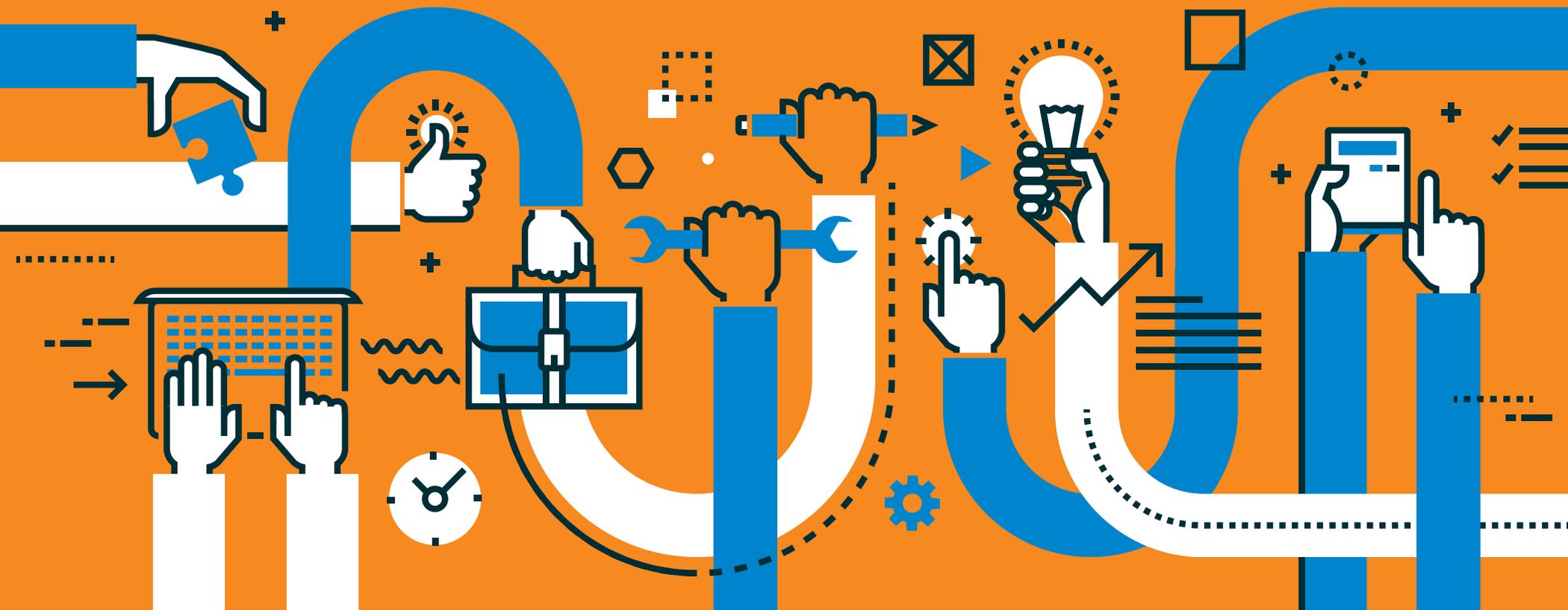


Marketing Bootcamp

By Eric Hultgren, Sarah Grajewski, and Anne Drummond | MLive Media Group





The reasons small business owners cite for having a website:



The benefits of digital

The reason more and more businesses are moving their marketing online is because digital channels offer powerful benefits, such as:

- **Broad reach.** Digital marketing campaigns have the potential to reach Internet users anywhere. A campaign's reach isn't limited by geography or the audience of one publication or radio/TV channel.
- **Targeted approach.** Within this broad reach, digital marketing also makes it easier to identify and then target your campaigns to specific customer demographics. A children's bookstore can more easily market to parents using specific social media groups or target their ads to specific demographics.
- **Cost-effectiveness.** Many digital channels have low entry costs, and can be turned on and off as needed depending on your budget. And some tactics, such as creating and maintaining social media accounts, only require an investment of time.
- **Flexibility.** It's easy to make changes to campaigns and content in digital formats. You can update product information or add helpful links as they become available, swap out photos of an event, or change your contact information.

Measuring the Impact

One of the greatest benefits of digital marketing is the ability to measure, in real time, the return on your marketing dollars. For example, you can count the number of website visitors generated by search marketing, or the number of clicks on content and advertisements, and analyze how many of those clicks became paying customers.

You can also measure the number of customer interactions in comment sections and on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. These interactions are more than just a virtual thumbs up for your business. They can actually help drive customers to your company, increase your sales leads and ultimately give your revenue a boost.

“The power of digital marketing is the opportunity to find the right people at the right time on the right device with the right message,”

says Eric Hultgren, director of marketing at MLive Media Group

To take advantage of these benefits, your digital marketing strategy can include a range of tactics, including email newsletters, search optimization, blogs and social media. Some businesses begin with a simple online advertising campaign, while others take a deep dive into creating their own content, maintaining a large social media following or organizing an email campaign that helps to transform potential customers into regular ones.

There’s no doubt that the Internet has changed how people make decisions about the products and services they buy. So whether you try digital marketing on your own or hire an agency to help develop a comprehensive strategy, your company will be in a better position to reach those potential customers. ★

47%

of users who follow a business are more likely to **visit that business's website**



Replacing the vague notion that general mass targeting is the only effective option. We now live in a marketing world where personalized engagement, positioning the brand as thought leader and influencer, is key. Twitter found that 47% of users who follow a business are more likely to visit that business's website. Using the model above, then, how many will become customers?

As marketing professionals, our great task is to generate a working model. Not only must we represent brands, identities or products that will be attractive to the consumer, we must cut through the noise of mass media, refining the message to truly reach the influence-able few.

A singular approach to building an effective marketing and advertising budget is ineffective, read on for concepts and competencies, and

new approaches to developing a comprehensive campaign or plan budget.

Decide what's important

Ask any Revenue Officer or C-Suite professional what's most important to your business, and the answer will always be sales. The sale, for most, is the warm blanket of success. From it, margins and profits can be measured, and these are the measurements that those types call "real". Margins and profits are real metrics, bottom-line growth tools, and things that can be tracked, repeated, and increased over time. Ask the marketer what's most important, and he will tell you that it's the engagements that matter most. He knows that those



primed for sale, engaging with, sharing information about, and developing a relationship with the brand or product, will champion

the brand and drive sales. So, then, how can we agree on what's important?

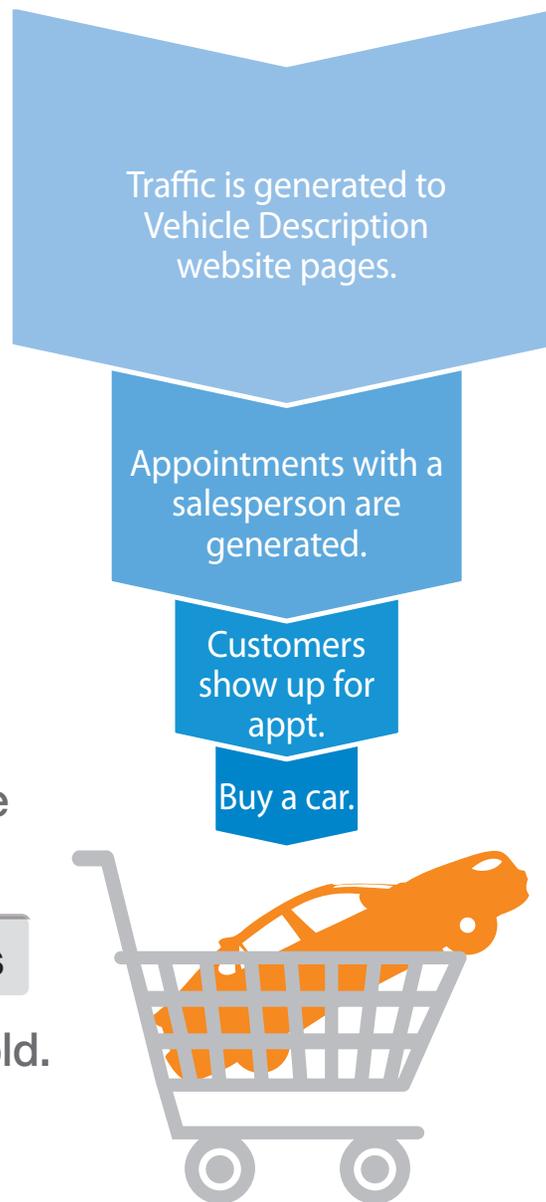
Creating your key performance indicators

KPIs are the lifeblood of any campaign. They are the actions against which success is measured. In order to determine what's important to your business, you must truly know your business. What end result is desired? More to the point, what does the path to that end result look like? Let's use an automobile dealer as an example.

Automotive dealer website traffic brought to

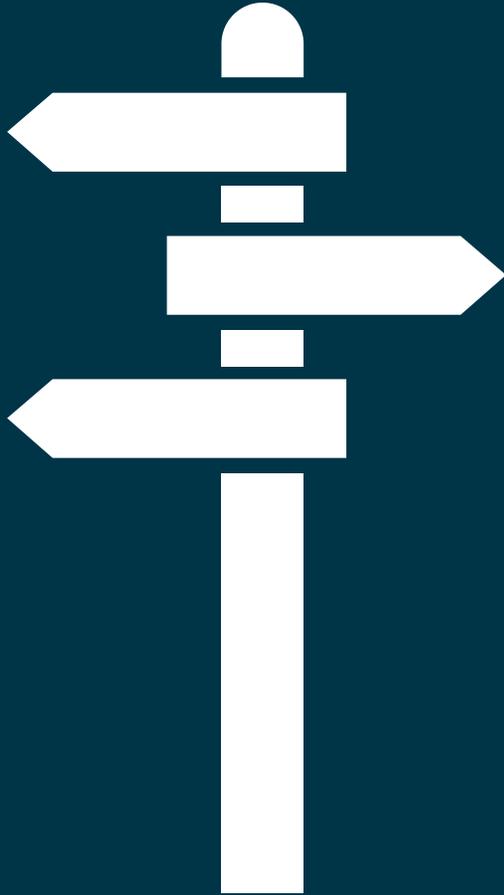
Vehicle Description Pages

corresponds to total cars sold.



creates lift in the visits to a Vehicle Description Page and the market and consumer confidence remain the same, there will be a lift in car sales.

So, what are the driving factors for your business? Can you name them succinctly? Run through this exercise for your own business (or segment of your business.) If you are a mechanical company specializing in insulation, HVAC, and electrical, those three verticals may have distinctly different performance metrics.



Other things to consider:

Not all conversions will be relative to website traffic, but few other elements are so easily tracked over time (and in real time). Select those elements that are trackable, and you'll have a model for success.

Think about driving factors. It's tempting to want to consider Facebook likes as a driver for sales. "We have 1,500 followers now, and our sales increased 1%." Instead, consider that the opposite is true. "With our increased sales, we also grew followers by x%."

Track what's really trackable. A restaurant gives food to a philanthropic event. That restaurant can't measure lift in brand recognition. But a restaurant hosts the philanthropic event? There's a way to track first time guests in that experience, and even add to the CRM data.

PRO TIP

Understanding SEO

Improving your website's search engine ranking helps customers find you.

Internet searches are the new front doors for businesses.

Searches bring more people to company websites than all other digital channels combined.¹ And because those visitors are on the hunt for products or services, they are often ready to buy. For example, 85% of retailers said that search engine marketing was the most effective tactic for generating new customers.²

But if you want the benefits of that traffic, you'll have to put in a little work.

That's where Search Engine Optimization (SEO) comes in. SEO is the process of adapting your website to improve its ranking in the results for specific search terms.

Inbound links are key for SEO. Creating high-quality, shareable content that's valuable enough to link to will pay off in search.

“If a business doesn't show up on the first page of Google, they don't exist,”

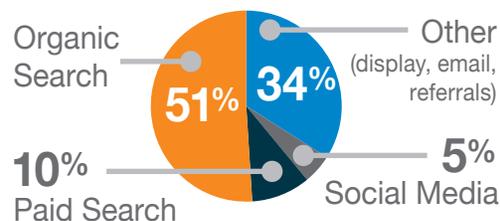
says Sarah Grajewski, director of search at MLive Media Group.

While you'll have to develop a strategy in order to get those clicks, the good news is that you don't have to pay for this placement as you do with search advertising.

The fundamentals of high rankings

To understand SEO, you first need to understand how search engines work. Search engines like Google and Bing use complex, proprietary algorithms to determine which websites are most relevant to the words that users type into the search box. While there are many components to these algorithms, three of the most important are keywords, content and links.

Primary Web Traffic Sources



Combining paid searches, social media outreach, email marketing and referrals, organic searches still drive more traffic to sites.

(BrightEdge)

Keywords. To show up in a search result, your website must contain the words that users are looking for. These are called keywords, and optimization involves targeting the most effective keywords for your business.

Start by studying which keywords people most often use to find your business. These typically coincide with a product or service you offer—such as “HVAC installation” or “yoga”—along with a descriptor like a geographic location. Google Analytics is a free tool that shows which search terms currently bring the most visitors to your page. Then, look for other keywords that might be relevant to your company by using a free keyword research tool such as the Keyword Combination Tool from Internet Marketing Ninjas.

Content. Search engines also consider the context of keywords to determine a page’s relevance, so it’s essential to incorporate your keywords into content that provides value to your customers. Provide good, detailed descriptions of all the products and services you offer. And consider writing how-to articles, Q&As with company experts, industry glossaries and other content that helps you put keywords into context.

Make sure to update this content on a regular basis, because search engines give higher rankings to sites that routinely add fresh content. Maintaining a company blog is a great way to keep your site up-to-date.



What do you know about Google's micro-moments?

With consumers checking their phone 150+ times each day, and 87% saying they have their phone with them day and night, speaking to your audience at the very moment they need you will impact the reaction to and awareness of your brand. You need to be there (anticipate the moment), be useful (relevant to the need), and be quick (swiftly responsive). For more on Google's micro-moments and their recommendations on using data and mobile to generate mobile campaign features and methodology, download their full documentation on the topic.

<https://think.storage.googleapis.com/images/micromoments-guide-to-winning-shift-to-mobile-download.pdf>

Consumers check their phone 150+ times each day and 87% have their phone with them day + night.

Sources: Mitek and Zogby Analytics, September 2014. Kleiner Perkins Caufeld & Byers, 2013 Internet Trends Report.

87% of millennials have smartphones on their person 100% of the time.

(Heidi Cohen's actionable marketing guide)

We no longer enter a store without our phone, any more than we would do so without our wallets. 82% of smartphone users turn to devices to help them make a product decision, according to Google. When searching for a product, a number of things may be found: how-to videos, consumer reviews, store inventories, and comparison pricing. Each of these has the ability to influence the buying decision. Sephora's vice president of interactive media, Bridget Dolan, has said, "We think one of the biggest opportunities that we have in retail is for our customers to leverage their phones as a shopping assistant when they're standing in the store. Having access to this information is that perfect new moment for customers to find everything they're looking for and get advice from Sephora."

The company backs up this thinking with their own web content that separates products into categories like "just arrived" and "bestsellers," and offers interactive beauty advice chatting. A section of their site offers how to videos, editorial/commercial style layouts for newly developed or released products, and photo galleries that feature images from real Sephora customers – harvested in sweepstakes fashion using social media hashtags.

"Sephora Makeup Review" returned 781 thousand video returns alone.





64% of decision makers read their email via mobile devices.

(Business to Community)

Email is not dead, though many would have you think so. Instead of that sensationalized statement, let's adjust. Email is changing, like everything else around us. Using email alone isn't going to do it. Just as television paints a broad swath across all viewers, hoping that brand recognition will stick, so go email campaigns. But, consider what email could do to support what you already know about your customers.

81% of US online shoppers are more likely to make additional purchases as a result of emails based on previous buying behaviors. (Harris Interactive) By the year 2017, 1.779 million people will access email via their mobile device (Radicati Group). Given that consumers have email addresses, and that businesses have information on their habits, neglecting customers post-sale is a lost opportunity. It's

always easier to turn a once a month-er into a once a week-er than it is to find a fresh, new face. Treat the customers you have to personalized messages that talk about what they want to hear from you, and you'll reap the revenue rewards. For more about how email has developed and to see where you fall among those using email as a marketing device, visit this article. ► www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/general/data-points-for-a-bigger-budget.html



Art and science forged together

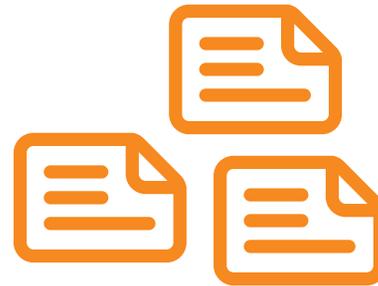
Now that you know what you are intending to drive: traffic to a webpage, the numbers in your CRM, the number of appointments, bids, or estimates—whatever the KPI you've determined, you must now create a campaign or marketing effort around that exact conversion. Point every single effort you make toward

that conversion, and align the elements you place in orbit accordingly.

Until now, we've talked about numbers: charted, and measurable developments that are easily trackable. At the campaign development stage, we have to talk about how the art impacts the science and vice versa.

Audience targeting is a crucial component. Having a media partner with this capability is absolutely integral to your success. After all, if only 12 engagements come from 5,000+ ad placements in a traditional, mass media effort, the approach must be a surgical one, rather than broad-stroke. Moving the needle on the number of interactions is made simpler when a carefully selected group of primed intenders is the audience.

Crafting the look and message of a campaign



Let's begin with content.

Why would you buy media, when you can create your own? Brands that blog are 13 times more likely to generate positive return on their investment, according to Hubspot. Forrester has recently reported that three fourths of marketers 'saw positive bottom-line outcomes from their content marketing efforts, such as increased loyalty and reduced marketing and media expenses.' Just under 60 percent of respondents also claimed content led to increased ROI. By 2019, content marketing will hit \$300 billion, according to PQ Media's global Content Marketing Forecast.

In short, content is important to the perception of your brand in the digital space. If you are crafting articles that are more about topics relevant to your audience and less about you (a good mix is important here; it's about the customer!), you position yourself as a thought leader, a reputable source of information, and establish relevancy to the consumer. You also create evergreen artifacts that will, when used properly, enhance SEO, provide fodder for social space followers/friends, and improve your site content.

While narrative content development isn't as costly as display/graphics development, please remember that a blend of deliverables keeps concepts fresh and engaging. Ebooks, infographics, podcasts, blogs, microsites, videos, white papers—whatever the medium, a steady stream of content is important and mixed media is crucial.



Brands that blog are 13X more likely to generate positive feedback.



Now, Display.

What should you say in your creative? What visuals do you select? With the average brain interpreting visuals 60,000 times faster than text, having the right look and feel is important. Nuts, bolts, numbers and metrics have been the combined elements we've discussed thus far. But any good creative will strike you in the feels. That's right: it's all about feelings.

Think about the purpose of the ad. Is it intended for brand awareness? To describe special features? Convert a viewer into your CRM? Or build brand advocates? Whatever the reason, the visual and headline should align with the purpose, and contain elements of your brand that ties the entire campaign together illustratively. Regardless of the purpose, heighten the emotion. What is the viewer supposed to feel from this ad unit? How are they supposed to respond? Is that clear?

While we could belabor creative development on many levels, today's work is really about generating an effective model that will work for you (or for your client.) There will surely be more on developing quality creative at a later date.

The brain interprets **images**
60,000X faster than text

(Sources: 3M Corporation and Zabisco)

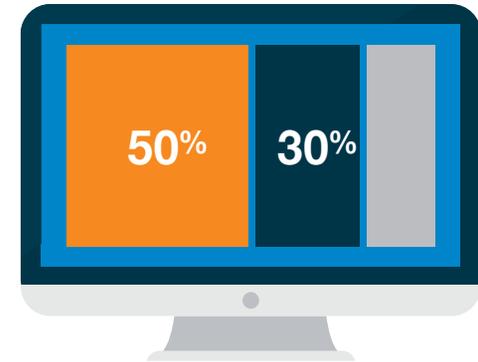
Creating Smart Content

The content you create and share is crucial to your digital marketing strategy.

In digital marketing, the best way to sell your product or service often is by not “selling” at all. Instead of always asking your customers to buy, you can become a resource for *them*, by sharing valuable information or just something fun. For example, a car dealership could produce a used-car buying guide, or a dentist office might distribute kids quizzes on how to prevent cavities.

This information is called “content,” and whether delivered through a blog post, social media update or video, it’s the heart of any successful digital marketing strategy. Consider that 50% of consumers report that a company’s content has a positive impact on their purchase decisions.

“When consumers believe the story a brand is telling, they believe in that brand and are more apt to purchase that product,”
says Hultgren.



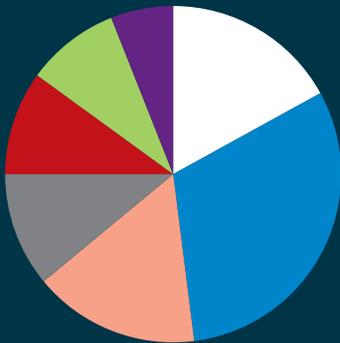
People spend more than 50% of their time online with content and an additional 30% of their time on social channels where content can be shared.

(AOL and Nielsen)

Nearly 90% of all brands use some form of content marketing, according to the Content Marketing Institute. Whether a mom-and-pop shop or Coca-Cola, businesses recognize that this vital marketing resource helps them connect with their customers, generate more sales leads and grow their business.

Rates at Which Brands Publish Content

- 17% Daily
- 31% Multiple times/week
- 16% Weekly
- 11% Multiple times/month
- 10% Monthly
- 9% Less than once/month
- 6% Unsure



64% Publish at least once/week

(Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs 2015 survey)

Think like a publisher

You may think of yourself as a restaurateur, accountant or spa owner. But in this new era you can also be a content producer. There are lots of ways to use content to enhance your website or engage in social media discussions. Some types, like videos and infographics, may require help from outside agencies. But many can be developed by your own staff. Consider these common content offerings:

- 1) Articles** and other formal, written texts provide information and value for potential customers. Here are types of articles you might share:
 - **White papers** are an authoritative report on a business issue that your customers are facing. For example, an attorney might author a white paper about creating a business succession plan.
 - **Client case studies** show how a product or service works and how it benefits a client.
 - **How-to guides** offer in-depth solutions to common problems.
 - **Product reviews** tout the merits of a particular item you're selling.
- 2) Infographics** present information in a fun /visual format, allowing readers to easily digest data and statistics.
- 3) Videos** communicate information in a way that is visual and memorable. They can be professionally filmed or DIY, and you can post them to websites like YouTube and Vimeo, share those links or embed them directly on your own website.

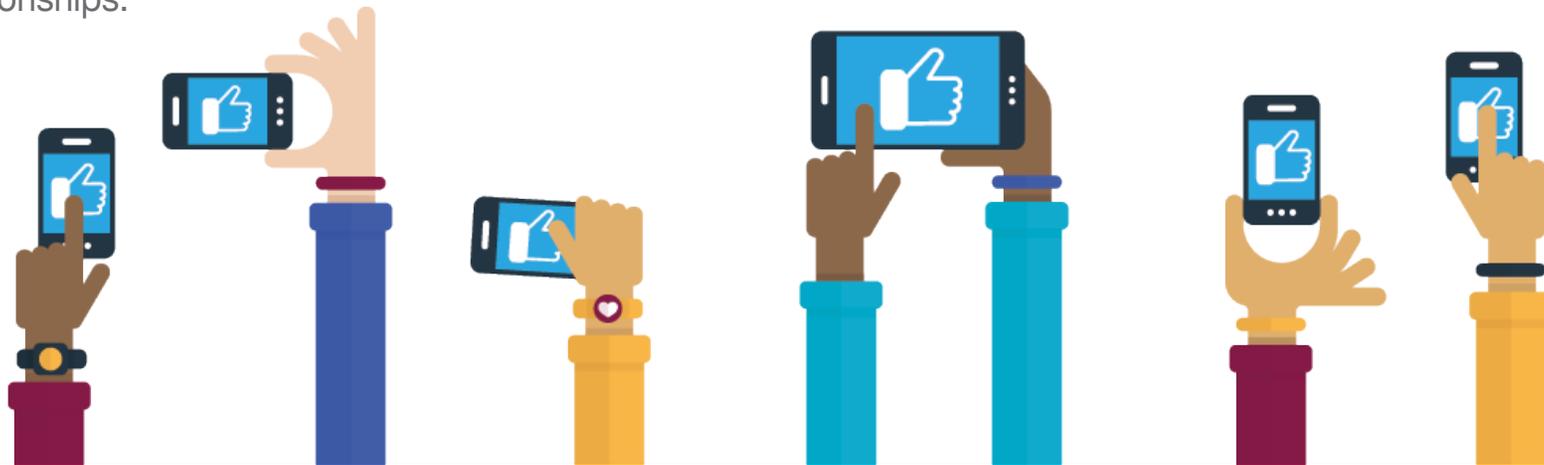
But don't be brazenly promotional

Social networks aren't keen on companies that blatantly ask for likes or shares of their posts. For example, Facebook announced last year that it will de-emphasize content in its news feeds from publishers posting so-called "like-bait."¹ Instead of asking for likes and shares, focus on creating content that speaks to your audience so they're inspired to take action on their own.

If you find it hard to strike the right tone, consider hiring a consultant or social media marketing team to help navigate this new world. But while the online format is new, the goal remains the same: building meaningful customer relationships.

“Brands that kill it on social media do so because they take it seriously, find their voice and build a community,”

says Hultgren. ★



1 Facebook.com

Crafting your budget



There are a number of models used to calculate marketing dollars. Entrepreneur.com has a pretty robust version, that calculates a high spend and low spend number based on margins and fixed expenses.

www.entrepreneur.com/article/54436

Forbes also released an article on how to develop a solid budget.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/davelavinsky/2013/06/07/three-steps-to-a-solid-marketing-budget/#12ae88181178>

Once you have determined what appropriate spending looks like, you'll want to examine the appropriate blend. While the blend will be different based on the project, you'll want to consider a few things.

- ✔ **What is the industry norm?** In the advertising and marketing space, if all of your competitors are choosing to make their impact in a certain segment, you can choose to join them in that channel, further segmenting the mind share for your brand, or dominate in a different space, capturing the power of a fresh, untapped audience.
- ✔ **What is the sweet spot for your organization?** If you have a workforce of individuals that pen their own blogs and are masters of infographics and the social space, you may want to concentrate your efforts on content. Always, always play to your strengths first.
- ✔ **What is the intended consequence?** If it's a lift in vehicle description pages on your auto site, you won't get more traffic with radio commercials. Build for the outcome you desire.
- ✔ **Strengthen the path to conversion.** Whatever the intended outcome, find a path to that conversion for your audience, in the fewest steps possible.
- ✔ **Remove the word "digital" from your vocabulary.** It isn't digital marketing, after all. It's just marketing.

Look at what the rest of the U.S. is doing.

When you review a chart like this, keep in mind that this includes B2B and B2C style businesses, so you'll want to adjust the lens for what you know to be true for your own business.

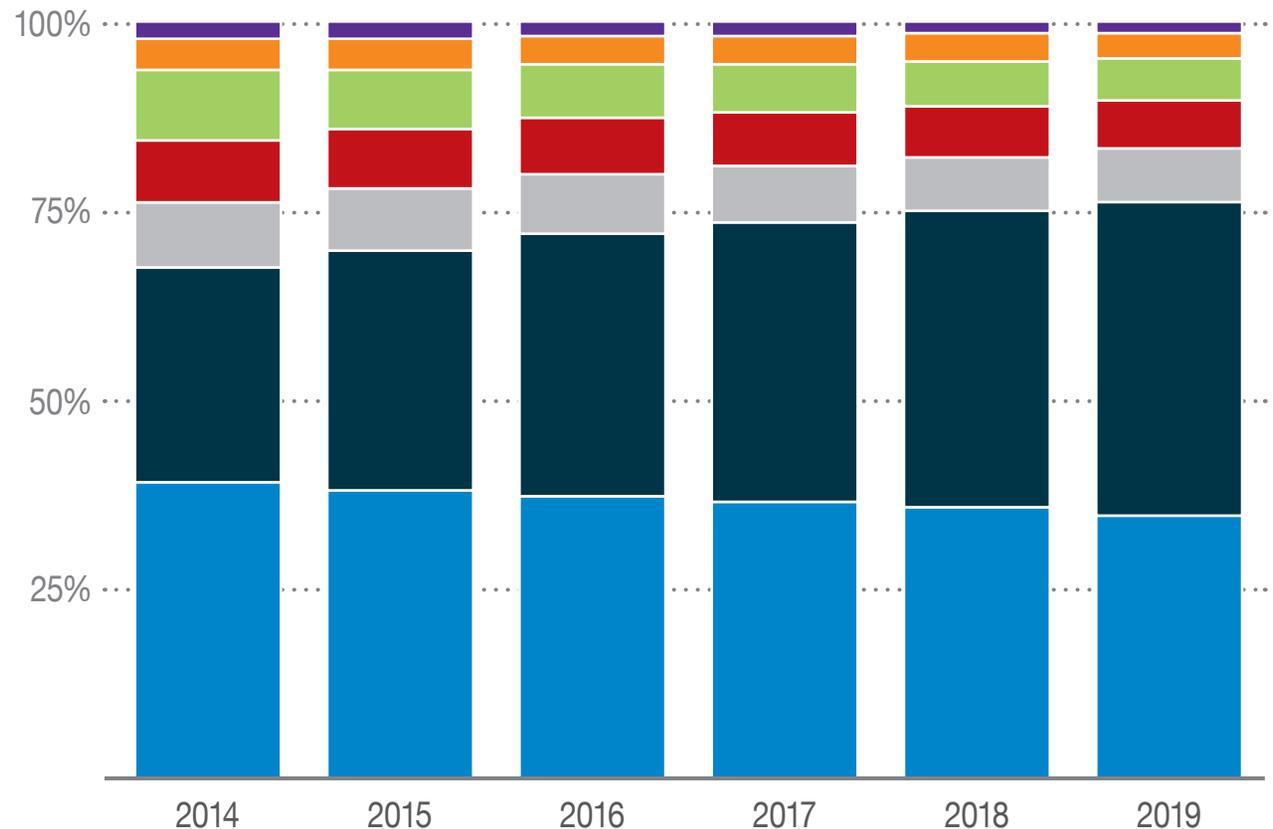
Another report by Forrester Research, identifies the US Interactive Marketing Spend, 2014-2019, and provides a similar view. (Page 3)

www.slideshare.net/JeffHarnoisMS/us-digital-marketing-forecast-2014-to-2019

Distribution of advertising spending in the U.S. from 2010–2019, by media

This timeline represents the advertising spending share in the United States from 2014 to 2014 as well as a forecast until 2019, broken down by media.

- Directories
- Outdoor
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- Digital
- TV



Source: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/272316/advertising-spending-share-in-the-us-by-media/>

Final Thoughts

When creating your marketing strategy, the single most important tactic is aligning with measurable outcomes. Know your own path to conversion, and track its performance constantly. A great campaign can change the conversion ratios, so watch for changes to your model. Use content and great visuals to elevate the sentiment around your brand. Target your audience, using the most surgical methods available to you, making better use of the consumers indicating their intention to convert, as you desire.



Eric Hultgren

Director of Marketing | MLive Media Group

Eric is a human connection specialist who focuses on how the social space can help brands build customers for life by focusing on connecting with them before they ever attempt to sell to them. The world of marketing is changing by the hour and brands who understand that engagement trumps pageviews will be the brands that are successful in the next phase of business in the internet age.



Sarah Grajewski

Director of Search | MLive Media Group

Sarah has been with MLive Media Group for four years, starting as an account executive working directly with businesses in West Michigan. She has since grown with the company working as a Senior Sales Consultant advising teams of sales people across the state and is currently the Director of Search. Sarah is self-taught, certified in Google Adwords and Analytics with a wide range of experience with successful paid search accounts and digital strategies across several business categories.



Anne Drummond

Creative Director | MLive Media Group

A self-proclaimed type-A artist, Anne has a host of marketing and public relations experience, alongside an ability to harness the power of the design process for creative execution. She leads a team of multi-disciplined creatives to best serve the visual and branding needs of clients. Her certain sensibility for detail and urgency are key components in her visioning efforts.