UNIT-1

The History of Social Media: Social Networking Evolution!

Today, social media is a term that everyone knows. Even the most remote areas of the world have at least heard of Facebook and Twitter, and are probably using them on a regular basis. But it wasn't always that way. Social media, in its present form, has been around a relatively short term and even though you probably can't imagine living without it now, except for the last few decades, everyone did.

Of course, how you define social media can determine where you actually start the history of the medium.

For example: some people define communication by letters via the postal service as social media, but most people define it as the ability to use the internet to share and communicate instantly with others, even across great distances. That means, that social media can be traced back to one website in particular – and no, it wasn't Facebook.

1997: The Birth of Social Media

The first social media site that everyone can agree actually was social media was a website called Six Degrees. It was named after the 'six degrees of separation' theory and lasted from 1997 to 2001. Six Degrees allowed users to create a profile and then friend other users. Six Degrees even allowed those who didn't register as users to confirm friendships and connected quite a few people this way.

From Six Degrees, the internet moved into the era of blogging and instant messaging. Although blogging may not seem like social media precisely, the term fits because people were suddenly able to communicate with a blog other instantly as well as other readers. The term "blog" is a form of the phrase "Weblog" which was coined by Jorn Barger, an early blogger that was the editor of the site "Robot Wisdom."

From there, ICQ was born and most members of Generation X remember ICQ and the service that was created shortly thereafter, America Online, with AOL's instant messenger especially prominent in the social media lineup.

2000: The Internet is Everywhere

By the year 2000, around 100 million people had access to the internet, and it became quite common for people to be engaged socially online. Of course, then it was looked at as an odd hobby at best. Still, more and more people began to utilize chat rooms for making friends, dating and discussing topics that they wanted to talk about. But the huge boom of social media was still to come.

2003: The First Social Media Surge

Although the younger generation of today might not know about it, back in the early 2000's the website MySpace was the popular place to set up a profile and make friends. MySpace was the original social media profile website, leading into and inspiring websites like Facebook.

But even though MySpace has a very small user base today compared to Facebook and Twitter, there are musicians who have used MySpace to promote their music and even be heard by record producers and other artists. Colbie Caillat is an example.

Another website that was one of the beginning social media websites was LinkedIn, still a social media website today, geared specifically towards professionals who want to network with each other.

In fact, most of the social media websites we have today are similar to LinkedIn, in that they are specifically about one particular thing, or they have some kind of unique quality that has made them popular. While MySpace was a general social media site, LinkedIn was, and is still is, meant for professional businesspeople to connect with each other to network, find jobs and socialize.

2005: Facebook and Twitter

In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched what would soon become the social media giant that would set the bar for all other social media services. Facebook is the number one social media website today and it currently boasts over a billion users.

However, back in 2004, Facebook (TheFacebook.com then) was launched just for Harvard students. Zuckerberg saw the potential and released the service to the world at the website facebook.com.

In 2006, the popularity of text messaging or SMS inspired Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan Williams to create Twitter, a service that had the unique distinction of allowing users to send "tweets" of 140 characters or less. Today, Twitter has over 500 million users.

Around 2010: The Rest of the Pack

Before long, there were dozens of other websites providing social media services of some kind. Flickr was one of the earliest and still is one of the most popular photo sharing sites, but others include Photobucket and Instagram, with Instagram gaining popularity today as one of the top social media sites to include on business cards and other media.

Tumblr, a microblogging website started in 2007 by David Karp and now owned by Yahoo, is one of the sites that could be seen sprouting up in the late 2000s. Foursquare was quite a popular website for a while, particularly with smartphones being used so extensively, and then there is Pinterest, Spotify, and many others. Some of the most popular social media platforms in the late 2000's included: Google Buzz, Loopt, Blippy, and Groupon.

One of the things that started happening right in this time period is that social media not only became widely used, it also became widespread in business.

Websites were starting to list their social media addresses, businesses would include Facebook and Twitter addresses on their television commercials and many tools were being built to include social media on websites – for example: WordPress plugins that would allow users to include not only links to their social media websites, but also to include their latest social media posts directly on their websites.

Social media icons were seen everywhere and it became almost unusual to see businesses or brands without them.

In addition, social media began to be one of the ways in which internet marketers and website owners would boost the visibility of their websites. The benefits of social media marketing for business began to become quite clear to business owners large and small. Social media bookmarking became quite popular and there were services that would bookmark a post or a website across dozens or even hundreds of social media services.

Social Media Today

Social media today consists of thousands of social media platforms, all serving the same – but slightly different purpose. Of course, some social media platforms are more popular than others, but even the smaller ones get used by a portion of the population because each one caters to a very different type of person.

For example: Instagram caters to the kind of person that communicates through photographs best, and other platforms such as Twitter are perfect for those who communicate in short bursts of information. As mentioned, businesses are using social media to promote their products and services in a brand new way and so each form of social media serves a purpose that the others available may not.

The Future of Social Media

Although it is impossible to know what the future of social media holds, it is clear that it will continue. Humans are social animals and the more ability to communicate with each other on the level that each person likes best, the more prevalent social media will become. With new and exciting technologies just around the corner, social media will be interesting to see in the coming decades.

Features of Social Media

Social media has many advantageous features over traditional media. These features are derived from the social media technology. There are four characteristics, along with the development of social media continue to strengthen Intelligence theory to deconstruct social media features, because social media is a part of information chain.

The integration is mainly manifested in the integration of hundreds of millions of dispersed users with different characteristics. Social media connect users around the world, so that they can exchange and share information with the same platform. Integration is the present of a small world theory and scattering distribution principle. This feature is from information integration technology such as the TCP / IP protocol and WWW technologies which appearing in early and exploratory stage of social media, enhanced with the development. Information integration technology provides an effective guarantee for heterogeneous information, platforms and terminals to achieve interconnection, this shorten the shortest path of information, and better support the user to maintain "strong ties" and expanding the "weak relations" of social media. So the small world phenomenon is apparent. Integration of users and information resources shows Matthew phenomenon in social media.

B. Time Effectiveness

The delay in Social media information exchange can be ignored. User of social media can send and receive information immediately whenever they want, which means information exchange synchronization and user can fast access to the required information. Time effectiveness is a measure of an important indicator of intelligence value. The aging of intelligence and attenuation of the value is because of the lack of time effectiveness. Because of it social media information is high-value, which will widely attract users. This is the advantages characteristic factors. Computer technology, mobile terminal technology and network technology will be high-speed, broadband, intelligent, easy direction, so as to continuously enhance the time effectiveness of social media. This process will throughout the development of social media.

C. Least Effort

Social media is almost open and free to use, users do not need special skills or special training can easily use social media. So the user will make least effort to get and utilize the information and knowledge in social media. This is the performance of the least effort principle of Information Science. All the technology used in social media is to help user make least effort to get and utilize the information, and which is the driver of the social media. The least effort of social media just follows the Zipf's law which is the basic principles of information science. This means social media will receive two opposite forces-"single force" and "diverse force." The role of these two forces manifested in one hand we hope the information in social media kept short and simple so it is easy to manage and use. On the other hand we want social media information detailed and rich so we can get more value. Social media information retrieval techniques can enhance the social media "Single force" to improve the efficiency of information

access and use. This will break the equilibrium state of development, making social media from the exploration stage to the growth stage.

The dynamic and the public of social media makes social media ordered. As we know, because of the WEB2.0 social media is open and dynamic. If we consider social media as a system, this will match the principle of information science in the "dissipative structures" theory "an open and dynamic system will spontaneously transform disordered and chaotic state to a new kind of space and feature ordered state. There are mass user and information in social media, so this will provide a lot of entropy stream into the knowledge system of social media, and which will make the social media system to reach equilibrium or form a new knowledge system. So the accumulation, regeneration and aging of social media intelligence, compared to traditional media, is more quickly. This could also explain the chaos and order phenomenon of social media, reflecting the self-organization mechanism of social media information. Because social media users can edit and revise information, the wrong and useless information in social media will be filter out. This use of human's creativity and the regular of intelligence itself to makes the whole social media information more valuable.

Types of Social Media

As a social media pro, you probably already use all the biggest social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and media sharing sites (Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat), along with maybe a handful of others like Pinterest and Google Plus.

But there's much more to social media than the top social media and media sharing networks. Look beyond those social media juggernauts and you'll see that people are using many different types of social media to connect online for all kinds of reasons.

In our quest to bring you the latest and best social media news from all corners of the internet, we've stumbled upon plenty of hyper-focused niche social networks for everything from jet setting and green living to knitting and all things manly. However, grouping social networks according to subject matter quickly gets overwhelming—and sometimes utterly distracting. (Plus, Wikipedia's already done it for us.)

And while there was once a time when you could simply categorize networks according to their functional capabilities (Twitter for short text content, YouTube for video, and so on), that time has passed. As more networks add rich features like live streaming and augmented reality, the lines between their feature sets continue to blur and change faster than most people have time to read up on the changes.

So instead of categorizing networks according to hyper-specific user interests or shifting technology features, we prefer to think like marketers and group networks into 10 general categories that focus on what people hope to accomplish by using them.

Here's our list of 10 types of social media and what they're used for:

- **Social networks**—Connect with people

- **Media sharing networks**—Share photos, videos, and other media

- **Discussion forums**—Share news and ideas

- **Bookmarking and content curation networks**—Discover, save, and share new content

- **Consumer review networks**—Find and review businesses

- **Blogging and publishing networks**—Publish content online

- **Interest-based networks**—Share interests and hobbies

- **Social shopping networks**—Shop online

- **Sharing economy networks**—Trade goods and services

- **Anonymous social networks**—Communicate anonymously

Knowing about these categories of social media and understanding why people use them can open up new ideas and channels for engaging with your audience more effectively—so let's get started.

1. Social networks

Examples: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

Why people use these networks: To connect with people (and brands) online.

How they can benefit your business: Let us count the ways. Market research, brand awareness, lead generation, relationship building, customer service... the list is pretty much endless.

Social networks, sometimes called "relationship networks," help people and organizations connect online to share information and ideas.

While these networks aren't the oldest type of social media, they certainly define it now. These channels started as relatively simple services—for example, Twitter was the place to answer the question "what are you doing?" and Facebook was where you might check the relationship status of that cute Economics 101 classmate.

Now, and especially since the rise of the mobile internet, these networks have become hubs that transform nearly every aspect of modern life—from reading news to sharing vacation photos to finding a new job—into a social experience.

If you're not using these core networks yet as part of your social media marketing plan—or if you're looking for ideas to improve your existing strategy—you'll find a wealth of usable information in our guides to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

2. Media sharing networks

Examples: Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube

Why people use these networks: To find and share photos, video, live video, and other media online.

How they can benefit your business: Like the major relationship networks, these sites are invaluable for brand awareness, lead generation, audience engagement, and most of your other social marketing goals.

Media sharing networks give people and brands a place to find and share media online, including photos, video, and live video.

The lines between media sharing networks and social networks are blurring these days as social relationship networks like Facebook and Twitter add live video, augmented reality, and other multimedia services to their platforms. However, what distinguishes media sharing networks is that the sharing of media is their defining and primary purpose.

While the majority of posts on relationship networks contain text, posts on networks like Instagram and Snapchat start with an image or video, to which users may decide to add content like captions, mentions of other users, or filters that make you look like a bunny.

Similarly, on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, video is the primary mode of communication.

When determining whether or not your business needs to establish a presence on a media sharing network, it's important to consider your available resources. If there's one thing the most successful brands on platforms like YouTube or Instagram have in common, it's a thoroughly planned mission and carefully designed media assets, usually following a specific theme.

To increase your business's chances of success on media sharing networks, see our guides to marketing on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Vimeo.

3. Discussion forums

Examples: reddit, Quora, Digg

Why people use these networks: To find, discuss, and share news, information, and opinions.

How they can benefit your business: These networks can be excellent resources for market research. Done right, you can also advertise on them, though you'll need to be careful to keep your ads and posts separate.

Discussion forums are one of the oldest types of social media.

Before we connected to our first university friends on The Facebook, we discussed pop culture, current affairs, and asked for help on forums. Take a look at the wide reach and massive user numbers on forums such as reddit, Quora, and Digg and you'll see that the public's thirst for collective knowledge and wisdom remains unquenchable.

Image via Quora.

These are the sites where people go to find out what everyone's talking about and weigh in on it—and users on these sites generally aren't shy about expressing their opinions. While social relationship networks are increasingly implementing measures to reduce anonymity and create a safe space online, discussion forums generally allow users to remain anonymous, keeping some of the "wild west" feel that used to define the online experience.

This can make discussion forums such as reddit (the self-styled "front page of the internet") and Quora great places to go for deep customer research and brutally honest opinions. If you're careful to keep ads and posts separate, they can even be a place to advertise—for all the details, see our guide to reddit advertising.

4. Bookmarking and content curation networks

Examples: Pinterest, Flipboard
Why people use these networks: To discover, save, share, and discuss new and trending content and media.

How they can benefit your business: These networks can be highly effective for driving brand awareness, customer engagement, and website traffic.

Bookmarking and content curation networks help people discover, save, share, and discuss new and trending content and media.

These networks are a hotbed of creativity and inspiration for people seeking information and ideas, and by adding them to your social media marketing plan, you'll open up new channels for building brand awareness and engaging with your audience and customers.

Bookmarking networks like Pinterest help people discover, save, and share visual content. An easy first step for getting started with Pinterest is to make your website bookmark-friendly. This entails optimizing headlines and images on your blog and/or website for the feeds these networks use to access and share your content. You should also pay close attention to the images featured on your site or blog—these are the window displays of Pins, so you want them to be good representations of your content.

Image via Pinterest.

Content curation networks like Flipboard are similar to bookmarking networks, but with a focus on finding and sharing articles and other text content. You can create your own Flipboard magazine to sort through the most engaging content on your topic of choice from third-party sources, and to showcase your own content.

Other types of networks are also adding bookmarking and curation features. For example, Instagram now offers features for users to save content and create private collections.

To start planning your strategy for bookmarking and content curation networks, see our guides on using Pinterest and Flipboard. And if you're looking for inspiration, check out these 10 Pinterest accounts that will make you a better social media marketer.

5. Consumer review networks

Examples: Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor

Why people use these networks: To find, review, and share information about brands, products, and services, as well as restaurants, travel destinations, and more.

How they can benefit your business: Positive reviews bring social proof to your claims. Handled well, you can resolve issues with unhappy customers.

Consumer review networks give people a place to review brands, businesses, products, services, travel spots, and just about anything else.

Reviews are a type of content that adds a lot of value to many websites and online services—think about the buying experience on Amazon, or the experience of searching for a local business on Google Maps. Consumer review networks take it one step further by building networks around the review as a core part of the value they provide.

Image via Zomato.

Location-based review services such as Yelp and Zomato continue to grow as personal social networks adopt geolocation and more users choose to consult the internet along with their friends for recommendations of best dining spots.

There are sites to review anything from hotels and restaurants to the business where you're thinking of applying for a job—and user reviews have more weight than ever before. In fact, according to a survey by BrightLocal, 88 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.

It's vital for your brand to have the ability to attract positive user reviews and handle negative ones. To do this, you can select a customer success team member to address reviews on sites relevant for your business. Entrust them with answering any questions or concerns from clients with average or negative experiences, and see if there is anything that can be done on your end to turn a possible detractor into a fan. For more on this topic, read our blog posts on how to respond to negative reviews and online reputation management.

6. Blogging and publishing networks

Examples: WordPress, Tumblr, Medium

Why people use these networks: To publish, discover, and comment on content online.

How they can benefit your business: Content marketing can be a highly effective way to engage with your audience, build your brand, and generate leads and sales.

Blogging and publishing networks give people and brands tools to publish content online in formats that encourage discovery, sharing, and commenting. These networks range from more traditional blogging platforms like WordPress and Blogger to microblogging services like Tumblr and interactive social publishing platforms like Medium.

If your promotion strategy includes content marketing (and if it doesn't, you might want to consider it), your business can gain visibility by keeping a blog. A blog doesn't just help increase awareness of your business and generate more engaging content for your social channels such as Facebook; it can also help carve out a niche for your brand as a thought leader in your industry.

If you're getting started with blogging and content marketing, see our guides to starting a blog, promoting your blog, content marketing strategy, and creating great content.

7. Social shopping networks

Examples: Polyvore, Etsy, Fancy

Why people use these networks: To spot trends, follow brands, share great finds, and make purchases.

How they can benefit your business: Brands can build awareness, increase engagement, and sell products via new channels.

Social shopping networks make ecommerce engaging by adding a social element.

Of course, elements of ecommerce appear in many other types of social networks—for example, Pinterest features Buyable Pins, and Instagram provides call-to-action tools in the form of "shop now" and "install now" buttons. Social shopping networks take it one step further by building their site around a focused integration between the social experience and the shopping experience.

Services like Etsy allow small businesses and individual crafters to sell their products without an existing brick-and-mortar location, and networks such as Polyvore aggregate products from different retailers in a single online marketplace, and. Polyvore is one of the largest social style communities on the internet, and it's a good example of a network designed to integrate the social experience with the buying experience. Most of the content is generated by users, who choose products they like, create collages, publish them as a set, and then share sets with other users.
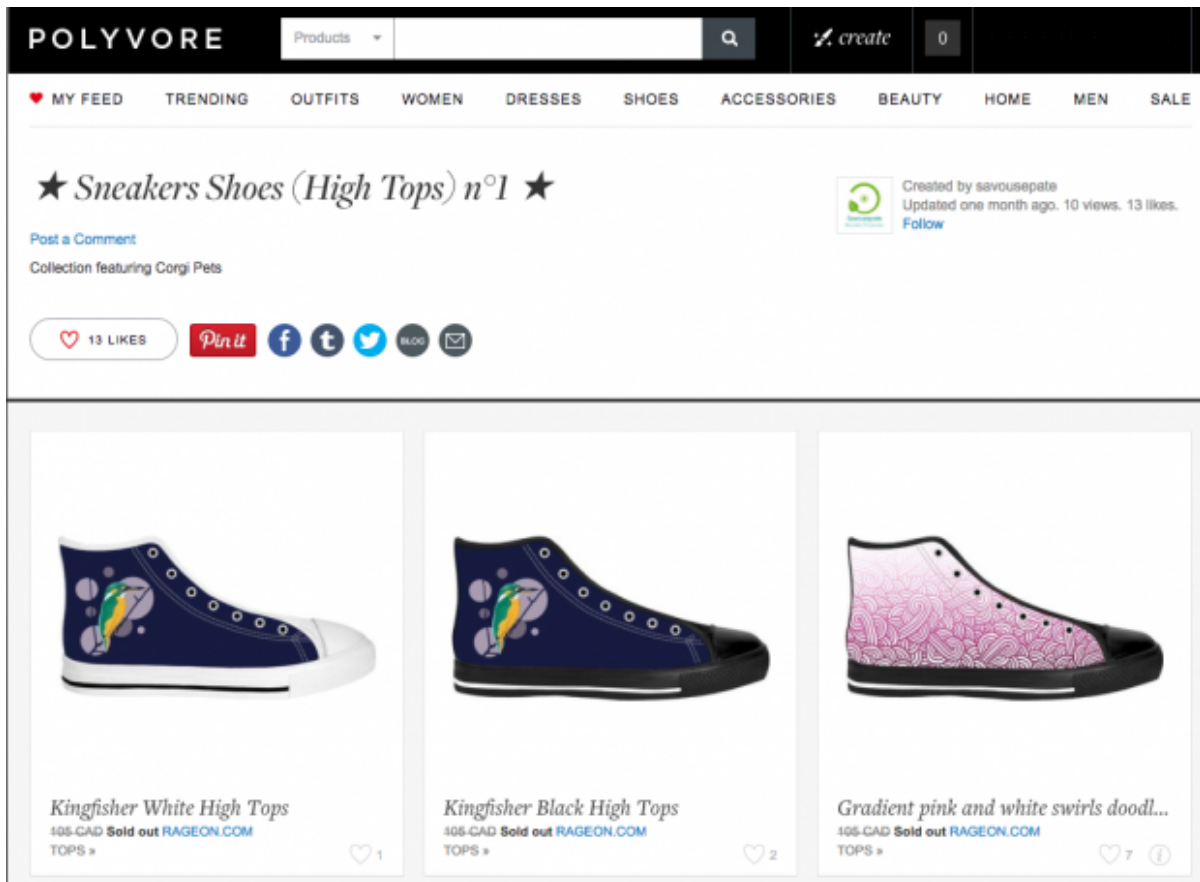
Image via Polyvore.

For more information about these networks and how they can benefit your business, see our guide to social commerce.

8. Interest-based networks

Examples: Goodreads, Houzz, Last.fm

Why people use these networks: To connect with others around a shared interest or hobby.

How they can benefit your business: If there's a network devoted to the kind of products or services you provide, these networks can be a great place to engage with your audience and build brand awareness.

Interest-based networks take a more targeted approach than the big social networks do by focusing solely on a single subject, such as books, music, or home design.

While there are groups and and forums on other networks that are devoted to these interests, focusing solely on a single area of interest allows these networks to deliver an experience tailor-made for the wants and needs of the people and communities who share that interest. For example, on Houzz, home designers can browse the work of other designers, create collections of their own work, and connect with people looking for their services.

Image via Houzz.

Networks such as Last.fm (for musicians and music lovers) and Goodreads (for authors and avid readers) also provide an experience designed specifically for their niche audience.

If your customers and social audience share a common interest (for example, if you're a publishing house), an interest-based network can be a good place to keep up with current trends among fans of a your industry or its products.

9. 'Sharing economy' networks

Examples: Airbnb, Uber, Taskrabbit

Why people use these networks: To advertise, find, share, buy, sell, and trade products and services between peers.

How they can benefit your business: If you happen to offer the kind of products or services traded here, these networks can be another channel for bringing in business. (For example, if you operate a bed-and-breakfast, Airbnb could help you find customers.)

"Sharing economy" networks, also called "collaborative economy networks," connect people online for the purpose of advertising, finding, sharing, buying, selling, and trading products and services.

And while you're probably already familiar with big-name networks like Airbnb and Uber, there are a growing number of niche networks you can use to find a dogsitter, a parking spot, a home-cooked meal, and more.

Image via DogVacay.

This online model for peer commerce has become viable and popular in recent years as people started trusting online reviews and feeling comfortable using them to gauge the reputation and reliability of sellers and service providers. According to a report by digital research firm Vision Critical, "The collaborative economy today works because trust can be verified electronically through social networks… social media lets the collaborative economy run smoothly."

While most marketers will find these networks too specifically targeted or restrictive, if you happen to provide the kind of product or service that's traded on a particular network, you might want to look into it as another channel to generate leads and sales.

10. Anonymous social networks

Examples: Whisper, Ask.fm, After School

Why people use these networks: To gossip, vent, snoop, and sometimes bully.

How they can benefit your business: They almost certainly can't. Steer clear.

Last—and least—are anonymous social networks. While major social networks are making increasing efforts to hold users accountable for their social activity, these sites go the other way and allow users to post content anonymously. CBS New York described Whisper as "the place to go these days to vent, come clean, or peer into other people's secrets," saying the site focuses on "turning confessions into content."

These networks might sound like a fun place to blow off steam (for example, if you're a teen and want to complain about your parents, teachers, boyfriend, and so on).

However, they've been shown to provide a consequence-free forum for cyberbullying and have been linked to teen suicides.

In our opinion, anonymous social networks are a step back toward the wild-west early days of the internet in a time when we've learned the importance of keeping the internet a safe place for everyone. If it's worth saying, it's worth standing behind.

Whether you're exploring new potential markets for your business or just looking for new channels to connect with your customers, there are many types of social media you can use. Some are pretty much mandatory for any business; others are useful for a smaller subset of niche businesses; and some you should steer clear of entirely.

Whatever your needs and your goals, it's a safe bet you'll find what you're looking for somewhere on social.

10 Issues with Social Media

1:- Cyberbullying – According to a report published by PewCenter.org most of the children have become victims of the cyberbulling over the past. Since anyone can create a fake account and do anything without being traced, it has become quite easy for anyone to bully on the Internet. Threats, intimidation messages and rumors can be sent to the masses to create discomfort and chaos in the society. Check out the 6 cyberbullying stories that turned into suicide stories.

2: – Hacking – Personal data and privacy can easily be hacked and shared on the Internet. Which can make financial losses and loss to personal life. Similarly, identity theft is another issue that can give financial losses to anyone by hacking their personal accounts. Several personal twitter and Facebook accounts have been hacked in the past and the hacker had posted materials that have affected the

individuals personal lives. This is one of the dangerous disadvantages of the social media and every user is advised to keep their personal data and accounts safe to avoid such accidents.

3:- Addiction – The addictive part of the social media is very bad and can disturb personal lives as well. The teenagers are the most affected by the addiction of the social media. They get involved very extensively and are eventually cut off from the society. It can also waste individual time that could have been utilized by productive tasks and activities.

4:- Fraud and Scams – Several examples are available where individuals have scammed and commit fraud through the social media. For example, this list contains the 5 social media scams that are done all the time.

5:- Security Issues – Now a day's security agencies have access to people personal accounts. Which makes the privacy almost compromised. You never know when you are visited by any investigation officer regarding any issue that you mistakenly or unknowingly discussed over the internet.

6:- Reputation – Social media can easily ruin someone's reputation just by creating a false story and spreading across the social media. Similarly businesses can also suffer losses due to bad reputation being conveyed over the social media.

7:- Cheating and Relationship Issues – Most of the people have used the social media platform to propose and marry each other. However, after some time they turn to be wrong in their decision and part ways. Similarly, couples have cheated each other by showing the fake feelings and incorrect information.

8:- Health Issues – The excess usage of social media can also have a negative impact on the health. Since exercise is the key to lose weight, most of the people get lazy because of the excessive use of social networking sites. Which in result brings disorder in the routine life. This research by discovery will shock you by showing how bad your health can be affected by the use of the social media.

9:- Social Media causes death – Not just by using it, but by following the stunts and other crazy stuffs that are shared on the internet. For example bikers doing the unnecessary stunts, people doing the jump over the trains and other life threatening stuffs.

10:- Glamorizes Drugs and Alcohol – One of the disadvantages of the social media is that people start to follow others who are wealthy or drug addicted and share their views and videos on the web. Which eventually inspires others to follow the same and get addicted to the drugs and alcohol.

Social Media Influencers

There are different types of influencers. Depending on the objectives, not all types of influencers can be matched with all types of personalities.

Twelve different types of influencers include: the specialist, the activist, the socializer, the observer to the broadcaster, curator to the thought leader. Many users do not give great importance to this matrix.

Lisa Barone, co-founder of the firm Outspoken Media (New York), in contrast, proposes a simpler list in Small Business Trends: The Five Types of Influencers On The Web.

A list which corresponds very well to the five main types of influencers that found on social media:

- The networker (Social Butterfly): one who has the biggest contact list and found on all platforms. He or she who knows everybody and everybody knows him or her.

- The opinion leader (Thought Leader): one who can become the best ambassador of a brand. He or she has built a strong authority in his or her field by based on credibility. Their messages are most often commented on and retweeted.

- The discoverer (Trendsetter): one who is always the first to use a new platform. Constantly on the lookout for new trends, they become the "hub" in the sector.

- The sharer (Reporter): one who distributes information to the bloggers to journalists through the specialized webzines. He or she usually amplify messages.

- The user (Everyday Customer): one that represents the regular customer. He or she does not have a network as large as the networker, but his or her network remains equally important.

According strategies and objectives with the campaigns in social networks, certain types of influencers are a perfect fit. To be efficient, it must be determined what type of influencer you want to reach.

What makes a good influencer?

"*Influence*" is a concept difficult to evaluate since it refers to both subjective and objective values, resulting in a measurement of:

- commercial and financial success

- reputation and credibility

- quality of affiliations and contacts

- charisma and the impact of personality

For each of these values, the notion of influence may vary from person to person.

In fact, in the age of social media, the definition is changing as how to identify influencers. Today, thanks to online applications, all social media users now have the opportunity to stand out and in turn become leaders in respect to their interests. As a result, marketers and public relation professionals are forced to reassess their approach to define the notion influence on social networks.

Influencers on social media are either passionate individuals who turn out to be specialists or professionals involved who use Web 2.0 tools as part of their work. They take advantage of their presence on social networks for personal gain or as representative (or ambassador) a brand, company or

organization. They produce and share relevant content, appealing to the interests of a community. This can result in regularly prompting discussions and interactions that might have influence on behaviors.

UNIT-2

Audience Research and Engagement in Global environment

#1: Identify Your Ideal Customer

One of the first questions I ask is, "Who is your ideal customer?"

Some of the answers I've received include women, people who have to eat to survive, bosses, employees and people looking for work. While these answers may be true for you, too, they won't help you find your audience because they don't help you prioritize where to spend your time.

John Lee Dumas has famously talked about identifying your business avatar. This means you'll want to create a fictional persona of your ideal customer, to the point of naming it, knowing how many kids it has or what it does on the weekends. The clearer your avatar is, the easier it is to find people on social media who resemble the persona.

#2: Determine Your Audience Size

Once you have a good sense of what your audience looks like, you can **use Facebook Ads Manager to estimate the size of your audience**.

For example, if you want to reach women in Maine who are interested in nutrition, you can find out that 62,000 people on Facebook match that audience.

Some quick market research will tell you if your audience is big enough.

This is also good business information, because if your audience is too small, you may need to change your offering to expand your audience. On the flipside, if your audience is too large, you might want to target a narrower niche to start.

Of course, not everyone is on Facebook. According to recent research, almost 60% of Americans are on Facebook. That number may be more (or less) depending on where your audience lives, their age, gender and household income, but it's a good starting point.

#3: Survey Your Customers

If you've been in business for any length of time, you have customers you can survey. For the purposes of optimizing your social media campaigns, wisely spending your ad dollars and targeting guest blogging opportunities, you need to know where your audience hangs out online. As part of your survey, **ask your current customers the following questions**:

- **What social media sites do you regularly use**?

- **What websites do you visit for information on _____** (for example, remodeling ideas, pricing strategies or whatever is appropriate for your business)?

- **Do you listen to podcasts**? If so, which ones?

- **Do you regularly read blogs**? If so, which ones?

- **What people do you follow or pay attention to online**?

You can also **use free tools like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms to collect your answers**. In this video, Steve Dotto walks you through how to create your own forms with Google Forms.

Google Forms is a great way to collect feedback on live events, for example, because it graphically displays your audience's feedback. Go to your form results and select Form > Show Summary of Responses from the drop-down menu.

Would you recommend AOC to a friend or colleague?
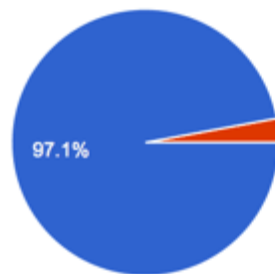
Yes	67	97.1%
No	2	2.9%

Overall, the content provided was:
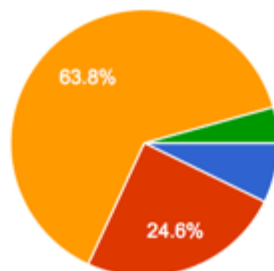
Way too simple	5
A little too simple	17
Just right	44
A little advanced	3
Way too advanced	0

Generate pie charts of your customers' interests.

#4: Research Online Behavior

What do you do if you're just starting out, your customer base is too small for meaningful results or you're expanding into a new category? In cases like these, or simply to supplement your surveys, you can research online behavior.

The Pew Research Center has an excellent breakdown of where your audience spends their time online. It's not difficult to **find studies and infographics that provide information on specific platforms or other countries**. For example, check out this chart from MarketingCharts to see a makeup of the top social media channels based on gender, age, education and more.

#5: Find and Connect With Your Customer

Once you get the results from your survey and have reviewed the demographics of the available research, it's time to put that knowledge to work across different social media and digital marketing platforms.

It's important to note that you can **upload your email database to almost all social media platforms to find your customers there**.

Upload your email list to find out which prospects and customers are on different social platforms.

Connect with this core group on any platform to jumpstart your online networking there and provide social proof that you're well connected and someone worth knowing.

Here are some tips for connecting with your ideal customers on the platforms that will work best for many businesses and entrepreneurs.

Facebook

Most social media marketers will tell you that the organic reach of businesses on Facebook has tanked. Google's image search does too when you ask it about "organic reach on Facebook."
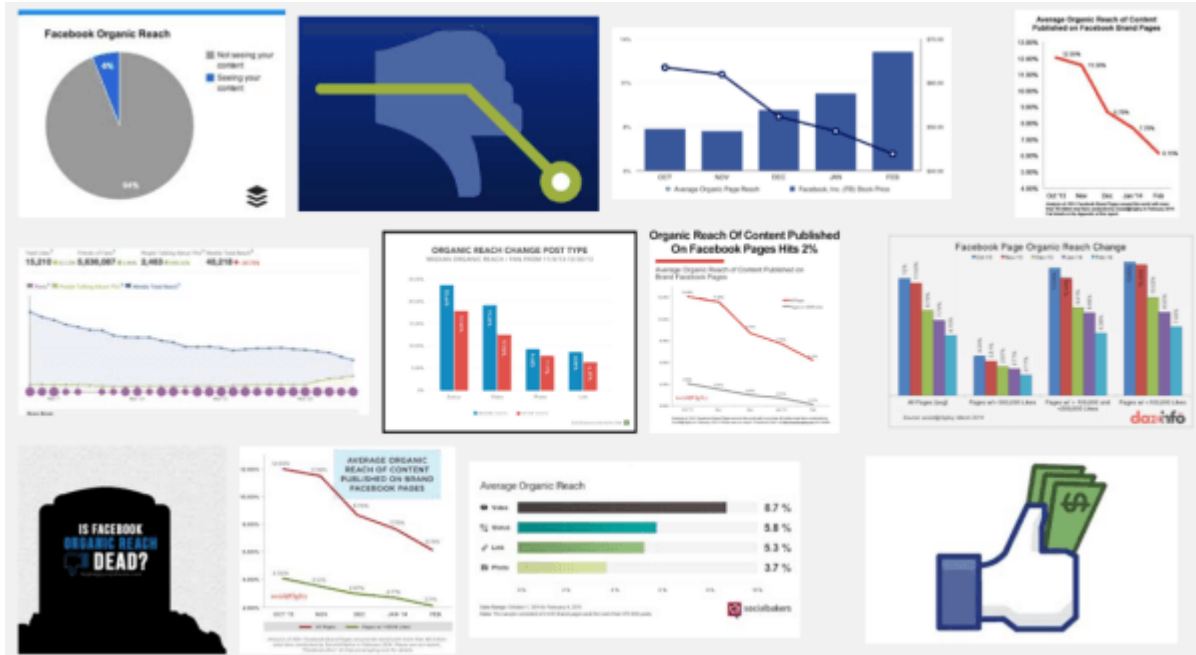
Facebook's organic reach is trending downward.

If you're trying to find your audience on Facebook, the easiest path is to **target your ideal demographic with Facebook Ads Manager.**

If you return to your survey, you may find that your current customer base likes Golf Magazine or watching UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship). Armed with this information, you can target your ads for your Facebook prospects, whether they like a round of golf or a roundhouse kick.

Facebook Ads Manager gives you other options to find your audience. You can **upload your customers' email addresses to Facebook Ads Manager to create a custom audience**.

Building Brand on Digital Media

More than 28% of marketers have reduced their traditional advertising budget to fund more digital marketing efforts. That's because if you own a business in the present day, you need an online presence. But, with so many digital options to choose from, you first need a plan. This is where an effective digital marketing strategy can help.

A digital strategy is a blueprint of how you will build out your business's online objectives. And we all know how important blueprints are when it comes to building something that's profitable and expected to last.

From your website to your email campaigns, creating a digital strategy keeps you from throwing ideas on the wall and crossing your fingers that they stick. With a digital strategy, you can connect your business objectives to measure your successes and failures.

To help, here are six steps to creating an effective digital strategy that meets your company's needs.

1. Define Your Goals

Before you get started with any plans, first define your goals.

While every company's goal is to be profitable, you will need to dig deeper to define your digital marketing goals. It could be that you want to increase online sales by 25%. Maybe you would like to aim for 100 social media shares or increase your email subscription list by 500. Once you define your goals, prioritize them and take your top three. Now, ingrain them in your head because these goals will be the guide of your digital strategy.

2. Know Your Key Channels

Omnichannel marketing is good for all businesses. However, the reality is that there are few businesses that actually need to use every digital marketing channel. In this step, you'll weed out what's not needed for your company and focus on your audience and the channels they use. For instance, if your business caters to adults that are over the age of 50, Snapchat doesn't belong in your digital plans. Instead, it may be better aligned that you focus on email or Facebook.

Knowing your key channels helps you trim the fat by reaching your target audience more efficiently and cutting any unnecessary spending.

3. Develop a Content Strategy

According to Business2Community, brands now spend 25-43% of their marketing budget on content marketing. Whether it's emails, social media posts, blogs or visual content, content is what the internet is built from. Therefore, your content should be the driving force of your digital strategy in order for it to be effective.

When developing your content strategy, pinpoint your audience's wants and needs. For example, if you notice the same FAQs coming from your customers about your product or service, develop an email drip campaign that educates. If you've figured out that email isn't the best channel for your target audience, try another avenue like social or a business blog. Just make sure the content you create is useful since people share what they find interesting. And the more they share, the closer you will get to achieving your goals.

4. Create a Calendar

Once you know the type of content that will work for your business, build out a calendar or a timeline to stay consistent.

You will likely use more than one marketing channel and have multiple pieces of content to manage, so let this calendar act as the lifeline of your digital strategy. Include details like content formats, deadlines, benchmarks, deliverables, and channels in your calendar.

Keeping everything in one place will help simplify the process as your workload increases.

5. Put Everything in Motion

Now that the planning is done, it's time to put everything in motion.

Step back and take a look at the strategy you've created with a realistic mindset. Make sure you have enough resources, money and time to properly execute the items in your digital strategy. If you think you're not fully equipped at the time, it's perfectly fine to trim your list down a bit. If you feel you're all set, let the fun begin.

6. Monitor and Measure

After all systems are a go, the last step is monitoring and measuring the results of your digital strategy. Since practically every major platform has its own form of analytics, accessing this info is easy.

This is also the time where you get to check and balance those goals created in step #1 to help you determine what was successful and what wasn't. By learning this information first hand, it will help make your future digital efforts even stronger.

And there you have it! Six simple steps you can use to develop a digital strategy for your business that is easy and effective.

Storytelling and User Generated Content on Digital Media Network

Hoover. Velcro. Q-tips. Chapstick. These are all brands whose names are so synonymous with the products they sell, they've become generic terms used in daily conversation. This is the epitome of brand marketing success. 45% of a brand's image can be attributed to what it says and how it says it. This is why storytelling is an integral aspect of any successful brand marketing strategy. Of course, not every organization will be able to achieve such a high level of brand awareness, but there are easy actions that you can take to enhance the effectiveness of your brand marketing.

Below, we've outlined some of these actions, and included some best practice examples from which you can take inspiration!

Create a cohesive brand narrative

In order to convey the value of your brand, and the benefits you can bring to potential customers, you need to be able to succinctly summarize it all in a brand narrative. A brand narrative is a strategic statement, a tool that you can leverage to communicate with your target audience. Your brand narrative will tell both potential and existing customers who you are, what your values are, and what makes you special.

Whether you're circulating a press release or submitting a guest blog, the first step to creating a lasting impression is being able to share a compelling origin story that will set you apart from your competitors.

Take the time to consider what makes your brand unique. Regardless of the products you sell or the industries in which you operate, every organization has at least one USP. Use this as your starting point from which you can build out a bigger, all-encompassing, aspirational picture.

Aim to create a narrative that is between 300-500 words in length. This may seem extensive, but this will be a central document that will inform and influence everything from your social posting to your paid advertising campaigns, to the copy on your website. Break your narrative down into sections – this will make it easier to lift relevant quotes as and when you need them. Be sure to cover your brand's history, how it has evolved, its goals for the future, key product or service offerings, its values and beliefs.

Nike is an example of an organization who have solidified their appeal with a strong brand narrative. In the 90s, when Michael Jordan was their spokesperson, they ran a television ad during which the basketball star outlined how his repetitive failures have helped him to succeed. From the inspirational "Just Do It' strapline, to their assertion that "if you have a body, you ARE an athlete", the Nike brand is rooted in inspiration, innovation and inclusion, and this brand message has been consistent since its inception.

Identify your target audience

Once you've defined your brand positioning with a cohesive narrative, you should look to define your target audience, and segment them into fully-fleshed personas. If you can adopt a streamlined and targeted approach, you'll be able to harness the full power of your brand marketing. Clearly defined personas will help you to make the most of your storytelling capabilities, as you'll be able to tell the right story to the right people at the right time, and achieve your overall objectives in the process.

Start by conducting a thorough analysis of your existing audience, and those of your main competitors. This will involve utilizing social listening tools, to gather data such as brand mentions (a valuable way to measure sentiment), the type of content which best convinces and converts these audiences and industry influencers who you could potentially recruit as brand champions. You can use tools such as Google Analytics to find out more about visitors to your website – where they're located, the devices they use, the landing pages they prefer.

You can supplement this information with personas that encompass your ideal customers – target segments that you aspire to engage but haven't yet. Include details such as their age, income level, location, interests, and any potential challenges. Once you've taken the time to achieve this level of persona definition, you'll find it infinitely easier to create clear, compelling brand stories.

Leverage the virality of video

85% of brands who employ a comprehensive video marketing strategy experience success. This isn't surprising when you consider that one video is worth 1.8million words. Video is a format that can promote brand awareness, extend your reach (with video, there always exists the potential to go viral!) and tell your brand's story in an accessible, entertaining way. By using video as part of your brand marketing mix, you can significantly increase audience engagement rates and create a lasting impression.

The value of video lies in its ability to convey a lot, succinctly, which is important in a digital age where the human attention span is approximately 8 seconds. In order to maximize its impact, all you have to do is ensure your video content is sufficiently interesting and tailored to your target audience's needs and interests.

So, what kind of video content should you create? If you want to promote your brand's credibility, you may want to consider customer testimonials. Customer testimonials are considered the most effective content marketing tactics, identified by 89% of B2B marketers. They have the ability to humanize your brand, creating an emotional appeal that can only be cultivated by word-of—mouth and peer-to-peer recommendations. In short, customer testimonials are powerful because they tell your brand's story for you.

Brand videos can also be leveraged to tell your story from your own perspective. Amazon is a brand is that particularly adept at telling its own story through thoughtfully-created video content. In ads created to promote their Prime service, they showcase the unifying power of gift giving. One video in particular shows a priest and an imam, two old friends meeting for a cup of tea, before sending each other the same gift using the service. Not only do Amazon manage highlight the benefits of unlimited fast delivery, recognizing that a large proportion of their customers make purchases intended for others, they simultaneously promote the importance of selflessness, and thinking of others.

Consider User-Generated Content

The key advantage of User-Generated Content isn't too dissimilar to that of using customer testimonials – it can foster a very personal, emotional investment in your brand. Giving your customers the opportunity to play a vital role in your brand building efforts can make them feel like a valued component of your business. With UGC, your brand can demonstrate in interest in your customers' opinions and gain their trust.

Another benefit of UGC is that it significantly reduces the requirement for you to produce a large volume of content yourself, which frees up both you and your marketing budget to focus on additional, complementary brand building activities.

The success of UGC has even been acknowledged and adopted by the mass media – in 2005, the BBC set up a User Generated Content team, with 3 staff, changing the way the broadcasting service reported news. In July 2005, suicide bombers targeted London's transport network during rush hour, killing 52 people. The BBC initially reported the police line that there had been power surges on the underground. But for the UGC team, the emails and texts they received told a different story. Soon, the BBC was able

to ascertain what had really happened and knew the locations of all four devices just over an hour after the first bombs went off.

UGC can be produced in various formats, but, as previously mentioned, video is one of the most compelling types of content that that you can use to share your brand's stories in an authentic, emotive manner.

Coca-Cola are a brand known for their skilful use of UGC. Their "Happiness is Movement" campaign serves as a perfect example. The idea behind the campaign is to exhibit how movement, and an active lifestyle, can be responsible for some of our happiest moments in life, and that their brand is aligned with this sentiment. Coca-Cola accumulated a series of videos created by their followers that show how they move to have fun.

Create a Cross-Channel Marketing Campaign

The only step more important than creating a compelling brand story is ensuring that it's properly distributed for maximum impact. The best way to guarantee that your brand voice is heard by your target audience is to create and implement a cross-channel brand marketing campaign. As users are adopting an increasing amount of digital technologies, and are active on a growing number of devices, it's important that brand communications acknowledge and adapt to this. The most successful organizations are those that can pull together social media, email, search and offline marketing activities into one cohesive strategy that gives their brand an extra visibility to the individuals that matter most.

Innocent Smoothies are a company that have benefited greatly from cross-channel marketing. Their strategy is centred upon emotive messaging on a variety of channels, with a strong emphasis on their charity work (10% of profits are donated to charity).

This includes offline marketing activities that the brand promotes using online channels. The Big Knit, for example, is a programme that gets people across the UK to knit tiny hats for Innocent's drinks bottles. For every drink sold, 25p is donated to Age UK. It also runs Innocent Unplugged, a festival where people can leave their mobile devices at home for the weekend in order to destress. All of Innocent's marketing, across various channels, is underpinned by the same brand story - their desire to help people live well and do good.

According to Innocent's brand activation manager, "Over the last 10 years we have moved away from communicating our brand identity or brand positioning as just a TV advert or a piece of broadcast creative. I think these days you can bring what you stand for as a brand to life in many different ways and engaging ways, and that is effectively what we use our brand properties for.

"As a brand we like to help people live well and that is in the things that we make and also the things that we do...what our brand properties give us is a way of bringing the brand to life in a way that gets people talking, gets us noticed more and engages our drinkers more than a 30 second TV ad."

What is SEO?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results.

What goes into SEO?

To understand what SEO really means, let's break that sentence down and look at the parts:

- Quality of traffic. You can attract all the visitors in the world, but if they're coming to your site because Google tells them you're a resource for Apple computers when really you're a farmer selling apples, that is not quality traffic. Instead you want to attract visitors who are genuinely interested in products that you offer.

- Quantity of traffic. Once you have the right people clicking through from those search engine results pages (SERPs), more traffic is better.

- Organic results. Ads make up a significant portion of many SERPs. Organic traffic is any traffic that you don't have to pay for.

Organic search traffic is specifically any unpaid traffic that comes from SERPs.

How SEO works

You might think of a search engine as a website you visit to type (or speak) a question into a box and Google, Yahoo!, Bing, or whatever search engine you're using magically replies with a long list of links to webpages that could potentially answer your question.

That's true. But have you ever stopped to consider what's behind those magical lists of links?

Here's how it works: Google (or any search engine you're using) has a crawler that goes out and gathers information about all the content they can find on the Internet. The crawlers bring all those 1s and 0s back to the search engine to build an index. That index is then fed through an algorithm that tries to match all that data with your query.

There are a lot of factors that go into a search engine's algorithm, and here's how a group of experts ranked their importance:

Weighting of Thematic Clusters of Ranking Factors in Google

(based on survey responses by 128 SEO professionals in June 2013)

Domain-Level, Keyword-Agnostic Features
(e.g. domain name length, TLD extension, domain HTTP response time, etc.) — 5.21%

Domain Level Keyword Usage
(e.g. exact-match keyword domains, partial-keyword matches, etc.) — 6.98%

Social Metrics
(e.g. quantity/quality of tweeted links, Facebook shares, Google +1s, etc.) — 7.24%

User, Usage, & Traffic/Query Data
(e.g. traffic/usage signals from browsers/toolbars/clickstream, quantity/diversity/CTR of queries, etc.) — 8.06%

Domain-Level Brand Features
(e.g. offline usage of brand/domain name, mentions of brand/domain in news/media/press, entity association, etc.) — 8.59%

Page-Level, Keyword-Agnostic Features
(e.g. content length, readability, uniqueness, load speed, etc.) — 9.8%

Domain-Level, Link Authority Features
(e.g. quantity of links to the domain, trust/quality of links to the domain, domain-level PageRank, etc.) — 20.94%

Page-Level Link Features
(e.g. PageRank, TrustRank, quantity of link links, anchor text distribution, quality of link sources, etc.) — 19.15%

Page-Level KW & Content Features
(e.g. TF*IDF, topic-modeling scores on content, content quantity/relevance, etc.) — 14.94%

MOZ

That's all the SE (search engine) of SEO.

The O part of SEO—optimization—is where the people who write all that content and put it on their sites are gussying that content and those sites up so search engines will be able to understand what they're seeing, and the users who arrive via search will like what they see.

Optimization can take many forms. It's everything from making sure the title tags and meta descriptions are both informative and the right length to pointing internal links at pages you're proud of.

Learning SEO

This section of our site is here to help you learn anything you want about SEO. If you're completely new to the topic, start at the very beginning and read the Beginner's Guide to SEO. If you need advice on a specific topic, dig in wherever suits you.

Here's a general overview:

Building an SEO-friendly site

Once you're ready to start walking that SEO walk, it's time to apply those SEO techniques to a site, whether it's brand new or an old one you're improving.

These pages will help you get started with everything from selecting an SEO-friendly domain name to best practices for internal links.

Content and related markup

A site isn't really a site until you have content. But SEO for content has enough specific variables that we've given it its own section. Start here if you're curious about keyword research, how to write SEO-friendly copy, and the kind of markup that helps search engines understand just what your content is really about.

On-site topics

You've already learned a lot about on-site topics by delving into content and related markup. Now it's time to get technical with information about robots.txt.

Link-related topics

Dig deep into everything you ever needed to know about links from anchor text to redirection. Read this series of pages to understand how and when to use nofollow and whether guest blogging is actually dead. If you're more into the link building side of things (working to improve the rankings on your site by earning links), go straight to the Beginner's Guide to Link Building.

Other optimization

Congratulations! You've mastered the ins and outs of daily SEO and are now ready for some advanced topics. Make sure all that traffic has the easiest time possible converting with conversion rate optimization (CRO), then go micro level with local SEO or take that site global with international SEO.

SEM

Search engine marketing (SEM) is a kind of Internet Marketing. It includes the promotion of websites via increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) through optimization and advertising. With search engine optimization (SEO), SEM can adjusts or rewrites website content for achieving a higher position in search engine results pages.1 All this is done by using a mixture of search engine-optimized website design, paid advertising, high-quality marketing copy etc. In other words, search engine marketing emphasis on purchasing ads which appears on the results pages of search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo etc. In SEM, search engine offers lots of ways to purchase ads, which normally become visible above or to the right side of the content on the search result pages. If anyone offers to pay higher fee for an ad then the page will appear higher ads.

In search Engine Marketing four types of methods and metrics are used for optimizing websites. These are as follows:

(1) Keyword Research and Analysis
This method includes following three Steps:
Step-I: To make sure that the site can be indexed in the search engines.
Step-II: To find the most appropriate and well-liked keywords for the site.
Step-III: To use these chosen keywords on the site so that traffic will generate and convert.

Generally, internet searching is the initial step for each potential buyer, so that search perception impact builds the brand impression for each potential buyer. Search perception impact is the identified impact of a brand's search results on potential buyer perception which also includes site indexing, title and keyword focus.

(2) Saturation and Popularity of Website
Saturation of website means the presence of the website on search engines. A websites saturation can be analyzed through the number of pages of the site which are indexed on search engines. Popularity of website means the number of backlinks the site has. For saturation and popularity of a website, pages have to include keywords for what people are looking for and also ensure that they rank highly in search engine rankings.
(3) Back End Tools
These includes web analytical tools and HTML validators. These tools and validators gives data on a website. Variety of these tools are from uncomplicated traffic counters to tools which works with log files and also to more complicated tools are based on page tagging (which means to put JavaScript or an image on a page to track action). The main advantages of these tools are that they can delivered conversion - related information. For example, EBSCO uses following three important tools:
(i)   log file analyzing tool: Web Trends by NetiQ
(ii)   tag- based analytical tool: WebSideStory's Hitbox, and

(iii)   transaction - based tool: TeaLeaf RealiTea Validators performs the following functions:
          1. To check the unseen parts of websites.
          2. To ensure websites meet W3C code standards, and
          3. To emphasize potential problem and some usability issue.

Keywords

The majority of people look for products and services online and the first thing they do is to type in a keyword phrase into the search box. The core idea of digital marketing is to target audience through specific keywords and terms. Keywords in digital marketing are like connectors that connect them to their audience. Knowing and identifying such keywords will help digital marketers and businessmen get desired results from their search engine optimization campaigns. A proper keyword search lies at the heart of a successful marketing campaign.

Keywords research helps your target audience to search and find you through the common words and terms they speak or use. Your keywords must stand out. This builds up your contacts and paves way for potential customers. Keywords help you identify relevant words or phrases that are overall linked to the theme of your website. This puts your website in a good place with search engines. A keyword research helps you save money by letting you focus only on keywords that will deliver results rather than on keywords that will not generate any traffic.

The development of effective internet marketing tools has created a wider space for business marketers to sell their products and services online. People depend on keywords and search engine result pages before they make a purchase online and they don't go beyond the first page of the search engine to look for options. If customers are searching for you and the search terms they put are not within your site's content, it is very likely that they will not be able to find you. Hence, keywords need to be relevant and are very important.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing refers to a technique in marketing a product or a service where users help in spreading the advertiser's message to other websites or the users create a scenario which can lead to multi-fold growth.

Description: Viral in literal sense means anything which spreads fast (across users). This term is symbolically used in context with the web or mobile domain. Viral marketing is described as a marketing strategy which inspires users to spread or share the message to other users which can lead to multi-fold growth.

It could be a simple message on your smartphone related to a product which was recently launched, a news piece (example - India winning the world cup), or a YouTube video that individuals share with different users.

Hotmail was a classic example, but later Gmail took it to a new level, when it launched its free web-based email service. The email was by invitation only at first which helped create curiosity among the users.

But, when it was made live for everyone, most of the people migrated to Gmail to create their own free account. The users who got a Gmail account could then send an invite to other users to create an account, and the chain continued.

There are various elements required for effective marketing strategy which can make viral. Firstly, product or services should be 'free' for all, and should have easy accessibility. By doing this the marketing team is able to get enough attention from users across the globe, although it might not lead to any profit.

The next important element is the transferability part, which simple means that the message can be easily transferred or shared via email, WhatsApp, networking websites, etc. The message should be simple to understand and at the same time it should be short. Example - Get professional email for your business @yourcompany.com, 50GB of storage.

The other element is that the message should be interesting and intelligently placed. Users should be able to identify with the message. If any influential person (such as celebrity) endorses your message or product on the website or on their social media or networking site, it can become viral.

ZERO MOMENT OF TRUTH

The marketing world is plagued with buzzwords. We see them in blog posts, hear them in day-to-day conversations, and read them in industry articles so often that we had to create a guide to keep them all straight.

But there's one up-and-coming buzzword that may have more substance to it than most: the "Zero Moment of Truth." Coined by Google in their 2011 eBook "ZMOT", the term refers to the moment in the purchase cycle between the *stimulus* (what alerts you of a product, like an ad) and *first moment of truth*(a term used by Proctor & Gamble to refer to the decision to purchase).

So...What is the zero moment of truth?

The zero moment of truth (ZMOT) refers to the point in the buying cycle when the consumer researches a product, often before the seller even knows that they exist. The number of consumers researching a product online prior to purchase has been on the rise in recent years as the internet and mobile continue

to advance. In 2011, the average shopper used 10.4 sources of information before making a purchase decision, compared to half as many sources in 2010 (ZMOT, 2011).

What does the ZMOT look like?

While much of the research behind the ZMOT has been focused on B2C companies, B2B companies have something to learn from the concept as well. Lets look at a simple scenario of someone encountering the ZMOT during a B2B buying cycle:

1. Lisa, a marketing director at a software company, sees a PPC ad on google for marketing automation. The ad functions as the stimulus in this example because it piques her interest enough for her to want to learn more.

2. Lisa decides to do some research. This is the zero moment of truth, where she looks at product reviews and buyers guides to find the right marketing automation system for her needs.

3. Next comes the first moment of truth, where Lisa decides to purchase a marketing automation system.

4. Lastly, there is the second moment of truth, which is the experience that Lisa has after buying the product.

How can B2B marketers prepare for the ZMOT?

The most important lesson from Google's eBook about the zero moment of truth is that marketers need to be aware of the ZMOT, and prepared for it — regardless of whether they're B2C or B2B.

"If you're available at the Zero Moment of Truth, your customers will find you at the very moment they're thinking about buying, and also when they're thinking about thinking about buying." (ZMOT, 2011)

Here are a few ways that you can make sure your B2B product or service passes the ZMOT test:

- Make sure information about your product is readily available. Consumers will be looking for the following types of content to help them make a decision: customer testimonials, buyers guides, and case studies. They want reviews that are coming from your customers and clients, not directly from you.

- Focus on optimization of both the desktop and mobile versions of your site. Most product research starts with an online search on a computer or phone, so it's important that your site is optimized for SEO. Try doing some of the following searches on Google: your brand, reviews of your brand, and opinions on the best product/service in your industry. This will show you exactly what a consumer sees (or does not see) when they're researching your product.

- Think video. It's not a coincidence that YouTube is the second most popular search bar on the internet (ZMOT, 2011). Consumers are looking for visuals to help them decide. For B2B, this means incorporating product demonstrations and webinars into your strategy.

Putting a strategy in place to prepare for the zero moment of truth should not drastically change your current marketing strategy. After all, the fact that consumers research before purchase isn't earth-shattering news. But it is important to be aware of what information consumers need during this process, and how easy it is for them to access it.

Unit-3

E-Commerce & Start-ups: Ideation, Plan and Management

Starting an ecommerce business is hard work with many steps and decisions that need to come together at the right time. To help, we have put together a comprehensive resource list, compiled from Shopify's most popular blog posts. These posts have been placed into a logical order based on how you would research, build, launch and grow a profitable ecommerce business.

Let's dive in.

Choosing a Product

Finding A Product To Sell

The first step to building an ecommerce business is to know what products you want to sell. This is often the most challenging part of starting a new online business. In this section, we will highlight the strategies you can use to find product opportunities, explore the ten best places to look for product ideas, and finally, we will reveal ten trending products that we came up.

Evaluating Your Idea

Once you have a product idea in mind, how do you know if it's a good idea or not? In this section, we will go through two exhaustive evaluations methods, evaluating both the product itself, as well as the market for your product choice.

Obtaining Your Product

Having found your product idea and evaluating them in the previous section, you must now figure out where and how you're going to obtain your products. The next two posts will cover the various methods for acquiring your products, along with the pros and cons of each model.

Research & Prepare

Research Your Competition

You've found your product, evaluated the potential and sourced your supplier. It's time to write your business plan, but before you get into that, you'll need to research your competition thoroughly so you know exactly what you're up against.

Writing Your Business Plan

With your competitive research complete, it's now the perfect time to write your business plan. A business plan will be your road map that helps bring your ideas and thoughts together. A business plan is vital so that you can determine how to best move forward and most effectively compete.

Registering Your Business

With a business plan in hand, now is a good time to consider your options for registering your business.

Setting Up Your Business

Naming Your Business

Aside from finding an actual product to sell online, another difficult decision is determining your business name and choosing an appropriate and available domain name. These blog posts will help you tackle these important tasks.

Creating A Logo

Once you have solidified your name and registered your domain, it's time to craft a logo. In these posts, we will show you several options for creating a great logo for your new business.

Understanding Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

You're almost ready to begin building your online store. However, before you jump into it, you should understand the basics of search engine optimization so that you can optimize your site for Google and other search engines.

Building Your Store

With a better understanding of search engine optimization (SEO), it's time to build out your store. There are many critical elements. Below we have included a list of our best blog posts to help you write captivating product descriptions, shoot beautiful product photography, and a list of some of the best tools to help you optimize those photos.

Lead Generation and Personal Branding

Personal branding refers to the practice of people marketing themselves and their careers as brands. It's the building of your personality in an online format. According to "Brand Yourself", a personal brand should reflect your actual personality and should not be an idealized version of who you are. Since the relationship between brands and consumers needs to be made and remade consistently. You need to know that there is a constant desire for a reinforcement of the self-brand.

The content that shows up about you on search engines, your tone, your sense of humor, your outlook on life, all play an extremely important role in personal branding. In order to use personal branding for a B2B lead generation you need to:

Identify your target audience:

Spending huge amounts of money on marketing campaigns won't help if the marketing message that we want to spread does not reach our target audience. Again, as per the research analysis of "Brand Yourself", the true measure of success in generating B2B leads depends on how well our personal brand connects with our prospects. Therefore, it is very important to establish a personality, a human identity, for our brands.

Ensure content quality:

Content plays a crucial role in marketing techniques and hence the branding of any business or brand. You need to ensure that your content is top-notch quality. Quality content means that it states exactly what you wish your target audience to know. Moreover, it provides them with unique, fresh, and useful knowledge consistently

Leverage the power of followers and subscribers:

This is an era of social media where you need to take your followers and subscribers seriously. These days, everybody including hiring managers, business prospects, and even your friends search you on social media platforms. This helps get valuable insights about you and your business. Moreover, what you say about others and what people have to say about you also has an impact on your personal brand because "word of mouth" is the new trend!

Consider your marketing message as an asset:

You need to treat your marketing message as an asset. The reason? Well, that's because it might help you open up new profit channels, or create additional demand in a different market.

Building a Multi-platform Social Media Marketing Strategy

Social media marketing can help you build engaged audiences where they already spend their time, create multiple sources of traffic that continually bring in customers, and grow your business through the power of online networks.

Or, it can be a time-consuming obligation that spreads you thin, resulting in a presence your target customers don't know or care about—a drain on resources rather than the asset you've seen it become for many established brands.

The difference is creating a social media marketing *strategy* that keeps your actions focused, along with a process that enables you to execute without taking too much attention away from running your business.

But starting from scratch can be a daunting task, especially with so many different channels to build a presence on and the commitment that comes attached.

That's why we've put together this guide to walk you through how to approach your own social media strategy, along with tools and tips to help you pull it off.

How to create a social media strategy

Before you post anything, it helps to have a big picture view of what you want to get out of your social media efforts and how you can best achieve those outcomes.

Your business (i.e. your website) is the center of your social media strategy. And your strategy is how you tie all of your social media efforts back to its various goals.

Social media marketing can serve all kinds of functions for your business, from driving traffic and sales, building brand awareness, amassing an engaged audience, connecting with customers and prospects, providing support, and so much more.

This is because you have a wide range of channels to incorporate, each with its own strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to consider.

What is a social media marketing strategy?

For the sake of making it easy to get started, there are five essential pillars to consider when creating your social media strategy:

1. **Goals**: Define the outcomes of your efforts and how you'll measure them.

2. **Target Audiences**: Research and profile your ideal customer.

3. **Content Mix**: Create social media programming based on recurring content archetypes.

4. **Channels**: Choose the best of the available social networks you want to dedicate your time to and what you'll use them for.

5. **Process**: Set up the infrastructure and tools to execute your strategy efficiently.

This isn't a prescription for social media success, only a framework to lay the foundation. By the end of this guide, you'll hopefully be better equipped to understand how all of these considerations are connected and inform each other to make smarter decisions and revise your social media strategy over time.

Setting goals for your social media marketing plan

Everything you post or do should be tied back to one of your goals as a business owner. To start, define what these goals are and think about how you'll measure the success of your efforts.

Social media marketing requires a lot of testing and trying things out; you can't improve any particular aspect of it without knowing what signals to pay attention to. You can even use these signals (which will vary from channel to channel) to define targets for your social media efforts to help you stay motivated and on track.

Here are just some of the goals you should consider for your social media marketing, which you can add to your strategy over time:

- **Drive brand awareness**: Reach more people to increase the likelihood of your brand getting seen by the right people. You can measure this using impressions/reach, likes, shares, mentions, or any other signal that shows a real person has seen your post(s).

- **Create demand for your products**: Get people interested in your products with relevant inspiration or education, which you can gauge by clicks to your site, products added to a shopping cart, or comments/messages from interested customers.

- **Acquire leads**: Get your audience to convert into email subscribers, which you can then nurture into sales off of social media for free. This can also mean building an audience of interested shoppers you can retarget with ads.

- **Get sales**: These are paying customers that come from your social media efforts and can be measured by number of orders or revenue.

- **Drive offline traffic**: If you're a retail business or are hosting events, one of your goals might be drive people to a specific location in real life.

- **Network to form partnerships**: Engage with influencers or like-minded brands for influencer marketing or co-marketing campaigns.

- **Build a loyal following**: Grow an engaged audience that wants to hear from you; don't inflate your follower count with fake or bought followers. You want to build an authentic community of people who are interested in your products, and who will promote your content or products to others. You can measure this by followers you've added or lost in a certain time frame, or your engagement rate (total engagement divided by number of followers).

- **Establish social proof**: Source positive testimonials or content generated by customers/influencers that casts your brand in a positive light and can potentially be used in other marketing efforts.

- **Provide customer service**: A social media presence opens you up to customer questions, complaints, and inquiries. So one of your goals will be to provide this support to customers or direct it to another preferred, private channel. One way to measure this is through your response time for direct messages (This is displayed as a badge on your Facebook page, for example).

- **Become a thought leader in your target market**: Social media gives you a voice that you can use to not only participate in conversations, but shift them in the direction you think they should go in and build credibility around your products or services.

All of your choices should aim to tick one or more of these boxes, and any ideas and new tactics you plan to test out should be evaluated on their potential to achieve these goals. Some of them may be long-term investments while others are more immediate.

Keep these objectives in mind as we get in to the next step: figuring out who you'll be trying to reach.

Identifying your target audiences

Marketing, on and off social media, starts with understanding your ideal customer. Building a rich context about your target audience takes time, but there are steps you can take immediately that will put you in a better position at the start.

Spend some time researching your target audience, looking for demographic and psychographic data or observable patterns that help you form a mental image of who is likely to buy from you. This exercise won't just inform your initial strategy but also help you develop a voice and tone for your brand that resonates with them.

If your business naturally focuses on a specific niche (like cat owners, for example), your job will be easier than if you're trying to appeal to a more general audience (like a telecommunications or airline brands). I recommend lurking in the places your intended customers often hang out, in subreddits or blog comments for example, to see what they're interested in.

Facebook, being one of the largest social networks and thus a database of 2.3 billion monthly active users, is also a great place to do some audience research. Check out your competitors' pages, clicking through on the profiles of some of their engaged followers to get a better sense of who they are and what they like.

Once you've done some digging, you can put it all together to create an ideal customer, or "buyer persona", who is likely to buy from you.

You don't have to fill out every trait, but describe what you can to paint an image of this person as it is relevant to your business.

Location: Where do your ideal customers physically live? Even knowing just the country can help, but if you're a local business or only want to serve a specific area then you should isolate those places.

Age: What is the age range of your customer? Keep this as broad as possible, unless you know for sure your target customer is at a certain point in their life.

Gender: What gender do they identify as? This might unimportant or essential, depending on your brand.

Interests: What are their interests/hobbies/passions? These help with potential content ideas and audience targeting. (e.g. cooking, hip hop dance, yoga).

Career/Industry: What industry do they work in and what job titles have they held? Again, this might not be as relevant, depending on your brand.

Income Level: What is the income range of this buyer persona? Are they price-sensitive or are they willing to spend more money for premium products?

Relationship Status: Are they single, actively dating, or already married? This may be relevant if you're in the wedding industry, for example.

Favorite sites/apps: What type of websites do they keep bookmarked? Do they browse Instagram or Pinterest daily? Are there specific apps they couldn't live without?

Motivation to Buy: What reasons would this person have for buying your product? Do they want to sport a status symbol or make time to work out despite a busy schedule?

Buying Concerns: Why might they choose not to buy your product? Are they worried about the quality?

Other info: Anything else that isn't covered but would be worth mentioning, such as education, stage in life (parents with newborn kids), events they attend, etc.

The point of these personas isn't to be 100% accurate, but to outline your best guess at the kind of person who would be the easiest to convert into a customer.

For example, here's a profile I made for an online store I started that sells LED shoes. After doing some research, I ended up with a description that looks something like this:

- **Location**: Canada/United States

- **Age**: 18 to 34 years old

- **Gender**: Male and female (mostly female).

- **Interests**: EDM music, music festivals, dancing.

- **Career/Industry**: N/A

- **Income Level**: $30 to $70K salary

- **Relationship Status**: N/A

- **Favorite sites/apps**: EDMLife.com, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat.

- **What they consume:** EDM music, memes, dance videos.

- **Motivation to Buy**: They want to stand out when they dance and go to music festivals. Shooting cool videos for YouTube and Instagram.

- **Buying Concerns**: Quality of the product, short battery life, getting the wrong size, not confident enough as a dancer, getting it in time for an event.

- **Other info**: Events they attend include music festivals like Shambala, VELD.

Most of these traits can be targeted directly or indirectly through social media ads, but having it written down also helps inform the kind of content I can share and the voice I should use.

Keep these personas broad. This is all subject to change, evolve, and become more accurate as you execute your strategy and get real feedback.

Maybe one of your assumptions was wrong or your customers share another trait you didn't expect at all.

Either way, social media marketing is one of the best ways to find out who your customers really are, and what you learn can even be incorporated into your larger business roadmap, such as what products you'll come out with next.

You can go further and develop several audiences or "target segments" to speak to, such as gift-givers, shoppers who already buy from one of your competitors, and influencers or companies you want to build connections with.

But with at least one major target audience, you'll be in a better position to consider the next part of your social media strategy: what you're going to post.

Coming up with content for social media

Managing a social media channel is a bit like running your own TV network.

On each channel, you can produce a content series with new "weekly episodes" (just like our series, Ask Shopify). You can syndicate your content to other channels (e.g. cross-posting from Snapchat to Instagram). You can have reruns of fan favorites to fill in for empty time-slots (#ThrowBackThursday), and commercial breaks to sell your products.

Defining your content mix—the recurring formats and post types you'll rely on—makes it easier to think up and produce social content while adding a rhythm to your posting schedule to offer your audience both variety and consistency at the same time. Otherwise, you'll wind up scrambling for something to publish every day.

Most social media accounts worth following make an implied promise to their audience that they consistently fulfill. For business owners, it often starts with a question:

Beyond your products, how can you consistently provide value to your target audience?

It's not only about what you post, but how you allocate your resources (time, money, creativity) to maintain your social media presence on a specific channel. Some ideas will warrant a greater investment because they help achieve a number of your goals at once.

But within your content mix, you want to also have ideas you can plan for in advance, reproduce, and schedule to go out on a regular basis.

For example, you might feature a customer testimonial every Tuesday and share a quote graphic every Wednesday and Friday. These pieces that are relatively easy to turn around can keep your social media calendar full while you build out more elaborate assets, such as a promotional video or a blog post.

The content mix you develop can incorporate:

- **News**: Information about what's happening in your industry or posts that are based on what's trending at the moment.

- **Inspiration**: Motivation to use your products or pursue a certain lifestyle, such as quote graphics or photos from around the world.

- **Education**: Share fun stats, tutorials, and facts or how-to posts from your blog or YouTube channel.

- **Product/promotional posts**: High quality product shots of your products being used, demo videos, testimonials, or feature explanations can help you achieve your ultimate goal of getting sales. You can often run these as ads after you create them.

- **Contests and giveaways**: A contest or free download in exchange for an email is a great way to promote something of value to both you and your audience other than your products.

- **Customer/influencer features**: Shots or videos featuring your customers or the people they follow.

- **Community events**: Share meetups, fundraisers, or learning opportunities, especially if you're a local business.

- **Q&A**: Ask your audience a question or make a request to elicit responses, such as 'Tag a friend who's always late", or answer a common question that you get from customers.

- **Behind-the-scenes**: Share how your product is made or what you're doing to grow your business to offer some transparency that your audience can relate to. Giving your audience a look into the humans behind your business can go a long a way to create trust or build your personal brand as a founder.

- **And more**: Get creative and try to come up with a content mix that differentiates you from your competitors.

Aim for about 5-7 content archetypes to start off with, balancing your content mix with post formats that you can quickly create with a couple that might take some time to produce, like a product demonstration video, as well as posts that aim for sales and posts that just seek to delight and grow your audience.

Based on my example of selling LED shoes to an audience of dancers and music festival goers, I might start with the following content archetypes, tying each one to different goals until I have a healthy mix:

1. Promote a post to a popular product in my store. (Sales)

2. A relatable meme about EDM culture. (Awareness and engagement)

3. Share a roundup blog post of top 10 music festivals/songs/etc. this summer and ask for audience opinions. (Engagement and creating demand)

4. Share a cool dance video from YouTube. (Audience building and engagement).

5. Share a popular song from Spotify. (Engagement)

6. Highlight a specific product feature (Sales)

7. Share a dance video or picture submitted by a customer and tag them (Engagement, sales, create demand).

Some of these ideas might be flops. Some might be hits. The point is to come up with goal-oriented concepts to test out.

Vary your programming so it doesn't lean too heavily on sales posts. When new followers land on your account, their perception of your brand will likely be your last 3-6 posts (depending on the platform). If they're all explicitly selling your products or services, it will turn them off.

Note: *Keep in mind that anything you create can potentially be promoted again and again to your audience over time, or on other channels. Don't shy away from eventual "re-runs", especially if a certain post has proven to give your traffic, engagement, or sales a bump.*

To get you inspired to come up with your own content mix, here are some ideas that you can borrow from brands that are doing well on social media.

Get customers to contribute content

Luxy Hair relies on style education via their blog and YouTube channel to market their hair extensions, which no doubt takes time to produce.

But on their website and in their marketing communication, they encourage their customers to share before and after pictures on Instagram using a branded hashtag. These photos are then shared on Luxy's own Instagram account or store using one of the available Shoppable Instagram apps.

If your products beg to be shared on social media, you can harness that to source social content that you can use for your own social media posts, tagging your customers to give them the spotlight.

Shots of your product being used

While it's great to have several content formats to add variety to your social media marketing mix, **even one proven content archetype can do wonders** for growing your audience if published consistently.

Letterfolk's Instagram is a great example of how developing a theme through what you post can make social media publishing less work in the long-run without sacrificing engagement. Nearly all of their posts feature the same premise: an interior shot of their flagship letter boards sporting a relatable quote.

They can succeed with this strategy because each post helps them achieve several of their goals at once, namely:

- Create high-level engagement with relatable quotes.

- Grow a following through an account with a clear and consistent premise.

- Drive sales by showing off the product in action.

Think about how you can develop your own content formats to chase several of your goals with a single post.
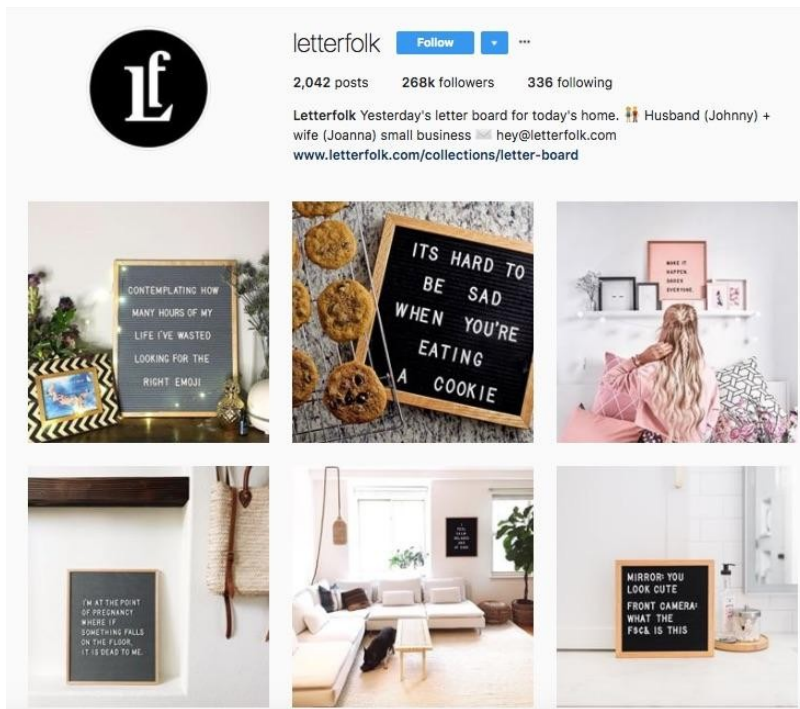
Humor that relates to your target audience

Being funny can go long way in getting your audience to engage with what you post. If humor lends itself well to your brand, then by all means make room in your social media marketing for content that elicits a laugh.

If a joke is a hit, then you can consider paying to promote it to reach a larger audience (few things spread better on the internet than laughter).

When you're starting out, you might not have the time or money to produce high quality content that's customized for each social channel. Start small with a few ideas to experiment with. As long as you maintain a regular schedule and keep an eye on how your posts are performing, you can adapt your content mix over time.

Additional tips and resources

- **Be visual**: Even if you're not a designer or video editor, you can use free tools like Canva (social graphics), Adobe Spark or Lumen5 (videos), Meme Generator and more to produce shareable content.

- **Always aim**: Tie each post in your content mix back to your target audience and one or more of the goals you established. Knowing what to measure will help you evaluate the success of a particular idea and inform your strategy over time.

- **Curate and create:** To avoid becoming overwhelmed creating original content, try to curate and remix content as well. Be sure to tag and credit your original sources and ask for permission if you're unsure.

Prioritizing channels for your social media strategy

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest—there's no shortage of places for you to build a presence for your brand.

But there are two mistakes that are easy to make when you're just starting out on social media:

1. Building your presence on more channels than you can maintain.

2. Treating every channel the same and not playing to the strengths of each.

Each channel you choose is another you have to manage. You need to prioritize what you'll be focusing on in the beginning based on the target audience you've identified and which channels can support your content archetypes and your goals. That starts by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each channel.

For the sake of this post, we'll cover some of the most popular social channels. There are dozens of social sites. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Facebook: Pay-to-promote and your own business page

Few social channels are built for businesses quite like Facebook. On top of a Facebook Shop, the ability to add customer reviews, and a popular Messaging feature that can be used to provide customer service, Facebook is also one of most widely used social media apps by a broad range of consumers.

But it's biggest downside is that unless you pay to promote your posts, you won't be able to reach many people, even if they've opted in by "liking" your page.

That said, Facebook can be an incredibly powerful way to use social media for advertising. It's a database of information that you can use to deliver targeted ads to your ideal customers. If you amplify content that's set up to produce engagement (likes, shares, comments) such as a viral video, you can generally lower the cost of your advertising, so keep that in mind.

Instagram: Engaged followers and influencers

As a marketing channel, Instagram lets you focus on building a following through a variety of visual mediums.

Unlike Facebook, it's possible to get pretty good results without necessarily paying to promote yourself, although there's also the option of pursuing Instagram advertising and influencer marketing.

But also unlike Facebook, almost half of its users are millennials so it might not be for you if your customers are generally older.

Instagram lets you post images and videos, which are discoverable through hashtags. But there's also Instagram Stories and Instagram Live, which lets you put out photos and videos with a 24-hour lifespan or share moments in real-time. This gives you the unique option of keeping your Instagram feed consistent and clean, while using Stories to test out ideas and share behind-the-scenes glimpses that have a more casual and personal production quality to them.

Twitter: Networking and news

Twitter's greatest strength is that it lets you listen to and engage with other voices in the world. It might not be as strong as a sales channel for many brands, but can be used to showcase your brand's personality (see Wendys or Moonpie's accounts for examples).

What you can use Twitter for instead, if you choose to, is networking with other brands, journalists, and connecting with potential and existing customers on a smaller scale. Many Twitter users also rely on the platform for news, if that's a part of your content mix.

Pinterest: High buying intent for certain verticals

While Pinterest isn't exactly a "social media site", and is more comparable to a search engine, it often finds itself in a company's social media marketing mix, especially among ecommerce brands. That's because users actually come to Pinterest with more intent to actually buy something than any other social platform.

Unlike the channels above, Pinterest has a clearly defined user base consisting mostly (70%) of women with disposable income. It's not for every brand, but it's a product-friendly platform for those are a good fit. If you're in the fashion, handcrafts, or home decor space, you'd be missing out an opportunity to get traffic and sales here through both organic and paid tactics.

LinkedIn: Your company profile and professional network

LinkedIn's greatest strength is its position as *the* social network for professionals. If your target audience can be identified by a particular profession or there are companies that need your products or services, then it might be worth building your presence here.

LinkedIn is also a great platform for networking, hiring talent, building thought leadership, and pursuing business development opportunities, reaching out to brands or people of interest you would like to partner with.

At the very least, it's worth having your own personal LinkedIn profile set up for networking and a company page so others can learn more about your business and its employees.

Additional tips and resources

- **Consider content marketing channels**: If you have the time and ability, you can start a blog or a YouTube channel that you can be part of your social media strategy. Content marketing can contribute to your social media programming, and social media can be used to distribute your content marketing and source ideas, photos, and more.

- **Focus**: Take some time to learn and test one or two platforms at a time. It's better to be excellent on one channel than mediocre on several.

- **Optimize your profiles**: Fill out your social profiles with all the information your customers might want and try to claim the same username on every platform, especially a unique tracking link to your website. Have a clear bio that describes what you do and what you're about (this is essentially your digital elevator pitch). Also be sure to have an avatar and cover photo wherever applicable. You can use Canva to create these in the right dimensions for each channel you've chosen.

Creating a process to execute your social media plan

With an understanding of your goals, your target audience, and how you'll be using different channels, it's time to create the framework you need to manage and schedule your social media calendar.

There are a wide variety of tools you can use for this purpose, but I recommend using Trello for planning content and Later, Hootsuite, or Buffer for scheduling because they all have fairly robust free plans to get you started.

Collecting ideas and planning content

Ideas often seem to strike at random. So you need a place to collect and develop them as inspiration comes. Trello has worked wonders for me because I can not only save ideas to a Trello board, but attach links, files, and notes to each idea as it comes to life. It gives you the flexibility to be as meticulous or as barebones as you want with your planning.

The content archetypes you developed earlier are good to fall back on as you plan out what you'll be posting, but you can also stray from them with new ideas and opportunities. There's always going to be aspects of your social media marketing that are reactive, organic, and experimental.

Regardless, you want to create a process that lets you keep a backlog of ideas and develop them until they're ready to schedule.

If you're planning to post the same content to multiple channels, make sure the content and copy are optimized for that channel. You can attach channel-specific variations to each card for easy access when you start to schedule your posts out.

Scheduling content: when, where, and how often to post

With content in the pipeline of your social media calendar, it's time to schedule your posts. Once you've prepared the copy, images, and whatever else you need for your content, you can start scheduling them using a tool like:

- Buffer for easy, automatic scheduling.

- Hootsuite if actively engaging with others or "social listening" is a big part of your strategy.

- Later if you're building a visual social media brand with Instagram as your focus.

But how often should you be posting on each of your chosen channels?

While some answers can be really prescriptive, the real answer is to start slow and then ramp up to a higher frequency as you develop your routine and figure out what works.

You don't want to spread yourself too thin or spam your audience's feeds. It's fine if you only have time to post once every few days in the beginning. You can build up to one post a day and then test to see if a higher frequency actually nets you better results on specific platforms.

The "best posting times" for your particular audience is something you'll only discover through trial and error. Popular posting times will also vary depending on seasons and other variables.

If you need a good place to start, think about when people check their feeds: in the morning, at lunch, during their commute, before bed.

What's more important is that you schedule your posts in batches, at least a week in advance. Do it in one sitting, dedicating a few hours at a time so you can focus on other things while your social media publishing runs in the background.

Automate what you can to make time for the tasks you can't.

The reality of social media marketing is there are activities that you won't be able to simply schedule and forget if you want it to be effective.

There's are other responsibilities such as replying to your audience, community management, running ads, and of course creating content that you need to make time for (although you can outsource any of these functions whenever you're ready).

Social media marketing, especially early on, demands that you are deliberate about how you spend your time.

Always think about how you can be more effective with your time by repurposing or reusing your content, or allocating money to paid promotion to get a better return on the time you spend creating content.

Additional tips and resources

- **Create templates**: Wherever possible, build design and copy templates based on what works to make it easier to turn around new content on an ongoing basis, especially for a recurring content series. For example, you can save your most used Instagram hashtags so you always have them handy when you post, or apply the same filter to your photos to achieve a consistent look.

- **Keep an eye on the calendar:** Holidays are a great opportunity to be topical and timely with what you post. Pay special attention to what's coming up so you can brainstorm social media marketing ideas in advance. Sprout Social has a great calendar that includes hashtag holidays too, if you want something handy to reference.

- **Tailor your posts for each channel**: You can share the same post or image to different social channels, but make sure to take the time to optimize copy, images, or videos for the channel you're posting to.

- **Make time for proactive interaction**: Social media is a two-way street, and you'll need to engage with others on and off of your own content in order to make it work. That means commenting on people's posts, tweeting at others in your community, and just being sociable on these social networks.

The best laid plans are written in pencil

It sounds obvious, but it needs to be said: Social media is a lot different as a business owner or marketer than as a casual user.

Your aim now is to get a positive return on the time, money, and effort you spend on it. That requires intention behind every action.

Your social media strategy is your plan of attack. But in a space like this that literally changes by the day, with surprise newsfeed algorithm updates, new channels, and audiences always ready for something new, you need to remain flexible and keep your finger on the pulse of the internet to constantly improve without getting distracted by every new shiny object.

However much things change, though, these three best practices will never go away: Be authentic, delight your audience, and when in doubt, guess, test, measure, and learn.

For media, entertainment and gaming companies, figuring out how to make money with a mobile app is a big part of the Strategy phase of the mobile lifecycle. Mcommerce apps that sell products directly have that part figured out too. Naturally enough, this is referred to as "monetization" and these companies spend a whole lot of time and effort strategizing around it.

If you're in another line of work, however, you may only be thinking of mobile as a marketing channel or as a utilitarian tool for things like wayfinding, property management, or simply sharing helpful information. If that's the case, you're leaving money on the table.
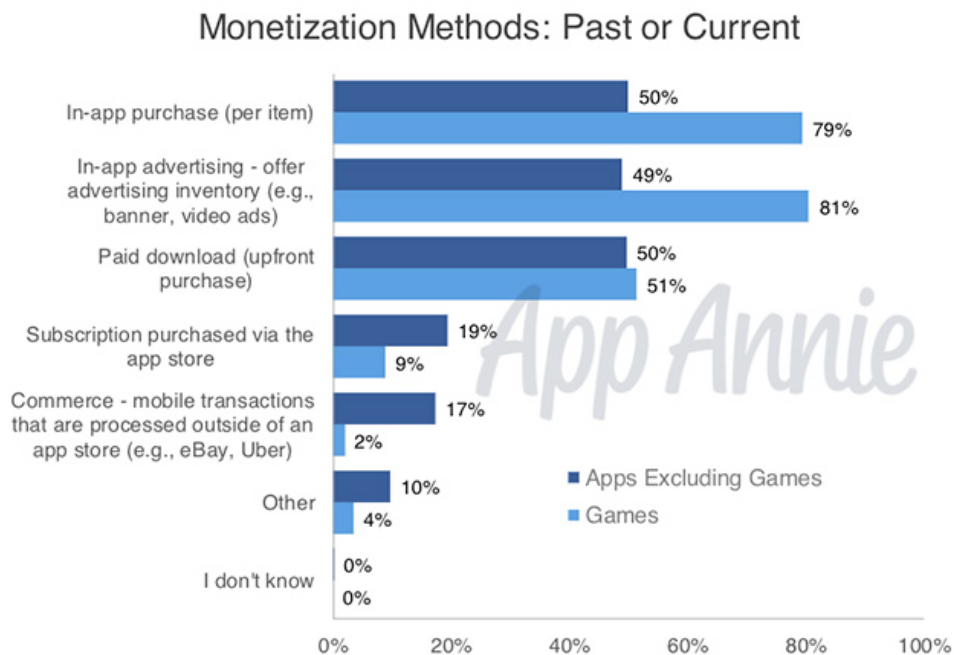
What Is an App Monetization Strategy?

Simply put, it's a plan for driving revenue via your mobile app, using one or a combination of different app monetization models. It's best to consider and plan for monetization during the Strategy phase, so you don't have to force-fit something later.

Outside of direct mCommerce, there are five basic options:

- Pay-to-download (or "Paid"): Pretty straightforward. These are apps that you pay $X to download.

- Subscription: Users pay a monthly fee via the app stores.

- Free ("Freemium") with in-app purchases: The app is free to download but the publisher makes money on in-app purchases that provide an enhanced, "premium" experience. In games, these are usually micro-transactions such as special gear, extra lives, weapons, gaming levels, etc. In other types of apps, these could be access to exclusive content behind a paywall.

- Limited Freemium: The app is free to download but is limited in one of two ways—either the user can access full functionality for a short time only OR the free version only offers basic functionality, such as a few game levels. The idea is to entice users to try before they buy, hoping the app experience is compelling enough to convert them to a fully paid or subscription version.

- Free to download, with advertising: In-app advertising is an increasingly common way to monetize all types of apps. Users will welcome ads if they are well-targeted, relevant, interesting and non-disruptive to the user experience. It's even better if the advertising adds value by connecting users with rewards or exclusive content (as in sponsored gameplay integrations).

According to App Annie's recent worldwide survey of app professionals, in-app purchases and in-app advertising were the most popular monetization strategies, however many of those surveyed expected subscription and mCommerce to become more popular over time.

Monetization Methods: Past or Current

Developing a Sound Monetization Strategy

There is no cut-and-dried monetization strategy that works for every industry or every type of app. Ultimately, your team will determine the type(s) of monetization you want to include in your app by carefully evaluating a number of considerations, including:

- Your app experience: User experience (UX) should be your most important consideration. Any monetization strategy you choose should align with the overall experience and preferably enhance it.

- Your audience: Across various demographic categories, people feel differently about paying for an app or making in-app purchases, and their behavior varies accordingly. According to Gartner, people in the 25-34 age bracket spend the most on both paid apps and in-app transactions (thanks, older Millennials!). Those on the younger side of Gen X (35-44) come in second, but they spend more on in-app transactions than paid downloads. In addition, women spend less overall on paid downloads and in-app transactions—but they're more likely to try a freemium approach.

- Your business goals: Monetization should always complement your overarching business goals, not take away from them.

- What the competition's doing: Check out other apps in the same category. How are they monetizing? Does their approach complement or detract from their UX?

Though game developers pioneered it, mobile app monetization is still a developing field. If your team lacks expertise in monetization, consider working with an expert partner. And if in-app advertising may be part of your mix, seek out a monetization partner with not only the requisite experience but also strong brand relationships and robust data sharing.

Unit-4

Definition of 'Data Mining'

Definition: In simple words, data mining is defined as a process used to extract usable data from a larger set of any raw data. It implies analysing data patterns in large batches of data using one or more software. Data mining has applications in multiple fields, like science and research. As an application of data mining, businesses can learn more about their customers and develop more effective strategies related to various business functions and in turn leverage resources in a more optimal and insightful manner. This helps businesses be closer to their objective and make better decisions. Data mining involves effective data collection and warehousing as well as computer processing. For segmenting the data and evaluating the probability of future events, data mining uses sophisticated mathematical algorithms. Data mining is also known as Knowledge Discovery in Data (KDD).

Description: Key features of data mining:

• Automatic pattern predictions based on trend and behaviour analysis.

• Prediction based on likely outcomes.

• Creation of decision-oriented information.

• Focus on large data sets and databases for analysis.

• Clustering based on finding and visually documented groups of facts not previously known.

The Data Mining Process: Technological Infrastructure Required: 1. Database Size: For creating a more powerful system more data is required to processed and maintained. 2. Query complexity: For querying or processing more complex queries and the greater the number of queries, the more powerful system is required. Uses:

1. Data mining techniques are useful in many research projects, including mathematics, cybernetics, genetics and marketing.

2. With data mining, a retailer could manage and use point-of-sale records of customer purchases to send targeted promotions based on an individual's purchase history. The retailer could also develop products and promotions to appeal to specific customer segments based on mining demographic data from comment or warranty cards.

Google Analytics

With the business of the holidays looming just around the corner, it's important to start putting plans in place to set your business up for success in 2018. One way to do that is to make sure you're using Google Analytics.

Google Analytics is a vital tool for digital marketers, SEO analysts and webmasters alike. For the ability to really understand how effective a digital website campaign has been, to review SEO performance, or to find out how well users are interacting with your new website, Google Analytics (GA) is the go-to tool.

However, you can easily get lost within GA if you don't know what you are looking for. With so much data available at your fingertips, it can be pretty difficult to know where to look to find the most important metrics.

Without being able to analyze your website traffic, how will you be able to effectively assess your current marketing strategy and know how to move forward? Through using Google Analytics, you can uncover massive amounts of data about your website and your users, gaining valuable insights that can be used to enhance your marketing strategies.

In this article, I'll fill you in on key steps to using Google Analytics to make sure your 2018 digital marketing plan is successful.

What Matters Most

You need to know how to choose the best marketing metrics right from the start. Below I'll be reviewing some core components of Google Analytics, such as Traffic Channels, Site Content, User Behavior and Audience Demographics.

Traffic Channels

One of the most insightful aspects of digital marketing is the ability to understand exactly how customers are finding you.

This vital element of Google Analytics allows you to determine which marketing efforts are working and what needs to be revised. Google Analytics allows you to hone in on the performance of different marketing channels to evaluate everything from SEO performance to email marketing. Here are the different channels you can review in GA:

Direct: These are visits in which users have navigated directly to the URL by:

- Typing in the domain directly to the URL bar

- Clicking on a bookmark

- Clicking on a link in an email which isn't tagged using tracking parameters

- Clicking on a link in a mobile messaging app

Organic Search: These are visits from organic (unpaid) search results. Month on month and year on year increases to organic traffic represents a strong SEO strategy. The results of this report are determined by the medium of organic traffic such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo.

Social: Visits from social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.)

Email: Traffic from tagged links clicked in email messages, whether mass email marketing or individual messages. You can add a tracking link to the URLs in your emails by using Google's URL Builder tool. You can further segment this traffic by 'campaign' if you have tagged your links. This way you can see which email campaign(s) were the most successful over a period of time

Referral: Traffic coming from users clicking a link from another site, excluding major search engines.

Paid Search: Traffic from PPC (pay-per-click) campaigns such as Google AdWords. You can also link your AdWords campaign to Analytics for more efficient reporting within Analytics, under Acquisition.

Other Traffic: Google defines "other traffic" as traffic coming from online advertising outside of search and display, such as cost-per-view video advertising. Occasionally you will have undefined traffic in this report which GA will eventually filter out to the appropriate channel.

Display: Indicates traffic from display advertising, such as Google AdWords remarketing campaigns.

Here's a screenshot below with an example of different channels:

Site Content

Within the site content section of Google Analytics, there are four really insightful sub-sections to look at: All Pages, Landing Pages, Content Drilldown and Exit Pages.

With **All Pages** you will find a list of all the pages on your site that have been viewed during a date range that you specify. If any of your pages are missing, they either haven't been viewed in the specified date range, or the tracking code isn't installed properly on that page.

You can break the data down by the page, pageviews, unique page views, time on page, bounce rate, exit rate, entrances or page value. I'll go into a bit more detail on these metrics here:

- **Pageviews** are how many times the page was viewed; this can be the same user multiple times in one session.

- **Unique Pageviews** show how many unique sessions there have been for a page.

- **Average Time on Page** is the average time spent on the page over a chosen date range.

- **Entrances** calculates how many times a page was the entrance page to the website, meaning the first page that the user viewed.

- **Bounce Rate** is a percentage calculated by the number of visits in which a person leaves your website from the landing page without browsing through other pages.

- **% Exit** is the percentage of pageviews that were the final page before a user left the website.

- **Page Value** is calculated using ecommerce, dividing the total ($) value by the number of pageviews for the page, so you can disregard this if you do not run an online store.

In **Content Drilldown** we see the same data as in the All Pages report (with the same user metrics mentioned above), but this time it is broken down by sub-folders.

This section will show how well organized your site is, and how well people are interacting with your content when navigating through your site. You can see the folder images next to the page path to determine whether this is a page or subfolder. As you can see below, the homepage (/) is the main folder, with the icons underneath representing subfolders of the homepage. By clicking on the links you will reach a more detailed breakdown about the corresponding pages within the folder selected.

This report is particularly useful as it can also show under performing or low value content or content that may be appealing to visitors that you were not of originally aware of. Here's a screenshot from the Content Drilldown report.

Landing pages are the only pages in the content reports that show you a conversion rate. This is because multiple pages can be viewed within single visits before a conversion happens, but there will only be one page that a visitor lands on. So, if someone landed on your services page prior to navigating through your sub-service pages, before completing a conversion, the services page will count as the page which generated the conversion.

You can segment this data by adding a secondary dimension such as the 'Source or Medium' on the Landing Page report. This will allow you to gain a better understanding of the pages which perform well through mediums such as organic traffic, referral traffic or paid advertising, or specific sources such as Google, Yelp or Google AdWords. Being able to recognize which pages are gathering the most conversions is vital when analyzing marketing performance.

Exit pages are the final pages viewed within a visit. Usually, you tend to see your contact or checkout pages high up this list, which is ideally where you would like to see the 'user journey' finish.

Monitoring this report is key to understanding which pages could use improvement in order to keep users on your website and drive them towards completing a conversion. This will always be a highly beneficial analysis when considering your digital marketing plan. Keep an eye out for pages high up the list which may have error messages such as '404 Page Not Found'; fixing these are ways to quickly improve the user journey and overall website performance.

Audience

Be aware of who your audience is. It's one of the key rules to getting better conversions.

The audience section in GA is a very important section to take note of. It is here where you can really dig deep into user statistics for your site, and therefore gain a deeper understanding of the type of people who really engage with your content, buy your products, or inquire for your services.

The broad overview of the audience tab helps you gain an initial understanding of users' behavior so you can form the hypotheses to help your conversion optimization strategy. Then you can start to dig deeper, mining the different reports for more audience insight.

Within the audience section, you can answer questions such as:

Do Bounce Rates vary significantly between desktop and mobile visits?

If you have a much higher bounce rate for mobile visits than desktop, despite having a similar visit count for both, you should consider revising the mobile experience for users.

Which segments account for the highest Goal Conversion Rates?

Are female New Yorkers aged 25 – 34 buying most of your products? You can use this kind of data to help target your audience through digital advertising more efficiently.

In general, once you're able to better identify the demographic and device segments that demonstrate a high conversion rate on the site, then you can target that specific audience via AdWords / Bing Ads or social media advertising campaigns.

Below is an example of segmenting data of mobile users. Here we have added in the age dimension and sorted the list in order of bounce rate. You can see that users aged 18-24 have the highest bounce rate percentage, meaning they are most impatient when visiting this particular website on their mobile device.

Device Category	Age	Acquisition			Behavior		
		Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate ↓	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
		4,987 % of Total: 8.51% (58,583)	70.62% Avg for View: 76.89% (-8.14%)	3,522 % of Total: 7.82% (45,042)	65.65% Avg for View: 70.70% (-7.15%)	1.60 Avg for View: 1.53 (4.50%)	00:01:49 Avg for View: 00:01:44 (4.36%)
1. mobile	18-24	698 (14.00%)	82.52%	576 (16.35%)	76.36%	1.38	00:01:33
2. mobile	25-34	1,678 (33.65%)	75.45%	1,266 (35.95%)	68.71%	1.54	00:01:41
3. mobile	35-44	1,277 (25.61%)	70.16%	896 (25.44%)	64.68%	1.61	00:01:44
4. mobile	65+	145 (2.91%)	47.59%	69 (1.96%)	61.38%	1.61	00:03:09
5. mobile	45-54	809 (16.22%)	61.80%	500 (14.20%)	56.74%	1.82	00:02:25
6. mobile	55-64	380 (7.62%)	56.58%	215 (6.10%)	56.32%	1.78	00:01:20

Conclusion

Better measurement is the key to making the most of any marketing strategy. Here at Main Street ROI we highly value Analytics, and use the tool in many ways on a day to day basis both for our own business and for managing our clients' SEO, AdWords and Email Marketing campaigns. Using Google Analytics will move you away from a guessing game and help you to understand who is coming to your website, and the ways in which you can make data-driven improvements to your digital marketing strategy.

Website Audience Measurement (WAM)

IMRB International, in a joint effort with Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), recently (2010) launched the Web Audience Measurement (WAM). On the lines of their other measurement products – TAM for television and RAM for radio, IMRB has embarked on a panel based measurement tool for the internet audience in India. Based mostly on TAM, the new tool tracks usage behaviour along with other data for a sample size of around 5,000 people. Panellists are tracked using a unique metering device that is custom built for the Indian internet market, and can even track a user's internet data accessed from multiple machines. At the launch of the new tool, Thomas Puliyel, president, IMRB International, said, "With WAM we can fully realise the potential of the internet as an advertising and marketing medium. We will be able to measure the effectiveness of the medium in terms of reach and frequency, just like any other medium."

1. The panel based system has adopted a unique built metering system for its panellists that will allow them to capture internet usage data from multiple machines for the same user. WAM will not just measure how many people access the web, but also their demographics – age, sex, the regions they come from and also their usage habits. The platform design is based on the TAM software, thus providing ease of use for traditional media planners and buyers who are comfortable with the TAM software. Balendu Shrivastava, group business director, IMRB International, notes that they saw a distinct need for a robust measurement tool which gives a similar kind of ratings that are already there

for other mediums like radio and television. Elaborating on the development, he said, "That was the basis on which we started working on. We created a software meter which captured data which is very similar to what is captured by the television meter; and, created a similar panel similar to use the software from where we are gathering the data." In terms of the data points that are available, WAM gives users similar data points as TAM, which includes Reach, which measures unique users; Duration, which is time spent surfing; Exposures, which is the number of times a person is minimising or maximising a particular channel; Page views, which are the routine page views that are captured by the servers as well; and, Web Rating Points (WRP), which are similar to the TRPs. Moreover, the tool can be installed by the panellist on multiple computers, thus enabling to track his or her usage behaviour across locations. Noting that some advanced analytics is also possible using WAM, he added, "It includes post-planning which allows users to see what was the reach, frequency, etc., as well as pre-planning which allows users to plan websites based on things like what kind of reach or frequency is expected."

2. Several other internet measurement tools like comScore and Komli Media's Vizisense are already in use even in the Indian market. Highlighting the measurement tool's key differentiator, Shrivastava, explained, "The biggest thing for WAM is that it can give data at a day part level. At present, all tools in the market are giving data at a month-level. So suppose I run a campaign only from 12 pm to 2 pm on November 15. Till now you could only look at the data for the entire month, and not look at data only from this particular date and time band. WAM will allow you to do that."

3. According to Shrivastava, "WAM will capture all information where a user will be going to. The idea is to make the internet all-inclusive, in the sense, get even the traditional media buyers and advertisers like FMCG to come and start advertising on the internet. So, the tool is definitely going to increase the market for internet advertising and make it more accessible to all advertisers. In turn, this is definitely going to benefit the Internet industry."

4. The tool is reportedly already covering all areas around the country, while it will report data from the top eight markets at the market level, and the remaining areas are covered as part of Rest of India. "As and when the interest increases and people start looking at more granular data, we would be willing to expand our r ports to provide market level analysis for smaller cities as well," Shrivastava informed.

What it means for...

Media Agencies

-Know metrices for measurement from other media platforms

-Measure day-parts and city-wise data as opposed to monthly or daily reports

 Other Measurement Tools

-comScore

-Alexa

-Google Analytics

Role of Social Media in Marketing Research

As marketers are always interested to grab the attention of the consumer. People have embraced new media and technologies to such an extent like smart phone etc. has given marketers the opportunity to reach consumers in a 24/7 capacity through a variety of mediums. It enhances the chances of messaging being seen. Therefore it is obvious to allure the marketers towards social media. Traditional campaigning approaches are overshadowed not only by rising social media but also due to increasing difficulty to create an outstanding campaign due to very competitive market.

The problem lies with the change in the consumer"s mindset. Social media has led to a culture of active engagement, immediate access to anyone and for anything and constant communication. This is of course something that the traditional advertisement and other marketing methods could not ever achieve. Whereas social media like Face book page, Twitter and YouTube etc. can directly address the new increasing demand expectations of consumers. Besides its initial engagement, social media activity is also likely to be sustained as attention is kept over a period of time rather than for just a few moments. Impact of social media can be seen in television advertisements which sign off with a plea for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook or Twitter page with the promise of an exciting online experience, fun incentives and a sense of community that people actually want to get involved with. Consumers use social media for fun and it makes no difference to them whether they are joining, an unbranded or branded game. However, the more successful the creative more likely consumers are going to develop a sense of loyalty to the hosting brand.

There have been numerous campaigns that have taken advantage of technological tools. With the help of these tools advertisers can track where their message is going.

As Rohit Ohri, executive chairman, Dentsu India, says: "Communication has moved from „one-to-many" to one-toone" to „one-to-community". Evolved marketers are increasingly looking at targeting communities." These communities, he adds, are not just defined by occupation or industry. Increasingly, communities are defined by interests. "Bikers, hikers, new mothers, lovers...these are just a few examples of interest groups, marketers are talking to these days," point out Ohri. In US and Europe brands are also using Twitter commerce. Dell has used it to advertise different types of deals so has low-cost American airline Jet Blue. Volkswagen recently ran an Application Programme Interface (API) based on LinkedIn"s viewer pages. Women professionals online could see an ad for Beetle; young male professionals interested in sports saw the polo ad; and senior executives got to see an ad for family car Jetta – with all viewing taking place at the same time. This helped the company get 2700 product recommendation in 30 days.

There is a good example of Old Spice You Tube campaign „The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" which was viral hit. Making it one of the most successful brand campaigns ever, transforming the image of a brand that had previously been deemed old fashioned and out of place in the contemporary market. The

brand now has spin off games, featuring videos, Facebook page and links to their retails ages. The site attracts thousands of consumers who want to join and play along with this clever marketing game.

Nokia has launched an aggressive viral campaign, comparing its Lumia with rivals such as Samsung Galaxy, on You Tube, to revive its fortune in the Indian Smartphone market currently dominated by phones running on Google Android platform. The You Tube campaign shows short clips of Lumia representatives challenging consumers with rival Smartphone, mostly that of Samsung, at malls and pubs in terms of internet and social networking speed and experience. When Lumia wins, the other consumer holds high a banner saying, „My phone just got blown away by the Nokia Lumia".

Social media offer a platform for direct interaction between the brand and users. Resulted in changing role of marketers from positioning of their products or services to customer advisors. Once considered the domain of PR agency, is now infiltrated by marketers. Marketers are often designated to deal with the enquiries, grievances and praise to a brand by the people on social networks. This provides opportunity to the company to gain a thorough and accurate insight into the public"s perception of a company or product and allowing them to work on both well received aspects as well as less popular. Real time feedback gives brands the chance to react and address any issues immediately.

Impact of social media on public relation can be tracked by looking at how social media has affected the costs of marketing efforts. This can be accomplished by utilizing a few standard metrics like online advertising, public relations, search engine optimization and website to show a holistic view of the true value social media is bringing to the table. Following is the list of metrics which can be used to evaluate public relation to show a cross-channel view of where social media is delivering.

1. Cost per Impression

2. Cost per engagement

3. Cost per site visitor

4. Cost per click

5. Cost per inbound link

6. Cost per subscriber

Many of these metrics can be utilized to create a cross channel dash board which will show how social media and public relations efforts complement each other and deliver "inexpensive" results.

Case Studies

'Digital India' Campaign by Govt. of India

About Digital India Campaign

In a major paradigm shift from the past, the Government of India has embarked upon a new & ambitious 'Digital India' program, this program has 3 basic objectives –

A- Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to every individual, High-speed broadband service as a utility for every citizen, Cradle-to-grave digital identity to every citizen, Shared online space on a public cloud network, Secure & sound cyberspace for everyone.

B- Governance & Services on Demand, Availability of basic & fundamental services to every citizen through online medium & a mobile-friendly platform,cutting down the burden of paper-based financial transactions by making it cashless & electronic based.

C- Digital Empowerment of Citizens.Making people more digitally aware & connected with each other, All the govt issued certificates & documents to be made available digitally on shared public cloud,

These are some of the major highlights of the program.
Since, Prime minister Narendra Modi himself is very tech-savvy person, it is no surprise that 'Digital India program' could be said as is his dream project,
On the event of flagging off of 'Digital India' program in New Delhi on July,2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself said that,

"I dream of a Digital India where 1.2 billion connected Indians drive innovation, A Digital India where the world looks to India for the next innovation, where ICT enabled citizen-government interface is incorruptible , where high speed digital highways unite the nation, where government is open and governance is transparent."

He further added that "E-governance is going to change into m-governance or mobile governance. Mobile governance is going to be a reality soon", he then told the media that 'Digital India' program has already drawn investments worth Rs 4.5 lakh crore and will create 18 lakh jobs in future, as it aims to transform ease of doing business in the country.

Objective of Digital India Campaign

Some of the objectives that have been declared by the govt. are:

- 'National Optical Fibre Network' (NOFN) program which aims to improve the Optic-Fibre infrastructure nationwide.

- 'e-Sign framework' which allows citizens to digitally sign their documents online using Aadhaar card.

- 'Digital Locker Platform' which will drastically cut down the usage of physical documents and to enable their e-sharing via govt. registered portals.

- 'Bharat Net programme' as a high-speed digital platform which will connect more than 250,000 Gram Panchayats of country & to bring them under a common platform to provide them basic & fundamental govt. services with ease.

- Reframing the 'outsourcing policy' to create centres in small towns across the country. Along with some other major programs this whole project is projected at 113,000 crores, which will prepare the nation towards a Knowledge-based transformation.

Approach/Strategy adopted for Digital India Campaign

As a startup measure it has been decided that all the Financial dealings by Central Government Ministries/Departments and their organisations will be made in cashless mode via electronic transfer by Dec 2016, to eventually eliminate the paper-based transactions in govt. dealings permanently.

Digital literacy training is also being provided in small towns & villages across the country as a part of this process via NDLM training centres & for this purpose alone more than 1750 training partners including registered civil societies, NGO's, limited companies & institutes are partnering with NDLM through Public-Private Partnership (PPP), till date more than 6 lakhs beneficiaries have been certified following their online assessments.

Results of Digital-India-Campaign.in

Lots of people have changed their profile pictures on Facebook & Twitter in support of this 'Digital India' campaign by the govt.

Several industry leaders such as Mark Zuckerberg, Sundar Pichai & Satya Nadella have lend their support to this initiative by Narendra Modi.

Satya Nadella, CEO Microsoft has said that his company will invest in this program by setting up affordable low cost broadband technology which could cater to the service of more than 3 lakhs villages across the country.

Indian Heavyweights such as RIL's Mukesh Ambani, Cyrus Mistry of TATA group, Sunil Bharti Mittal of BHARTI Enterprises, Kumar Mangalam Birla of BIRLA group,Azim Premji of Wipro & Anil Ambani of Reliance group, who were all present during the launch of 'Digital India' program at New Delhi by Narendra Modi, have already pledged their support towards the initiative partnering with the govt. by investing towards Network rollout & enhancing connectivity, broadband implementation & Wi-fi deployment, some will start large-scale manufacturing in India to cut down the import burden, some will invest in chain of retail networks across the country through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Learnings

While at first the campaign might seem like that it got off on a very solid start, there are some technical factors which might pose as a hindrance:

Broadband highways: mere laying the empty pipes to implement the 'National Optical Fibre Network' program might not be the solution to connect the whole country digitally unless the Centre & State joint effort is of quality standards, which might be a problem given the past experiences on how the political landscape in the country precedes over everything else.

Universal Access to phones: 'universal access' might be overstating the term in context of working network in the country, with call drops & failures have become a common complaint even in the metro cities, one can only imagine the situations in far towns & villages,though recently the Telecom Ministry has taken a check in this regard & has started taking measures to control the situation.

Overall, one could say that govt. has still miles to go before most of these programs can take shape, but the way which govt. has shown its intent having even given the private sector something to look towards to with the investment opportunities in its PPP model & the extent of interest it has sparked in many heads the 'Digital India initiative' could be called nothing short but as a 'Marketing Success'.