In fact, mobile devices currently account for one-third of all global website traffic,[8] and the number of mobile-only adult Internet users recently surpassed the number of desktop-only Internet users.[9] Mobile users also tend to spend more time online.[4]

Organizations that operate in business-to-business industries are seeing the same increases in visits from mobile devices.

In fact, a 2015 Demand Gen Report found that 56% of those buying from B2B sites frequently use mobile phones to view those sites. The same study found that 85% of respondents required content on B2B sites to be optimized for mobile devices, up from 69% the year prior.[5]

With mobile devices continuing to account for a greater share of web traffic, it is imperative that a website is optimized for mobile in order to attract and engage visitors, nurture leads, and drive revenue.

Google's search algorithm also improves rankings for websites that provide mobile-friendly experiences for users,[10] which means a responsive web design can positively impact a website's SEO score.

MOBILE SCORE (30 points)

Only 55% of organizations in the sample size have fully-functional mobile websites

MOBILE OPTIMIZED

40%

55%

5%

■ No ■ Partial Capabilities ■ Yes
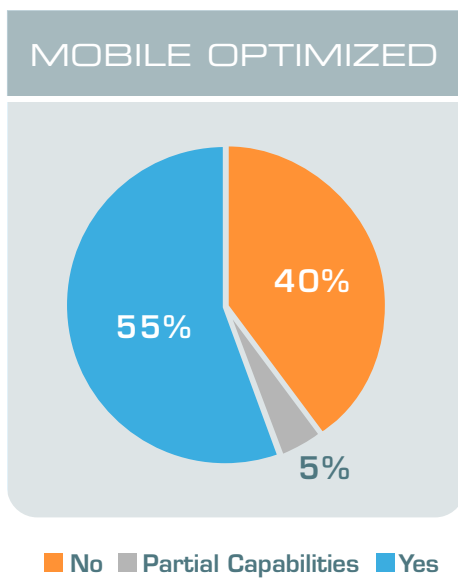
Slightly more than half of the websites analyzed for this report possess fully-functional mobile designs. These websites have a significant advantage over competitors who might fall into the 40% that do not provide the mobile capabilities that Internet users are seeking.

To determine whether a website meets mobile standards, the HubSpot Website Grader awards 15 points if a website had a responsive design and 15 points if that website's viewports adapted well to mobile standards.

Responsiveness:

A responsive design website adapts to all screen sizes no matter what device the page is being displayed on, ensuring that visitors encounter user-friendly experiences and are able to view pages exactly as they were designed. Mobile templates can also be used to create mobile sites, but these require a second mobile-only domain and need to be built for each specific site, not per screen size.

Viewports:

A website's viewport controls the width of the page display, aligning it with the device a visitor is viewing it on. Without a viewport, mobile devices will load a webpage at the width of a typical desktop screen, which will often cause text and graphics to appear much smaller than intended.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a key factor in a website's ability to attract new visitors. A website utilizing proven SEO strategies will be more likely to be understood and placed prominently by search bots, making it easier for users to discover.

SEO is a critical tool for websites in all industries to attract visitors and drive sales. A 2014 survey from Conductor, an organic marketing and technology company, found that search traffic is responsible for 64% of all website traffic.[11]

Across all industries, leads that come from search engines have a 14.6% close rate.[12] These numbers can vary from industry to industry, but the average landing page conversion rate when taking all sources of traffic into account is only 2.35%.[13]

Therefore, effective SEO efforts can make a big difference in bringing more interested and engaged visitors to your website, and getting them to inquire, make a purchase, or follow through on another offer.

The analysis provided in this report ranks each website based on page titles, meta descriptions, headings, and sitemaps to determine if a site is fully optimized for search queries.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION SCORE (30 points)
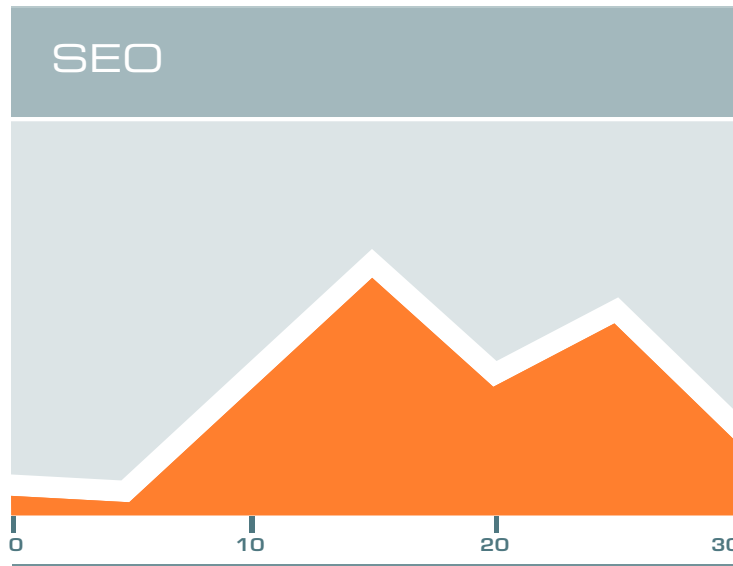
Average	17.50
Median	15
Mode	15
Highest Score	30
Lowest Score	0

Results from the Website Grader evaluation show a number of websites in the sample size currently possess strong SEO approaches, but there are quite a few that probably aren't attracting much organic traffic or recognizing any benefits from search results.

Several websites received perfect scores of 30 for their SEO efforts (although it is important to remember that search engine optimization is a process that is constantly evolving and requires consistent website upgrades to stay in line with user behaviors and more sophisticated search engine technology).

On the other side of the spectrum, a few websites received scores between zero and five, suggesting they are missing out on viable opportunities to attract via organic search potential customers and partners.

SEO SCORING CRITERIA

The categories that Website Grader analyzes to deliver the SEO score can give organizations an idea of how they can improve their website's ability to organically attract visitors. Each website was graded based on the following criteria:

PAGE TITLES: The title of a web page should be an accurate and concise description of the content found on the page. Google typically displays the first 50-60 characters of a title tag, so using less than 55 characters in your titles should allow them to display properly. It is also important to avoid using a company's name in title tags (as it is probably already included in the URL), and to incorporate keywords in your title to help pages rank higher in search results.

META DESCRIPTIONS: A meta description is the short summary that appears under a website link in search results. These are meant to be kept short (less than 150 characters) and offer a concise, but compelling description of your page. Use unique descriptions for each page – an engaging explanation can help a website stand out among other search results.

HEADINGS: Using keywords in headings and content make it more likely that visitors will stay on a page if they scan it and see the terms they searched for. Search engines will penalize websites for keyword stuffing, so it is important to write for readers first and not worry about how many keywords you can awkwardly cram into your headers and page copy.
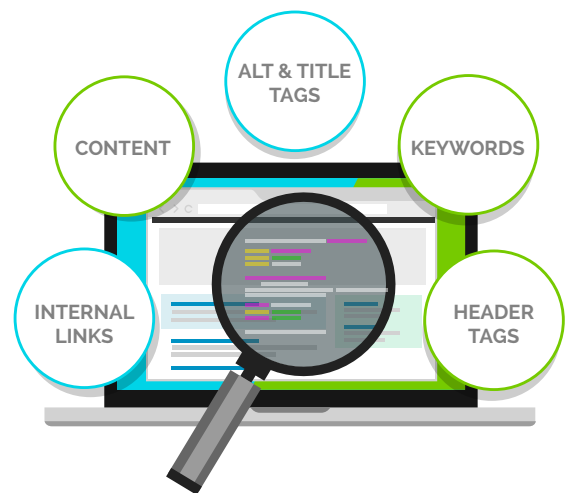
SITEMAP: If a page does not have an Extensible Markup Language (XML) sitemap, it could be missing out on opportunities to communicate directly with search engines. Sitemaps help visitors navigate sites quickly and easily. The XML file contains a website's individual page URLs and lets search engine crawlers follow the links to all individual pages, therefore indexing all your site's content.

Depending on the platform used to create and manage a site, your content management system might automatically create a sitemap. Otherwise, your technical team would need to create the XML map, put it on your server, and then submit it to each individual search engine.

SECURITY

Website Grader analyzes whether or not each website in this report's data set possesses an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate.

SSL is the standard security technology used to establish an encrypted link between a web server and a visitor's browser. This encryption ensures that all data remains private as it is passed between the server and the browser.[14]

When visitors land on an SSL-encrypted website, their browsers form a secure, binding connection with the server that prevents anyone beside the visitor and the website from seeing or accessing any entered information.

Websites with SSL certificates will display "https://" as opposed to "http://" at the beginning of their URLs. SSL certificates are most commonly used on ecommerce sites, banking or bill pay web pages, or other websites that collect visitor information.

In addition to protecting sensitive user or donor information, secure sites will also receive minor ranking boosts from Google.[15] SSL certificates and other security measures can also protect your website from hackers who can disrupt your site's operations.

SECURITY SCORE (10 points)

Only 23% of organizations in this report possess security certificates for their website

SECURITY

23%

77%

YES ▪   NO ▪

SSL CERTIFIED
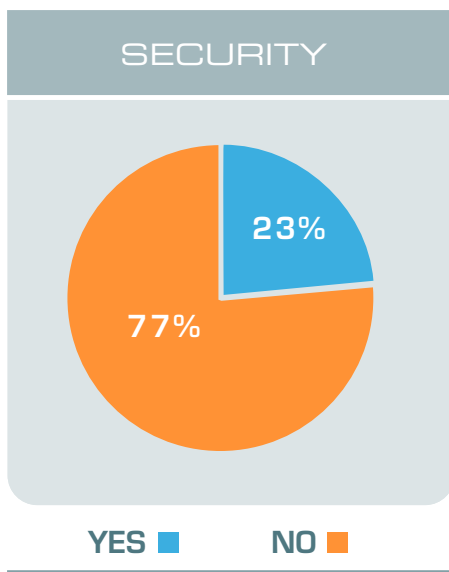
The majority of websites from this study's sample size do not have security measures in place. Website Grader awards site 10 points if it has active security measures present, and zero points if it hasn't enacted any security precautions.

Security certificates are critical for websites that collect user information, payments for goods and services, or donations from visitors. In addition, a website with active security certificates can improve its standing in Google search rankings.

Security certificates also make it more difficult for hackers to access sites and disrupt page performance. Hacked websites can unwillingly redirect visitors to unapproved sites, become flooded with unwanted advertisements and backlinks, or lose important files.

So, even if you aren't using your website to collect sensitive user data, by implementing security measures, you will ensure that your site will continue to operate as it was designed.

OVERALL WEBSITE SCORE (100 points)

WEBSITE GRADE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
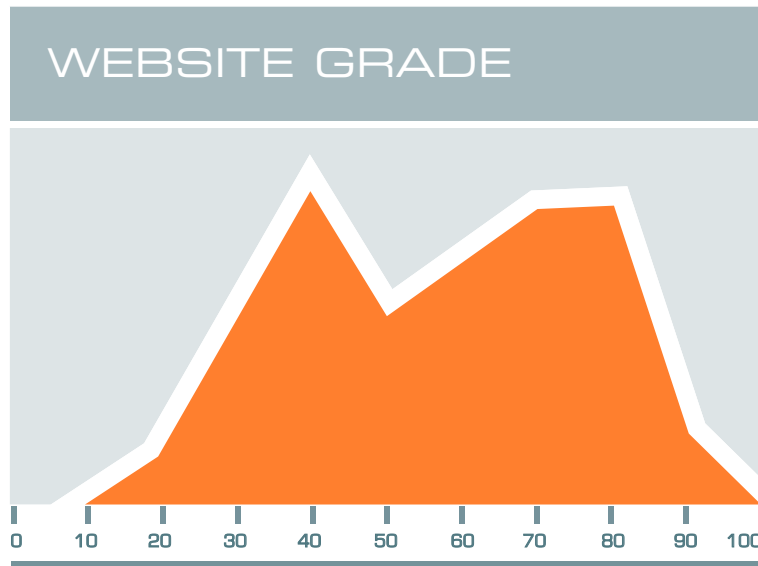
Average	57.41
Median	59
Mode	74
Highest Score	94
Lowest Score	21

After ranking each website's performance in the four main categories (performance, mobile, SEO, and security), HubSpot's Website Grader issues a cumulative final ranking.

The average ranking from the sites included in this report is 57.41, suggesting that many websites could, at the very least, use some tweaking and upgrades to enhance the overall experience for their users.

Some may need even more significant overhauls, requiring redesigns and rebuilds to better accommodate visitors and provide them with the user-friendly experience that drives conversions and engagement.

MARKETING GRADE

In addition to website function, this report examined each website's marketing efforts. Each organization's marketing grade was calculated using HubSpot's Marketing Grader platform.

The score represents a number of key factors, including social media activity, blogging efforts, lead nurturing, analytics, as well as website performance and mobile responsiveness. By focusing on improving these efforts, websites can better attract visitors and convert them into leads and potential customers.

The Grader also identified which websites were utilizing marketing automation efforts designed to improve lead nurturing and assist with email and campaign management.

MARKETING SCORE (100 points)
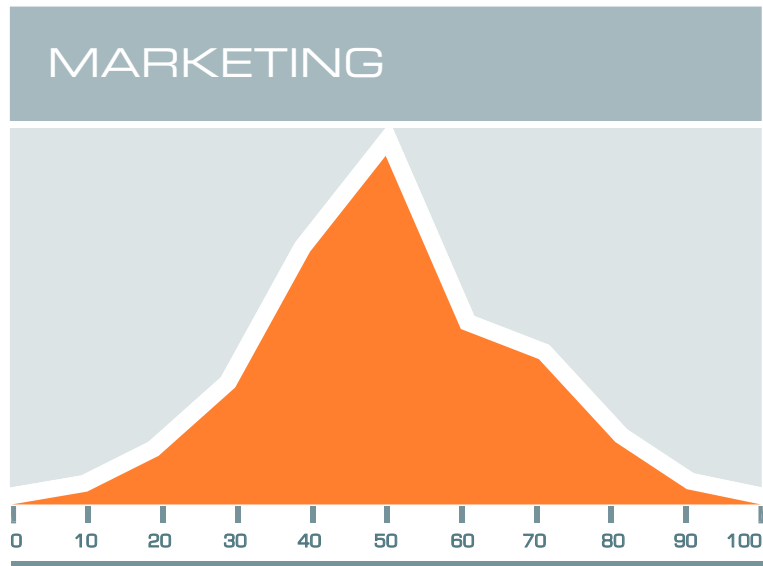
Average	49.79
Median	49
Mode	44
Highest Score	86
Lowest Score	4

A number of organizations included in this report are not taking full advantage of available digital marketing strategies and tools that serve to better attract and engage potential customers.

Based on an average score of 49.79, the Marketing Grader results show that many organizations should be looking for ways to strengthen their marketing efforts. By focusing on areas such as content creation and blogging, social media reach, analytics, and other key topics, organizations from all industries will be able to use their websites to attract more visitors and generate a greater number of viable leads.

MARKETING SCORE CRITERIA

HubSpot's Marketing Grader analyzes the following categories to determine the strength of an organization's marketing activities:

BLOGGING: Blog effectiveness is measured by analyzing the frequency of blog posts, content length, links to lead-generating forums, social media popularity of blog posts, use of images, and correct use of meta descriptions.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Each website's social media score is determined by an analysis of the dealer's social media reach, the frequency of social media content creation, how much engagement these social media posts receive, and how well each website is optimized for social media sharing.

SEO: The Marketing Grader determines SEO success by measuring the number of pages search engines have indexed from each website. It also looked at the page title, description, page components, and social media activity of website content. The Grader also analyzed the number inbound links—hyperlinks that direct visitors back to a website from other sites—as well as each website's MozRank (https://moz.com/learn/seo/mozrank), a measure of the importance and authority of given website.

LEAD GENERATION: The process of converting website visitors into leads, lead generation is scored based on how well each website uses forms to capture prospect information, how forms are used to link content and offers, and how marketing and analytics tools are being utilized.

MOBILE: A website's mobile marketing grade is calculated by how well a lead can make a conversion by using nothing but a mobile device. This score is determined by analyzing two categories: how well each website appears on mobile devices, and whether the website is optimized for use on a smartphone or tablet.

MARKETING AUTOMATION

Only 21% of Southeastern Michigan organizations are utilizing marketing automation software

AUTOMATION

21%

79%

YES ■   NO ■
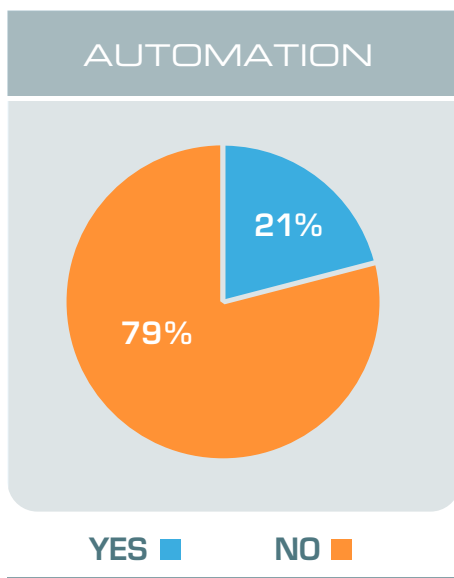
Marketing automation uses software to execute and manage a number of different marketing tasks, such as sending emails and posting social media messages, in order to carry them out more efficiently. It allows marketers to schedule, segment, and track numerous tactics while providing contacts with personalized, useful content.

According to the research compiled for this report, only 21% of organizations in the sample size are utilizing marketing automation techniques and software to keep potential customers, donors, and other stakeholders engaged.

Companies that are currently using automation software enjoy greater opportunities to communicate and nurture customers, giving these organizations a distinct advantage over their competitors who aren't utilizing automation.

Automation allows businesses to understand the preferences of visitors and leads, and personalize content to meet their interests. It also gives organizations the ability to qualify and segment customer relationship management (CRM) systems and better nurture contacts that may not be ready to purchase products or services, but are engaged and could become loyal customers in the future.

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ABOUT INBOUND 281

WHO WE ARE

We are a digital marketing agency dedicated to helping our clients navigate the digital landscape, connect more meaningfully to their customers, and inspire their audience with purposeful content. We do this by leveraging inbound marketing and web design strategies for business, corporate, and enterprise marketers.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to use our inbound approach to develop leading-edge digital marketing plans, perceptive strategies, and valuable solutions to help you engage your customers with more two-way conversations and personal interactions to support revenue generation.

READY FOR A CONVERSATION?

If you are interested in a comprehensive plan that combines website design, email marketing, social media marketing, content development, and automation – or if you'd just like to learn more about how an inbound marketing plan can complement your established branding and communications strategies to meet your organization's unique needs, reach out and have a conversation with us.

TALK TO US