

10 Top Tips to increase campaign effectiveness and ROI

The latest reports on the digital marketing industry show that it is growing year-on-year. Experts in the industry are even calling for digital to stop being referred to separately because it's become such a significant part of what marketing involves. Within this space there are a vast number of opportunities that brands can take advantage of by following the trends in this constantly evolving marketing scenario. In order to succeed in 2013, companies need to focus on tying in cross-channel campaigns, including offline and online experiences and finding ways to measure the impact of these cross-channel campaigns. In today's digital marketing environment marketers need less money to market their brand and results are more easily measured. However it can take time to develop an effective strategy and to properly integrate all of the channels. In this month's Ask the Experts article our digital marketing experts share a checklist of 10 top tips to follow to make sure you are getting the best out of your marketing efforts.

The growing number of channels for media consumption highlight the importance of a precise and consistent strategy that makes it easier for marketers to successfully reach their business objectives and to reach consumers across all the different channels they are using. Companies should leverage the viral nature of digital content and the power of online interactions to benefit their online strategy. Digital channels create engagement and engagement helps to create long-term relationships. Through these relationships is where awareness, trust and brand loyalty are built. Here are 10 marketing practices that our experts recommend you follow in order to more effectively market your brand and products:

1. Think integration: create a consistent brand message

Companies should leverage the viral nature of publishing content through their websites and share through their newsletters, campaigns and social channels. Trust is built through relationships, which in turn builds brand loyalty and awareness. Align your company vision, mission and core values with your brand position. From that starting point, you can craft a consistent message and distribute that message to prospective and existing customers in an integrated way. Every individual marketing activity should reinforce and complement the others. Think about it: the world's biggest brands - such as Apple, Coca-Cola and McDonald's - are models of consistency.

2. Be unique to beat competitors

If you haven't identified your USP, this should be first on your to do list. Why should people choose your brand and buy from you as opposed to your competitors? Be as specific as possible. A good place to start is conducting a SWOT analysis. What are your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? Exhaust each list and be honest. By going through this exercise you will uncover what makes your business unique, which should be the focus of all your marketing campaigns and communications.



3. Be seen to generate demand

It is easier to respond to demand than to create demand. But if your brand/company is not prominently visible via all marketing channels you are also missing the opportunity to respond to this existing demand effectively. It is therefore essential that your website is prominently displayed in search engines, that your recipients receive regular newsletters and relevant communications and that your profiles on social media are constantly updated with new and engaging content.

4. Get personal: the customer is the centre of your strategy

Email is the most efficient and cost effective way to communicate one-to-one. Develop a regular email newsletter and a series of automated email marketing programmes with prospect/customer focused and relevant content. What do your customers want to hear about your products? What do customers want to discover about your brand? Maybe it's special offers, new product lines or service information that will make their lives easier or events that might interest them. Make sure you always collect as much information as possible to segment your lists based on your audience's individual interests, behaviour or buying preferences. This will help you to improve the engagement and the interest of recipients in your email communications.

5. Produce great content to engage with your target audience

Develop a content marketing plan. Content can come in the form of newsletter, blog posts, articles, eBooks, videos, pictures, audio, webinars, white papers and more. Producing quality content is vital to position your brand and it also helps to increase the positive association that prospects and customers will have when interacting with you. Be sure you develop content that you can use via the different channels and adapt it for both online and offline campaigns so that you can leverage it to generate a coherent customer experience across all touchpoints.

6. Go Social

Social media is where consumers are spending a large percentage of their time whilst online. In addition to keeping up with their friends, they are turning to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Google+ to conduct research and find references for the products and/or services they want to buy. Develop your brand pages, build engagement with your audience and post information that is relevant to your audience. Make sure you track comments, likes and interactions online so you can respond in real time in the most appropriate way. Make content easy to share across channels, from email to social networks and vice versa.

7. Get the best out of your website

Does your website properly reflect your brand and company image? The first impression is what really counts to positively influence prospects and customers, your website is very often the first point of interaction with your brand and is certainly the online window for your products. If you are not getting enough visits and leads/customers from your website, it's definitely time to consider an overhaul. The navigation of your site should allow visitors to quickly find the information they are looking for. And most importantly, don't make them hunt for ways to interact with your company. Contact information, newsletter signup forms and links to social pages/profiles should always be prominent regardless of where the visitor is on your site.

8. Keep the Conversation Going!

Even with a well thought out website or an email marketing programme not all of your subscribers will convert immediately. Make sure to plan an effective retargeting strategy - using email and your website together with other channels such as social media and mobile - to engage and reinforce brand visibility on all the contact points. Design a compelling campaign that reminds them about your brand and products while giving them another reason to interact with your company.

9. Focus on Conversion

Website visitors, friends and followers on social media, newsletter subscribers ... your prospects and customers are in different stages of their customer life cycle when they start to interact with your brand and prefer to do so via different channels. Marketers need to identify the most appropriate strategy for each of their targets in order to reinforce the engagement and invite prospects/customers to move forward through the different stages of their life cycle. Invite those that are ready to take action to buy online or at your point of sale, using incentives (such as discount vouchers, free shipment or loyalty points). For those that are in an earlier stage of the buying cycle, use a different strategy that reinforces the engagement (such as an invitation to attend an exclusive event or to sign up to become members of a community). This will give them something of value while providing you with the opportunity to reconnect with them.

10. Data is the key: track all activities and be analytic

Data is a wonderful thing and offers unlimited opportunities to improve effectiveness and ROI of your digital marketing activities. Data is so important when getting to know your customer, so track all of their activity. Data analysis is vital for marketers that want to build a customer centric strategy and effectively engage with their target audience. Traditional media may be harder to measure but the online world is rich with information that will help you to improve the performance of your marketing campaigns.



Conclusions

In marketing today, a unified approach is key to delivering one consistent brand experience for the consumer. That can mean very different tactics for each platform, including online/website, email marketing, mobile and also traditional marketing channels as well as tactics to be consistent across all and bring these channels together. It becomes less about managing a brand/client and more about guiding. The world is not a static environment and in order to effectively communicate the brand message to the core audience, marketers will need to be able to create connections with consumers that are in a constant state of motion.

Our advice is to get started as soon as possible but don't rush it. The key for success with your digital marketing strategy is in finding the balance between moving at the same pace as today's consumers alongside with planning what's realistic within your organisational environment (budget, technology, resources etc.). Experiment with possible solutions, learn from them and improve your process with the key takeaways.