MainPath Marketing

Recipe for Success:

Why an Interconnected Digital Marketing Strategy Is Essential for Your Business

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS: WHY AN INTERCONNECTED DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Take a second and think about your digital-filled day. If you're not at work on your desktop, you're at a coffee shop on your laptop; if you're not on your phone texting a friend, you're scrolling through your Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter feed on your iPad. The digital world is more a part of our lives than ever before, and it plays a huge role in our consumer behavior. As a business-owner, you owe it to yourself to leverage this new digital edge – but it's important to do so in the right way.

The key to understanding, attracting, engaging with, and ultimately persuading consumers is through an interconnected digital marketing strategy. Today's consumers are more responsible and critical when it comes to making purchasing decisions – they like to do their own research. In fact, a Buyers Journey study discussed on Forbes tells us that 70-90% of the buyer journey is finished before the consumer engages face-to-face with one of your employees. So where are these customers doing their research? You guessed it – online. That same study tells us that consumers engage with 11.4 pieces of content (on average) before they make a purchasing decision.

Long gone are the days of relying only on 1-to-1 relationship-building strategies for increased loyalty and sales. Instead, we have to create that same kind of personal experience, but in the digital world. But, how do you create a personal experience when you haven't met your customers? The answer is to know their online behaviors and target them – and that requires a multi-channel digital marketing approach.

Successful digital marketing is like one, well-rounded, balanced, and delectable meal. Each ingredient is essential in its own way and often blends with the other ingredients to truly complete the dish and appease your appetite. Similarly, each component of digital marketing should be utilized in your campaign, and it's important that those components blend with one another. Customers have varied preferences, and they respond to different channels in different ways. An interconnected digital marketing strategy helps you cover all your bases while maintaining a consistent voice, goal, and image for your brand.

From social media and content, to PPC (pay-per-click) and CRO (conversion-rate-optimization), each ingredient adds something essential to the meal for a truly successful gastronomic experience.

MEAL TIME: A BREAKDOWN OF THE ESSENTIAL DIGITAL MARKETING COMPONENTS AND HOW THEY CONNECT

Let's get cooking.

ANALYTICS

(Meat and Vegetables) – the foundational ingredient that provides significance to every other ingredient in the dish.

While analytics is not quite a "channel" it is no less important. Analytics tells you where to place your energy in terms of strategy. Quality analytics should link to every one of your channels to provide information on what's working and what's not. Without tracking your successes and where they are coming from, you're flying blind. Which social platform does your company generate the most leads from? Which channels or mediums are your biggest conversion points? Analytics provides you with this data that can be interpreted and used to re-target your efforts for a truly successful campaign. However, it's important to keep this data fresh and re-visit it often, because as quickly as our technology advances, our consumer behaviors change.

CONTENT

(Cheese) – the ingredient that goes with everything, comes in all different forms, and can do wonders for any dish.

High-quality content is a powerful ingredient and can grab your audience's attention, evoke a desired emotion, offer an opportunity for engagement, display your authority on a particular subject, advertise your product or service, promote your credibility, build customer loyalty, and ultimately encourage an action. All that to say, content is important. While analytics helps you decide how to reach your target consumers, the content dictates what you'll say to those consumers once you reach them. Content serves many purposes and works with almost every other channel and tactic.

Expert-level, objective content builds authority and credibility through placement on third-party sites, which is accomplished in distribution. Fun, entertaining content builds engagement and brand loyalty by being shared across social media platforms. Helpful

and informational, branded content keeps your customers coming back for more and gives them insight into your brand, as this content typically lives on your site. Use content to target your customers on the right channel, in the right way.

DISTRIBUTION

(Rice) – a staple for the most popular dishes around the world, used to support the rest of the meal and make it more fulfilling.

Distribution gives your brand an incredible amount of credibility. When you are researching a new company and you see that their CEO authored an article that was published on Forbes, how does that shape your opinion of the brand? Unless you are vastly different from the majority of today's consumers, you're probably thinking, "Wow, now there's a trustworthy brand that really knows their stuff" – and then you're hooked.
An Inpowered Study reviewed by Forbes tells us that expert content impacts a consumer's brand awareness 88% more than brand content, and 50% more than generated reviews (i.e. Yelp, Google+, etc.) Distribution drives strategic connections for your brand and works by placing your content on those third-party sites. This ingredient is what helps set the sales-driving, loyalty-building ball in motion.

EMAIL

(Onions) – you serve them to the people you are closest to, yet everyone else they encounter that day gets to experience the lovely oniony smell.

Most lead generation and CRO tactics lead to some sort of form fill that prompts consumers to enter their email address. But, what do you do with this large collection of email addresses? You reach out to them. Keep those consumers engaged by sending them emails that point to your latest high-quality content posts, your new special offers or promotions, and any other exciting news related to your business. Email is great for re-engagement, but what it lacks is the opportunity for new engagement – that's where social media comes in. By incorporating social sharing links in each of your emails, you can create a ripple effect. When one of your email recipients makes the decision to share, all of a sudden your brand is given the opportunity to touch everyone else in that consumer's social network.

SOCIAL MEDIA

(Eggs) – everyone loves eggs, yet they are very precise about which form they prefer them in – scrambled, over-easy, fried, or maybe all of the above!

Social Media is a great tool for promoting your

inbound marketing efforts. You can use social to share the content that's published on your site's blog, mentions of your company on third-party sites, exciting news or specials for your brand, and more. Social platforms serve as the perfect, casual setting for consumers to engage with and relate to your brand. However, like every other digital marketing component, your efforts should be clear and consistent. It's not enough to set up a whole bunch of social accounts and post on them "willy-nilly." You should hold the same branding, tone, and image of your brand across each of your platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.). And while that may seem like a lot of work, analytics can help you decide which platforms to target more heavily.

SEO

(Lemons) – sprinkle this magic zest over your entire dish to top it off with a lemony touch that tells your taste buds, "This meal is worth it."

SEO (search engine optimization) leverages the power of every other digital marketing tactic and uses that power to tell search engines that your company/product or service is important. Your foundational SEO efforts should include on-site optimization like keyword research, title tags, and metadata descriptions, but your overall SEO strategy needs to take it a step further. To have a successful SEO campaign you need to have the whole package – content marketing, social media, distribution, conversion rate optimization, etc. Why is that? Because today's sophisticated search engines look at more than just keywords, they also look at links, tech optimization, social media presence, credible third-party site presence, brand awareness, amount of time spent on site, click-through rates, and more.

CRO

(Herbs & Spices) – not only does it make the dish more attractive, but it enhances all of the meal's natural flavors.

CRO (conversion rate optimization) is a digital marketing tactic that dictates how consumers interact with your site. By using the right CRO tools you can see where visitors go on your site, how much time they spend on each page, what they do once they are on a page, and more. Data from these findings can then help you to make strategic decisions about how to tweak your site. For instance, you may notice a lot of clicks on a "learn more" button that sits way below the fold of your site. Now, if you do in fact want visitors to "learn more" about whatever it is, you might consider moving that button to be above the fold so that more people have the opportunity to see it. Other CRO tweaks include changes to color, font, page organization, site layout, images, illustrations, etc. Much like analytics, this is an ongoing process, and it's important to continue drawing fresh data from your site, as

consumer behaviors are constantly changing.

PPC

(Garlic) – offers the perfect kick to top off a well-rounded meal, & the littlest bit can go a long way.

PPC (pay-per-click) is a tactic used to target consumers and encourage them to convert. This tool is highly effective and displays results quickly. And while it may seem very different from the other channels and tactics, it relates to them completely. Wherever ads are placed – social media sites, search engine results pages, or targeted websites – they are attracting consumers with relevant content that includes keywords. Then, once an interested consumer clicks on one of your paid ads, they're taken to a landing page which often uses a combination of CRO, SEO, and content to quickly engage the visitor and funnel them into conversion.

WEB DEVELOPMENT

(Flour) – a basic ingredient that starts as a powder and ends in a fully-formed, often delicious treat.

A well-designed site is essential for a good consumer experience. Even though the consumer isn't coming into your store, they should still be offered exceptional customer service, and that is found in your site's visual design, relevant information, and ease of use. It's important to start with a good foundation, and then allow CRO to come in and make the necessary, ongoing adjustments to enhance your campaign. Another highly important aspect of web development is mobile responsiveness. Since consumers are interacting with your brand on every kind of digital device imaginable, it's important that your site maintains its integrity on every type of technology.

WHITEPAPER RECIPE & CONCLUSION

How your brand is portrayed in the digital world is HUGE. Let's use white papers as an example. A Forbes IT buying study states that 72% of study participants contacted a vendor or reseller after reading a white paper; and 57% of participants were influenced in their product buying decision after reading a white paper. Now what does that mean in terms of interconnectivity? Take a look below.

The recipe for a successful white paper calls for:

- 3 cups of high-quality, informative, and engaging content
- 2 cups of analytics to identify the most effective way to reach your target audience
- 1 cup of web development combined with CRO to create a perfect landing page in which to place your downloadable whitepaper

- 1 cup of email outreach to keep your existing contact list engaged with and loyal to your brand
- ¾ cup of social media combined with distribution to engage your target audience through other channels and direct them back to the white paper on your website
- ½ cup of SEO that utilizes foundational optimization as well as every other digital marketing tactic to ensure that your white paper ranks high on applicable search engines

Voila, there's one piece of your digital marketing strategy down. Thanks to the seamless combination of each of these ingredients, you can create a comprehensive, all-encompassing recipe for success.

Now you might be thinking, yes I agree, but how do I gain access to each of these specialties to create an interconnected strategy? It's true that many companies simply don't have the resources to support a full-service digital marketing team in-house. But don't throw in the apron just yet – there's a simple solution!

An outsourced digital marketing agency can provide you with all the benefits of an internal marketing team, while hiring just ONE company. Main Path Marketing has that team of specialists plus a dedicated marketing executive that drives your digital marketing strategy and manages the multi-channel approach.

An interconnected digital marketing strategy calls for all the ingredients listed above in order to create a successful campaign that offers ongoing growth and success for your business.

ABOUT MAIN PATH MARKETING

Main Path Marketing is a San Diego-based digital marketing agency that is committed to building and implementing successful, strategic campaigns for their clients. Our strategies offer a multi-channel approach made possible by the interconnectivity of our marketing team. We create campaigns that yield results, and we ensure that those results align with our client's business goals.

For more information, contact Main Path Marketing at **(858) 427-0825**.

Resources:

http://www.sas.com/en_us/insights/marketing/multichannel-marketing.html

http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-multi-channel-marketing-faqs-ht

http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/31057/The-Ultimate-Checklist-for-Integrated-Marketing.aspx

http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2014/04/10/the-role-of-influence-in-the-new-buyers-journey/

http://www.inpwrd.com/

http://www.idemployee.id.tue.nl/g.w.m.rauterberg/lecturenotes/Eight-Rules-for-Writing-Great-White-Papers.pdf

http://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing

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