

IBT Partners

# Optimizing your Online Presence

Digital Strategies for Investment Promotion Agencies

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# Introduction

Who should be reading this whitepaper?

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**What's the secret to an effective web marketing strategy? And how can you improve yours? Find out by reading this whitepaper!**

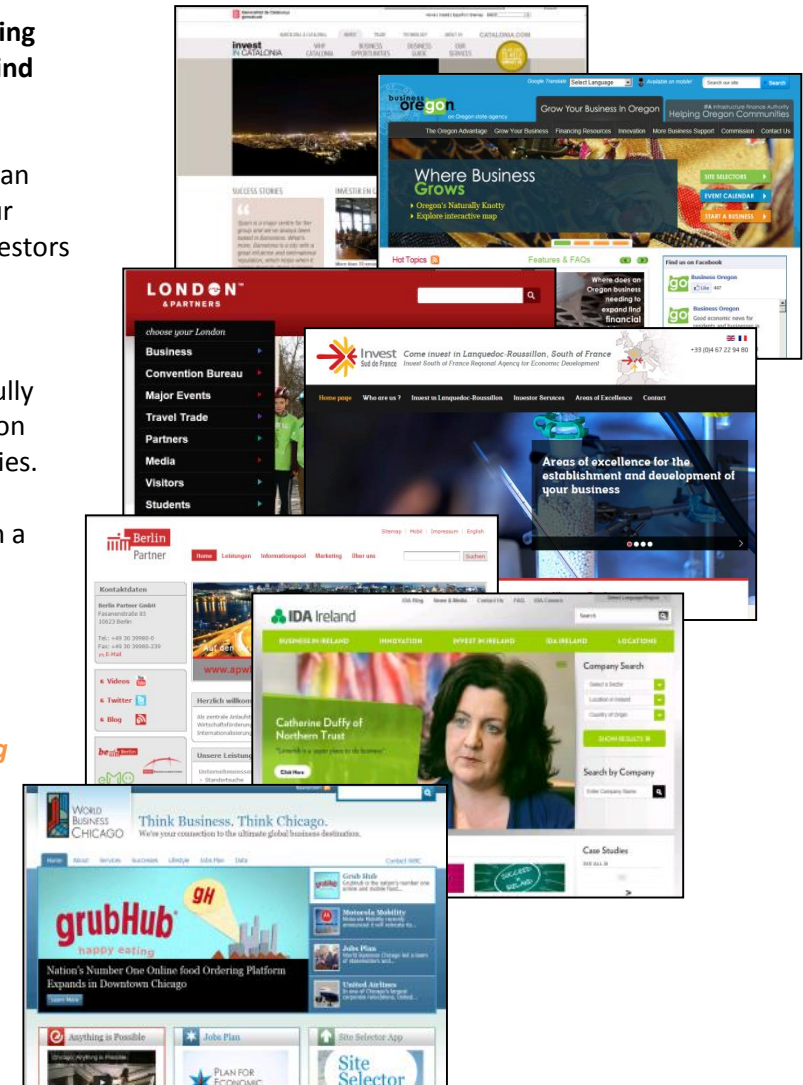
This whitepaper gives guidelines on how you can optimize your digital presence - increasing your online footprint and making sure potential investors find and appreciate the many benefits of your territory.

Over the past years, IBT Partners has successfully helped a large number of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) to develop their digital strategies. This experience has allowed us to establish a benchmark of best practices, providing us with a wealth of knowledge and recommendations.

As reported by John Worthington, Director of IBT Partners,

***“In this day and age, a good digital marketing strategy and online presence is a prerequisite for an IPA to succeed”***

This whitepaper was brought to you by the IBT Partners Publications Team. For more information email: [info@ibtpartners.com](mailto:info@ibtpartners.com)



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Optimizing your Digital Presence for IPA's

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# Digital strategies

## What makes a successful digital strategy?

Our experience in delivering successful digital marketing strategies shows that the most successful IPAs tick the following boxes:

- **A modern and professional website**
- **Search engine optimization**
- **A well defined social media strategy**
- **Lead generation**
- **Innovation**

Online digital strategy is all about website design and development, internet marketing and communications.

One definition that we like is “a web strategy is a long term strategic plan indicating how to create and develop an online presence that aligns with your development strategy”. This must of course include: design, content, usability, social media...

Many IPAs have only begun to appreciate the importance of having a clear stated digital strategy.

The result is that there is a huge disparity amongst IPAs between those that have started to use their websites proactively and those whose websites are more ‘brochure ware’.

This will change in the near future as agencies realise the importance of a successful digital marketing strategy.

The definition of your strategy must include the 5 elements listed on the left. A structured and well measured approach with clear indicators and aesthetics will enable you to improve your online presence.

During IBT Partners’ research into digital strategies, **London & Partners**, the IPA for Greater London, UK, stated:

*“We are investing in audience insight to ensure our digital channels fully meet our customers’ needs across the globe. We want our online channels to work alongside traditional media and relationships to provide the right information to the right person at the right stage of their investment decision”*



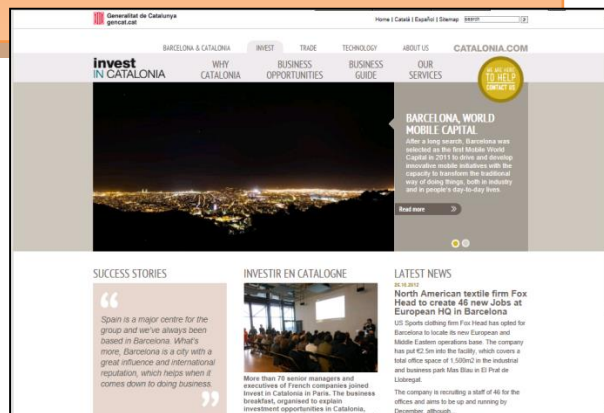
# A modern and professional website

## Are first impressions important?

The overall appearance of your website contributes a lot to a visitor's first impression. Make sure your website is well structured and visually pleasing while remaining useful and informative.

During IBT Partners' research into modern and professional websites, **Invest in Catalonia**, the IPA for the region of Catalonia, Spain, stated:

*"We have just launched a new website and are currently working on improvements. The focus this year is on the quality, clarity and visibility of the content."*



### Good practices

- ✓ **Create a visual impact**  
Use slideshows on your homepages to effectively communicate your key strengths
- ✓ **Include detailed contact information**  
Good 'Contact Us' pages include maps of location, directions and a list of specific employees to contact
- ✓ **Have an active homepage**  
Home pages with small boxes displaying 'Latest News' or 'Recent Updates' show professionalism and regular activity
- ✓ **Enable mobile access**  
The number of users connected via tablets or smartphones is soaring. Think about making your site compatible with these terminals
- ✓ **Facilitate search capability**  
Give your users a way of searching and navigating easily around your site

### Bad practices

- ✗ **Unorganised content**  
Lots of content is not enough. Content must be structured. What makes your location special has to be clearly stated, backed up by case studies and regularly updated
- ✗ **Translate some pages and not others**  
An English version of your website is a prerequisite in an international context. Make sure any linkable pages are also in English
- ✗ **Has broken links**  
Websites with links that do not work reflect very poorly on a location's professionalism and don't encourage further visits. It also affects your search engine optimisation
- ✗ **Slow page-loading speed**  
Statistics show that 35% of internet users leave a site when the page takes longer than 4 seconds to load. Opt for a quality hosting provider ensuring rapidity and fluidity of navigation

# Search Engine Optimization

## How can I be found more easily?

Making sure your website is optimized for search engines can be a pivotal part of getting found on the web.

If your website is not ranking well for the words that describe your products and services, then you're not getting found for them by potential investors either.

**On-page SEO** refers to how well your website's content is presented to search engines. This can often be improved quickly and easily.

**Off-page SEO** refers to your site's overall "authority" on the web, which is determined by what other websites say about your site. This can take time to improve.

### Boost your traffic with sponsored links

Using Google Adwords and its sponsored link ability allows you to obtain immediate results: ensuring visibility with a measured budget.

### Webmaster tool

This Google tool is an important source of information for your website. It will allow you to identify weak points in your SEO and how to fix it.

### SEO Quick Fix

- ✓ **Find Keywords**  
Pick a list of keywords that are relevant to your territory. This will allow you to better interact with your target prospects, the ones you can convert into leads
- ✓ **Use keywords in your content**  
Putting keywords in rich and varied content is essential for SEO. It will allow you to improve your ranking in search results
- ✓ **Page title, URL H1 text and meta data**  
All of these elements are taken into account by search engines when determining your rank. Take advantage of them by using the key words in the right places
- ✓ **Sitemap**  
Creating a Sitemap allows Google to detect all the pages of your site, optimising your SEO in a fast and simple manner

### Performance analysis

A number of tools exist (Xiti, Ranks, Alexa, Analytics...) that can give you all the statistics about your site: bounce rate, average visit time, number of unique visitors, number of pages viewed...absolutely essential for a good understanding of your sites performance!





# Social media

## What should I be using?

Broadcasting positive information to a large audience and ensuring that this information will be relayed are some of the key strengths of social media!

Successful IPAs incorporate global marketing as well as local awareness. Social media can be tailored to large audiences (mass marketing) just as well as it can be tailored to more specific targets (marketing one-to-few).

This is why you must consider your objectives and position yourself on social media networks accordingly.

The most successful IPAs are the ones that utilize a wide range of mediums to engage with their online communities, Target audiences vary according to the social media used. The most important include:

- **LinkedIn**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Viadeo**
- **Youtube**
- **Xing**
- **Google+**
- **Blogs**

Be careful, a bad use of social media usage can damage your image! Having a Facebook page with only 15 likes does not give off a professional image



Social media allows your investors and potential investors to communicate directly with you and your employees online.

Social media numbers are today very important. Choose the network according to the content you wish to share and the audience you want to target.

Note that being active on social media will also improve your SEO and can generate more traffic to your site.

When getting started, IBT Partners recommends the major 3:



LinkedIn now boasts over 200 million business users and more than 2.7 million business profile pages.

When setting up your profile, remember to include all important information including links to your website. Take the time to make the descriptions for you, your IPA and your region interesting with an accurate reflection of your experience, knowledge, and passion for business. Don't hesitate to join groups which will improve your visibility. Lastly, note that LinkedIn is very much tailored to a global reach. In some countries there are local alternatives.



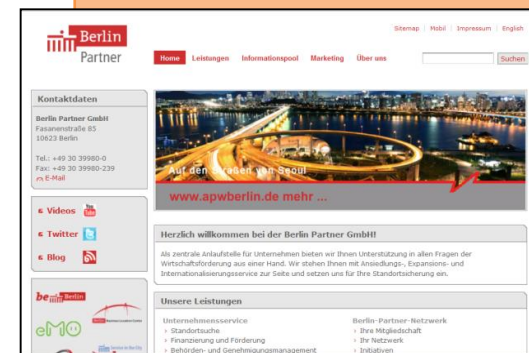
With more than a billion users, Facebook serves as a powerful platform for building a community of advocates for your IPA to help increase word-of-mouth marketing.



Twitter search is ideal for finding out what is being said about your competitors and for industry mentions.

During IBT Partners' research into social media, **Berlin Partner**, the IPA for Berlin, Germany, stated:

*"Berlin Partner focus is on social media channels such as the be Berlin campaign's Facebook page with more than 1.6 million fans; Berlin Partner and visit Berlin (the official Berlin tourism office) combine forces to administrate this page. Berlin Partner also runs a YouTube channel for location marketing films about Berlin."*



# Lead generation

*How do I make this more effective?*

Many IPAs have high volumes of traffic but little insight into their visitor database. Other IPAs had fewer unique visitors but significantly more accurate monitoring of their visitor database resulting in a better rate of conversion.

Visitor analysis was deemed vital to the success of the IPAs' marketing strategies, as it allowed for specific audience targeting.

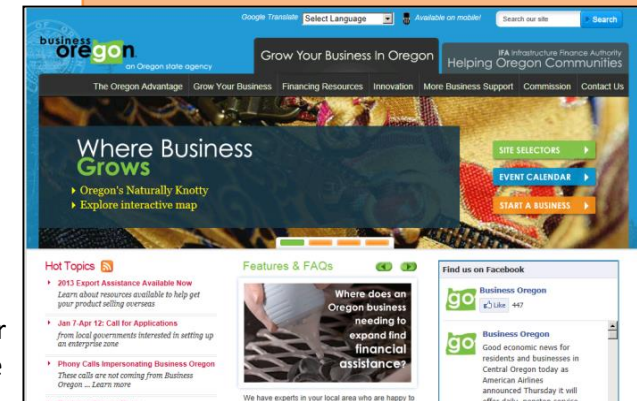
Optimizing leads from efficient follow-through resulted in successful digital marketing – turning leads into prospects, into investors.

## Steps for effective lead generation:

- ✓ **Get a good understanding of your visitor persona**  
Establish your specific target audience
- ✓ **Create a compelling offer for your visitors**  
Target the type of leads you're trying to attract
- ✓ **Create a call-to-action**  
A button or a link on your website that grabs a user's attention and directs them to a landing page
- ✓ **Create a landing page**  
A form where users submit information (name, email address, telephone number etc.) in order to access your offer
- ✓ **Interact and qualify leads**  
Set up automated email campaigns and broadcast personalised information to your databases. This will enable you to generate a larger number of leads while using fewer resources
- ✓ **Analyse, measure and reiterate**  
Use the information gained to monitor your visitor database and create more target specific assets

During IBT Partners' research into SEO, **Business Oregon**, the IPA for the State of Oregon, USA, stated:

*"We use our analytic reports to track marketing campaigns and recipient responses to help drive greater results and to increase event or industry activity. In addition, we use analytics to analyze content and navigation as well, and use resulting information to influence how we apply SEO, matching our content and navigation to what customers are looking for and how they are viewing our content."*



*What innovative approaches allow you to stand out from the competition?*

Web-marketing offers the possibility of addressing a very large audience. Agencies that opt for a personalized strategy are the ones that get the best results.

Simple things like a video or power point presentations on the home page of your website can dramatically improve the overall appearance and personality of your site.

Placing innovation at the heart of your digital strategy will allow you to positively differentiate yourself and shows that your agency is always trying to provide a better experience for your audience.

## Innovative ways to improve your website:

- ✓ **Mobile compatibility**  
Make sure your website looks good and is accessible and easy-to-use on handheld devices
- ✓ **Mobile apps**  
Create your own mobile application and stay connected continuously with your prospects
- ✓ **Offer an interactive tour to your prospects**  
A virtual visit of your territory and its advantages could be an important way of encouraging your leads to make contact with you
- ✓ **Videos/Visual presentations**  
Place videos or short slide shows on your home page to give a visual presentation of what you have to offer

During IBT Partners' research into innovation, **World Business Chicago**, the IPA for the city of Chicago, USA, stated:

*"At World Business Chicago we're developing a web strategy for the future. We're looking to improve user experience with a mobile-first design process, since a growing number of site visits are from mobile devices and we imagine that will only increase. Developing our messaging with a small screen in mind will result in more concise, readable content which will help both usability and search engine optimization. A mobile-first methodology will also help inform a cleaner visual design and enhanced interaction experience overall."*





## Next steps

### *Optimise your online presence and achieve success*

The different digital strategies presented in this whitepaper are some of the many ways you can improve the online presence of your agency. The implementation of an online strategy should be part of a long term plan with clear metrics to achieve the pre-determined results.

The biggest challenge for IPAs is how to manage all the different channels of interaction (LinkedIn, Facebook, web sites, automated email campaigns...), together in an integrated, coherent and intelligent way.

*“IBT Partners has reviewed hundreds of IPAs’ online presence. We have identified today’s online pioneers in marketing initiatives and territory promotion. This is fundamental in enabling us to develop benchmarks, best practice and programs for the optimization of online presence for FDI.”*

Michael Hawksley, Online Business Director

**Request an  
Online Presence  
Diagnosis!**

## About IBT Partners

In 2002, we created IBT Partners with a vision to build a company that would make a substantial difference to our clients in helping them grow internationally – a vision based on the idea that international business and trade are vital engines of economic growth and an essential step in any company’s strategy.

Our staff, their enthusiasm and their skills are what make the difference. Our offices in France, Germany, the UK and USA house teams that are all multi-cultural, multi-lingual trade experts with knowledge of new technologies.

We have worked with 100s of SMEs, helping them to identify new business opportunities and new potential clients in export markets.

**We invite you to get to know us, our vision, our passion and our commitment to increasing international trade for our clients.**

### Get in touch!

Email: [info@ibtpartners.com](mailto:info@ibtpartners.com)

You can also find us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

During IBT Partners’ research into online presence, **Invest in Ireland**, the IPA for Ireland, stated:

*“One of the challenges facing IPA’s is integrating and managing their online presence in its totality - websites, mobile, apps, social media, etc. In addition, gleaning insights from all the data available today to IPAs will continue to be challenging.”*

