

YOUR GUIDE TO DIGITAL MARKETING

Unleash the power of digital marketing

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Digital marketing can be a bit scary

Sure, everyone is doing it. And they all say it's good for business. But exactly how does it all fit together? And how can you use it to make your business work?

If you're finding it hard to know where to start, this guide's for you. It's everything you need to unleash the power of digital marketing so you can manage and grow your business.

Let's start right at the beginning

What are we talking about here?

Digital marketing simply means promoting your product or service using the internet. It's using online methods to connect with customers, engage them, and earn their trust.

So when we talk digital, you probably know we're talking about your website and social media presence. But we're also talking things like emails, blogs, viral advertising, videos, and pay-per-click advertising – basically anywhere your brand engages with customers, or potential customers, online.

The great news is it's easy to get started with digital marketing, and to get measurable, affordable, and lightning-quick results. Think of it like picking up a guitar for the first time: there might be loads to learn, but you can still bang out some great tunes knowing just a handful of chords.

£123bn
of digital capabilities
contributed to the UK
economy last year.

According to a recent report
by Oxford Economics* (full
disclosure – we sponsored it)

*Digital Opportunity report, Oxford Economics, 2015

Introducing the 7C's of digital marketing

Deciding how to market yourself digitally – especially with a modest budget and limited resources – can be difficult. Daunting even.

So this is our theory for making the most of digital. It can help you navigate your way through the world of digital, so you can start realising your full potential online.

If it makes sense to you – and you think you can work with some of the ideas – you're ready to get going. With quality connectivity, you can find what works for you and unleash the power of digital marketing sooner than you think.

Customers

Customers

Digital is really no different from any other marketing process: it's all about knowing your customers. That means understanding who they are, what drives them, and what their current relationship is with you. Once you fit the pieces together, you'll be able to wield more specific, effective messaging.

Unleash the power

- Take the temperature of your audience with customer satisfaction surveys, Net Promoter Scores, or even plain old ratings and reviews. It's vital to know what they think.
- Take a deep breath, be brave, and reach out to unhappy customers (even the really annoying ones). If you can solve their issues, you'll take away big insights into your business.
- Use every opportunity – from email responses to website engagement – to speak and engage with your customers. They're powerful ways to gather insights.

“When you think of customers, think data. Guard it jealously, treat it as your most valuable asset, and don’t squander it or allow it to go stale. When you build it up over time it will point you to things that will help you delight your customers.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

70%

of UK 18-24 year olds say brands that fail to personalise their marketing would lose them as customers.

Marketing Magazine, 2016.

Content



BUSINESS

Content

This is anything and everything you use to communicate with that audience of yours: words, pictures, videos, polls, links, audio, and more.

Why's it important? Because the content you share creates your story. And humans love a story: they connect customers to your brand – and make them want to buy from you.

Unleash the power

Make sure your original content is always engaging and enjoyable. Stories should be well-structured, with a strong narrative flow.

Try breaking that brilliantly-crafted narrative into smaller, easy-to-digest chunks. For example, if you've written a press release, cut it up into several tweets or rewrite it into a couple of short blogs to get double (or even triple) use out of your work.

Keep on top of the hottest keywords (words and phrases people are searching for) and provide great content around them: you'll be rewarded in your Google rankings.

Curate interesting content. Simply tweet, email or blog links to content you think your audience might enjoy. It's an effortless way to generate more complex stories and greater customer engagement.

“There’s a reason that human beings spend more time playing than any other animal on the planet: we enjoy being engaged.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

“Make sure your content is sprinkled with keywords, but remember that Google’s algorithms are constantly in flux, forcing sites to adapt and refresh their content. It’s an opportunity to provide new and relevant content to potential customers – if you get in before your competitors do.”

Bernadette Kelly, Director of Business
Development, ActiveWin Media

4x

as many consumers prefer to watch a video about a product rather than read about it.

Animoto Online and Social
Video Marketing Study, 2015

Conversion



Conversion

This is the all-important rate at which you turn the people who come to your website into paying customers. This is essentially what your online marketing should be geared towards (so it's a biggie).

Make sure everything is about getting that final click to maximise your ROI. That means getting straight to the point, and being totally ruthless in making that sale.

Unleash the power

- Make sure your calls to action (the things you want people to do next) are utterly unambiguous. If your audience doesn't know what the next step is, they can't progress down your nicely-constructed sales path.
- Test, test, test. Then test some more. A/B and multivariate testing are great tools to help to optimise a conversion path. Get into the habit of doing this frequently (if not constantly).
- Resist the temptation to over-egg the pudding. Lots of businesses want to provide as much information about their products as possible. But all those words get in the way of your users taking actions – the very things that earn you cash. Stick to the things that make your product special.

“Make sure your calls to action are easy to spot and in logical places. For example, we read from left to right so make sure your onward actions are on the right-hand side. Little things like this can really make a difference.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

Context

Context

What keeps your audience up at night?
What are they into? How do they use
the internet? How can you engage
more directly with them?

Understanding your customers' digital worlds,
and keeping your messages relevant to them, is a
massive part of digital marketing. Because, without
the right context, even well-crafted stories can
quickly become meaningless.

Unleash the power

- Stay relevant. Is your subject matter something your customers care about? Are you sure?
- Don't forget, the way you format your content – and the channel you use to deliver it – is key. There's no point Snapchatting people in retirement homes (there are always exceptions, of course).
- Target and tailor your content based on what you know about your audience, and how they'll behave. Making things personal means customers will be glad you've recognised them and feel like you're tuned in to their personality. (Just don't be overly familiar: it makes people uncomfortable.)
- Be empathetic. Try and understand the customer's world, their emotional needs and their goals. (Pro tip: everyone wants more time and money).

“Being contextually aware means you can show your customers the respect they deserve by being aligned to their requirements. It's all about relevancy.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

“Know your target audience and cater your content around them. Don't try to be everything to everyone. Adopt a personality that appeals to your audience and to the people who will buy from you.”

Bernadette Kelly, Director of Business
Development, ActiveWin Media

Community



BUSINESS

Community

Harness the power of your customers by creating advocates. They're brand fans that really like what you do, and are prepared to tell others – for free.

Encourage them to reach out to one other and their own networks. Great businesses do this all the time, and it's not hard to follow in their footsteps.

Unleash the power

- Being present in digital spaces that feel personal and are trusted by your audience, like Facebook, can be powerful. But – while it can do wonders for building awareness and consideration – tolerance levels for errors are very low.
- People buy from people, especially people they know, so it's worth investing in word of mouth. Simple mechanics such as referrals, customer ratings, reviews, and customer success stories can add to a business's sense of community. There's a reason you always ask your mates for recommendations.
- Find topics that are trending and incorporate them into your posts, but remember who you are. If The Great British Bake Off is trending and you're a law firm, can you really say anything relevant? Your persona must reflect the type of business you're in.
- Respond to people as quickly as possible and recognise those who give you good reviews. When you get negative feedback, respond quickly to remedy the situation. Except when dealing with trolls: you're allowed to ignore them.

“Human beings like to be helpful. They love to be recognised for being helpful. And even more, they love to be recognised for being knowledgeable and for sharing that knowledge with others.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

“You have an army of potential brand ambassadors in the social space so don't be a social snob. Make sure you recognise people for their effort because social media really is today's word of mouth.”

Bernadette Kelly, Director of Business
Development, ActiveWin Media

Convenience



BUSINESS

Convenience

It's difficult to overstate how convenience lies behind so much in digital. Think about the reasons you shop online: more often than not it's because it's easier than a trip to the shops.

A big part of why customers choose you is because you offer them a simple way of meeting their needs. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to make something complex - and actually quite hard to make something simple.

Whatever it is you do, you need to be convenient. Especially online, where you're not there to explain something when someone gets the wrong idea.

Unleash the power

- Create services that customers don't have to go out of their way to find. If that means being part of someone else's website – or a networking platform – be present right there.
- Allow customers to choose which channels and devices they use to interact with you. If you don't make the effort, they almost certainly won't.
- Find out why customers leave the website journey or sales path you're trying to create, and then test solutions that remove the friction. You might be surprised at how little friction needs to be present to turn people off.

“Don't make it hard for customers. They want you to do all the heavy lifting; that's why you exist.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media



For the first time in 2015, Black Friday online sales rivalled those of brick and mortar retailers. This was mostly because US consumers found it more convenient than fighting (sometimes literally) the crowds in stores.

Cohesion

Cohesion

Customers want one conversation with you, on whatever device they want to use to contact you today. You might be using multiple channels but you should always appear to be having just one relevant chat with your customer.

The ultimate goal is to unite everything - from email marketing, to the texts your customer service team sends to individuals.

Unleash the power

- Organise your stories and desired outcomes and then present them in an order that supports value for your business and customer needs. Do this across all channels and touchpoints so you have one conversation with every customer. Think of it like talking to several friends individually around a noisy table.
- Choose a style and approach and stick to it. That's the only way you'll ever become known for what you do.
- Attribution models are all the rage, for a reason. They connect the dots between how your emails, social, blogs, display ads and AdWords have all contributed to digital success. And that means getting valuable insights on the path a customer has taken to get to the point of conversion.

“To your customer, your brand is a single entity. They want to be able to have a joined up, cohesive conversation with it. Not one that’s fractured or jarred or that just doesn’t flow.”

Stephen Wind-Mozley,
Digital Director, Virgin Media

Made to measure

Digital marketing seems to come with its own set of complex data and theories. Here, we dig into some of the most common measurements.

So, what are you trying to do?

Step one of any measurement framework is to define what success looks like. While every campaign will define this differently, it's important to define your objectives very clearly before you even start.

If you're a start-up, your immediate objective might be brand awareness, in which case reach (among your target audience) might be the most important metric to track.

Or perhaps you know that most of your business comes from word of mouth referrals or returning customers. In that case, you might be better focussing on a social metric of engagement. That's considering things like how many people are actually doing something as a result of seeing your content on their social platform.

Get the inside track

After that, you'll want to track traffic to your website – and then look at what actually drives that traffic.

By far the best value-for-money tool for tracking ROI is Google Analytics. Spend a bit of time setting it up correctly (there are plenty of free guides online) and then tagging the links you share, and it will soon be a firm friend.

You can tell where people are coming from (social, advertising, email, or search, for instance) and from there, work out how much it costs to get people to your website.

Best of all, you can also see exactly what people do on your site, and track them to see if they convert – or where they fall off. You can also compare how much they spend compared to how much it costs to get them there.

See? It's easier than you might think!

Nine of the best (free) tools to get you started

Every great business needs great tools. Luckily, you don't have to spend a lot to get up and running. In fact, here's a bunch of great apps that won't cost you a penny (and might save you a few):



1. Slack

First up, a brilliant messaging app. Not only does Slack make collaboration easy, it's highly searchable and you can highlight ideas for follow-up, making chatting a lot more productive.

Great for:

File sharing, teams in multiple locations

Find it at: slack.com



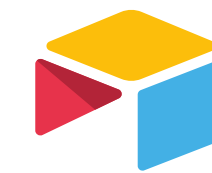
2. Trello

Another collaboration tool, Trello organises your projects into boards so you see at a glance what stage everything's up to. It's as satisfying as moving Post-it notes around a desk (and infinitely more organised).

Great for:

Managing projects

Find it at: trello.com



3. Airtable

Like a sharable Excel, Airtable allows you to collaborate on spreadsheets, which you can fill with anything (from images to barcodes), all updated in real-time.

Great for:

Crunching numbers, getting everyone organised

Find it at: airtable.com



4. Evernote

A digital filing cabinet and project management system, Evernote can store and catalogue everything from social media and snaps, to receipts and ideas.

Great for:

People with lots to remember

Find it at: evernote.com



5. Hootsuite

Manage all your social platforms in one place, schedule posts in advance, and analyse the content that’s working best. The only thing it can’t do is write a brilliant, topical joke – you’ll have to do that yourself.

Great for:

Taking control of social (especially if it’s just you doing it)

Find it at: hootsuite.com



6. Followerwonk

This Twitter analytics tool lets you find out more about your followers, identify influencers and (perhaps even more importantly) find people who share your passions.

Great for:

Finding the right people to talk to

Find it at: moz.com/followerwonk



7. Answerthepublic

Not only is Answerthepublic handy, it’s fun to use too. Type in a relevant subject and ‘The Searcher’ creates a lovely chart showing the questions and queries customers are asking.

Great for:

Generating content ideas

Find it at: answerthepublic.com



8. MailChimp

Create email campaigns with handy templates and send them to up to 2,000 subscribers for free. Emails are optimised for all devices, which is helpful.

Great for:

Keeping in touch with your customers

Find it at: mailchimp.com



9. SurveyMonkey

The best way to find out what your customers think, is to ask them – and SurveyMonkey makes it easy. Create and publish online surveys in just minutes, and then analyse the results.

Great for:

Getting customer feedback

Find it at: surveymonkey.com



The Lloyds Bank UK Digital Index of 2015 found that digitally ambitious businesses are 30% more likely to grow.

Lloyds Bank UK Business Digital Index, 2015

The last word

So that's it! Hopefully, this guide has given you a way of holding the big picture of digital marketing in your head.

Each of the 7C's we've covered has entire bodies of science – and artistic interpretation of it – standing behind it. So this is simply a basic introduction. But it's more than enough for you to get started. It's a lot to take in, but even trying a few of our suggestions can take you a long way.

If this guide makes sense to you, you're ready to get going.

And don't forget, you can find all the ultrafast connectivity you need to get started, along with plenty of info, tips, and advice at:

virginmediabusiness.co.uk

How can you unlock your digital marketing potential? Using a hairdresser as an example, Stephen Wind-Mozley - our digital director - shows you.



THANK YOU