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B2B MARKETING EXPERTS

COMING FROM EXPERIENCE: 17 WINNING MARKETING TACTICS FROM THE B2B EXPERTS

Valuable Tips, Inside Information and Good Reasons Why You Need to Employ These Tactics – and Get Them Right

CONTENTS

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INTRO

From blogs to business cards, webinars to trade shows, there are dozens of tactical options for companies to choose from when it comes to business-to-business (B2B) marketing. The challenge for the vast majority of businesses who are getting started with marketing for the first time is to pick the right number and the right type of tactics. Get those two things right and the hurdle of doing things well and becoming successful in marketing is in sight. But get them wrong – either by choosing the wrong tactics or the wrong number – and execution and success fall farther into the distant horizon. If you're the new person in charge of marketing for your B2B company or the CEO who pays the bills, that is bad news.

We've compiled this guide based on 15 years of experience working with B2B companies of all sizes. Along the way we've seen the practical reality of when to use a particular tactic, and how. The guide focuses on how to be successful with each tactic, and is full of references that will take you to additional resources if you desire them.

You can read the guide cover to cover, or go directly to the tactic you're considering to read more about it.

One word of advice for those who are just starting out on their B2B marketing journey – identify your top 5 marketing tactics and try to stick with just those for the first 6 months. You're going to be more successful if you limit the breadth of your plan. It's amazing how much more progress you make when you focus.

Good luck!

BLOGS

4 PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO DOUBLE THE LEAD GENERATION POTENTIAL OF EVERY BLOG

DID YOU KNOW?

Small businesses with blogs generate 126% more leads.[1]

In the world of inbound marketing, B2B marketers are using blogs as a common tactic to get more online visibility. According to HubSpot, 60% of marketers say that blogs are their top inbound marketing priority.[2] There are several good reasons to blog, from improved search engine rankings and increased website traffic to positioning your brand as an industry leader and building better customer relationships. Many of us, however, are not leveraging our blogs as a potential opportunity for lead generation and conversion – a missed opportunity.

Here are four practical strategies you can use that, when combined, will double the lead generation potential of every blog post you create.

1. POST BLOGS FREQUENTLY

There is a lot of speculation around blog frequency out there. Research has shown that B2B companies publishing 11+ blog posts per month get almost 3X more traffic than those publishing between 0-1 posts per month. It has also shown that these organizations get 3.75X as many leads as those blogging 0-3 times per month.[3] This is where blogging benefits search engine optimization and contributes to back links when promoting via social networks. Maybe you need to work up to this volume, or you may find it doesn't bring you the results you expected. Test and adapt to your market.

Wait, are you still gasping at the sheer number of posts you need to create to increase your traffic and leads? I bet you're thinking, "How in the world do I generate that much content for my blog?" Time constraints are undoubtedly a challenge. Many B2B marketers have this concern when it comes to consistent, good quality blog copy.

SOURCES:
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2. HubSpot, The State of Inbound, 2016.
http://www.stateofinbound.com/?__hstc=20629287.9b96fbdabb9891860babaf5de2779fe8.1461182723336.1479089393329.1479408608586.58&__hssc=20629287.3.1479408608586&__hsfp=3090435354

3. HubSpot, Blogging Frequency Benchmarks, 2015.
https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/blogging-frequency-benchmarks#sm.01d3srqw1e24e0j11ag1vk96zpgja

2. UPCYCLE YOUR EXISTING CONTENT

You already have existing content from webinars, whitepapers, eBooks, case studies, infographics and more. These are investment-heavy tactics – both from a time and money standpoint – making it critical that you not see them as one-time use and done. Leveraging these assets to create small blog articles will save you time in the content creation process and help alleviate the spinning wheel effect when trying to come up with your next blog topic.

3. MAKE EVERY BLOG A LANDING PAGE WITH OPT-IN OPPORTUNITIES

Since you're leveraging your value-add content to create your blog articles, take advantage of inbound traffic and potential conversion opportunities by ensuring your blog page acts like a landing page. Link to the asset from the blog so readers have the opportunity to download additional information and learn more. Having a gated form will enable you to identify the visitor and generate a new marketing qualified lead, monitor the visitor's engagement levels with other content and fuel the direction of the sales conversation.

4. PROMOTE YOUR BLOG!

Use your other communication channels, such as social media or a newsletter, to remind your audience that you're producing this great content for them. We promote our blog 2-3 times via our channels, as we realize our audience is busy and might not remember to check in frequently for new content.

By treating every blog page like a landing page, you will essentially create hundreds of conversion opportunities for your business – think 3.75X more leads every month. Can you imagine what that bump could do for your sales pipeline and revenue? We believe in blogging. You should too.

NEXT TACTIC
BUSINESS CARDS

BUSINESS CARDS

6 TIPS FOR CREATING A BUSINESS CARD THAT WILL HELP YOU STAND OUT

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of sales increases by 2.5% for every 2000 cards that get passed out.[1]

It's the first thing you pull out when meeting a new prospect – so why is it not top of mind when it comes to marketing? Here's some advice on how to improve your business card and leverage it as a marketing tool.

Business cards are one of the most cost-effective marketing tools available, yet so many companies treat them as an afterthought. A high-quality, well designed card will stand out and get you noticed by your prospective customers.

That being said, we shouldn't kid ourselves into thinking that our business card will be displayed like a piece of art. It will most likely get put in a drawer or a file with a stack of other cards. The trick is to make your card memorable when you hand it out. That way, when it's time to make that important business call, you will be remembered.

Of course, a beautiful card will mean nothing unless it lists all of your important information such as name, address, phone number, website and email. But why not take it a step further and include your value proposition or a brief description of what your company has to offer?

SOURCE:
1. Adobe, Adobe Creative Cloud, 2016.
https://blogs.adobe.com/creativecloud/4-business-card-statistics-that-will-make-you-rethink-your-strategy/

6 TIPS TO CREATING A BUSINESS CARD THAT WILL HELP YOU STAND OUT

1. USE A SIMPLE FONT THAT IS EASY TO READ

2. DON'T OVER COMPLICATE THE CARD WITH TOO MANY COLOURS

3. INCLUDE YOUR LOGO

4. USE BOTH SIDES OF THE CARD

5. INCLUDE A BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION ON THE BACK

7. MAKE IT STAND OUT BUT REMEMBER TO USE STANDARD SIZING

Another important thing to remember is that a great business card will not get noticed unless it gets handed out. It might seem like an obvious comment, but so many times I've met someone in networking conversations and their first comment is "Sorry, I forgot my card." It's important to treat your business cards as a marketing tool and hand them out at every reasonable opportunity. You never know where or when you will find your next client..

NEXT TACTIC
EMAIL MARKETING

EMAIL MARKETING

5 REASONS WHY EMAIL MARKETING IS STILL EFFECTIVE FOR BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES

DID YOU KNOW?

89% of marketers say that email is their primary channel for lead generation.[1]

These days everyone is trying to get into your inbox. According to the Radicati Group's Email Statistics Report 2015-2019, the number of emails sent and received per day total over 205 billion. In 2015 there were also 4.4 million email accounts worldwide, and 2.6 billion of those account users averaged 1.7 email accounts each.[2] That's a lot of email. If you are wondering if your company's email campaign stands out amid all the noise, and if it is even worth it to continue sending email marketing campaigns to your audience, the short answer is...Yes!

Email has been around for a long time, and it is a tried and true marketing tactic that is still important for businesses of every size. Let's go through the top reasons why email marketing is still worth it:

1. IT IS THE EASIEST WAY TO REACH MOBILE CUSTOMERS.

Email marketing has value for businesses because it is an easy way to reach customers, especially mobile customers. 55% of email is now opened on a mobile device.[3] This means that nearly three out of every five email marketing messages are also a mobile marketing message, making email marketing one of the best ways to reach mobile customers.

2. IT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO KEEP CUSTOMERS INFORMED.

This tactic is one of the best ways for businesses to stay connected with their customers, many businesses seek out the email campaigns of their partners and suppliers in order to stay informed.

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3. Litmus "Email Analytics" (March 2016).
4. Inbox Marketer, 2015 E-mail Marketing Benchmark Report, 2015. https://www.inboxmarketer.com/
5. Radicati Group, Emails Statistics Report 2014-2018, 2014. http://www.radicati.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Email-Statistics-Report-2014-2018-Executive-Summary.pdf

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According to Inbox Marketer, the top ten reasons that Canadians subscribe to an email campaign are as follows:[4]

- 63% SUBSCRIBE FOR DISCOUNTS
- 58% SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE A FREEBIE OR ENTER A CONTEST
- 48% WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
- 39% WANT TO RECEIVE ADVANCED NOTICE OF NEW PRODUCTS OR FUTURE RELEASES
- 36% SIGN UP BECAUSE THEY DEAL WITH THE COMPANY OR BRAND REGULARLY
- 34% HAND OVER THEIR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO ACCESS EXCLUSIVE CONTENT
- 32% WANT TO RECEIVE CONTENT ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL INTERESTS
- 18% WANT TO RECEIVE COMPANY NEWS
- 15% PREFER E-MAIL AS A WAY TO "KEEP MY FINGER ON THE PULSE" OF THE BRAND/COMPANY
- 13% SUBSCRIBED BECAUSE SOMEONE RECOMMENDED THEY DO SO

3. IT IS EASY TO INTEGRATE INTO OTHER MARKETING TACTICS.
Email marketing campaigns are extremely versatile, with the ability to be customized in various ways and tailored to integrate into other marketing tactics.

4. IT'S CHEAP.
Email marketing is easy, effective and inexpensive. Email campaigns can be free or you can spend a small amount to add extra design, personalization and list management features.

5. EMAIL MARKETING IS ACTION ORIENTED.
Email marketing is an old form of communication, and we are conditioned to do something with our emails. Whether it's to open them, reply or delete them, email encourages us to take action. Therefore, email marketing is one of the most effective methods of getting your customers to take action, whether it is going to your website, calling in or any other call-to-action.

Email marketing may be an old tactic but it is but no means outdated. It is still a valuable asset in the business world. More than 34% of people worldwide use email, which is about 2.5 billion people.[5] Email is popular, and it is a vital tool for all businesses.

NEXT TACTIC
INFOGRAPHICS

INFOGRAPHICS

7 REASONS WHY INFOGRAPHICS SHOULD BE IN YOUR B2B CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

DID YOU KNOW?

Infographics are "liked" and shared on social media 3X more than other any other type of content.[1]

Infographics have become a significant part of a B2B marketing content arsenal in recent years. In fact, from 2015 to 2016, infographic search volumes experienced more than an 800% increase in the use of visual content by marketers increased by 130%[2] and they haven't slowed down. Should this statistic surprise us? With 90% of information transmitted to the brain being visual in nature,[3] and visuals processed 60,000X faster in the brain than text,[4] it shouldn't. The infographic is an ideal way to target these visual learners. If you're not leveraging infographics, we have seven reasons why you should:

1. THEY ARE COMPELLING.

In addition to our visual nature to learning and grasping content, people are naturally drawn to facts and figures. We follow trends closely to be "in the know" and ensure that we continue to evolve with trends and important influences relevant to our specific industry and job roles.

2. THEY OFFER A VISUAL WAY TO EXPLAIN COMPLEX DATA AND FACTS.

Infographics are more eye-catching than printed words since they usually combine images, colours and content that naturally draws the eye in.

3. THEY ARE IDEAL FOR OUR DWINDLING ATTENTION SPANS.

I read recently that it's been said that a goldfish has a longer attention span that humans. With increasingly shorter attention spans, the population tends to scan material rather than reading text. Infographics can be consumed quickly and offer a lot of value-add information.

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2. Vennage, 10 Visual Content Marketing Statistics to Know for 2017.
   https://venngage.com/blog/visual-content-marketing-statistics/
3. Web Marketing Group, Why Every SEO Strategy Needs Infographics, 2014.
   http://www.webmarketinggroup.co.uk/blog/why-every-seo-strategy-needs-infographics/
4. 3M Corporation, What is Data Visualisation, 2001.
   http://www.cips.org.in/documents/2014/bpf-datavisualization.ppt

4. THEY ARE HIGHLY SHAREABLE, LINKABLE AND BOOST SEO.

One of the major promotional benefits of infographics is generating inbound links to your website. Their ability to be shared will generate static backlinks, which play an important role in Google's "Page Rank" page rank algorithm, which is important for organic SEO.

5. THEY WILL INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE.

Infographics are popular social media tools for several reasons. People want information and they want it now. Social media is all about speed, and infographics communicate more information in a shorter amount of time. Infographics are filled with the kind of information we love to share. Social media is also highly visual today and infographics fit nicely into this dynamic and help break through the clutter of everyone else's feeds.

6. THEY DEMONSTRATE AN EXPERT UNDERSTANDING OF A SUBJECT.

The research needed to create a compelling infographic will help you display your brand's knowledge. By publishing relevant and useful infographics that educate and offer insight, you position your brand as a thought leader on your topic or industry.

7. THEY ARE A GREAT BRAND AWARENESS TOOL.

Creating an infographic that is embedded with your logo, colours, shapes and messaging is a powerful means of creating greater "brand awareness."

Infographics have exploded as a form of shareable content that provide measurable results for B2B marketers, making them a must for any B2B marketing strategy.

NEXT TACTIC
LIST DEVELOPMENT

LIST DEVELOPMENT

5 STEPS TO BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO OLD CONTACTS

DID YOU KNOW?

The cost of acquiring new clients is 6 to 7 times higher than the cost of keeping your existing ones.[1]

It's been said that since the cost of acquiring new clients is 6 to 7 times higher than the cost of keeping your existing ones, reactivating an existing contact base is an incredibly efficient and effective strategy that holds the potential to greatly influence your company's bottom line. So, before you send out the troops to scope out new business, try these 5 steps to forge new relationships with old connections:

1. IDENTIFY INACTIVE CLIENTS.

Before you can re-engage old clients, you'll need to identify which clients have become inactive. Begin by deciding on the length of time that must have lapsed to warrant the new communication; this will differ depending on your industry. Is it 6 months? 2 years? Once you've established the parameters, most CRMs will allow you to search based on these criteria and pull names accordingly.

2. ASK WHY.

Determining why this client hasn't recently done business with you is critical to creating a strategy to re-engage them. Did the relationship turn stale for a reason? Was there a conflict? Was it timing related (for instance, business that takes place on an annual basis)? Or did you just drift apart? Each circumstance will be unique and your method for targeting each client should be custom built to suit the clients' needs.

3. WHO MAKES THE CUT?

It's a fact: in business, there are clients you love and clients you less-than-love. If a client relationship has become inactive, be sure to question whether you truly want to do business with this client again before re-engaging them. Were they late paying their bills? Difficult to please? Take this into consideration before

SOURCE:
1. Smart Insights, "10 Ways to Reactivate Your Customer Base." 2014. http://www.smartinsights.com/customer-engagement/customer-engagement-strategy/10-ways-to-reactivate-your-customer-base/

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making contact. This vetting should be led by your sales team, followed by a debrief with your marketing department.

4. MAKE A GAME PLAN.

Now you can formulate a strategy to bring the inactive client back into the fold. It's best to use the communication method that the client has been most comfortable with in the past. Did you talk on the phone? Email? Text? Reach out in the same manner to better your odds. Keep these tips in mind during that first interaction:

- Don't lose sight of your history! Keep the messaging personal.
- Reference your past transactions. Refresh their memory while letting them know that their needs are still fresh in your mind.
- Do your homework. Congratulate them on any big events that have taken place at their company recently, or discuss notable news items pertaining to their industry.
- Offer fresh, engaging content with some commentary on how it relates to them.
- Inform them of a new service or product, including a case study to demonstrate value.
- Offer special pricing on a product or service they use or need.

5. KEEP THEM ENGAGED.

You've lost them once. Don't let it happen again! Give each returning client the same care that you would give to a new acquisition. It's a honeymoon all over again. After the initial interaction (and hopefully transactions!) be sure to keep the client in the loop moving forward by inviting them to subscribe to your newsletters and follow you on social media. The frequency of your communication should relax a bit at this stage, but make sure you are in contact enough to remain front of mind.

Reactivating lapsed customers is a long-term strategy, so take this into consideration when measuring the success of your plan. Clients who have strayed and been lovingly brought back into the flock have the potential to become your most loyal brand ambassadors. Take a lifetime approach from both a sales and marketing standpoint, and the dollar value will increase along with the depth of your relationship.

NEXT TACTIC
MARKETING AUTOMATION

MARKETING AUTOMATION

10 MARKETING AUTOMATION MYTHS AND WHY YOU NEED TO HARNESS ITS POWER

DID YOU KNOW?

B2B marketers who implement marketing automation software increase their sales pipeline contribution by an average of 10%.[1]

There are many common misconceptions about marketing automation. As a result, myths abound about what this technology can (and can't) do for B2B marketing teams. Our goal is to debunk some of those myths so you can harness the power that marketing automation brings.

TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT MARKETING AUTOMATION:

1. IT'S EXPENSIVE AND IS ONLY FOR LARGER ORGANIZATIONS.

In the early days of marketing automation, this was true. Many of the developers of marketing automation solutions catered to larger organizations which came with a heavy price tag. However, new and more affordable solutions have come to market in recent years. They are designed specifically for small-to mid-sized businesses that offer many of the same features and functionality as those geared towards larger enterprises. Key players in this space are HubSpot and Infusionsoft.

2. IT'S DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX TO LEARN.

According to a Regalix recent research study, State of B2B Marketing Automation 2015, 79% of B2B marketers globally have a marketing automation solution in place.[2] Marketing automation is a must for modern marketers if they want to save time, create personalization, and measure their impact on the business. If platforms are that complex, would the adoption rate be so high? Likely not. There are a series of certification programs, tutorials, forums and other support options available when adopting and learning a new platform to make it an easier and more enjoyable undertaking.

SOURCES:
1. Forrester, The Forrester Wave™: Lead-To-Revenue Management Platform Vendors, Q1 2014.
https://www.forrester.com/report/The+Forrester+Wave+LeadToRevenue+Management+Platform+Vendors+Q1+2014/-/E-RES95221

2. Regalix, The State of B2B Marketing Automation, 2015.
http://www.regalix.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/State-of-B2B-Marketing-Automation-2015.pdf

3. IT'S ONLY FOR EMAIL MARKETING.

A common misconception about marketing automation is that it's strictly for email marketing, but this is simply untrue. B2B marketing teams should look to their platform as much more than that. Marketers have access to a wealth of data and information including behavior analytics, email automation, campaign optimization, reporting and metrics, third party platform integrations for tactics like social media and PPC, and more.

4. IT LIMITS CREATIVITY.

Marketing automation provides just the opposite and opens up a world of creative capabilities. For those without designers, most platforms offer pre-built templates that you can customize to your brand and message. Plus, with options like dynamic content and segmentation, B2B marketing teams can craft customized marketing messages to the right audience at the right time, allowing for a more personalized touch and to meet complex promotional requirements.

5. IT'S IMPERSONAL.

Marketing automation is as personal as the marketer allows it to be. Sending out mass emails to lists of unsegmented leads will naturally be impersonal. But leveraging the platform's tools and capabilities to create targeted segment lists with messaging geared to each of those audiences will give the recipient the personalization they demand today, which in turn creates higher engagement and conversion rates.

6. IT'S ONLY FOR LAZY MARKETERS.

Just because you can auto-schedule your content for future distribution doesn't mean that you're finished. Marketers who focus on quality know that it takes work and that it's actually just a small piece of the puzzle when it comes to the strategy at large. Savvy B2B marketers are constantly seeking ways to improve their outreach tactics. Marketing automation enables outreach through the ability to monitor and understand the impact of your efforts. With the reporting and metrics available, you can continue to hone in on what's working and what's not to drive better engagement and conversion rates.

7. IT FAILS TO GENERATE QUALITY LEADS.

Quality and quantity of leads continue to be the primary concerns of B2B organizations. Today's platforms offer a series of capabilities that are good for the top, middle and bottom of the funnel. The list for lead generation is plentiful. B2B marketing teams have the ability to send automated trigger emails based on prospect activity and create automated programs that channel prospects into a pre-built nurture stream, pushing them deeper into the funnel. They can track website visitors and gain insight into the companies that are coming to their site regularly, accompanied by their content interest areas. This enables sales to better target their contact strategy. Web forms can be created to capture information about prospects when downloading value-add content, which pushes contact data into your CRM for sales. SEO audits can be performed to ensure your website and content are optimized for inbound traffic.

8. IT CREATES SPAM.

Spam is unsolicited, irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent to a large number of recipients. Emails should be tailored to the user and personalized to match their experience. This is the marketer's responsibility, and automation platforms enable this to be done more accurately and efficiently by building lead nurture programs that guide the prospect through the funnel with information they want to receive.

9. YOU CAN SET IT AND FORGET IT.

B2B marketing professionals using marketing automation know all too well that this is not the case. Marketers need to leverage their platform to create nurture streams that will enable meaningful interactions with prospects that can help them move through the various stages of the sales cycle. These nurture streams need to be monitored and modified based on engagement and conversion data to ensure they never go stale and that improvements are made to increase ROI.

10. IT OFFERS NO BENEFIT TO SALES.

Marketing automation is integrated with CRM, the tool that sales teams count on for their livelihood. The bi-directional syncing of data allows for tools like lead scoring models to be setup and allow sales to receive alerts and triggers when prospects are primed and ready to buy. Sales can also see the activity and content areas prospects have engaged with to create more personalized conversations.

Don’t let misconceptions keep you from adopting a marketing automation platform. The benefits far outweigh any potential pitfalls or negative arguments people throw your way. Using a platform brings a world of possibilities above and beyond any savvy marketer’s dream.

NEXT TACTIC
PRODUCT LAUNCHES

PRODUCT LAUNCHES

6 KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT LAUNCHES

DID YOU KNOW?

69% of marketers say that understanding buyer needs or pain points is the most important go-to-market strategy for a product launch.[1]

In today's competitive marketplace, it is important to get out in front of customers to make sure that they are informed about what your company has to offer. Product launches are essential, because they serve to bring new products or services to market.

Companies sometimes spend millions developing a new product only to treat its launch as an afterthought. The product launch is the most critical and vulnerable point of the product production process. It is paramount that a company has one person dedicated to the product launch, however only 37% of companies actually take this step.[2]

The product launch has far reaching effects. A poor product launch could leave customers confused, resulting in reduced sales revenue and ROI. On the other hand, a successful product launch should produce happy customers, more sales and a better bottom line. The following are the six key elements we believe are absolutely essential:

1. MARKET OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS.

There are many elements you should consider during product development when evaluating market opportunity:

- Audience: Always consider audience need when developing a product.

SOURCES:
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http://www.regalix.com/by_regalix/research/reports/state-of-b2b-product-marketing-2015/

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3. HubSpot,[2] 18 Tips for Planning a Flawless New Product Launch, 2016.
http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/elements-flawless-product-launch-li#sm.0001mik8qy87uczpueb23yfdgm80h

- Competition: Consider any competition that is currently in the same market space that you plan to enter. An established company with a mature product will make the market harder to enter.
- Finances: Make sure you understand the financial landscape of your product from development to distribution, and do not price yourself out of the market.

2. TESTING.

In order to know how the market will respond to your product or how successful it will be, it is important to test. You can do this by gathering a bunch of your trusted customers to test and give feedback. The resulting data will allow you to make product improvements before going to market.

3. TIMING.

Effective timing of a product launch is critical to attracting customers and optimizing your revenue and product. It is imperative to launch your product during a window of time with the most opportunity. This means that your product should launch when there is the highest need for its features in the marketplace. Conversely, you should also time your product launch according to your competitors. Decide whether or not you want to be a first-mover to beat the competitor to market or a second-mover to improve upon what is already in the market.

4. CLEAR LAUNCH GOALS.

Clear goals for your product launch will ensure that you determine the purpose of your product launch and guide you when evaluating launch tactics. Once you have determined your goals, you must establish how these goals will be measured and which tools will be used to do so.

5. CLEAR POSITIONING AND MESSAGING.

The right product positioning will shape the way customers evaluate your product against that of your competitors. Customers tend to use products that are most relevant to their needs. The right message at the right time is key for market adoption.

6. FEEDBACK.

Even though you have tested your product prior to launching, it is equally as important to collect customer feedback after the launch. This will allow you to make improvements to the product in the second wave of production, which will result in higher customer retention and improve sales and revenue.

By including our six key elements in your product launch strategy, you will be well on your way to successfully bringing your product or service to market.

NEXT TACTIC
PUBLIC RELATIONS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

4 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR YOUR COMPANY

DID YOU KNOW?

80% of business decision-makers prefer to get their information via articles rather than ads.[1]

Here's a surprising fact for business-to-business companies: PR is one of the most powerful tools in the marketing toolkit. PR is an amazing way to raise awareness and even generate leads. It lends credibility to niche and small B2B players, and puts them on the radar of decision makers who may never have heard of their company or its solutions before.

There are a few key factors to making PR work well for B2B companies. Here's what we've learned over the last decade of working with small- and mid-sized B2B companies:

1. YOU NEED TO HAVE A REAL STORY.

The most critical success factor for making PR work in B2B is that there has to be a compelling story. It's ok to do 'momentum' stories every once in a while, such as new staff or client additions, but PR success will come from putting interesting and useful news into the marketplace.

If you're thinking about doing a press release, ask yourself if your typical customer or prospect would find the news compelling. Is the news helpful to them? Does it forward their knowledge of trends in the industry, new innovations, solutions to problems they face, people they care about? If not, you probably don't have a real PR opportunity. Don't undertake PR if your company doesn't have real, compelling stories to tell, as it won't lead to good results.

2. IT TAKES ELBOW GREASE, NOT JUST POSTING 'TO THE WIRE'.

We get pitched every week by a new wire service that promises to deliver email distribution to thousands of journalists across the globe. But such services

SOURCE:
1. Forbes, Use Content Marketing to Boost Your Business, 2013. http://www.forbes.com/sites/capitalonespark/2013/01/23/tell-dont-sell-use-content-marketing-to-boost-your-business/#640dffff615c

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rarely deliver strong results. The reputable wire services do deliver good back links and exposure, but they're not going to get your story picked up by the media you want and turned into a frontpage story in the trade publication your audience reads. For that, you need to roll up your sleeves and actually pitch your story to specific individuals (editors, writers) at the publications you're targeting. Call them and send them personalized, specific emails. You don't have to go after hundreds. In fact, it's better if you pursue 5-10 high quality journalists and editors, and take the time to connect with them and build a relationship with them.

Do use a wire service when your story is strong – the reputable services come at a cost ($400 - $1000 per release), but they will get you excellent exposure. You need to be your own town crier. Combine using a wire service with individual pitching and you'll get results!

3. PREPARE YOUR OWN MEDIA DATABASE.
To help you with #2, media databases are a great way to identify the reporters and publishers who serve your target audience. The trick is that you can't simply buy a list and be done with it. Lists are notoriously out of date (there's a lot of movement in the media industry). You can start by downloading a list, but from there you have to do your homework. Research each name on the list to confirm that person is still active with the publication and covers the same subject area. Read what they've written recently to ensure that if you pitch them, your story will be relevant to them. From here, you're good to go direct to these editors and journalists with a unique pitch for your news.

4. BE WARY OF CLIPPINGS REPORTS.
Your wire service will provide a clippings report that covers the number of sites on which your release appeared, how many impressions or page views it received, and how many times it was downloaded. But most of your audience won't read the press release, and these stats are rarely meaningful. We find them to be a whole lot of noise, and not important. What you really want to know is whether your press release got turned into a story in a trade publication or professional journal that your audience reads. So, don't place much importance on the clippings reports and instead (again), do your homework to find out which publications picked up and ran your story. This is what matters!

B2B companies with technical expertise are often surprised that PR can be a useful marketing tool for them. To many, it can seem like a 'fluffy' endeavor. But it's precisely because B2B companies have technical expertise and intellectual property that PR works. But PR as a marketing tool is like any other tool. You have to use it well in order to get good results.

NEXT TACTIC
REFERRAL PROGRAMS

REFERRAL PROGRAMS

6 WAYS TO ASSESS IF A REFERRAL PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

DID YOU KNOW?

Companies with referral programs report 71% higher conversion rates.[1]

In many areas of business, referrals are among the most effective ways to increase sales. After all, most referrals are done for people who are already looking for a particular product or service, so they are highly qualified opportunities. B2B companies often ask us if they should implement a formal referral program to increase sales. We're usually cautious about recommending them, because we've seen mixed results.

Influitive and Heinz Marketing recently surveyed 600 B2B professionals across North America in all sectors and positions.[1] The results of the survey brought out a few interesting findings:

HOW IMPORTANT ARE REFERRALS?

69% of respondents to the Influitive B2B survey indicated that referrals close faster than any other form of lead. 71% of respondents also said that referrals have a higher conversion rate, and 59% reported that referrals deliver more value over a lifetime. Of the sales reps that were surveyed, 56% said that they deem referrals "very valuable."

However, despite these strong stats, only 30% of B2B companies have some sort of formal referral program. That may seem counter-intuitive, given the results that referrals appear to generate, but it's not surprising. It's much more difficult for a company to cultivate referrals through a structured program than it is to accept referrals when they come. Depending on a company's size and nature, referral programs can be difficult – awkward even – to implement, and they can often backfire.

SOURCE:
1. Influitive + Heinz Marketing, What You Should Know About B2B Referrals (But Probably Don't), 2015. http://info.influitive.com/rs/879-TZW-526/images/New%20Research%20B2B%20Referrals.pdf

WHEN DOES A FORMAL REFERRAL PROGRAM WORK?

Companies that typically have formal referral programs to increase sales are larger and have lower acquisition costs than companies that don't. Putting an effective referral program in place isn't a small undertaking, and often smaller companies have better ways to increase sales.

SHOULD YOUR COMPANY HAVE A REFERRAL PROGRAM?

Here are six things to consider in order to implement a successful referral program. They can help you assess whether a referral program is a good fit for your company:

1. COMMUNITY - You must create an environment where customers can interact with each other in order to make asking for referrals easier.
2. CUSTOMER CHANNELS - Aside from emails, you need to be engaging customers in other ways (e.g. social media, events).
3. CONTENT - Does your business have a program for creating value-added content? If so, you can involve customers in creating interactive content and give them incentives to give you referrals.
4. CONTEXT - Are your sales and marketing processes built on an understanding of the customer buying journey, so that the company can find the right time and place to ask and provide referrals?
5. COLLABORATION - Sales and marketing should be working together effectively in the organization in order to make the most of any referral program.
6. INFRASTRUCTURE - You need proper tools to make the referral process easier for customers, as well as for sales people to follow-up on leads.

Looking at the list above, it becomes evident that relatively few B2B companies are in a position to create a strong referral program. Most small and mid-sized B2B companies are better suited to putting other sales and marketing tools in place in order to increase sales. Referral programs are farther down the priority list.

THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO A FORMAL REFERRAL PROGRAM

But that doesn't negate the value of referrals! The simplest and most-effective referral program is to profusely thank and recognize those clients who do refer you. Send them a thank-you card, send them a gift, let them know how much you appreciate the referral (regardless of whether or not it turns into new business). That tends to be the best way to encourage referrals, with minimal effort, for small- and mid-sized B2B companies.

NEXT TACTIC
SEO

SEO

2 SIMPLE WAYS TO HARNESS THE POWER OF GOOGLE TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR SEO

SOURCES:
1. MarketingProfs, Marketers' Favorite SEO Tactics and Metrics, 2015. http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2015/27941/marketers-favorite-seo-tactics-and-metrics
2. Adweek, 81% of Shoppers Conduct Online Research Before Buying, 2014. http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/81-shoppers-conduct-online-research-making-purchase-infographic/208527
3. Kissmetrics, Should You Change Your SEO Strategy Because of Google Hummingbird, 2013. https://blog.kissmetrics.com/google-hummingbird/

DID YOU KNOW?

72% of marketers say that relevant content creation is their top SEO strategy.[1]

In the constantly changing world of online marketing, maintaining a successful digital strategy can feel a bit like racing on a treadmill with an ever-increasing speed. Just keeping pace won't stop you from being thrown off; instead you'll need to continually adjust to stay on top of your game.

WHAT IS SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, and refers to the rules that companies can use to increase their search engine rankings, making it easier for customers to find their web presence online. Given that 81% of consumers research online before making a purchase,[2] making your company readily available to search engines is crucial to success in today's marketplace.

The trouble is that as Google makes changes to improve the search engine's capabilities, it uses slightly different methodology to find websites. After a major Google update, it's not uncommon for companies to experience changes in their web traffic levels, causing them to question whether they'll need to completely re-evaluate their digital strategy – a costly and time consuming endeavor that most companies would rather avoid.

THE GOOD NEWS.

In running, the basics of a good stride always remain the same, regardless of your speed. Similarly, in SEO, the basics of good web practices remain constant regardless of changes to Google. Will you need to add a few new features over the years? Yes. Will you need to modify some of your approach? Absolutely. But if your fundamentals are on point, you can continually make manageable adjustments to evolve your web presence in a successful and sustainable fashion.

WEB BASICS FOR OPTIMAL SEO.

Google's evolving algorithms have changed in recent years,[3] weeding out spammy imposters and increasing the intelligence of the search engine to deliver more accurate results to the user. The biggest takeaways from these changes for online marketers are:

1. BE ORIGINAL AND ADD VALUE.

By far, the most important factor in a successful web strategy is to provide valuable, original content to your customers. Here's why:

MORE CONTENT

= more entry points for search engines to find you
= more space to add keywords organically
= more opportunities for readers to share, building your inbound links
= more of a platform to position your company as a subject matter expert

2. USE YOUR KEYWORDS AND DON'T FORGET THE DETAILS.

Google's Hummingbird update increased the search engine's accuracy by interpreting not only the keywords in a search term, but also the meaning and context to deliver more precise results. When creating your content, think about what questions your customers might be typing into Google, and build a strategy around those questions. Position your keywords wisely and be specific in order to maximize Google's capabilities. Short keywords like "hat" don't produce the same conversions as long-tailed keywords like "neon yellow men's fitted baseball cap."

SEO, when done right, can generate enough publicity to make you the most well-known company in your industry. Make sure you're keeping your digital strategy current and harnessing that power.

NEXT TACTIC
SOCIAL MEDIA

SOCIAL MEDIA

3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA TO DETERMINE WHAT TO POST AND HOW OFTEN

DID YOU KNOW?

Social media has a 100% higher lead-to-close rate than outbound marketing.[3]

There are billions of people using social media each and every day on various platforms. By 2018, Statista predicts that there will be around 2.67 billion social media users worldwide, up from 1.91 billion in 2004.[1] The most popular social media platform is Facebook with 1.71 billion monthly active users,[2] and YouTube has become the second biggest search engine, bigger than Bing.

If your business is not on social media, you may be falling behind! Social media has several benefits for businesses, big and small, including increased brand awareness and loyalty. It provides businesses with more opportunities to convert leads by increasing inbound traffic to websites. Lastly, social media platforms are free, so they're a cost-effective way to market your company.

HubSpot has found that social media has a 100% higher lead-to-close rate than outbound marketing. 84% of B2B marketers report that they use some form of social media with 83% claiming that social media is an important part of their business.[3]

That being said, just using social media is one thing, but having a social media calendar that is optimized is the key to marketing management and maximizing its potential. Creating a calendar helps take your social media marketing to the next level and can make quite a difference in your conversion rates. In order to optimize your social media calendar, you first need to know three things about each platform:

1. REACH.

Each social media platform's reach is determined by the number of account users and the demographics of the members as determined by age, sex, nation-

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2. Statista, Most Famous Ssocial Nnetwork sSites Wworldwide as of SeptemberSeptember, 2016, ranked by number of active users, Statista https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/
3. HubSpot, The Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics., Hubspot - http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics
4. Pew Research Center, Demographics of Key Social Networking Platforms, 2015.Pew Research Center - http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/demographics-of-key-social-networking-platforms-2/
5. CoSchedule, What 16 Sstudies Ssay Aabout the Bbest Ttime to Ppost on Ssocial Mmedia, 2016. CoSchedule Blog http://coschedule.com/blog/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/

ality and many other categories. For instance, according to the Pew Research Center, Facebook reaches a whopping 71% of adult internet users in the US, 58% of their entire adult population. Twitter reaches 23% of adult internet users in the US, 19% of their entire adult population. LinkedIn reaches 28% of adult internet users in the US, 23% of their entire adult population.[4]

2. BEST DATE AND TIME.

Each social media platform has a specific timeframe in which a post would be most successful, i.e., most clicks, most conversions, most leads. Facebook, the most popular social media site has the most posting success on Thursdays to Sundays at 9am, 1pm and 3pm. Twitter, on the other hand, sees its highest success on Wednesdays at 12pm, 3pm, 5pm and 6pm. Lastly, LinkedIn is best deployed on Tuesdays to Thursdays at 7am, 8am, 12pm, 5pm and 6pm. It's important to keep up to date on these statistics as they are republished yearly.[5]

3. CONTENT.

It's essential to post content that will convert. The best social media content will inspire your audience to take action and therefore become marketing qualified leads. In order to do this, recognize that there is some content that converts better than others. Images convert at a much higher rate than plain text posts. On Twitter, for instance, an image post is retweeted at a rate of 150% more than a text post. Make sure that you include a call-to-action in your posts. This raises the urgency so that your audience is compelled to act. Lastly, make sure that your posts are relevant and, as much as possible, entertaining.

By following the three rules above, you will be well on your way to understanding social media and using it to its fullest potential. You can also optimize your social media marketing management by using a scheduling tool, like Hootsuite, to keep your posts organized across various platforms.

NEXT TACTIC

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES/LUNCH 'N LEARNS

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIE /LUNCH 'N LEARNS

7 TIPS TO AVOIDING BAD PRESENTATIONS

DID YOU KNOW?

75% of B2B marketers say holding in-person events is their most effective marketing tactic.[1]

More often than not, developing a B2B presentation is overwhelming. It's challenging to fit everything you want to share into a tight, compelling presentation that will keep your audience engaged.

No matter what subject you're addressing, designing an effective presentation deck is an art. Based upon our years of developing both company and product training presentations for a global audience, here is a list of 7 simple tips that will help you add a little "wow" to your next presentation.

1. YOUR PRESENTATION IS A STORY; SCRIPT IT OUT FIRST.

When developing a presentation, your first instinct is likely to begin creating slides. But a little planning goes a long way. Before you open up your presentation tool, you should figure out the following:

- What is the hook of my presentation?
- What are the top 3 messages my presentation should convey to the audience?
- What images would support these messages?

Make sure your script follows good storytelling conventions: give it a beginning (build up intrigue), middle (the details of your story), and end (leave the audience with the main take-away).

SOURCE:
1. Content Marketing Institute Survey, B2B Content Marketing 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends North America, 2015. http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2015/09/b2b-content-marketing-research/?utm_source=cmi.media%3Futm_medium%3Durlshortener%3Futm_name%3Dsm%3Futm_term%3D2015

2. MATCH DESIGN TO SCRIPT.

Your presentation design should be driven by the script you developed (tip #1). Decide if your presentation is meant to entertain, inform, persuade or sell. Is an animated or more formal approach most appropriate to the subject and your audience?

3. BE CONSISTENT.

Use the same colours and fonts throughout. Select graphic images in the same style. Your corporate template should outline guidelines on font style and size, colours, and slide layouts.

4. USE IMAGES WITH PURPOSE.

Images are powerful when used with purpose. Don't use images to fill space; use them to support your story, add important information or make an abstract point more concrete. All images should be consistent with your brand. No clip-art.

5. YOU ARE THE FOCUS – NOT THE SCREEN.

Give thought to how you present yourself: how you stand, what you are wearing and how you move around the room. Are you engaging with your audience? Do you use multiple vehicles to present? You are the focus when you're presenting, no matter how interesting your slides are. If necessary, get some professional coaching on how to present with power.

6. ASK QUESTIONS.

Questions turn a presentation into a conversation. Prepare a series of relevant questions that will intrigue your audience. The key is to ask a lot of questions; some may be rhetorical. Pose a question that will have your audience pondering for a moment before moving to the next slide with the answer.

7. PRACTICE.

Never step in front of an audience without first practicing your presentation in front of trusted sources that will provide honest feedback. Schedule a dry-run at least a week before your official presentation so you have time to make adjustments.

By following these 7 tips, your next presentation will actively engage and inform your audience, and help you make a splash.

NEXT TACTIC
TRADESHOWS

TRADESHOWS

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO DO TO MAXIMIZE VALUE FROM YOUR NEXT TRADESHOW

DID YOU KNOW?

81% of tradeshow attendees have buying authority.[1]

Exhibiting at tradeshows is a common tactic in B2B marketing plans and comes with two guaranteed inevitabilities. The first is that tradeshows are expensive to participate in. Booth space, booth design and setup, signage and collateral, not to mention the time and attention required from a large team of people adds up. The second is that it's hard to predict your pay-off for attending.

Offline marketing measurement has traditionally been a continuous challenge for marketers. A recent survey found that almost 50% of organizations don't measure the ROI of their tradeshow activity.[2] However, with the right strategy and tools, you can get a clear picture of how your participation is contributing to your organization's bottom line.

To better measure and understand your tradeshow ROI, here are five things you should do:

1. DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT AN EXHIBIT SPACE IS REALLY RIGHT FOR YOU.

Just because the conference has an exhibit hall, it doesn't mean exhibiting is the right approach for your organization. If you have never attended the conference, consider simply registering as an attendee to get the full conference experience. Send your top sales rep to attend the sessions, networking events and walk the show floor to get a sense for whether or not the demographic profile for attendees aligns with the prospectus. Guide him or her to find every opportunity to meet people and network, and collect business cards for lead generation to create an opportunity for post event follow-up. You can leverage point #3, below, to monitor potential traction for the event and new revenue potential.

SOURCES:
1. CEIR: The Spend Decision: How Exhibits Fit into the Overall Marketing.
http://www.ceir.org/research

21. Display Wizard, Survey Finds Nearly 50% of Trade Show Exhibitors Don't Measure ROI.
https://www.displaywizard.co.uk/exhibition-roi-survey/

32. Handshake, Tradeshow ROI.
https://www.handshake.com/tradeshowroi

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2. SET UP CLEAR GOALS FOR THE SHOW.

Once you've decided to exhibit at an event, it's critical to establish what goals you are trying to achieve. Are you looking to simply drive brand awareness for a rebranding initiative you just launched or are you seeking to drive lead generation and create upsell opportunities for new products and services your clients will benefit from? Regardless of your goal, plan to make it simple, "We want to meet X number of customers" or "Generate 50 leads from C-level titles at target prospect companies." And don't forget to communicate this goal to the staff participating in the event so they know what they're working toward.

3. RECORD AND TAG YOUR LEADS AND CUSTOMER CONVERSATIONS IN YOUR CRM.

Oftentimes, average time to close can be lengthy, with sales cycles averaging 12-18 months in some cases. Leverage your CRM software to set up special tags and group leads for each tradeshow you attend to better follow and monitor the results of your participation. You will have a sound understanding of the average show value, average lead value per show, and the overall impact it's having on your pipeline with net new revenue generation from existing and new customers.

4. LOOK TO DETERMINE ROI BASED ON YOUR AVERAGE TIME TO CLOSE.

As mentioned above, average time to close can vary for each B2B organization. Don't monitor your CRM daily. In fact, it's recommended that you check in at the 3- and 12-month post event point to track and monitor the number of deals resulting from your participation.

5. TRACK EXPENSES AGAINST NEW REVENUE.

Just because you generated some revenue from an event, doesn't mean you've yielded a positive return. To truly understand the value you've received from the event, you need to calculate all of your expenses against the business you have won. To make this easy, there are some great calculators out there today. One we particularly like is Handshake's Tradeshow ROI Calculator.[2] Check it out.

Like all marketing tactics in your plan, understanding ROI for show participation is critical to ensuring that you spend your marketing budget wisely and focus your plan on high impact tactics that are sure to contribute to revenue generation.

NEXT TACTIC
VIDEO MARKETING

VIDEO MARKETING

7 PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING A GREAT B2B VIDEO MARKETING PLAN

DID YOU KNOW?

96% of organizations use video in their marketing and 73% report positive results to their ROI.[1]

With videos expected to represent 80% of all global Internet traffic by 2020, they should play an integral role in any B2B marketing strategy.[2] Whether it's a company overview video or product tutorial, videos provide potential and current customers with an easy and engaging way to learn more about what a company has to offer.

In order to get the most out of your investment when creating videos, consider the following best practices for creating a formal video marketing plan:

1. OUTLINE THE VIDEO CONTENT NEEDS OF EACH BUSINESS DIVISION/ DEPARTMENT.

- Will there be a product launch or campaign that needs a video?
- Does the sales team need a demo video for prospects?

2. DETERMINE THE TYPE OF VIDEO THAT BEST SUITS EACH BUSINESS/MARKETING NEED.

- Examples include: "how-to" videos, interviews with the CEO or developer, product demos, customer/case studies, company overviews, and more.
- Create a list of videos that you like so the video vendor understands your style and taste. Include links to these in the vendor scope document.

SOURCES:
1. Invisia, 50 Must Know Stats About Video Marketing, 2016.
http://www.insivia.com/50-must-know-stats-about-video-marketing-2016/

2. Cisco, White paper: Cisco VNI Forecast and Methodology, 2015-2020.
http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/complete-white-paper-c11-481360.html

3. IDENTIFY GOALS, AUDIENCE, VIEWER TAKEAWAYS AND CALLS-TO-ACTION FOR EACH VIDEO.

- Who do you want to reach and what do you want to achieve?
- What is the benefit to your audience?

4. ASSIGN A BUDGET, PUBLISHING SCHEDULE, PROJECT TIMELINE AND CONTENT OWNERSHIP FOR EACH VIDEO.

- Assign a larger budget to more complex, strategic videos.
- Ensure you have a content owner as well as a video project manager for each video.

5. ESTABLISH A VENDOR SELECTION PROCESS.

- Is this something done in-house or with a third party? Who will evaluate and sign off on the contract?
- Identify potential vendors and create a vendor scope template so that all proposals are based on the same information, timelines, requirements, etc.

6. ENSURE THE VIDEOS HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE AND METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION.

- Build a home for your videos on your website, YouTube, Vimeo.
- Define where and how you'll share your videos (e-newsletter, social media, website, etc.)

7. DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL MEASURE SUCCESS, INCLUDING METRICS AND ROI.

- Key metrics include total views, watch time, subscribers, engagement (likes, comments, shares), and click-through rates.
- Are you getting leads from your videos? How much money did you invest vs. what you achieved?

If you can demonstrate a plan that supports overall business objectives and marketing goals, along with ROI metrics, you're most likely to ensure your video investment is maximized.

NEXT TACTIC
WEBINARS

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WEBINARS

5 STEPS TO RUNNING A WEBINAR THAT GENERATES HIGH-QUALITY LEADS

SOURCES:

1. BrightTALK, 9 Ways to Drive Higher Webinar Attendance with Email.
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2. BrightTALK, ’s 2016 Webinar Benchmarks. Report:
http://public.brighttalk.com/resource/core/95395/benchmarks-deck_145169.pdf

3. Marketing Tech, 10 Tips to Promote Your Next Webinar, 2013.
https://marketingtechblog.com/top-10-webinar-promotion-tips/

DID YOU KNOW?

Email is the best way to drive webinar registrations, representing 35% of all sign ups.[1]

Over 65% of B2B marketers consistently rank webinars as one of their top content marketing tools.[2] Companies that integrate webinars into their B2B marketing strategy that are geared towards their target market and thought leadership (not advertorial or a product push), are successful at bringing in good quality leads. Why?

WEBINARS ARE ONLINE:

This means that viewers don’t have to take time out of their schedule to travel, which is enticing in the go-go-go corporate world. It also means that there are no geographical boundaries, and companies can reach their target audience even if they are halfway across the world.

Bonus: Webinars are generally cheaper than live events!

WEBINARS ARE CONSIDERED A VALUABLE ASSET AND CAN BE GATED:

This means that you can collect contact information from the people who register and follow up with them directly, as opposed to a non-gated, smaller content asset, like a blog post.

Bonus: Webinar registration indicates strong interest, so you know these individuals really care about what you’re saying!

PARTNER WEBINARS GROW YOUR REACH:

Joint webinars with partners or industry leaders give you access to a broader audience that you wouldn’t have if you only promoted to your existing contacts. This builds brand awareness and credibility for your company, helping you develop your thought leader reputation.

Bonus: If you use the right CASL compliant verbiage and fields for your registration form, you can grow your email list too!

WEBINARS BECOME A PERMANENT ASSET ON YOUR WEBSITE:

Webinars can be recorded and added to the resources on your website, which makes them an everlasting, gated asset. You can use them at any point for your social media or other promotional channels to generate leads.

Bonus: With the right use of keywords, page titles and meta descriptions, they are awesome for your website's SEO!

HERE ARE FIVE STEPS TO RUNNING A WEBINAR THAT GENERATES HIGH-QUALITY LEADS:

1. **CREATE CONTENT THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED.**
   The first step to a successful webinar is creating essential content for your target audience. The topic of your webinar should be timely and relevant, useful for their businesses and interesting at the same time. Make sure to identify and speak to one or more pain points you know your audience is faced with right now and how your presentation helps them solve these problems. If possible, bring in partners and other industry experts to co-present, so that your webinar attendees really get a holistic view of the topic.

2. **PICK THE RIGHT DATE AND TIME TO HOLD YOUR WEBINAR:**
   The best days to host your webinar are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and the best times are 1:00 or 2:00PM EST.[3] Of course, these days and times are not applicable to everyone around the globe, in all industries. If you've run webinars in the past and have your own data, you should use that over these averages. However, if you're new to webinars, these standards are a good place to start for North American companies.

3. **PROMOTE YOUR HEART OUT.**
   Because webinars bring in such high-quality leads, you want to make sure you generate lots of buzz and get as many registrants as possible. Here are the essentials:

   a) Bait your registrants with something more:

   Offer your registrants something for signing up. This can be another value-add piece of content like an exclusive whitepaper or report, a chance to try out one of your services for free, a chance to have a one-on-one question and answer session with a presenter, or anything else you think your audience might love.

   b) Build a killer landing page:

   Your landing page (the page where people sign up for your webinar) should be short and sweet, but provide enough information to entice your audience. Consider using visuals like images and videos for increased engagement, as well as bulleted lists to ease readability. Make sure you state the date and time of your event, what the webinar is about, who your speakers are and why they matter. Call out who, specifically, the webinar is for and keep your registration form short. Tip: Don't make your registrants jump through hoops to sign up. Try to use a platform that integrates with popular webinar software so that your audience only has to click once to get to your landing page and fill in only one form.

c) Emails are the best:

Email is the best way to drive webinar registrations, representing 35% of all sign ups. That's more than social media, partner promotions and banners combined.[1] Start promoting webinars 4-6 weeks in advance and send at least 3 emails. The first one should be sent to all relevant contacts, and the subsequent ones should be sent as reminders to anyone who hasn't yet registered. Make sure any partners or industry experts who are co-presenting are promoting via email to maximize your reach. Tip: Send a final reminder email the day before or the day of the webinar to get a surge of sign-ups from last-minute planners.

d) Don't forget the other promotion channels:

There's a plethora of promotional avenues that can be explored for webinars. Which ones you pick are dependent on where your target audience goes for information. Consider some of the following channels for your webinar (This is, in no way, a complete list!):

- Social media
- Paid advertising like LinkedIn-sponsored updates or banner ads
- Industry publications
- Influencers or guest bloggers
- Your website homepage
- Event promo sites like EventBrite and Meetup
- Press releases

4. RUN A SMOOTH WEBINAR!

Make sure that you avoid, as much as possible, any technical difficulties that might take place during a webinar:

- Practice, practice, practice
- Make sure you are hard wired into the internet – WiFi doesn't cut it for webinars, because it has a higher risk of falling out
- Use a professional mic so that your audience can hear you clearly
- Have an insider sit in on your webinar to let you know of any issues right away
- Have a helper monitor your chat and questions from the audience in case anyone is reporting issues
- Remember to hit record so you can promote your webinar afterwards

5. POST WEBINAR MUSTS.

Once you've successfully completed your webinar, make sure to upload your recording to your website and add the presentation deck and any handouts. Send emails to your webinar attendees, absentees (those who registered but did not attend) and your other contacts, with a link to the recording page. Also, make sure to promote via social and other channels like SlideShare to maximize exposure. Lastly, review your registrants' list and follow up directly with anyone you think would be a high-value prospect with a phone call or customized email.

Though webinars are a significant time investment, they are well worth it! They play a major role in B2B marketing strategy as they build brand awareness, position the company as a thought leader within the industry and generate high-quality leads.

NEXT TACTIC
WEBSITES

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WEBSITES

5 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE REDESIGN

DID YOU KNOW?

If it takes more than 3 seconds to load, 57% of mobile users will abandon your website.[1]

Your company's website is the single biggest vehicle for communicating your brand messaging to the marketplace. But like any other vehicle, after a few years you might find that certain parts need to be replaced, while other parts have stopped working altogether. If your company is encountering one or more of the following challenges with your website, it's probably time to make a change:

YOU HAVE NEW BRAND COLOURS OR A NEW LOGO

As soon as you undergo a rebrand, your website needs to reflect the change. Consistency is the key to great B2B marketing.

YOUR CONVERSION RATES ARE LOW

Low conversion numbers are an indication that your website isn't providing enough value to your customers. Is the information poorly organized or not easily accessible? Don't make your clients perform extra work just to find the data they need.

YOUR SITE ISN'T OPTIMIZED FOR MOBILE

Mobile now accounts for 65% of digital time,[2] and research has shown that if your site takes more than 3 seconds to load, a whopping 57% of mobile users will abandon the site entirely.[1] It's crucial that your website works on this platform.

YOUR SITE WAS BUILT WITH OUTDATED TOOLS

For instance, if your website was built in Flash, it's likely to influence slow load times. Additionally, Flash sites do not work on Apple products like iPads and iPhones.[3] Other tools like QR codes and CMS that is difficult to update should be overhauled entirely and replaced with current, easy to use features and systems.

SOURCES:
1. Huffington Post, 5 Reasons You Absolutely Must Optimize Your Website for Mobile, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ian-mills/5-reasons-you-absolutely-_b_5122485.html
2. Marketing Land, All Digital Growth Now Coming from Mobile Usage, 2016. http://marketingland.com/digital-growth-now-coming-mobile-usage-comscore-171505
3. Entrepreneur, How Often Should You Update or Rebuild Your Website, 2015. https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/251652

Depending on the severity of your challenges, you'll either need to begin formulating a plan for a refresh (re-skin with a new design but keep existing functionality) or a complete rebuild (demolition and reconstruction of the back-end functionality to improve load times, add new tools, etc.).

Though there isn't one singular formula for success, following these 5 steps will keep your team on track and assist in creating a brand new web presence that accomplishes all your online goals:

1. ASK YOUR CLIENTS.
The customer is always right! Talk to your customers about their experiences with your current website. What do they like? What do they feel is lacking? Is there a challenge they face during your interactions that could be solved through additional online functionality?

2. SET YOUR GOALS.
What is the intention of the redesign? More sales? More leads? More downloads? Begin by carefully considering your goals for the website, then prioritize them in order of importance.

3. DESIGN FOR THE END USER.
Now that you know what your customers would like to see on your website, you can begin to create different strategies to deliver that functionality. It's of paramount importance that you carefully consider the organization of content on the new website. Not only have products changed over time, but the way that they are displayed online has changed significantly as well. Content optimized for mobile will need to be reduced and organized to be easily scanned on the smaller visual platform of a smartphone. Break copy out into lists, bullet points and small sections to keep mobile readers interested.

4. CREATE CONTENT.
Crafting the voice of your brand online is extremely important for retaining existing customers and approaching new ones. Add value to your clients' online experience by providing them with stellar content that's both interesting and useful.

At this stage, you'll want to address the issue of SEO. Think about your strategy for updating the content on your site: Will you have a blog? What are your keywords? Who will write the blog for you? Refreshing content frequently is the clearest path to better rankings on Google.

5. TEST IT OUT.
Include your clients in A/B testing – helping to choose between two versions of your new site. It's an excellent way to determine whether a new design is serving the purpose you intended. It's also a great way to make your clients feel included in the process, letting them know that you're always on the hunt for ways to serve them better.

NEXT TACTIC
WHITEPAPERS

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WHITEPAPERS

7 TIPS FOR CREATING THOUGHT LEADING WHITEPAPERS

DID YOU KNOW?

Of content that B2B buyers are most likely to share, whitepapers rate the highest at 79%.[1]

We all have a finite amount of time to spend on marketing activities, so it's important to allocate those precious hours to marketing activities that pack the most punch. Whitepapers take quite a bit of time and effort – are they worth it?

According to a DemandGen Report, in the past 12 months B2B organizations used whitepapers to make 82% of their purchasing decisions. Other forms of B2B marketing content used to make purchasing decisions include: Webinars (78%); Case Studies (73%); eBooks (67%); Blog Posts (66%); Infographics (66%); Third-party/Analyst reports (62%); Video/Motion graphics (47%); and Interactive presentations (36%). B2B buyers are also 79% more likely to share whitepapers with colleagues.[1]

The data shows that for B2B companies to stand out in an increasingly crowded market, whitepapers are an effective tool. The only challenge is that whitepapers are probably the most difficult type of content to create (eBooks aside).

Here are a few tips on how to produce quality whitepapers that will help establish your company as a thought leader:

1. **CHOOSE A TOPIC THAT ALIGNS WITH YOUR BRAND AND IS OF INTEREST TO YOUR MAIN TARGET MARKET.**
   Writing whitepapers is a lot of effort – there's no point doing it if your target market isn't going to care.

2. **WRITE A CLEAR AND ATTENTION-GRABBING TITLE.**
   Avoid buzz words. Be slightly provocative, if that will work with your audience. For example, "The Pitfalls of Manual Time-Keeping: Making a Case for Auto-

SOURCE:
1. DemandGen, 2016 Content Preferences Survey: B2B Buyers Value Content that Offers Data and Analysis, 2016. http://www.demandgenreport.com/resources/research/2016-content-preferences-survey-b2b-buyers-value-content-that-offers-data-and-analysis

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mating" by a company that sells workforce management software or "The Top 5 Online Database Attacks and How to Stop Them" by an Internet security company.

3. ON THE FIRST PAGE, INCLUDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW DESCRIBING WHO THE PAPER IS FOR AND WHAT IT COVERS.

Should business development managers be reading this? CEOs? Let the reader know.

4. WHITEPAPERS SHOULD TAKE AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH.

They should include market overviews, key trends, projections on market evolution, relevant findings from third party research papers and articles, historical data, and expert advice. A well-written whitepaper gives readers the impression that you have proprietary expertise and are willing to share it.

5. WHITEPAPERS SHOULD BE BETWEEN FOUR AND FIFTEEN PAGES LONG AND INCLUDE VISUALS.

Use sidebars, pull-out quotes, text boxes, bullet points and lists to emphasize key points. Including charts and graphs will further support your arguments and add visual interest.

6. END YOUR WHITEPAPER WITH A SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS FOR THE READER.

Including a point of view on how the reader can use their new knowledge will help readers take a next step, which may involve your company.

7. WHITEPAPERS ARE MEANT TO INFORM, NOT ADVERTISE.

Don't mention a specific company or advertise your company in the content of the whitepaper. Prospects want subject-matter expertise. If they feel they are being sold to, you will lose them. At the end of the whitepaper you can credit yourself and include an 'About' paragraph with info on the author and company, including contact information.

Whitepapers serve to generate more credibility and trust for your business. It will make readers more curious about what you have to offer and thereby increase your leads. Problem solving information always has high conversion with readers, and online users are always looking for quality content. Therefore, you should probably consider writing a whitepaper if you are an industry expert on a particular topic and you have a wealth of information on a problem that a lot of your customers experience. Provide the answer to that question in great detail and customers and online users will be drawn to your website through your whitepaper. As a bonus, a good whitepaper will also be full of ideas that can each be developed into individual articles and blog posts to drive even more traffic and leads to your site.

SUMMARY

Congratulations, you've just covered 17 fundamental components of B2B marketing. It takes most marketers about a decade to learn the skills that you've just reviewed. But of course reading about a tactic and actually putting it to work are two different things. So now it's time to get these tactics working to grow your company's revenues. Remember to focus on your highest priority tactics, and limit that number to a reasonable amount. Be realistic about the time and budget that you have, because the more you can set reasonable expectations – and then surpass them – the more success you will enjoy.

Good luck.

And if you'd like any more info, please contact us at info@themezzaninegroup.com, or sign up for our blog at http://info.themezzaninegroup.com/blog