3 Media Web

Build a Digital Marketing Strategy That Gets Results

Build a Digital Marketing Strategy That Gets Results

While great websites can lead to leads, sales and overall marketing success, it's also easy to sink a ton of time and money into tinkering online — without much to show for it. Marketers say their biggest challenges are generating traffic and leads and showing return on investment, according to a **2017 HubSpot report**.

That's partly because our online teams are generally pretty divided. Marketers are focused on getting the word out and sharing creative promotions. Developers and website managers are focused on keeping the company's online presence running. But marketing and tech teams rarely put their heads together to create a unified digital marketing strategy.

That's what we've found over the past few years, and it's why we're focused on helping teams come together around a common goal: showing ROI of digital marketing. Our **own team** is part web geek, part social butterfly, so we speak the language of both developers and marketers. We've learned how to bring those two groups together to drive meaningful marketing results, focus on the big-picture strategy, demonstrate what's working and save your company resources (time and money) along the way.

Know Your Goals

Get together as a team and define your **overall strategy**. A successful marketing strategy isn't just about improving traffic or page views. Your strategy should be tied to business results like driving more qualified leads, shortening the sales cycle, increasing sales, improving customer retention — in other words, producing real business growth.

Example: ACME Inc. wants to increase sales of its technology product by 20% this year.

It's also important to agree on **who you're targeting**. What do you know about your ideal prospect online? Create buyer personas to clarify who your audience is, what they're looking for and what challenges they need help overcoming. Then run the numbers on your ideal cost to acquire a single customer, so that you can plan your marketing spend.

Example: ACME is targeting CMOs at midsized companies in the Northeastern U.S. who need help streamlining their marketing operations.

Finally, you need to know **what action you want people to take**. Does your sales process rely on people signing up for demos? Downloading your content? Filling out a request form? Calling you or sending you a live chat? Or are you just trying to build brand awareness and spread the word about what you do? Knowing the goal action will help you streamline the information you share with prospects.

Example: We want more qualified prospects to sign up for a demo with a sales rep.

Start with Your Website

Marketers know that there are a million ways to share your story online — and the list of marketing tactics grows every week. YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, online review sites, LinkedIn, Quora, industry publications — the list goes on and on. But we've found that all of those outside tools only work when your marketing home base — your website — is in tip-top shape. Before you start sharing and posting, make sure your website is doing everything it can to contribute to your strategy.

First take a hard look at the back end of your site. Technically, how does your website shape up? Run a technical report to understand:

Information Architecture

Is your site's architecture organized and logical? Are your pages and categories arranged in a clear hierarchy? Do your menus and navigation make sense? Are you sending clear signals to search engines about your site's content? Do you have extra content and scripts hanging around?

Site Speed

Load time is one of the most important factors for search engines. If your site is slow, users will leave — immediately. Google watches that user behavior and ranks websites accordingly. Improving site speed is one of the fastest ways to supercharge your online marketing. This step might seem technical, but it's important for the overall health of your site.

Design

Bells and whistles are fun, but today's users are looking for simplicity. They want to find what they're looking for, fast. Make sure your website design is consistent and clean, with clear calls to action on every page. If every page has a different look, layout and font, it's probably time to streamline the design. When you start with a simple design, you'll be able to more quickly make changes based on what you learn about your audience.

Content

When someone lands on your site, what do they immediately learn about you? Is it clear what you do and how you help people like them? Spend time making sure your messaging is crystal clear. You only have a few seconds to convince a website visitor that they're in the right place, so every word counts.

Then Turn Up the Traffic

Once your website is ready to greet people, it's time to go out and get those visitors! Many marketers focus their time on content marketing — creating blog posts, articles and images to share on their sites. Content marketing is an important strategy, and we recommend creating valuable content consistently over time. But the important word is **time**. Content marketing is a long game, and it can take years to build an audience, improve SEO and see organic spikes in website traffic ("Organic" refers to visits coming from organic search, i.e. from Google).

While content marketing should always be on your radar, we recommend taking advantage of paid advertising. It's the fastest way to increase traffic, reach specific groups of people and start learning about your audience. Think of content marketing as a steady drip that strengthens over time, while paid advertising is a garden hose you can turn on and off.

Advertising helps marketing teams:

→ **Target specific audiences**.

Let's say you're targeting CMOs at midsized companies in the Northeastern U.S. With paid campaigns on Google AdWords or social media, you can limit your reach to *just those people,* taking your message directly to the audience you care about. With today's advanced ad targeting, you can even reach people who are interested in your competitors, people who are searching for you and people who are already connected to your customers.

→ Improve SEO.

Did you know that running ads can actually improve your organic SEO? When you run successful ad campaigns and people click on your ads, Google sees an increase in your traffic, proving that you are relevant to your target audience. If you're sending the right people to targeted pages, your bounce rate will go down, signaling to Google to boost your organic SEO. Plus, your ad content and target audience help Google learn more about your company and your website.

→ Extend your reach.

Paid ads can boost your content to get more organic or "viral" results such as shares and views. And advertising can grow your social media audiences so that even your non-paid content reaches more people.

→ Learn lessons about which types of content are most popular.

Let's say you develop 20 different Facebook ads. After two weeks you find that five of the ads are wildly successful, 10 are somewhat successful and five fall completely flat. That short ad campaign has taught you valuable lessons about what your target audience is interested in. Maybe they love your promoted article about an upcoming marketing conference but they aren't interested in your promotion about marketing best practices.

Or you might run an ad campaign on Google where you start by targeting keywords you assume your audience is searching for — but the campaign might give you new, surprising insight about better keywords to target.

You can apply those advertising lessons to everything else you're working on, including the content you share on social media, your blog and email marketing.

As you send people to your website, you'll also learn lessons about how they interact with it. If a huge percentage of visitors are jumping to your Resources page and then leaving immediately, you know that you're not providing the tools they're looking for. Or, if you get a ton of traffic to your contact form but the conversion rate is low, it might be time to remove unnecessary fields and make the form simpler to fill out.

As you send people to your website, you'll also learn lessons about how they interact with it.

Use Other Tools to Reach Your Audience

Once you've used paid ads to bring in new traffic and learn about how your audience interacts with your site, look to the other tools in your marketing tool belt.

Content Marketing

Content Marketing is a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of valuable content (online) about your company and/or services, usually via blog posts and social media channels. Content Marketing efforts should attract clients, build your brand and increase brand recognition.

Over time you can move up in search engine rankings by publishing content about your audience's interest areas and your focus keywords. Consider what kinds of questions your customers and prospects are asking, and use content like blog posts to answer those questions.

Social Media Marketing

Content marketing goes hand-in-hand with social media marketing. If you're publishing helpful content on your website, spread the word by promoting your posts on social media.

Yext Location Services

Add your business to hundreds of online directories with the **Yext Location Cloud**. Updating your business information with Yext boosts your local search results, since you'll be added to major directories like Yelp, Google, Foursquare and Bing.

The bottom line: The most successful teams combine technical know-how, marketing creativity and constant analysis to drive marketing ROI. When you work together toward a common goal and look for lessons and tweaks to your strategy along the way, you're much more likely to see return on your investment.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Marlborough, MA Headquarters

11 Apex Drive, Suite 300A
Marlborough, MA 01752

📞 +1 (508) 845-8900

✉️ marlboro@3mediaweb.com

Grand Rapids, MI Office

99 Monroe Building, Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

📞 +1 (616) 258-2033

✉️ grandrapids@3mediaweb.com