

The Smart Business Owner's Guide to Digital Marketing

What to Fix Before You Spend Money on a Website, SEO, or Ads

A practical guide to making confident decisions and avoiding wasted spend.

Built for Waikato service businesses



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INTRODUCTION:

Why Most Marketing Spend Gets Wasted

Most business owners don't waste money because they're careless.

They waste money because they're busy.

They want more calls.

They hire someone.

They try a tactic.

And they hope.

The problem is, digital marketing has an order.

If you buy the right thing at the wrong time, it still fails.

Most wasted spend comes from:

- building a website with no clear message
- paying for SEO without the basics in place
- running ads with no landing page or follow up
- paying for content but never approving it
- tracking clicks instead of enquiries

This guide shows you the right order, what matters most, and what to avoid, so you can move forward with clarity.



The Big Picture:

The Three Marketing Leaks

Most businesses lose enquiries for one of three reasons.

Leak 1 - Not found

People search for your service and you don't show up in Google Maps or local results.

Leak 2 - Not chosen

People find you, but your website feels unclear or outdated, so they don't trust it enough to enquire.

Leak 3 - No system

You get attention, maybe even leads, but there's no simple process that consistently turns clicks into enquiries.

Your job is simple:

Find the biggest leak and fix it first.



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The Right Order to Spend Your Marketing Budget

Don't buy tactics. Buy the next best step.

Here's the order that works for most local service businesses:

1) Clarity first

If your message is unclear, everything else costs more and performs worse.

2) Local visibility next

Google Business Profile, reviews, service pages, location pages.

3) Website conversion

Fast, mobile-friendly, clear CTA, proof, trust.

4) Lead system (ads + landing page + follow up)

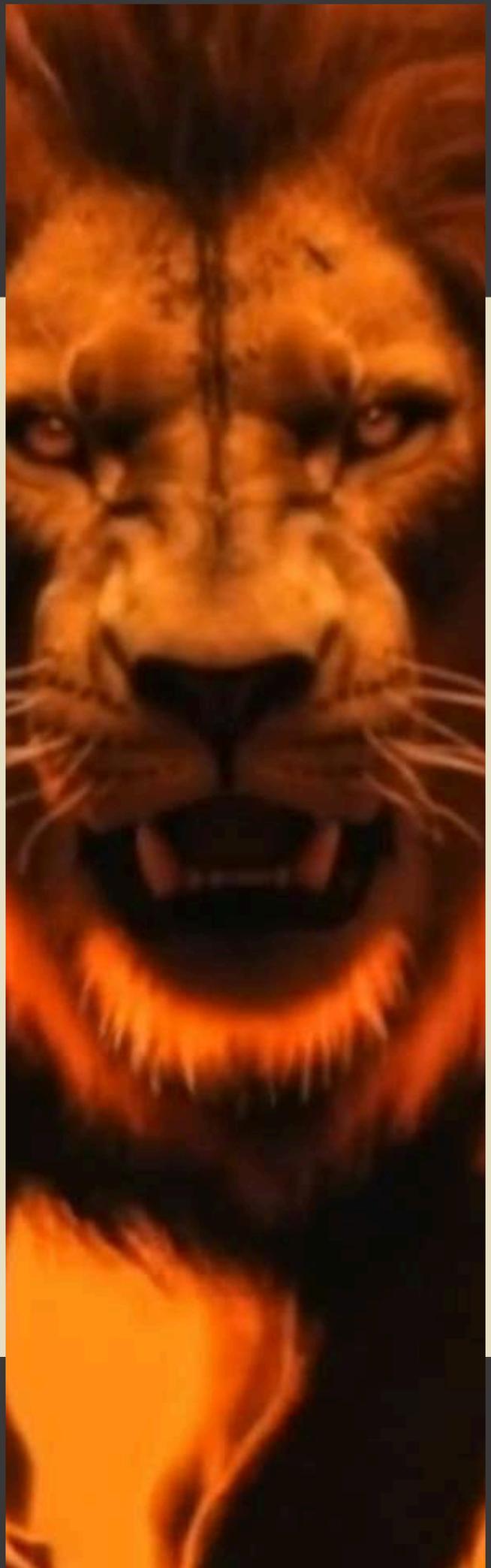
Only once the basics are strong.

5) Ongoing SEO and content

To build long-term compounding growth.

This order saves money because it reduces guessing.

If someone tries to sell you ads before fixing your website and Google presence, they're skipping the fundamentals.



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The 5 Most Common Marketing Mistakes

These mistakes keep good businesses stuck

Mistake 1 - Rebuilding a website without fixing the message

A prettier website won't help if it still confuses people.

Mistake 2 - Paying for SEO without local foundations

If your Google Business Profile is weak, SEO feels slow and disappointing.

Mistake 3 - Posting on social media with no strategy

Posting isn't a plan. It's noise unless it's tied to a goal.

Mistake 4 - Running ads to the homepage

Your homepage is rarely the best place to send paid traffic.

Mistake 5 - Moving too slowly to get results

Delays with content and approvals kill momentum.

Most marketing fails because the business owner can't supply content and feedback fast enough.



What Actually Works for Local Service Businesses

The simple formula

Local growth is not complicated.

It's three things:

1. **Be found**
2. **Be chosen**
3. **Turn attention into enquiries consistently**

If you're missing one of these, your marketing leaks.

This is why you see some businesses growing quickly while others stay quiet.

It's not always quality.

It's often clarity and visibility.



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Websites

When you need one and what it must do

A website is not there to look good.

A website is there to help a customer make a decision.

A good website must:

- load quickly on mobile
- clearly explain what you do
- clearly show who it's for
- show proof early (reviews, photos, examples)
- make the next step obvious
- remove doubt with a simple process

If your website is missing those things, the issue isn't traffic.

It's conversion.

Driving traffic to a confusing website is like pouring water into a leaky bucket.



SEO

When it's worth paying for (and when it isn't)

SEO works best when:

- your Google Business Profile is strong
- you have clear service pages
- you have location pages for the areas you serve
- you have consistent business details online
- you're earning reviews over time

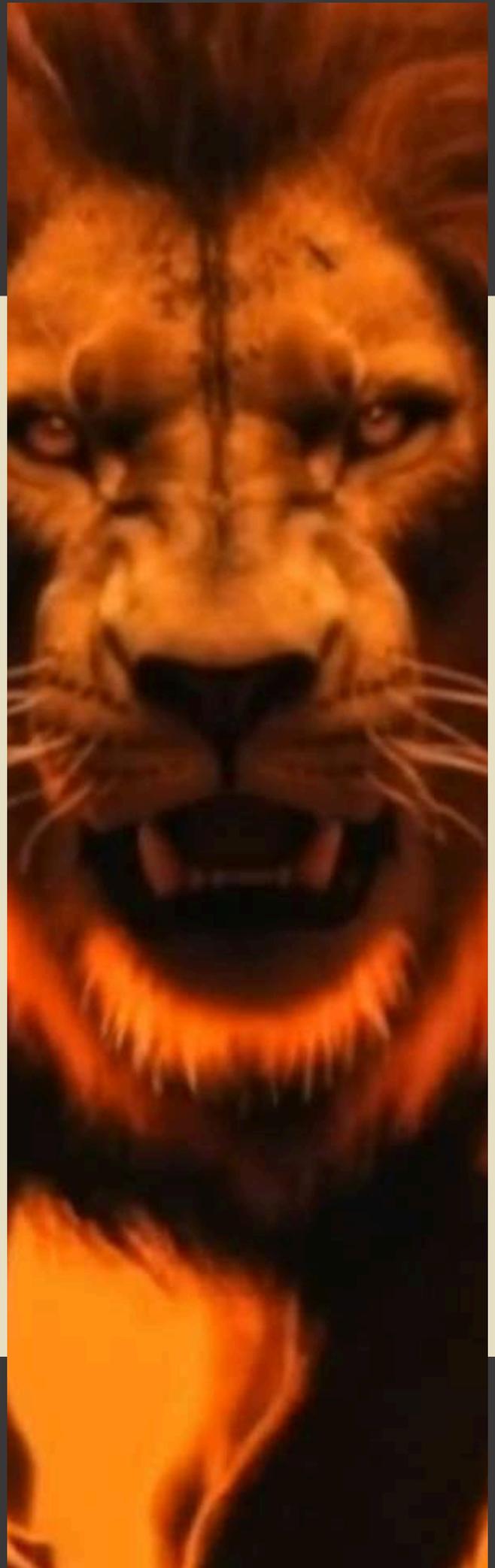
SEO is worth paying for when:

- you want long-term lead flow
- you want to be visible without paying for ads
- you're willing to commit for at least 6 months

SEO is not worth paying for when:

- you're looking for instant leads next week
- you're not willing to provide content or approvals
- your service is unclear or too broad

SEO is not a trick. It's consistency. Anyone promising instant rankings is selling you a dream.



Ads and Lead Systems

When ads make sense (and when they don't)

Ads are not a growth strategy on their own.

Ads are petrol.

If your engine is broken, more petrol won't help.

Ads work when:

- your offer is clear
- your landing page is focused
- your follow up is fast
- your website and Google presence are already strong

A simple lead system looks like this:

Offer - landing page - follow up.

Some people call this a funnel. It's the same thing.

Lead systems don't fail because of the ads. They fail because businesses are slow to approve content and slow to follow up leads.



Hiring Help

How to hire a digital marketer without getting burned

Before hiring anyone, ask these questions:

- What would you fix first for my business and why?
- How will you measure success in enquiries, not clicks?
- What will you deliver in the first 30 days?
- What do you need from me to move fast?
- How will you report progress in plain English?

Red flags:

- vague deliverables
- heavy jargon
- guaranteed rankings
- talking about clicks only
- no mention of conversion or follow up

Green flags:

- clear plan
- clear timeline
- clear priorities
- plain English communication
- focus on enquiries



What a Good 30 Day Plan Looks Like

This is what real progress looks like

In the first 30 days, a good plan usually includes:

Week 1 - Clarity and mapping

- define the message
- define the services and locations
- define the offer and next step
- map the digital plan

Week 2 - Foundations

- Google Business Profile improvements
- website structure and page plan
- review strategy setup

Week 3 - Build and launch

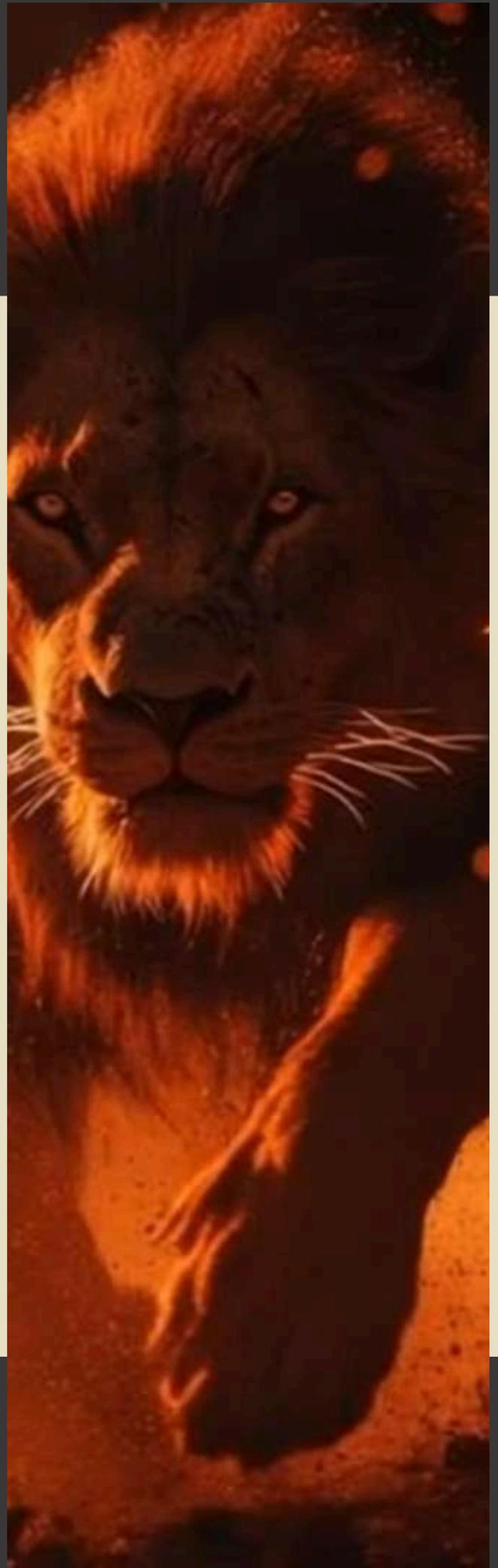
- website upgrades or landing page build
- lead system build (if ready)
- tracking and conversion setup

Week 4 - Test and improve

- review performance
- fix bottlenecks
- improve messaging
- plan ongoing actions

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is momentum.



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Closing

Clarity Before Commitment

You don't need complicated marketing.

You need the basics working properly.
And you need the right plan in the right order.

If you want clarity on what to fix first, book a free discovery call.

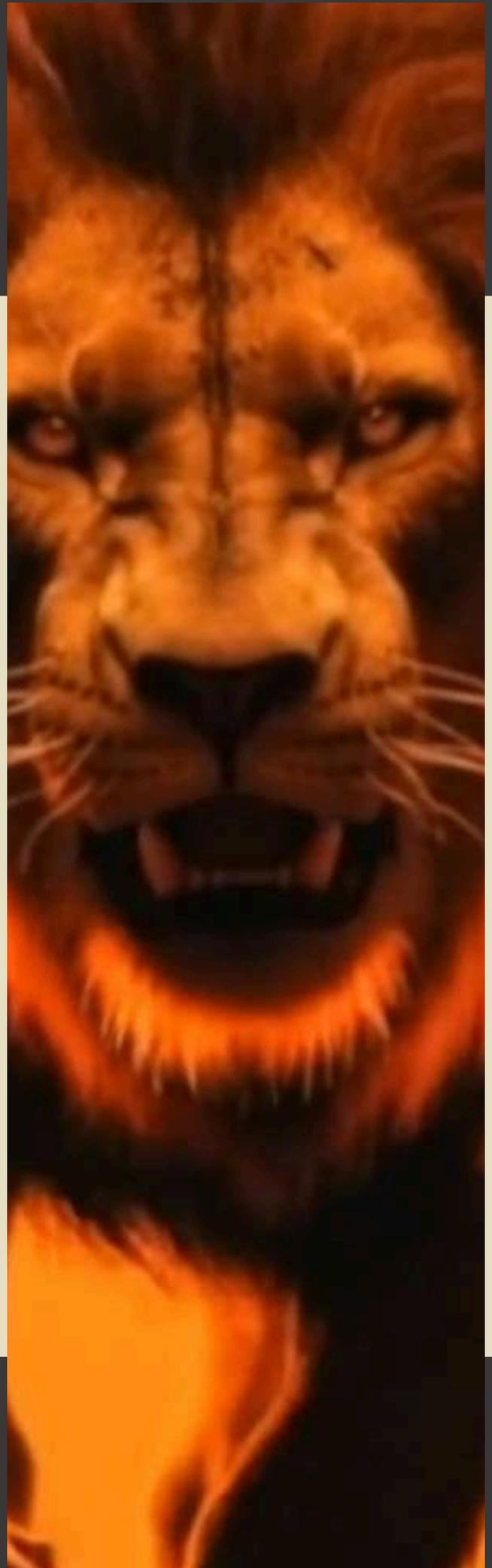
If there's a real opportunity for growth, you may be offered a free 2-hour growth mapping session for qualified businesses.

Book your discovery call:

dnp-marketing.co.nz/free-discovery-call

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