

## SETTING UP YOUR 2014

# ONLINE MARKETING SCHEDULE

By Matthew A. Perosi

As we kick off this New Year, we should plan all the advertising deadline dates for 2014. There were a lot of big changes in Google throughout 2013 that affected the way a website can be used for marketing. There were also changes in Facebook that were beneficial for ads. The Google+ social network had many major changes, all for the better.

My current tracking suggests that the Google+ social network will dominate in the future as the best network for attracting new customers. We might have to wait until 2015 to see that prediction come true, but don't wait until then to start using it.

Retailers frequently tell me that they lost track of time, and didn't finish their ads early enough. In fact, even though Thanksgiving was one week later in 2013, one jeweler actually told me that it "seemed like it crept up earlier this year." In that regard, I'd like to suggest some specific actions and a few dates that you can write on your calendar right now to help you plan your offline advertising and how it connects with your online advertising for 2014.

Let me start with simple monthly actions. These include sending one email newsletter, and writing a single blog post. Write these deadlines for the 7th of each month. An easy monthly blogging tactic could be to write a product review for new inventory. Every blog should also be shared to your business accounts for Facebook, Google+, and Twitter.

With regard to offline advertising, whenever you publish an ad, you should also be posting that ad online. I know that newspaper ads usually need a 7-day lead-time, but they can be submitted as late as 2 days before printing. Of course, other traditional media ads usually take more planning than that. A New Year's resolution this year should be to make a commitment to match all online ads to your traditional ads.

In 2014, at minimum, you should consider using Google AdWords and Facebook Ads. Other ad networks that produce positive results are Twitter Sponsored Tweets, Yelp Ads, and Foursquare Ads. Setting up each of these advertising methods is easier than ever before. Each company has

created easy setup methods so non-tech savvy business owners can manage their own basic ads. However, these easy ad setups usually cost more money than if you hire an agency to manage and fine-tune the ads for you. Agencies usually produce better ROI, and you should be using one if your media buy is large.

I've put together this basic table of 2014 holiday dates. It shows the date of the holiday, the expected lead-time for a newspaper ad, and the needed lead times for your online agency to prep those same ads for the ad network shown.

Holiday	Date	Google AdWords	Website Update	Traditional	Facebook
Valentine's	2/14	1/6	1/6	1/27	1/31
Mother's Day	5/11	4/18	4/18	4/25	5/1
July 4th	7/4	6/6	6/6	6/20	6/27
Halloween	10/31	10/3	10/3	10/17	10/24
Black Friday	11/28	10/27	10/27	11/3	11/20

As you can see, the lead-time for Google AdWords is much greater than other media types. This represents the complexity of that medium and time that an agency needs to create the matching pay per click campaign. In fact, Google requires 7 days lead time to authorize some ads. Website Updates also have a long lead-time because you need to set up new landing pages to match all the other online and offline campaigns.

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Something to consider is that traditional media, like newspaper and direct mail, is usually published within 7 days before a holiday. This creates top-of-mind association between that holiday and your offer. With digital advertising you have a greater opportunity to promote your special offer 14 to 21 days before. In reality, to get the best online exposure, you should always have your digital ads prepped and ready long before the traditional ads.

Use the table above to figure out all your advertising dates for this year, and write them on your calendar. This will help prevent all your important advertising opportunities from slipping by and your overall marketing ROI should increase.



**Matthew A Perosi**

Matthew Perosi is the Founder of the Jeweler Website Advisory Group (jWAG), a research team devoted to reporting how jewelers can use websites, mobile technology, and marketing trends to further personal and jewelry store goals. A library of articles, videos, and an archive of jWAG daily email "Nuggets" is freely available at [www.jwag.biz](http://www.jwag.biz). Matthew invites your feedback at [matt@jwag.biz](mailto:matt@jwag.biz).