Search for business value? SEO can help.  

New research on the importance of search engine optimization in digital-only and hybrid commerce.

Search engines are today’s Main Street for commerce — virtual or online. They are the primary mechanism through which customers find new products and services, and play a crucial role throughout the customer journey, from initial awareness to a click to buy. As such, content and search engine optimization (SEO) matter more than ever. 

The data show that companies that invest in SEO have experienced market share gains and higher revenue growth from improved search engine results. 

**SEO front-runners are positioned for growth.**

For SEO to deliver the desired business outcomes, organizations need to recognize the importance of search engine optimization and build a strategic framework to make it happen. The following are some key insights for businesses looking to optimize their SEO strategies. 

**That’s how commerce starts with search.**

E-commerce is quickly becoming a reality for both personal- and business-level online searches. As we enter the next phase of digital commerce, there are three major trends that will make a difference in the way that we search online: 

- **Dynamically generated content**
- **AI / ML capabilities in place**
- **Global reach and localization**

By embracing these technologies, organizations can differentiate their offerings, stand up new digital commerce capabilities, and elevate consumer experiences. 

**It’s not just about digital commerce.**

SEO plays an equally important role in physical commerce. Organizations that invest in SEO will experience market share gains and higher revenue growth from improved search engine results. As the line between digital and physical commerce continues to blur, SEO mastery is becoming increasingly critical to future growth. 

**Widening the gap.**

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**Outsource to outperform.**

Outside investment in SEO can provide an advantage for brands. 

**Searching for advantage?**

If you and your team have identified areas of your commerce strategy that could benefit from improved SEO, you may want to consider outsourcing SEO capabilities. Our research identified four areas where organizations are most likely to outsource SEO: search localization, content management, social media management, and paid search advertising. 

**Endnote:**

1. What people, processes and tools will you have in place? 
2. How can you create enough timely content at efficient cost to differentiate offerings, stand up new digital commerce capabilities, and elevate consumer experiences? 
3. What investments and partnerships will you make or plan to invest in? 
4. What is the technology stack you want to have or plan to invest in? 

During the early years of e-commerce, online research while shopping in the store was frequently or very frequently. 

Most consumers said they conduct online research while shopping in the store. However, more than half of consumers said they buy immediately or within a week of seeing a product in the store. 

The percentage by which SEO returns relative to the brand are more than twice as likely to say their SEO strategy is very important to their business. 

Compared to low-maturity organizations, SEO front-runners are more than twice as likely as low-maturity organizations to say their SEO strategy is very important to their business.

**About the research:**

The foundational research for the series, conducted by Lawless Research on behalf of Deloitte Digital between July 25 to August 8, 2022, is based on blind surveys of: 

- 144 marketers from the US
- 144 consumers from the US

The survey includes 288 respondents, 144 marketers and 144 consumers. 

The survey was conducted online using a randomly selected sample of US adults who are members of a national online research panel. 

The survey included questions about the use of SEO and other digital marketing strategies, the role of SEO in digital commerce, and the impact of SEO on business performance.