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Letter From the Editor

Hi All,

As we head into 2022 and as the economic recovery continues to progress, many marketers will find themselves with bigger budgets. But it is vital budgets are spent tactically and put toward marketing strategies that will drive business growth. But will marketers and business owners be returning to the "old normal" or are they set to embrace the new marketing tactics that arose over the past 2 years?

In this issue, we take a look futureward and discover the marketing and sales trends that will take center stage in 2022. From social media marketing and digital PR to marketing technology and hybrid events, let's take a look at what awaits us in the new year.

We hope that this issue helps you gain greater insight into how you can use your website and a powerful CMS system to improve brand awareness, lead generation, conversions, and ultimately your bottom line.

Thanks,

Amit Vyas
CEO, NEXA

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About the Editor

Amit Vyas is the Co-Founder and CEO of Nexa, a digital marketing agency that was launched in Dubai in 2005. With close to a decade of experience within Digital Marketing, Amit has seen firsthand, the dynamic environment with which businesses now have to operate in order to achieve growth and to succeed.

Amit has worked with hundreds of businesses in the Middle East from startups to large multinational clients during his time at Nexa and previously, in the UK. He can be found at international conferences and has spoken at marketing events in the USA (SXSW and Content Marketing Conference), Australia (ANZMAC), India (Content Marketing Summit at the World Marketing Congress) as well as countless others in Europe and the UAE.



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About Nexa

As one of the largest fully independent Digital Marketing Agencies in the UAE, Nexa has provided a vast array of services to over 1,000 clients in the region since 2005. Nexa is HubSpot's only Diamond Partner Agency for the GCC region. www.DigitalNexa.com

MarTech

in the News

How to Build a Martech Stack for Your Business in 2022

By: Toni Becker



Marketing technology, commonly referred to as Martech, is a range of software solutions that are used by marketing teams to support business objectives, drive business growth and improve innovation within an organization.

A Martech stack refers to a collection of these technologies that work together to improve marketing operations throughout an organization. The goal of martech is to make time-consuming processes more streamlined and efficient to better objectives and accelerate business growth.

Why You Should Invest in a MarTech Stack for Your Business

Marketing technology is evolving every day, and with new software being introduced to the market, it is important that you stay ahead of the game and take advantage of this technology before your competitors do.

You see, the reason so many businesses are investing in MarTech is that the benefits of a MarTech stack are vast. By creating a marketing technology stack for your business you will be able to see how integrated all your systems and platforms are and how they have the power to enhance the entire customer experience, driving more sales and customer loyalty.

Martech allows marketing teams to understand the entire customer journey from start to finish - and beyond. By integrating your platforms and systems you will be able to view the customer journey on a holistic level and track every customer touchpoint - and who doesn't want that?

Another benefit of MarTech is that it helps your team market smarter. By understanding the entire customer journey (as stated above) your team is able to evaluate strategies, streamline information, and automate processes that make for a better customer experience, and of course, this leads to more sales and greater customer loyalty.

At the end of the day, if you want faster and smarter marketing then MarTech is the right choice for your business.

Where to begin when building your MarTech stack

But with so many choices available on the market, it is important you have an understanding of your business goals and learn how each technology is able to help you reach those goals. Once you understand this, you will be able to add to your MarTech stack and build your marketing department's efficiency and better your bottom line in the process.

The kind of business you have will certainly impact the kind of technologies you choose, as some may serve your objectives more than others. When putting together your stack you need to discover which technologies would be foundational for your business and build from there.

Let's take a look at the different types of marketing technologies available today:

Advertising Technology: This falls under quite a large umbrella as advertising technology refers to software and systems available to help in Search Engine Marketing, retargeting, and ad tracking software. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system should be able to cover all of the above in a single location.

Customer Relationship Management: CRMs have the ability to align your sales, marketing, and service teams. A strong CRM such as HubSpot, will track all your customers and prospects and provide your teams with insight into how your marketing campaigns are driving them through the sales pipeline.

Content Management System: This technology powers your website, blogs, and landing pages and is designed to engage your prospective clients and consumers - guiding them effectively through the sales pipeline.

Experiential Marketing: This is a form of event marketing and refers to virtual events, webinars, and online conference technology. In the new normal this kind of technology is vital for marketing purposes and with martech of this magnitude you are able to manage and optimize your events effectively.

Insights and Analytics: Marketers need to have access to data in order to measure the results of their marketing activities. Many marketers already have website analytics and are able to track their efforts from a third-party application or tool. However, MarTech has the power to place all your data and analytics in a single location and can collect data from your website, social media, email campaigns, and more - and all of this is done automatically. This kind of insight allows you to track individual prospective clients and guide them through the sales pipeline based on their interests and where they are at in the buying cycle.

The above are just a few elements that make up Marketing Technology.

It is important to note that Customer Relationship Management platforms such as HubSpot offer all of the above solutions in a single platform. This makes the process of scaling up your MarTech stack easier and more efficient.

The Wrap Up

Here are a few categories to consider when thinking about how your marketing technology will complement your team:

- Customer acquisition - online marketing, partner marketing, event marketing, website optimization
- Brand & communications - social media, public relations, sponsorships, broadcast advertising
- Product marketing - product marketing, analyst relations, content marketing
- Marketing operations - campaign performance, data analysis, and insight, in particular, marketing operations (or marketing ops) is a key role that will help enable the rest of the marketing team to make smart decisions with your marketing data. Many marketing experts advise that this is a key role to have in place when growing the team

Martech is the new normal, and it is vital you get ahead of your competitors when it comes to creating your Martech stack. With this technology, you are able to grow your business better.



VIDEO ADVERTISING TRENDS

By: Shannon Correia

Video is arguably the best medium for advertising in 2022. Businesses are sharing vlogs to advertise and taking advantage of the fact that you can customize these motion picture ads more than ever before. Let's take a look at the trends you need to know about for the year ahead.

Businesses can share unique views and insights with video content. You're in full control to plan, produce, and edit videos with ease. This can easily go onto your website, with fully customizable options. Now, social media networks, where videos are uploaded and watched endlessly, businesses are getting more control when it comes to video ads, too.

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Get Busy Vlogging

Vlogs are first-hand video accounts and experiences. These have resulted in people becoming influencers by racking up views and fame. Businesses are finding ways to achieve this for themselves, too. It ties in nicely with Story content, where you get to share the behind-the-scenes looks of your business. That said, it needn't be ephemeral content alone. When filmed professionally, vlogs can successfully share your brand's stories. It is a meaningful way to connect with customers. Here are content ideas for your business's next vlog:

- A day in the life, where you showcase your company culture
- Sharing specialist knowledge
- Sharing customer experiences and testimonials



Key Video Ad Trends in 2022

- Video advertising is more prevalent than ever, with predictions of this medium reaching \$11 billion in spending in 2020.
- The video advertising industry itself is estimated to be worth \$60 billion.
- As a result of the above, businesses are spending less on traditional paid averts, such as TV commercials, while video ads on Facebook and YouTube are predicted to grow by at least 10% every year.
- Social media platforms remain a key platform for video ads to be shared. Facebook is the most popular of the lot.

- Video advertising can be highly targeted, with targeting capabilities continuing to improve, which has increased the success rates of these ads.
- AI is leading the way for personalized video ads. With this technology, viewers can see ads that are in line with their interests, making them more likely to connect with the content and take action.
- Taking this a step further, interactive videos continue to grow in popularity. This allows for direct viewer engagement with the video.
- Videos that use VR capabilities continue to increase as well, as customers prefer the 'try before you buy' elements and no-contact that eCommerce enables.
- Video ads in 2022 are including the use of VoiceOver. This is also important as the rise in video searches online continues to grow. There is also the inclusion of captions, which social media channels are now automating, as there are also many people who watch videos without the sound on.
- Shoppable videos are continuing to grow, creating seamless online shopping experiences. These direct pause to shop ads are highly effective, playing into the instantaneousness that consumers of today enjoy. This is a great way to effectively evolve your eCommerce offering.

Benefits of Video Ads for Social Media

- You can record live, which is great for events and behind-the-scenes previews.
- You can retarget customers with video ads.
- The video content shared can be repurposed for other social media networks too.
- These platforms can provide you with a lot of reach, and video content generates around 4x the views than images do. This increases your brand's awareness and visibility on the market, plus your conversion rates.
- Facebook video ads are cost-effective, with precise targeting and flexible payment options resulting in maximum exposure for your budget.
- People spend significant amounts of time on social media, meaning you can capture your audience's attention continually.
- Video ads have a long lifespan, with almost all social media networks moving toward a video-centric focus.



Are You Making the Most of Video Content?

- Do you have all of your platforms set up? This includes having a YouTube channel!
- Have you denitrified your niche, brand, and audience?
- Do you have a professional team ready to create regular, quality content that will stand out? Ads are getting shorter and with the likes of interactive video, you'll want to work with the pros to make the most of this medium.
- Is video an integrated part of your marketing strategy?



MARKETING PREDICTIONS FOR



More Businesses are Utilising Robust Tech

Tech is available to all businesses, and we're seeing more of them invest in it for its benefits. This changes the competitive landscape and means customers' experiences and expectations are changing. Automations are improving business processes and creating seamless customer journeys. This frees up time for the business and means that customers get a high-quality, standardized experience with a brand. When you email your customers, they expect it to be personalized, for your product recommendations to be suited to them, and for valuable content to be delivered to them.



Get into Real-Time Marketing

People want to see things as they are and as they unfold. Get involved in movements and trends as they drop. This shows what your brand is capable of creatively. This is no easy feat, and you've got to get the timing just right, though. When you do, you can reach new levels of marketing success and improve positive perceptions relating to your brand. There are many ways to achieve this, like including interactive elements, for example. You should also be sharing lots of quality Story content and Lives with your audiences in 2022.



Get Creative with Content

There are many ways to share a message. Content creation is of the utmost importance for your brand, but that doesn't mean it needs to be one-dimensional. Create text, imagery, audio, and video content in a multimedia mix. This not only appeals to audiences by keeping them engaged and holding their attention, but it also helps your business to capitalize on the growing voice and visual searches occurring online. If done well, it can also lead to compressive and interning storytelling that carries well.



Video, Video, Video!

Video content remains king, but naturally, as the world favors this content and it continues to develop, you've got to up your game with it. It is expected to become the predominant form of content shared online in the future. So, when looking at your videos, consider the following: Is it well-produced and edited? Is it short enough? Attention spans and platforms favor shorter bits of content - I assure you, what you want to say in 10 minutes can be shown in 15 seconds. It needs to grab attention and hold it. You can read all about the trends in video production for 2022 here.



More Ways to Talk and Shop

If you're an eCommerce store, you've got to offer your customers multiple ways to shop. An example of this is click-to-buy direct shopping on social media platforms. When it comes to customer care and service, you've also got to cater to multiple forms of content. An important one to mention here is through direct messaging, like WhatsApp for Business. This gives people direct communication with you in a manner that is comfortable and convenient for them. And yes, this includes the use of chatbots which have become far better at understanding and communicating on your behalf.



Influencer Currency Carries On

A few years ago, some analysts expected the 'influencer bubble' to pop. They couldn't have been more wrong. It has since grown, outshining the celebrity culture - but you can read more about how influencers are evolving here. Businesses in 2022 should harness this, and aim to inspire and appeal to influencers online, especially the micro-influencers with niche audiences. Sometimes all it takes is one video - and if your product or service is good enough, it doesn't need to cost you either, though if it does, the payoff of the views is well worth the investment.



Don't Lose Sight of the Basics

If traditional marketing works for you, then continue to use it. Likewise, don't abandon the ship of all of your current digital marketing strategies that are working. For example, email and content marketing are still highly effective ways of communicating with customers. That should remain steady, and improvements should be made where possible. As much as marketing is evolving, it is important to find ways of growing in your abilities and strengths. If you don't have A/B testing in place, be sure to include it for 2022.



Money Matters of Marketing

You've got to be prepared to invest in marketing. While many digital platforms are free, gaining organic traction will only become more difficult in 2022. For example, if you're on social media, be prepared to include ad spend in your budget. A little can go a long way, but it is needed to optimize the content you're putting out there. You'll also need to ensure the content you share is high-quality, which may require the expertise of professionals.

All of the marketing predictions named above follow existing trends and movements. These are not going anyway, so be sure you're in the know of them too:

Search engines as a final destination: Search engines are becoming final destinations since a snippet of info can easily answer a search request in some instances. This makes the challenge of getting people to read more and click through to your site even more challenging. Businesses should also ensure that the info that Google has relating to their business is accurate (with updated trading hours, for example).

Changing content strategies: Focus on conversion rates rather than bringing in a lot of traffic. These are the metrics that really matter for your business. To achieve this, ensure you're sharing valuable content that is in-depth and in line with what people are searching for. This means keyword searches remain vital, and marketers need to continually work on the digital presence of a brand. This should extend beyond your website, reaching all points of contact and online channels, as failing to do so can be detrimental for a brand.

Well-positioned content: For content to work for you, you've got to set it up for success. What we mean by this is that marketers need to utilize every available tool and resource. For example, no image should be shared without including alt text (you can do this on Instagram too), and blog posts need to include schema codes. Keep things updated, and let your content reach as far as it can. Look at patterns in algorithms and ensure you're in tune with them.



How to Create a Marketing Budget for 2022

By: Toni Becker

Due to the challenges the world faced in 2020 and 2021, almost all businesses are feeling the pressure to boost their digital marketing efforts in the coming year, as brand awareness and messaging is more important now than it has ever been before. With the vaccines being rolled out and with the world settling into the new normal, businesses need to plan ahead and make sure that they're ahead of the game in 2022 - or at the very least, ahead of their competitors in order to maximize whatever opportunities lie ahead.

Staying Front of Mind

Businesses need to stay front of mind and ahead of their competitors if they want to make it through these tough economic times, and digital marketing is the way for them to keep themselves ahead of the competition.

The problem is that many businesses, particularly small businesses and startups, do not allocate enough money to their marketing endeavors and end up spending their marketing budget haphazardly and without a strategy. This has been the case for small businesses even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the globe and now this is quickly becoming the case for all businesses no matter their size, because we are heading into the new normal and teams are scrambling to push marketing work through as quickly as possible.

But a solid marketing budget is essential when it comes to creating brand awareness, putting your business ahead of your competitors, and selling products and services effectively.

Below, we outline 6 steps that businesses should follow to develop a marketing budget for 2022.

1. Understand Your Customers

Before you begin building your marketing budget, you need to know which online channels you can use to reach your target market. This requires a lot of research into your target audience and you need to learn as much as you can about who they are, how they engage online, and where they find information.

What you should be asking about your target audience

- What is their age group?
- Where do they live? Big cities or rural areas? Be specific about the location.
- What brands do they engage with online?
- Where are they present and active online?
- What type of content would help them when researching products or services that we provide?
- What type of content would help during the decision-making or purchasing process?

All this valuable information needs to be unpacked and researched by your team and once you have a fully rounded understanding of your potential customer, you will have the right information to figure out the best way to guide them through the sales funnel and buyer's journey.

2. Understand Your Metrics

In order to create an effective marketing budget, you need in-depth knowledge of your buyer but you also need to understand your sales funnel and the numbers that drive it. This means that you need to be able to track your results as you generate new sales opportunities and convert leads into clients. There are certain metrics you should be able to have access to and it is these metrics that will provide you with insight into your marketing campaigns, and let you know whether or not they are working toward or meeting your goals.

What you should be able to track

- Website visits per month and from which sources
- Leads generated per month from visitors
- Leads converted to Sales Qualified Leads per month
- Leads converted into sale opportunities per month
- Opportunities that have converted into clients per month
- Value of every new client/deal

This is the kind of information that will give you insight into how well your marketing campaigns are working, and through this data, you will be able to see what is not working and amend accordingly. You can harvest this information through a variety of digital sources, including Customer Relationship Management software, Google Analytics, social media analytics, and more.

A strong Customer Relationship Management software or CRM is the best bet when it comes to tracking your campaigns, monitoring your leads, nurturing your leads, and converting leads into customers.

3. Budget Based on Revenue

Many businesses will allocate a percentage of their projected gross revenues to their marketing budget, however, the ideal allocation depends on a variety of factors including your business capacity, industry, growth capacity, and how quickly you want to make a marketing impact.

Let's take a look at an example, during the first few years of brand building, a business may spend upwards of 20% on marketing in order to set themselves apart from their established competitors.

When it comes to smaller businesses, a great way to look at your marketing budget is to spend 7% - 8% of your revenues on your marketing endeavors, with the budget, can be split between the following:

- Website Designs and Development
- Blog Article Creation
- Sales Collateral
- Paid Campaigns
- Social Media Marketing
- Content Creation across all channels
- Events

The general 7-8% rule has been put in place for businesses that have a revenue margin of 10 - 12% (after expenses) - which includes the marketing budget.

However, if your company's margins are less than 10 - 12%, you need to consider allocating more spending to your marketing efforts. It is important that businesses do not base their marketing budget on "what is left over for spending" because your marketing is of value and is a business asset. You need to be seen to make sales - and that is why your marketing should never be a final thought.

4. Allocate and Spend Your Marketing Budget Wisely

Your marketing budget needs to be a part of your overall business strategy, and you need to outline the costs in order to know how you are going to achieve your marketing objectives and goals within a specific period of time. And if you want to do that, you need to properly research what your chosen marketing tools will cost.

For example, you may find that your audience is most active on Facebook, and you would want to take advantage of that through targeted and paid social media campaigns, or you will want to get potential customers to your website as quickly as possible, and you may want to do this through Google AdWords. In most cases, you are able to tailor these platforms to suit your budget for each campaign, for example when it comes to Google AdWords you will be able to research the keywords that your customers are searching for when they are looking for your product or service online, and you can bid on those keywords. Keywords and keyphrases may cost more or less, depending on their search volume, so it is important you do the research on this and budget for your industry specifically.

Social media offers a great set of tools you can experiment with, from posting organically at no cost, to creating paid campaigns designed to target a specific audience and generate leads. If your budget is tight, start small, measure your campaigns, track results and learn what is working, and then grow from that.

Once your marketing team has done the relevant research on the marketing channels you would like to use, determine a cost for 2022. Then determine if you can afford all of this or if you need to pull back in some marketing efforts in order to maximize your return on investment.

It is important to note that some of your spendings may be fixed while other costs can be recurring. For example, email marketing services and CRM may come at a monthly cost, while your social media paid campaigns may vary significantly every month.

There are also a variety of other marketing spends you need to look into, such as hiring a professional digital marketing agency or a new in-house designer. It is important to take all of this into consideration when calculating your budget for the coming year - you do not want to be blindsided by costs you were not prepared for.

5. Measure and Amend

Once you have your marketing budget in place, **it is important to remember that it does not have to be set in stone and fixed.** There will be many times that you may have to change your plans, for example, a new product comes on the market and you want to capitalize on it through a new social media platform. Also, consider unexpected business impacts such as those that most businesses have faced in 2020 with the COVID-19, so it's important that an element of your marketing strategy remains fluid and dynamic allowing you to make swift changes, should they be required.

For any business, knowing what is working for your campaigns

and what strategy is helping you reach your marketing objectives, is more important than sticking to your spend rigidly. You see, your marketing budget can not always be completely set in stone, and your spending may move from one platform to the other as you learn what works for your business and what does not.

The key is to always be measuring, tracking, and monitoring your marketing. By always keeping a close eye on your campaigns and strategy, you will be able to learn what is generating the Return on Investment that you need, and once you know this, you can continue to invest in that specific strategy or platform. If you notice that a platform is not delivering on your objectives, you are able to then decrease or cut your spending on this platform completely and re-budget for where it works for your business.

6. Keep an Eye on Trends

It is important to remember that we live in the digital age and digital marketing trends are constantly shifting and changing. This is why your marketing team should always conduct marketing research and keep an eye on upcoming marketing trends - this will also help you better navigate your budget process.

When finalizing your budget, consider using platforms and technologies such as CRMs, to ensure you can keep up with the ever-evolving digital marketing playing field. For example: If you are using email marketing for your lead campaigns and lead nurturing campaigns, you will want to invest in trending features such as email tracking, contact insights, and automated email scheduling - all made available through advanced CRM technology such as HubSpot.

Remember, your marketing budget should include traditional tactics but you need to do your research around emerging platforms to ensure you can keep up with your competitors and stay ahead of the game at all times.

Begin Budgeting!

The above should help guide you on the path to creating a successful marketing budget for 2022. Begin by understanding your audience and your marketing goals, and consider the channels and technology available to help make your marketing efforts that much more successful.

There is no easy formula when it comes to creating your marketing budget, and it all comes down to measuring your efforts and scaling them accordingly.



Hybrid Events and Exhibitions

By: Shannon Correia

The world is a different place, and while many businesses adapted to hosting online events, many are now considering whether this should be an ongoing endeavor. In this article, we'll be looking at the disadvantages of online events, and why it is wise for a business to take a hybrid approach.

There are all sorts of online events. These have come about for various reasons, but they serve a valuable purpose. Before we get into the disadvantages and hybrid approach, let's look at the advantages of online events...

- They connect people despite geographic limitations, which also means people needn't travel to attend.
- It allows you to continue to host events that otherwise cannot be held due to lockdowns or restrictions.
- It can cost less and be easier to organize.
- It allows for greater attendance (since there are no venue limitations).
- You have access to better analytics when reviewing the event (like lead sign-ups and monitoring engagements).
- Improved ability to share information and handle the audience when it comes to sharing details.

With so many positives, you may be wondering why businesses don't just carry on hosting online events. But the thing is, there are a couple of significant setbacks, and relying on virtual events can actually create distance between you and desired audiences. Let's investigate this further.

Disadvantages of Online Events

The disadvantages of online events include:

- A competitive market, since so many businesses are hosting various events in online spaces.
- Attention spans are waning, and with that comes the possibility of 'attending an online' event that really just sits in the background on your screen or while you're busy with another activity.
- You can't fully engage people in a first-hand lived experience through online events. There are only so many ways you can try to leave a personal and personable impression with online events.
- People are craving experiences after being in unexpectedly extensive lockdowns and adapting to online events for all sorts of purposes, from personal screenings of weddings, to work meetings via Zoom.
- Sponsors are more inclined to get involved in physical events, and it's easier to give gifts and sell merchandise at these too. There's greater visibility and impact than online features and promotions.
- Longer events don't perform as well when hosted online.
- Networking isn't as easily done in online spaces as they are in person.
- It isn't as easy to 'wow' your audience online.

Hybrid Events for the Future: Be Online and In-Person

So, what's the solution? Well, a little bit of both. That way, you're able to enjoy the benefits of online and in-person events, without taking on the disadvantages of online events alone.

Content can and should be captured at all of your events, no matter the format. This way, you can create relevant clips of content for your channels that live on beyond the event itself. Don't think that is only available to recorded online events - there are endless creative ways to record and share content from all your events.

Online events can take all sorts of forms, from webinars to live presentations and virtual shows. Careful though - just because it's easy to set up and share, doesn't mean you should put less effort into it. In fact, a poor online event can harm your brand's reputation and perception, so tread carefully.

In other words, hybrid events ensure that a business is able to get the best of both worlds by bridging the gap between them. You can host virtual events and live events where appropriate, or you could just do them both in one. The best option will depend on the nature and purpose of the event. To pull off a strictly hybrid event, where you offer attendance

both online and in-person, you've got to ensure the event is engaging. The technological aspect should be seamless - not simply hitting record on that 'live' button. The people-watching online should also feel as though they are there and actively involved. This will require a professional videography team who can prep and plan accordingly so that the audience journey is a planned-out strategy.

Connections need to be front and center. On the marketing side, you also need to ensure that you're capturing attendee details to the best of your ability so that you can engage with them after the show. By offering online and in-person coverage, you're also getting a greater ROI, since there's greater attendance, reach, and scalability.

That said, there are absolutely times where a private in-person event should be held. In these instances, it creates an air of exclusivity and a not-to-be-missed show that certainly has its place as well. Again, this is not to say that you can't gather clips for content that will feed into your marketing plans.

Ready for the future of events and exhibitions? Hybrid models are here to stay, provisioning hosts and guests with the best of both worlds.





Top Digital Strategies for 2022

By: Shannon Correia

Strategy is rooted in all things digital in 2022. If your business is in the process of taking stock mid-year, we've got the low-down on the top strategies for sales, marketing, services, and people for you to use as a benchmark. These are top-performing trends that will take your business through the rest of the year and beyond.

Top Strategies for Sales

In 2022, many businesses are emerging from a prolonged crisis mode and settling into new ways of making sales. Becoming unique in the market has always been a goal, but the focus has shifted to being a brand that your audience identifies with. It's about portraying matching values and sharing messages that resonate authentically. This is a stark contrast to the business strategies of the past that were filled with secrecy.

This leads us to the ideal that audiences desire - not being bombarded with advertisements and salespeople with agendas. From this year, people want value-based sales and buying

processes. One of the best ways for a business to achieve this is to build strong customer relationships and to guide them on a journey with your brand. Using a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool makes this easy, with strategized workflows to guide the process in the best possible way. It is essentially a tool that streamlines all of the sales points in a personalized manner.

Finally, we've got to mention social shopping or shopping via social media platforms as one of the prominent sales trends for 2022. Businesses have the opportunity to make online shopping easier for audiences and to entice them with high-quality lifestyle content shared via social media pages. Video and voice-activated sales are also taking center stage as they continue to grow rapidly.

Top Strategies for Marketing

Digital marketing in 2022 is emerging from pandemic-based messaging to adapting to the new norms. That applies to marketing departments too, who are learning to shorten their marketing plans and become more reactive by creating and sharing campaigns closer to real-time. This puts businesses in touch with the now, instead of strategizing too far and risking the marketing falling flat because it has become irrelevant or inappropriate.

Marketing departments will need to continually hone in on their target markets to personalize marketing. This requires a series of buyer personas to be developed using data, with niche content aimed directly at them. Once you're communicating on a personal level, be sure to follow up by being responsive and engaging, even after sales are made. CRMs can help you achieve this by setting up automated messages and allowing you to view and respond to your social media mentions from one centralized location.

As sales evolve, marketing strategies do too. In cases where a business is utilizing new sales opportunities, marketing teams need to ensure that this transition is shared. Aim to content with audiences by sharing branded lifestyle content that makes a person want to buy into the essence of your business and make it part of their aspirations and reality.

Top Strategies for Service

The concept of the 'customer is always right' has altered slightly as businesses adapt in 2022. Businesses aim to please their audience and customers and since business dealings need to match the customer's values, it is important to provide top-tier service to cement brand loyalty.

CRMs allow businesses to manage the sales process with ease. When your sales and marketing teams work together by sharing data and insights, you can manage leads better with it resulting in more lead conversions. These systems also customize, simplify and streamline everything including service, which removes barriers and hassles from the process altogether. In 2022, customers have certain expectations, one of the most crucial being that of customer support. Offering avenues that welcome engagement with customer services, which is where CRMs like HubSpot come into play once again. With this, you can manage all interactions and provide timely and personalized responses.

Top Strategies for People

Becoming a people-orientated business is of the utmost importance in 2022. Many businesses have started devising employer branding strategies, which is the perception and reputation that a brand has as an employer. Maintaining a positive brand in this regard not only helps you retain your employees, but it has a knock-on effect for customers too, who choose to support businesses that treat their staff well.

Following closely on this concept in the workplace culture that a business has. The fact is, all businesses were affected by the pandemic, and so in 2022, they need to build on newly found working environments and cultures. With employer branding and workplace culture firmly in place, businesses can start looking to digitize and transform their HR departments. This ensures that your strategy for working with and hiring people is up to date and as efficient and effective as possible.

With these strategies in place, your business will be on its way to success by providing holistic and future-driven outlooks and outputs.



Digital PR in 2022 - Why This Should Be Your Company's Focus

By: Shannon Correia

Digital PR should be your company's focus in 2022 because it improves your business's ranking and credibility. Those are two qualities that in today's day, are priceless. That being said, it requires a concerted investment of both time and effort. The results take time before they appear, but when they do, your business will continually rake in the benefits.

Public relations is all about being seen and talked about, or in business terms, gaining awareness and visibility for your brand. This is a business function that has evolved, from traditional means to advanced digital ones. It has the power to save your business during times of crisis and can be the modern-day word of mouth that is so valuable to companies.

Some of the other most notable benefits of digital PR are that it is now cheaper, more accessible, sustainable, and filled with opportunities for businesses to take advantage of. When dealing with digital PR, your media lists will be concerned with journalists, bloggers, and influencers. These are the people who have relationships with a matching audience to yours and the ability to influence them.

Your Company's Focus for 2022

In 2022, audiences care about what they consume and want to be assured that a business's values align with theirs. This is what can make digital PR so appealing since it provides a trusted representation of your brand from a third party. It is not the direct messages shared by a business, but rather a trusted source who advocates for it. In a world where success is built upon credibility, having this social proof is paramount. When building relations with key personnel, businesses increase their coverage, and with that, they can improve their rankings online as well. Rather than merely sharing press releases, for instance, a PR agency can provide you with a topical article that mentions your business, or perform a study with surveys that relates to your business. These are the new kind of advertorial content that is then picked up and repurposed on various platforms.

With this new way of gaining brand visibility, your business will increase its leads through the volume of mentions and links

created externally. This results in credibility not only with your audiences but with search engines too. Agencies who provide digital PR have the advantage of a team of content creators that can produce valuable and relevant content, as well as the media lists and access to platforms that they have developed over the years.

How is Digital PR Conducted?

Planning: You need to structure your PR plans so that there are goals to achieve and a vision to follow. This includes deciding upon relevant publications and audiences to suit your brand.

Content design: This includes devising your content ideas. You will need new forms of content that are high quality, versatile and appealing due to their unique angles. It should also be able to fit different content types, from text to visual and auditory.

Outreach: Reaching out to the media and sharing your content should be done concisely and professionally. The pitches should be personal and will likely require a follow-up.

Tracking: PR practitioners make use of tools that monitor all of your brand's mentions. Knowing which people picked up your content and how it was shared is vital to record and can result in long-term partnerships.

DIGITAL PR

PLANNING

CONTENT DESIGN

OUTREACH

TRACKING

Digital PR is a method of reaching your audience that marketing does not have the power to achieve on its own. With more and more of the world moving online, one needs to get a handle on their digital image and presence, developing it positively as far as possible. Since much of online is all about networks and communities, it is clear to see that PR fits that bill perfectly.

There are various tools and opportunities available to businesses; however, as mentioned, this does require continued effort to build over time. It is also something that should be managed in a way that only adds to your business. For many, this means consulting the expertise of an agency. This ensures the best possible brand image is represented to the public, which is a sensitive and delicate space to operate in. Though, if done correctly, can provide you with ample benefits.

The Benefits of Digital PR

With everything to gain, digital PR is essential for your company's plan going into 2022. With this as a primary focus, you can build on your brand's position and standing within the digital world, which can result in the difference between your business finding growth and continued success, or becoming redundant and failing.

- Link building for SEO
- Increased traffic
- Increased visibility and reach
- Improves brand positioning
- Build credibility
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Reputation management
- Gain leads
- Improve organic reach
- Increase sales



Social Media Strategy for Businesses in 2022

By: Shannon Correia

Having a social media strategy is one of the most imperative elements of digital marketing. If you're in the process of planning or reviewing yours for the year 2022, then keep reading. We'll be guiding you on everything you need to ensure success in the social media arena.

Social Media Marketing in 2022

Launched in 2009 (yes, you heard it right), WhatsApp is the We know all too well that the internet doesn't sleep. Trends are here today and gone tomorrow, especially on social media platforms. Businesses need to create strategies that prepare them to ride the waves as and when they occur, to ensure they aren't washed out to shore, so to speak. That means you need to have the necessary rouses allocated, ready, and raring to go. For this to happen, you need to work with professionals. Whether you work with an agency or an in-house team, be sure to hire people who can effectively produce content, manage your communities, and manage your budgets. These skill sets and your preparations are what will have your team sailing through.

We mentioned budgets because your business will absolutely need them, not only to create the content and manage your accounts but because organic reach has become harder than ever. Try as they might, marketers know that they've got to put money behind their posts and advertise on these networks to gain traction and boost performance.

In case it needs to be reiterated - the importance and magnitude of social media marketing cannot be underestimated in today's world. From inspiration to shopping and service, it forms a vital role in the life of your customer and their journey and experience with any given brand. Remember, you're one squabble or dilemma away from harming your brand, and one viral video away from newfound popularity.

While there are many bubbles of interest and content within the depths of the internet, you need to find and form part of the ones that appeal to your audience. These platforms make that easy to achieve, with powerful targeting capabilities. It is important as ever to monitor or conduct 'social media listening' regularly. You can't do the research once and go with it. You've got to continually analyze the environment.

In terms of where social media is going as a whole, we can see that certain movements are still firmly in place and growing. One example of this is the value of video content, which is not going anywhere. Another is the fact that people are paying attention to the metrics that really matter - as much as a business can use analytics to improve their targeting, they are just as capable of finding the accurate results of a campaign, including conversion rates of influencers.

In other words, it's (still) all about fostering connections. Meaningful connections, though. Mindless scrolling is out and even when people are online for entertainment purposes, they are conscious of the messages they are receiving. This is where effective storytelling comes into play, along with sound values. Having a well-established brand with a specific voice is important too.

When you have that right, you're able to build online communities that are based on trust. That is the intangible and ultimate goal for businesses on social media today. People want to be confident in standing by your brand and feel that you truly care for them - that you're not trying to manipulate them, but you're there for them genuinely and authentically.

As such, businesses are finding it important to build on their transparency. That is, creating positive working environments and strong employer brands that people are happy to share about online. Customers perceive this as being supportive of brands who do well by their employees, which has become an important value for businesses to have if they want to be successful.

Going back to the instantaneity that dominates social media networks, your business needs to be in the now, both in what

it puts out there and how it responds. You've got to get with real-time marketing, which is far too important to discuss in one paragraph, so be sure to read more about why real-time marketing matters in 2022.

Marketers already know how important video is. Here's a guide on which trends are going to dominate video marketing in 2022. All kinds of businesses will need this, especially the eCommerce sector. Equally as important as getting down in the DMs. And by that, we mean offering your customers the opportunity to communicate with you directly - and also encourage them to interact with your content regularly, rather than only when they need something specific.

Finally, when it comes to your social media marketing strategy for 2022, be sure to be selective but all-encompassing.

Pick your platforms - you only need a handful! Then, be sure to use each of those platforms to the fullest - share all types of content, whether it's a Story, a post, a Reel, a short, live feeds, you name it. While each platform is unique, you can and should ensure all social media content ties into your overall brand through an integrated marketing communication approach. What you showcase is the same, you're just sharing it in different ways depending on the platform.

Creating a Social Media Strategy for Your Business in 2022

- **Allocate resources and responsibilities**
- **Have systems in place that govern the processes, eg styles for social media reporting and editorial calendars**
- **Set visions and goals with KPIs for the year, quarter, and month ahead**
- **Monitor social media by conducting research on an ongoing basis about the platforms and your audience**
- **Develop a monthly editorial plan that includes campaigns and leaves room for real-time marketing**
- **Work on developing meaningful and punchy campaigns that you roll out consistently**
- **Work with professionals to create diverse multi-media content, which is then edited for each specific platform**
- **Prioritize community management and merge it with customer service**
- **Create social media reports on a monthly and quarterly basis**

That wraps up the prevalent social media strategy for businesses as we head into 2022.

HubSpot Marketing in 2022 - How to Take Advantage of HubSpot for your Business

By: Toni Becker

In 2006, HubSpot launched software designed to assist organizations to implement and successfully execute their inbound marketing strategies. Fast forward to the present and HubSpot offers a full stack of software that includes a powerful Customer Relationship Management system, Marketing Hub, Sales Hub, Service Hub, and a CMS (content management system) Hub.

HubSpot has become an all in one marketing and sales software that offers advanced tools to help your business with just about all digital marketing tactics including, Search Engine Optimisation, Blogging, Social Media, Landing Pages, Marketing Automation, Email campaigns, lead generation campaigns, and website analytics integrating valuable marketing data with sales to create alignment between these 2 commercial departments within an organization.

Essentially, HubSpot puts all your marketing and sales efforts together under one umbrella and includes tools that every marketer or salesperson needs to reach success.

Let's take a look at what HubSpot offers for businesses overall, and then we will take a more in-depth look at the software's marketing capabilities - and how these capabilities can work for your business in 2022.

What Does HubSpot Offer?

HubSpot offers a variety of tools and can understand and cater to every part of the buyer's journey. The tools within the software are divided into what is known as "hubs," you can purchase these hubs separately, but when they are combined, they work together seamlessly ensuring success across your sales, marketing, and customer support teams.

HubSpot's Marketing Hub in 2022

All the tools that you require to run a great marketing campaign are available within this software, and these tools work together to attract, engage and delight potential and current clients. With HubSpot marketing at your fingertips, your marketing team is able to create compelling content all in one and get it to the right audience at the right time, ensuring high-quality leads, and customer conversion.

What HubSpot Marketing Hub Offers

- Email Campaigns
- Landing Pages
- Blogs

- Search Engine Optimisation
- Social Media
- Analytics
- Marketing Automation

About HubSpot CRM in 2022

The HubSpot Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software helps your marketing and sales team organize and track all of your leads and current clients. This powerful tool saves your team from performing time-consuming menial tasks throughout the day, leaving them to do what it is they do best.

What HubSpot CRM Offers

- Activity Tracking
- User Contact Information and Related Data
- Pipeline Visibility
- Live chats with Prospects and Clients
- Syncing of Outlook and Gmail



HubSpot Sales Hub in 2022

The HubSpot Sales Hub is made up of tools that allow you to seamlessly manage, communicate with and track your leads. With this platform your team has more insight into the sales pipeline, empowering them to interact with potential customers without having to spend time entering data or writing similar emails over and over again. To put it as simply as possible, the Sales Hub is designed to close more deals for your business.

What HubSpot Sales Hub Offers

- **Free Calling**
- **Email Templates**
- **Email Sequences**
- **Pipeline Tracking**
- **Meeting Scheduling**
- **HubSpot Service Hub in 2022**

The customer service software ensures swift and easy connection with potential and current customers, allowing you to nurture relationships, convert leads into customers and manage relationships. This kind of personalized service makes for happy customers, which in turn, improves your bottom line significantly.

What HubSpot Service Hub Offers

- **Support Tickets**
- **Customer Feedback**
- **Knowledge Base**
- **Live Chats**
- **Conversation Bots**
- **Goals and Reporting**

About HubSpot CMS Hub

The HubSpot CMS Hub is a cloud-based content management system that both marketers and developers can use when creating amazing websites focused on the customer experience.

What HubSpot CMS Hub Offers

- **SEO Recommendations**
- **Website Themes**
- **Fully Integrated CRM**
- **Drag and Drop Editor**

- **Adaptive Testing**
- **Contact Attribution Reporting**

Please note that each of these hubs comes with different subscriptions, and some tools may not be available for certain subscription levels.

HubSpot offers a lot for businesses and is the ideal platform for marketing and sales alignment. So, how will HubSpot Marketing work for your business in 2022?

Let's dive right in.

HubSpot Marketing in 2022

Here, take a look at how and why HubSpot is designed to help your marketing and business thrive.

1. An All-in-One Marketing Platform

Every marketer would like a simple solution to a problem, and having all of the best tools for any marketing tactic makes life infinitely better.

HubSpot has completely simplified inbound marketing by providing you with all the tools you need to ensure the most streamlined and effective digital marketing campaigns - from blogging and lead nurturing, right down to in-depth analytics.

2. Taking Social Media Marketing to the Next Level

Social Media is an important part of any inbound marketing strategy, but it can also be time-consuming in its execution; however, without consistent engagement, posting and online social media communication, your marketing efforts will become null and void.

In order to stay on top of your social media strategy, you need to schedule your posts well ahead of time, knowing they will be up and running when you are working on what it is you do best - your next creative campaign.

HubSpot allows you to manage all of your social media platforms from a single place and provides you with a scheduling system that promises excellent visibility online. You are also able to create social media paid campaigns through the site, from brand awareness campaigns through to targeted and strategic lead generation campaigns. With all of this available in one place, your marketing team is able to have full control over the process which makes executing successful social media campaigns easier than ever before.

3. Accelerating Lead Tracking and Conversion

Lead generation is the lifeblood of any business, after all, leads mean revenue which in turn, means business growth. HubSpot offers an array of tools to optimize your lead generation, lead nurturing, lead tracking, and conversion.

These tools allow you to have an in-depth overview of your visitors, how they arrive on your website, what search engines they used to get to your website, and how they engaged with your website in its entirety. This kind of data ensures you are able to understand your prospects in greater detail, and you are able to learn what it is they are looking for from your business.

4. Making Search Engine Optimisation a Breeze

Getting your website to rank higher than your competitors in the search engine results is a goal for any business, but SEO is difficult to implement without the correct analytical data and advanced tools at hand.

HubSpot comes with a wealth of SEO tools to assist you in keyword tracking, content creation, and technical SEO - all of which form the foundation of successful Search Engine Optimisation.

5. Edit Your Website with Ease

HubSpot makes website changes and additions easily accessible to everyone on your team, which allows you to save time and money as you do not have to rely on working with a web design and development agency whenever you need to get something done.

Through HubSpot, you are able to create new web pages easily, optimize your content for SEO, add modules to your design layout and fill in your content with ease.

6. Customer Relationship Management at Its Finest

HubSpot's integrated CRM facilitates are designed to make your customer relationship management simple and effective. This is done by integrating your website and social media accounts, allowing you to track users and visitors, and see what they are doing on your website.

This insight allows you to understand how your leads are responding to your online presence, while at the same time, drawing valuable information from your visitor's social media profiles. This will simplify communication between your business and your leads, making communication and exchanges as seamless and effective as possible.

7. A Data-Driven Marketing Solution

Gathering all your important marketing metrics has never been easier thanks to HubSpot.

Data-driven marketing is the best kind of marketing, and HubSpot facilitates all the data collection you could ever need or want. This data will guide your marketing and proves its value and Return on Investment.

8. Automating Tasks, Saving You Time and Money

Your teams have only so many hours in a day, and filling time with menial tasks can become frustrating, which often leads to human error. HubSpot automates tasks and systems, ensuring your marketing, sales, and customer service teams never have to worry about wasting time again.

Workflows are a great example of what HubSpot can do in terms of automation. Essentially, this automation app is able to automate as much or as little of your marketing efforts as you choose, in a measurable and contextual way. The greatest part of HubSpot workflows is that the system taps into the entire platform, which allows for the creation of items such as email lists that can be built on specific lead criteria, and HubSpot can help you to schedule optimal timing while keeping the sales funnel in mind.

IN CONCLUSION

The list of what HubSpot offers as a marketing platform is almost endless and these are just a few of the tools and benefits that come with the software.

At the end of the day, in order to both optimize and simplify your inbound marketing efforts, HubSpot is your one-stop solution.



Website Design in 2022

By: Toni Becker

According to a recent study, there are over 1.8 billion websites, around 200 million active websites, and every day there are thousands of new sites being added to the existing online competition. With these statistics in mind, it is important that you make sure your business is consistently kept up to date with the latest web development and user experience trends because if you do not keep your site up to date, you will slowly drop in the search engine rankings, while your competition rises.

Web development and web design has evolved right alongside advancements in technology, and 2022 is the year of interactive, futuristic, and engaging websites.

4 Website Design Trends for 2022

1. Vlogs

Video marketing has become one of the most popular digital marketing tactics, in fact, 54% of consumers have stated that they want to see more video content from businesses (HubSpot, 2018) while a 2019 report shows that 87% of marketing experts use video as a marketing tool and 73% of consumers state that they are influenced by a brand's video marketing social media presence when making a purchase decision online. And when it comes to lead generation, video marketing is a powerful marketing tool. According to Optimonster, video marketers acquire 66% more qualified leads per year, and the same study concluded that video marketers achieve a 54% increase in brand awareness.

The above statistics prove why video blogs, also known as vlogs, are quickly becoming the future of blogging and content creation. Creating a vlog on your website, or adding video content to your website blogs in 2022 will ensure more engagement with your target market and will lead to greater trust in your brand.

The Benefits of Vlogs for Yuser'suser'sour Website:

A personalized user experience: With vlogging, your audience gets to enjoy a more personalized experience from your brand, as it allows them to view your business operations, services, and your day-to-day brand message. This kind of visual and engaging content will make your brand appear more trustworthy, which in turn leads to more conversions.

It promotes your other content more dynamically: It is always great to share static imagery and written blog content online, but by having a vlog page, you are able to promote new content and products more appealingly - by visually showing your target market your offerings in action, the team behind your offerings, and why your product or service is the best in the industry.

Vlogs drive a user to action: Because vlogging feels more personalized and less like a sales pitch, it becomes easier to persuade viewers to take a specific action, and if you produce video content that users find engaging, useful, and valuable, they're likely to adhere to your CTAs and this inevitably drives conversions.

Your website vlogs can be shared across platforms, from Facebook to TikTok and YouTube, ensuring your marketing efforts reach even further - which in turn, drives traffic directly to your website.

2. Live Chat Box

Right now, digital marketing needs to be focused on customer service and user experience, and this is why the Live Chat boxes and conversational marketing as a whole, continue to grow in popularity. Live chat is well suited to providing customer support and through this technology, you are able to solve a customer's problems faster and improve customer satisfaction.

The Benefits of Live Chat Boxes on Websites:

Customer support: With Live Chat, you can instantly support your potential and current customers, saving them from the hassle of dealing with long and tedious IVR (interactive voice response) menus before they can speak with a human. From a customer's perspective, this alone can turn them into a happy customer and from a business perspective, live chat helps one step towards achieving your goal for world-class support.

Instant communication: Emails are still a trusted and preferred means of communication among consumers, but this kind of communication means that they have to wait hours, if not days before receiving a response. With Live Chat, you are able to speed up the checkout process by answering product or service questions instantly, and providing fast and efficient technical support to existing members - essentially, live chat will convert leads into customers, quickly and easily.

Cost savings: Website live Chat helps you decrease your customer service costs by decreasing the demand for phone support. At the same time, you will be able to interact with a larger customer base because a skilled agent can easily handle up to 3 customer interactions simultaneously through this platform.

With consumers becoming ever more accustomed to instant communication and instant gratification, it is fast becoming necessary for businesses to implement live chat boxes across their websites, and this will be a significant web design trend for 2022.

3. Motion, Animation, and Interactivity

Animation and video have always been a great way to engage online users and grab their attention, and they have become even more relevant, as online audiences' attention spans continue to decrease due to a variety of online distractions. So, how do motion and animation keep the online audience engaged on your website? Our eyes are instantly drawn toward any moving element, and this biological fact can be used to control the way a visitor views a certain web page.

The need for engaging and moving elements on websites is increasing, from micro-animations that offer feedback as a user hovers over a particular element to interesting typography that scrolls across the screen in a header, to full-screen animations and video headers.

Benefits of Animation and Motion on Your Website:

Capture the user's attention: According to a study, you have .05 seconds, or 50 milliseconds, to make a positive first impression on a website visitor and this is hardly any time at all. Animation and moving elements make for an excellent UX design tactic as movement will draw a user's eye, improve first impressions and decrease click-through rates.

Increase engagement: An animation is a powerful tool for increasing user engagement with a brand website. Animating website elements such as a call to action buttons or the navigation menu work to encourage users to click, explore, and remain on a page.

Customized content to stand out: Unique animations are a great tool for establishing a businesses tone and one-of-a-kind personality. Creating custom animations that suit your brand message and goals will show visitors that your organization offers something that your competitors do not.

To make this trend work for you in 2022, you need to think of what areas of your website you would like your audience to focus on.

Keep in mind that motion can also be distracting when used incorrectly, so be sure to work with an experienced website developer and website designer to ensure every element of your design is used strategically - essentially, make sure that the moving elements on your page tell your brand story correctly.

4. 3D Elements and Artwork

3D elements are becoming a popular trend for website design as these usually bright, eye-catching designs act as a bit of "eye candy" to lure the user's attention. You will also notice that these 3D elements are usually used against a clean and minimal background, ensuring that the viewer is not overwhelmed when they visit a page.

3D design elements are a great idea for e-commerce sites as they provide the viewer with a sense of realism when they are looking to purchase a specific product.

Benefits of 3D Elements for eCommerce Websites:

Realism: 3D images allow a user to get a fully rounded idea of what a product will look like in reality, making the purchase decision that much quicker.

Increased conversion rate: According to Cappasity, 3D imaging market research, 82% of website visitors activate the 3D view on a product page, and 95% of respondents state that they prefer an interactive 3D representation to video playback. With these statistics in mind, 3D elements give way to a significant increase in key metrics such as conversion rates.

Shows product quality: 3D imagery allows a viewer to rotate a product, and view it from a variety of angles. This interaction and view allow the viewer to see close-up detail of the value they will be getting from the product if they make a purchase - this is why 3D imagery is especially important for luxury items.

3D elements are set to be a big trend in 2022 as they are aesthetically pleasing, fun, and engaging - and tend to keep visitors on a website for longer.



IN CONCLUSION

Website design trends for 2022 are embracing a sense of "futurism" like never before, from attention-grabbing videos and interactive animations to live chatbots, modern website design is all about keeping the attention of the user and creating the best possible customer experience.



10 Tips for Email Marketing in 2022

By: Toni Becker

Everyone knows about email marketing, a marketing tactic that has been around since the dawn of the internet. In fact, the first mass email campaign was sent out in 1978 by Gary Thuerk, the Marketing Manager of Digital Equipment Corp. Thuerk sent out a mass mailer promoting DEC machines to 400 users that resulted in an astounding \$13 million in sales. This was a monumental moment in marketing, and from its inception, email marketing was known as one of the most effective channels for direct marketing.



Bonus Email Marketing Tip

Most people receive hundreds of emails per day. So how do you make yours stand out? Consider using the following, which has proven to be effective when used appropriately:

- Emojis in your subject line and preview text
- CAPITALISED content within your subject line. Just one word in a longer sentence though.

Fast forward to the late 90s and early 2000s when email marketing became somewhat repetitive and “spammy”. Many email recipients became tired of receiving sales related emails from faceless corporations that just wanted to “sell sell sell” and email marketing started to lose its edge. Marketers desperately needed to try a new approach to email marketing, and in 2010 segmented, personalized, and targeted email marketing campaigns were introduced.

With automation, personalization, and highly targeted emails campaigns, email marketing became powerful once more. And in 2013, emarketer reported that segmented, and automated email campaigns received a 50% higher conversion rate than traditional email marketing tactics.

With the introduction of Customer Relationship Management software such as HubSpot, email automation, personalization, and segmentation has become even easier to implement, and through CRM platforms businesses are now able to measure and track the success of each campaign - all of which allows for greater lead generation, conversion, and customer retention.

This kind of email communication and marketing forms part of today's Inbound Marketing strategy. Inbound marketing is a process of communicating with high-quality leads by providing them with information that they actually want to be informed about as opposed to the spammy email marketing of the past.

But sending out automated campaigns is not just about typing up a quick email, sending it to a mass audience, and asking recipients to make a purchase - today, email marketing requires strategy, lead nurturing, and quality content designed to drive action. The goal of any email campaign is to get the user to take a specific action, and if the user does not open your email, does not understand the messaging of your mail, and cannot find your Call to Action in the email - then your campaign will be for naught.

So, where do you begin with email marketing in the modern era?

In this article, we provide 10 tips for email marketing that will help you improve open rates, click-through rates, and lead generation potential.

1. Email Workflows

Contact leads at the right time with the right message

Whatever tactic you use for lead generation, be it social media lead generation campaigns, website lead forms, or newsletter sign-ups, you need to take advantage of the window of opportunity when you are at the top of a prospect's mind. This is why it is important to always send an email to a prospect within 24 hours of receiving their information.

In order to pull this off seamlessly, you should consider investing in automated email workflows as this tactic ensures you don't miss any opportunity for nurturing or engaging with a prospect. For example, HubSpot offers a Workflow app that creates personalized and automated emails that are triggered in a variety of ways i.e.: when a contact is added to a list, clicks a link in an email, submits a form to your site, views a specific page on your website or is marked as a qualified lead.

2. Get Personal

Send emails from a person, not a faceless brand

Your email open rate will increase substantially if you send out emails that come from a real person. This is because recipients are more likely to believe in and trust an email from an individual's personal work address as opposed to an email sent out from a generic work address.

Remember: It is important to implement A/B testing in this regard to see what works best for your business and brand.

3. Set the Preview Text

Don't waste any opportunity to deliver your message

Email platforms such as Gmail and Outlook display the first few lines of your email body text alongside your email subject line - essentially, these platforms display a teaser or text preview of your content before a user clicks on the email.

If you do not set up your own preview text, the platform will pull content from the body of your email which will look messy in this space. But if you set up your very own preview text, you have the opportunity to use this space for unique content that is designed to entice the user to open and read the body of the email.

Use this space to provide a concise overview of what it is you are offering in the email. Best practice is to keep this content to less than 50 characters.

4. Engaging Subject Lines

Be clear, honest, and concise

When it comes to creating your email subject line, remember that you are competing with a lot of other emails in your recipient's inbox. This means that you need to stand out from the crowd, and in order to do this, you need to create compelling subject lines and drive the user to click on the email.

To entice readers to click through to your email, make sure that your subject lines:

- **Are Straight to the point, Clear and Easy to Understand**
- **Are less than 50 characters as this ensure they will not be cut off by certain devices**
- **Use tone and language that your consumer is used to and relates to**
- **Make use of action-orientated language that creates excitement and a sense of urgency**
- **Offer a value proposition so recipients know what is being offered**
- **Do not use spam words such as “save” or “Cash”**

At Inbound, HubSpot's annual conference a study was presented that outlined statistics collected from over 200 million emails between March 2020 and August 2020. HubSpot provided insight into the subject line words that increased open rates during the 30 days studied and the top 6 words are:

1. **Free**
2. **Today**
3. **Last Chance**
4. **In Stock**
5. **Month**
6. **Tomorrow**

These words give the user a sense of urgency, that is: they only have one shot to claim the deal and it is this urgency that drives them to action. The same study revealed that subject lines with less than 20 characters have a significant open rate increase: B2B Open Rate Increases by 27% while B2C increases by 29%. Essentially, when it comes to email subject lines, make sure your keyword stands out, your subject line is relevant to the content of your email, and is as straight to the point as possible.

5. Be Concise in Your Messaging

No one wants to read a long email

No one wants to receive a long email, who has the time for that these days? People prefer concise, short emails that get straight to the point and have a clear focus. This is also important because users usually choose to scan emails as opposed to concentrating on them in-depth. You want them to be able to quickly identify and understand your message while they scan the body of your text.

To make sure your email is short yet concise, write it as if you are speaking with a person directly. If your email has to be longer than a few lines, break it up into sections using short paragraphs and bullet points to provide visual breaks so as not to overwhelm the reader.

6. Include an Easy to Identify Call-to-Action Button

Direct the reader to take action

What is the purpose of your email? Is it to get a contact to download a free ebook? Purchase a product? Contact a salesperson? Whatever the purpose of your email, you need to make sure that your recipient knows how to initiate the action. This is when a Call to Action button comes into play.

As we stated above, your recipient is more than likely to scan your email without reading the copy in its entirety. With this in mind, you must have a clear call to action button that is easy to spot. Without this button, your recipients will not be able to take the desired action that benefits them and your business.

7. Make Your Images Clickable

Hyperlink all your email images

The goal of any email marketing campaign is to drive the recipient to take a specific action, and the action usually requires a click-through to a specific page (be this a lead form or website page). One way to increase your click-through rate without overdoing your text or copy is by hyperlinking your images through to your chosen landing page.

For example, if the goal of your campaign is to get recipients to download an ebook, you can include an image of your ebook cover in the body of your mail. Instead of just adding a hyperlinked text with the copy “click here to download” you can also make the image itself clickable. People, in general, are more drawn to images as it is, and you can capitalize on this by making the image itself clickable as well.

8. Create a CTA Above the Fold

Place at least one clickable item above the fold

Emails are all about click-throughs and you want to make sure that your email campaigns get as many as possible. We discussed adding a call-to-action button in the body of the email, and also stated that you should make your images clickable. With that in mind, you also want to make sure that you have at least one clickable item that lies above the fold of your email.

This means that the receiver does not have to scroll down your email in order to find the CTA. A clickable item near the top of your email is specifically important for mobile users as they

tend to require more scrolling and zooming when reading email content. By providing a recipient with something actionable that can immediately be seen, you will quickly increase your clickthrough rate, and in turn, increase business growth.

9. Stay Social Media Savvy

Include social media and social sharing buttons

Make sure to extend the longevity of your email by adding social sharing buttons to your content. Most email platforms come with templates that have built-in social sharing buttons which makes it easier to implement across your campaigns. By making your emails sharable, you are able to reach a greater audience and gain more leads through the power of social media.

You also need to include your business's social media links in every email, ensuring your receiver has the ability to learn more about your business through social platforms. This will quickly establish your business as trustworthy, and you will grow your social following in the process - building more opportunities for engagement and community building.

10. Monitor and Measure Results

Track your emails and campaign success

What works for one email receiver or segmented audience, may not work for another and this is why you must check your email open rates and clickthrough rates.

By monitoring the success of your campaigns you are able to gain greater insight into your audience, and this data provides your marketing team with the opportunity to improve campaigns accordingly.

Use your email performance data to run A/B tests that are designed to show you what email content your recipients engage with, and amend your strategy to suit what your audience finds more desirable.

Analytics are vital and should play a part in your entire email campaign strategy. Without analytics, how will you know if you are succeeding or not?



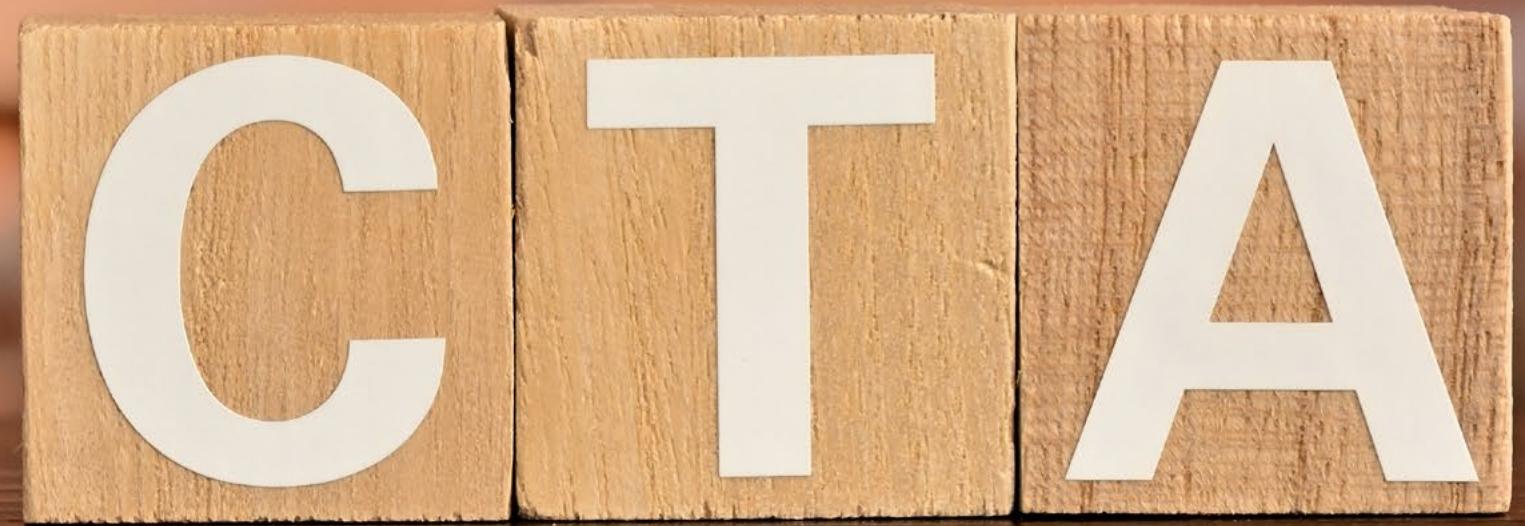
The power of Inbound marketing is unparalleled and email marketing has most certainly changed over the years - and for the better!

If you put time and effort into your email campaigns and ensure you have strategies in place for lead generation through this platform, you will attract more leads in 2022.

Call-to-Action: How to Create One in 2022

By: Shannon Correia

Call to action (CTA) is an all-important signal to guide your audience to the next step in their consumer journey. You must create effective CTAs to ensure that progress is made. In this article, we'll be giving you insight on how to create one that works in 2022, with examples of businesses that have found success using them.

Three wooden blocks with the letters 'C', 'T', and 'A' in white, arranged to spell 'CTA'. They are sitting on a dark wooden desk. In the background, there is a blurred office setting with people working at desks. To the left of the blocks, there is a spiral notebook and a pen.

Click Rates on Call to Action Prompts in 2022

Let's face it, marketers are faced with challenging circumstances. Customers are constantly bombarded with information overload, getting brand visibility is the first step. Once the interest is there, you've got to build on that so that engagement occurs. People could read a blog post, for instance, gain all the insight they need, and still decide not to sign up for your newsletter. In fact, the average conversion rate on landing pages is just over 2%.

When it comes to looking at the figures, the bounce rate is equally important to consider. This is a number that is notoriously high, with marketers continually working on ways to reduce it. This is usually done through successful calls to action (CTAs). To stand a chance at succeeding, they've got to be compelling. Let's take a look at some examples in 2022 that are working for brands so that you can implement the same winning strategy.

Calling People to Take Necessary and Desired Action

Creating great content only goes so far when there's no action to follow it up.

Blog posts, for instance, can lead to more results and be of more value to your business when the person then takes a desired action, like downloading something or signing up for a newsletter. It's no quick fix, but the audience needs to have the option there - it makes things easier for them too, as they have an easy way to continue their journey with your business.

- **CTAs are often part of a website page, an ad, or digital content. They act as important catalysts for growth since marketers can convert audiences into leads with them. They provide your audience with the necessary pathways to help them ultimately fulfill their needs.**
- **CTAs are one of the primary tools that help a marketer reach their goals. It is a necessary request to engage your audience further and become customers. The specific action that is used will depend on the circumstance. Here are some classic examples:**
- **Subscribe:** Joining a subscription service is often used for informational purposes, which often results in a customer getting blog post updates. It is effective as it results in them being added to your database.
- **Sign up or Join us:** You could be signing up for a free trial, an event, a newsletter, a course, or a product. This is an effective CTA for your lead strategy, as it can qualify leads accordingly.
- **Download Yours:** This is a CTA that often guards gated content. It is effective in that it again separates your lead pool by interest and is a chance to offer your audience real value in their first exchange with your business.
- **Try It:** A free trial offer is a hook to introduce your business to a specific client. This is your chance to provide value and make an impression on highly qualified leads.

Other CTAs that are often used as spins on the above, like 'learn more,' 'buy n/shop/order,' 'find out more,' or 'get started.' Let's take a look at some top tips for creating your CTA.

CTA Best Practices

The key is to keep the text short (between 1 and 5 words) The text should ideally convey an upbeat tone or provoke emotion (like a sense of urgency to trigger FOMO) Be explanatory and directive in your command or suggestion The button itself needs to stand out in terms of the design CTAs needs to be well placed on the page in a place that makes sense

Test your CTAs with analysis so that you can keep improving your performance and conversions A CTA is nothing without the build-up - let people know why they need or should want to take action Ensure your CTA deliver on its promise - it needs to be direct and fuss-free

In other words, CTAs are essential for generating and converting leads to drive growth and increase sales. With marketers moving away from vanity metrics, the effectiveness of CTAs becomes ever more important since they result in tangible results. It is important to remember that the offer for your audience needs to be compelling. The internet is, after all, filled with valuable content and offers. Be sure that yours meets expectations.

CTAs are (in most cases) a button with a link. From here, your audience will fill out a form that captures their details and provides them with the offer. Wondering where exactly you can expect to put your CTAs? Let's touch on some examples.

Where to share your CTAs

- **Website:** CTAs can be featured on your website pages as hassle-free options for your audience. These are broad as they apply to whoever is on your site. They can be adapted to suit the page, for example, getting started with a trial, or registering for an upcoming event.
- **Blog:** Whether people find your content on search engines or by looking through your blog directly, blog posts often include a CTA at the end. Include this option for free and gated content.
- **Email:** One of the essential KPIs when it comes to email marketing campaigns is click-through rates. It is not enough to have good content for someone to browse - a compelling CTA can lead them to take further action.
- You can - and absolutely should - include creative CTAs in your social media posts and Google Ads.

5 CTAs that Make Customers Click

Technique: Create appeal through exclusivity

Where there's a waitlist, there's a will. People love to join in on something that is perceived as high value, which is not easily accessible. Requesting an invite or joining a select group is one way to get ahead of the curve with your CTAs. This also works for specific information, like that of a case study, since it communicates information specific to a particular group.

Example: Zomato has recently launched an invite-only pro membership. This is only available to a select number of users and includes exclusive benefits.

Technique: Freebies for the win

People love just about anything free. This can make the trade-off to becoming a lead an easier one since the customer is getting value at no perceived cost or without a monetary contribution. This can make people more likely to take the next step, and provide you with a chance to 'hook' them with high-quality free trials or content. You can also include this in competitions to drive engagement without having to pay out to each lead.

Example: Resident Deals is a site for residents of the UAE to explore the best hotel deals for their staycation. When you subscribe to their mailing list, you stand a chance to win.

Technique: Facilitate learning and community

It is universally understood that knowledge is power. This can work in your favor as a marketer, as customers will be eager to learn all they need to know during their own research phases. By teaching them, you are imparting knowledge and can persuade them using logic or proof. It also keeps lengthy explanations at bay that would otherwise be un-gated clutter on your website. Another way is to foster a relationship through continual updates - a classic CTA example of this is "Subscribe."

Example: When you sign up for the Adidas newsletter, not only are you privy to an incentive (discount), but you also join the 'creator's club.'

Technique: Try before you buy

Giving people the opportunity to test out your product or service can provide you with a chance to 'hook' the customer through first-hand experience. This can be in the form of samples, demo's or trial runs. The key here is to cater to their needs so well that they can't imagine not having them.

Example: Audi launched an interactive test drive session for digital audiences to participate in and feel the power of their RS 5 model.

Technique: Straight to the point

When you simply say "Shop Now," you're getting straight to the point. It is especially effective when you've built up so much excitement in the preceding content that the customer wants to get their hands on it that very instant. This plays on impulses and immediacy.

Example: 'Order Now' appears in the pop-up on Ben & Jerry's website, prompting people to order their scoopful without hesitation.

Creating CTAs in 2022

Right - now that we're feeling inspired, it's time to create your very own CTAs. Your call to action is the gatekeeper for your lead generation strategy. This makes them a marketer's best friend and possibly some of the most important phrases they'll have to create and use.



A Comprehensive Guide to Content Marketing in 2022

By: Shannon Correia

Content marketing has developed into one of the critical tools at the disposal of marketers over the years. In this article, we're looking at the factors that are influencing it in 2022. In this in-depth article, we'll be looking at content marketing trends, as well as the quantity of content you need and creative ways to repurpose it.

While stakeholders may have shied away from investing in it before, content proves to be a long-term solution that is recession-proof. Before we delve into the specifics, content should always consider these 3 things:

1. The Audience

Know exactly who you are talking to and what they are looking for. It will enable you to answer the right questions using the correct keywords.

- **The bigger picture:** Created content needs to be in alignment with other marketing campaigns - content that fails is often that which is solely produced for the sake of it.
- **Time:** Content marketing takes time to yield results, with time sensitivities attached to its production, including providing regularly updated versions.
- **The audience:** Know exactly who you are talking to and what they are looking for. It will enable you to answer the right questions using the correct keywords.
- **The bigger picture:** Created content needs to be in alignment with other marketing campaigns - content that fails is often that which is solely produced for the sake of it.

- **Time:** Content marketing takes time to yield results, with time sensitivities attached to its production, including providing regularly updated versions.
- Furthermore, its content serves 3 essential purposes:
- **Navigational:** To help people understand the question at hand, as well as how your business can provide the best solution for it.
- **Informational:** Most notably of the 3, people should feel as though they are attaining value and unique insight when consuming your content as this means their needs/desires have been satisfied.
- **Transformational:** Good content, combined with good website design, should drive action by means of the viewer taking the next step, whether that be exploring your site more or becoming a lead.

2. Recession-proof Marketing With SEO

Marketers know all too well the importance of optimizing content. In 2022, that is going to become even more critical. Those who have mastered content marketing win the confidence of stakeholders, who have previously shied away from investing in it, finding its justification difficult.

Investment in content has been minimal because it is not an exact science - unlike other marketing efforts, one cannot accurately predict how content will perform, and it is known to take longer to generate results in comparison to, say, social media advertising. However, as times of financial difficulty are experienced by the world lately, the content has proven its importance.

During a recession, businesses have to cut costs, with marketing budgets often being the first to be slashed. As companies did this, many noticed that even though their advertising spend had decreased, they were able to maintain their levels of website traffic. The reason for this is SEO and the fact that content, when done right, can hold its own and speak for itself. It keeps your content steadily growing over time.

That said, content marketing remains a risky bet for many who have not yet jumped on the bandwagon. However, recent years have shown otherwise, especially in its ability to provide recession-proof marketing results. If you'd like to calculate the ROI of your content, read our blog post on how to do so here. It includes working out your cost of production and conversions. This can assist you with gaining buy-ins, as well as determining reasonable budgets for your content marketing strategy.

3. The State of Content Marketing

Content is varied - it can refer to all sorts of multimedia productions by your business or brand. Diversifying your abilities will do you well in 2022, with video, in particular, being the critical medium for high rates of growth and engagement. Consider content as your communication with your audience, in all forms, whether that be internal communications, social media activity, or contributions made as a guest. Since this form of marketing is so effective, businesses should be working on providing various touchpoints where meetings with their audience are possible, from textual emails and blogs to auditory podcasts and webinar specials.

These are the essential tips and trends to note for content in 2022:

- **Quality is non-negotiable:** Providing and producing quality is no longer a USP - it is an expectation. High levels of quality must be maintained, as well as the ability to tell stories with your content effectively.
- **Distribution matters:** Where you decide to showcase your content is vital, so mastering the best possible scheduling and automation are necessary. Additionally, the customer experience while consuming your content is paramount.
- **Reporting must be conducted:** As a recession-proof marketing technique, one must continually measure the data received on your content. This will allow for strategic testing and improvements to occur.
- **Account-based marketing:** Knowing your audience in-depth is the only way to effectively personalize the experience for them, in line with general marketing trends. This will ensure that you produce content that meets their needs effectively.

- **Become a content leader:** Evaluate your competition and ensure that you deliver the best possible offering to your audience among the lot. This not only refers to the substance but the ability and scale as well.

Content has proven itself to be a recession-proof form of marketing, which will change how stakeholders view and invest in it. Furthermore, content producers need to keep in mind the key considerations and purposes of content in 2022. Now that we're up to speed on content marketing, just how much of it does your business need? Let's investigate.

How Much Content Does My Business Need?

Content can be defined in simple terms as information presented via an electronic medium like a website. It is the message your business shares with audiences in digital marketing activities. So, just how much of it do you need? In this article, we'll be looking at the quantity of quality content you'll need to be successful in the market.

Every output, whether textual or not, forms part of your business's published content. With so many aspects under the umbrella of content marketing, it's easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of information you're required to produce and share. What's more, before that process begins, you've got to conduct a range of research. The research will let you know what types of content you need to be creating and who it's for (your buyer personas).

Popular Types of Content

- **Blog Posts**
- **Emailers**
- **Social media captions, posts, and clips**
- **eBooks**
- **Webinars**
- **Videos**
- **Podcasts**
- **Infographics**
- **Case studies**
- **Animations**
- **Presentation slides**
- **Listicles**
- **Interactive posts**

You need to have a well-rounded and diverse set of media in your marketing mix to keep things interesting, suit different platforms and content purposes, and appeal to your audience.

Figuring Out How Much Content You Need

It all begins with storytelling. Defining your brand and communicating it with your audience.

Content for Your Website

Content really begins with your website, since this is your digital storefront and ideally where you'll be redirecting people to.

But what if my business is run on social media? While these platforms are great to have and use, businesses should aim at having a website as an asset that they own since operating completely via network puts you at risk with limited control and true ownership of the space. Your brand story will determine the type of language you use whenever you're communicating across all digital channels. Once you have crafted your 'About Us,' you can use this information to develop your social media platform bios and

information. How much of this you need will depend on how many channels and platforms you use, though sticking to a few audience favorites that you can adequately manage is best. Content for your website includes landing pages, blog posts, and pillar pages.

Output Across Digital Channels

The content you create for campaigns and general marketing should be integrated across platforms, which saves you time from creating too much content altogether. That said, it should be diverse and include multimedia elements. Include images, text, and video where possible. It should also be noted that since content marketing has become a staple for businesses the world over, audiences expect to see quality content from brands. Quality thus still takes prevalence over quantity, so be sure your marketing messaging meets these standards.

Maximizing Content

You may have heard that content marketing is recession-proof. That is true - it is a long-term strategy for businesses since time is required before SEO results begin showing. All content should be optimized as this can help it achieve a wider reach, thereby reducing your content requirements in the long run. The basics include alt text on your images and making user-friendly blog posts. The type of content you create will also serve different purposes, like being navigational, educational, or transformational.

The Role of the Customer Journey

Your content should appeal to your audience, but also to every stage that they experience with your brand. You've got to share broad content topics for awareness, then hone in on more specific needs that foster relations and lead to sales. Once all is said and done, you've got to create content that'll inspire your customers to become long-term brand advocates.

Your Business's Content Needs Sorted

When developing your content strategy, you can map out each of the aspects above. You should end up with a complex set of segments that will require content. From there, you can determine the content to best fit each platform, which you can come to rely on as templates to make the process easier and keep your outputs consistent. Then, you've got to plan out your campaigns and actually begin creating them, ready to publish. Content should be reviewed on a quarterly or bi-annual basis to monitor performance and make adjustments to improve upon where necessary.

Now we're getting closer to answering the question of how much content your business needs. To circle back to the quality of content - once you've assessed your content needs, you've got to figure out the best way to fulfill them. You can outsource the work to an agency that can do it all professionally for you, work with freelancers on an ad hoc basis, or hire in-house (though don't assume one content king or queen can produce all the necessary types of content. More often than not, you'll require a team). Again, this will depend on your business's needs and your budget. If you're thinking content is iffy when it comes to money, fret not. You can assess and measure the ROI

of your content to make more informed decisions. Marketers are finding ways to make their content go the extra mile in 2022. To do this, you've got to find creative and meaningful ways to repurpose it.

Creative Ways to Repurpose Content

There are so many things you can do with content. Repurposing it is not a lazy tactic, but rather a strategic way of stretching your content so that it has more value. This does not mean you can simply share snippets of a video, or copy-paste your social media posts. To make the most of your content, you've got to get creative, see the bigger picture and understand the platforms you're using to the tee. Let's get stuck in.

Repurposing Content

Reworking and framing content in creative ways can bring new life to existing content. When it comes to branding and marketing online, you'll quickly see that content really is king. It can help you communicate with your audiences and increase understanding, connections, and engagement which is important for online growth.

With content, you want to create an impression, which is why simply recycling it won't work. Equally, you will run yourself dry if you continually try to create new content. To get your content team into gear, you'll need to get stuck in the creative process when generating content plans and ideas. Here's why repurposing content works and how it can benefit your brand:

Repurposing allows you to improve existing content and to extend the lifespan of what's been freshly created. It is essentially a way to reformat it for a new purpose so that when your audience sees it - whether it's the same target audience or a particular segment of yours, they're liking what they see.

Repurposing allows you to share the content across various platforms. By following the specifications, you'll have more successful content that draws in higher rates of engagement. For example, you can create a message that reaches and entices your audiences via your blog and social media channels, for example.

Repurposing also allows you to cater to different needs and niches. For example, someone further along in your sales funnels may still be interested in a particular product, though they're at the stage where they need more in-depth content, so a deep-dive will work better for them.

Sharing different aspects of content for marketing purposes keeps it fresh yet cohesive, allowing for integrated marketing campaigns. This means all of your platforms will share a similar message and look and feel, which will come across as professional and help to reinforce your messaging. This also saves you resources since you can create content with all of these in mind, ensuring you cover all of your bases.

The caveat is in creating the right content. While some content will perform better in some formats on specific platforms, bad content will fall flat no matter how or where you share it. This is why it is important to have a well-researched strategy and campaign before you dive into content creation.

Creative Ways to Share Content

Your website counts. That is to say, you should not overlook your website as a prime platform to share content, so we'll begin here. This is the online 'home base' for your brand, so be sure to populate the relevant pages with campaign messaging, not forgetting the all-important blog. Blogging is great for long-term recession-proof marketing and is a space for you to share long-form content that'll help boost your SEO. This can therefore boost your ranking in online searches and your position as a thought leader in the industry.

Creative ideas to repurpose blog posts:

- Include a roundup of the best blog posts in your own branded online magazine or eBook.
- Create graphics (like infographics or quotes) to share on social media.
- Share snippets and imagery via social media platforms and newsletter emails.
- Create blog posts that cover content you covered in a webinar or podcast, or vice versa.
- Offer in-depth or related content after the blog post as gated content to generate leads.
- Get words from others by interviewing guests and including testimonials.
- Rework and update your old blog posts.
- Use your knowledge to post on forums where you can answer questions (like Quora and Reddit).
- Rework blog posts to share them on third-party blogging sites like Medium.

Next up, let's consider your imagery. While businesses have access to royalty-free content or stock libraries, it is always recommended that you shoot original content for your marketing campaigns. Working with photographers and a videography team can transform your imagery and make the process of repurposing the graphics super simple. You can organize a shoot day where you get photos and videos to be edited and formatted according to your needs and this could last you for months.

Creative ways to repurpose imagery:

- Shoot video content snippets with the shortest being for Instagram and TikTok, slightly longer ones for Facebook and LinkedIn, and you're lengthiest for YouTube and your website.
- Shoot products in different settings, from different angles in multimodal ways.
- Edit your photos consistently so it's thematic and on-brand regardless of where it's posted.
- Play with technology by including time-lapse and panoramic shots so you aren't always relying on a horizontal or vertical graphic.
- Consider non-digital ways to share these images with your audience by using photography for complementary merchandise like postcards.
- Be sure you're taking lots of videos! This is key for high-engagement marketing. You can use videos on social media, in webinars, on your website - wherever you choose to share them, they are highly effective. For example, you could tell a great brand story in a video clip instead of a lengthy 'About Us' page, or handy QR-code

video links with demos instead of having manuals.

- Create short video versions of longer eBooks which are accessible after filling out a lead form.
- Get involved in the action if you're on TikTok by reusing an image as your green screen background.
- Share user-generated content! Your fans love to be shared and others enjoy the authentic third-party content.
- If you have a list of facts or want to share a similar or updated message, put it in a different design to freshen it up, be it new imagery or a new infographic design.
- Do you know what audiences find hard to resist? Interactivity. By including these elements where possible, you're inviting direct connection and engagement. Think about different ways to bring content to life for your viewers, which will also allow you to get feedback for research purposes.

Creative ways to create interactive content:

- Create videos that include links to shoppable content.
- Include polls, stickers, sliders, and the like in your social media Story content.
- Turn checklists and listicles into quizzes that people can take. People like to belong to a certain aesthetic or style tribe, so use your buyer persona data for this.
- Get people involved in a campaign with filters and lenses.
- Create round-up blog posts or social media 'guides' that include a variety of embedded links to your other content.
- Focus on creating and tweaking relevant series-based content where people can get contribute or ask questions, like podcasts and webinars. This also lets you test different platforms to compare interactions and engagement levels.

Make Content Work For You

Repurposing content serves many beneficial purposes for businesses and marketers. By stretching your content, you're doing yourself and your audiences a favor. The key is not to reshape without alterations and a strategy. With the creative ideas below, you can easily fill up your content plans with interesting posts to get your target audience interested and engaged.

Sales Strategies for 2022

By: Toni Becker

2020 has been a difficult year for most businesses and the thought of making sales and reaching targets in the new year has left many feeling anxious about the future. But the future of sales is not as lackluster as you may think, and it comes down to understanding the consumer, reaching your target audience at the right time, and making the right technological investments. In fact, we believe that the opportunities are plentiful, especially for businesses that understand the requirements of customers in the COVID-19 / New Normal era that we live in.

We live in the digital age, and with that comes an array of technologies, and when it comes to sales in 2022, technology and automation is the ultimate investment and business asset.



Technology Meets Sales in 2022

Technology is an integral part of sales strategic planning and businesses are beginning to understand just how beneficial it can be for business growth. In 2022, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software is the way forward as it has the ability to drastically alter the way a business functions and has the potential to impact sales, marketing, and business growth significantly.

What is CRM and how can it increase sales as we head into the ‘new normal’?

CRM software, as the name suggests, is designed to manage a company's interactions with customers and potential customers. When implemented strategically, a CRM will streamline marketing and sales processes, build customer relationships, improve customer service, increase sales, and increase profitability. Essentially, the goal of a CRM is to improve all business relationships, which in turn, improves the bottom line. At Nexa, we typically work with the 2 leading CRM platforms that are available today, HubSpot and Salesforce.

How do they work?

Artificial Intelligence: CRMs are AI-driven tools that automate tasks such as marketing campaigns, email marketing, lead nurturing, and data collection. This allows time for sales representatives to spend more time on selling, and less time engaging in manual, repetitive tasks.

Analytics and Metrics: CRMs provide in-depth insight into sales data, which allows for greater predictions and planning, including when to contact a lead and the best way to engage with them as they move through the buyer's journey. With such intelligent data collection and tracking, you are also able to see the success rate of your sales team, as they complete tasks and move toward making sales.

Sales Tools: Because of its AI and automation capabilities, a CRM allows for better marketing and sales collaboration, alignment, and customer/potential customer messaging, which drives sales and improves customer service.

The Benefits of CRM Software for 2022

Right now, finding customers willing to spend money is not easy, and once you do find customers (or potential customers), it is more important than ever to maintain strong relationships with them. CRM software allows you the opportunity to centralize, optimize and completely streamline communication between your business and your clients or potential clients, ensuring you stay front of mind during this uncertain time.

Below, we outline 5 CRM benefits that will help you win at sales in 2022

1. Greater Customer Satisfaction

As a sales team works with more leads and customers, it becomes difficult to streamline and centralize communication with both existing and potential customers. This is because conversations become suffocated with email after email, and scattered spreadsheets and lost handwritten notes lead to human error and inconsistent interactions. This kind of erratic and stressful communication inevitably leads to customer loss and in turn, great financial loss.

A CRM stores all your customer and potential customer data in a single place, which makes for an immensely powerful communication tool. Not only will your sales team be able to access a contacts full name and contact information, but they will also be able to find beneficial facts about a lead such as where they are in the buyer's journey, how they came across your business, what product or service they are interested in, and even their career position and birthday.

For a sales team, having this information is vital as it helps them assess a lead's needs and wants, and assists them in tailoring and personalizing communications.

A CRM will also keep track of all activities, projects, live chat messages, sales, invoices, emails, and customer service requests that contact has ever been a part of. Essentially, a CRM allows your sales team to better understand a contact and what they want and need from the business.

2. Greater Segmentation

No marketing or sales team wants to engage with the wrong audience, and a CRM allows for greater audience targeting and segmentation. With a powerful CRM, you can break down contact data into specific categories and criteria. This allows your sales and marketing team to run specific customer campaigns designed for a particular audience - when you know who you are speaking to, you can consciously personalize and tailor your message, and your sales pitch.

A strong CRM software helps a sales team know who is truly interested in the business, who is still making a decision, and who is completely cold. This makes the sales process much easier for your team, saving them time and improving your bottom line.

3. Greater Customer Retention

Apart from being a great way to find and nurture potential leads, a CRM is also a powerful tool for keeping your existing clients happy. A CRM also works for customer retention as it helps you keep your promise to your clients by reminding your sales team about appointments or when to follow up on emails.

However, the real advantage here is that a CRM can prompt a sales team to reach out to customers who have not been contacted in a while, ensuring you continue the conversation and stay top of mind at all times. And here is the best part: a CRM will help you implement and orchestrate your marketing activities through automation. The software will send our personalized email campaigns, customer survey emails, or post-purchase emails - at the right time!

4. Greater Understanding of Needs

Any sales team is more confident when they know what to expect from a lead or current client. It is so much easier to sell or up-sell when you are able to fully track a contact's buying habits. One of the primary benefits of investing in a CRM is that it can help your sales team sell more and sell quickly because they have access to a customer's interaction history and the entire customer journey, which allows them the ability to anticipate and prepare for a customer's needs.

Think about it like this: if a sales representative knows a contact's purchase history, that is: what they purchased and when, and even how they became a customer (where they found your business), your sales rep and marketing team can be proactive and come up with better offers and present this offer to a client at the right time.

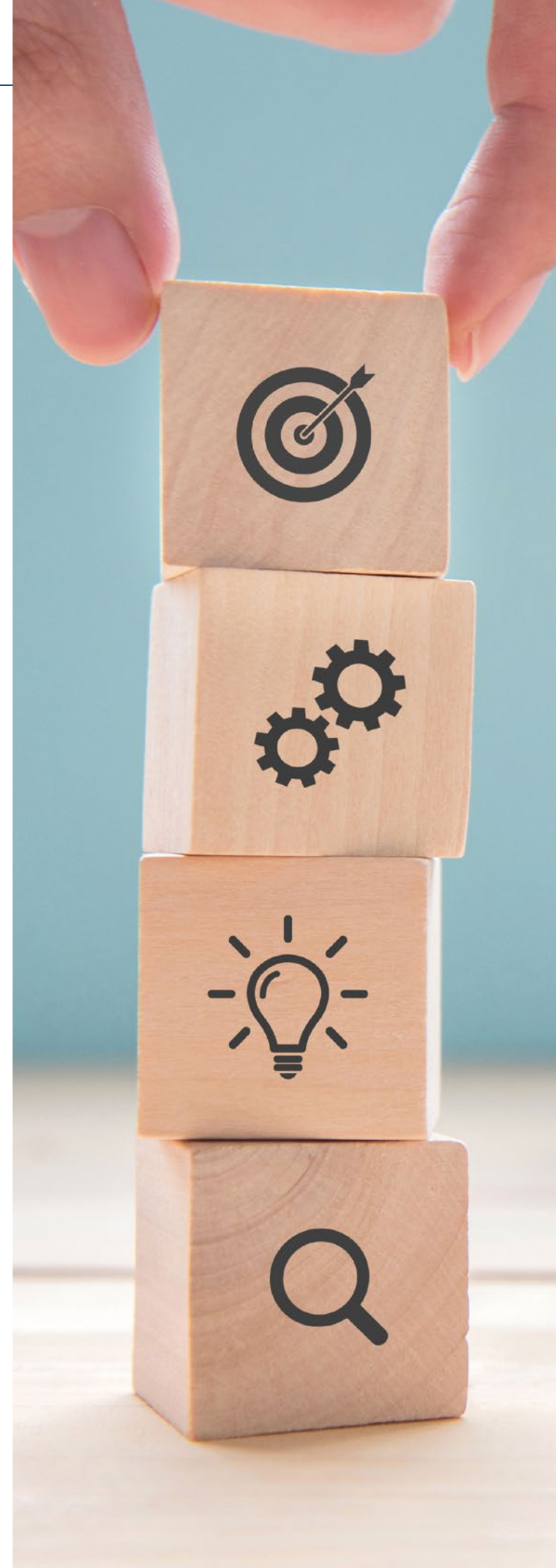
5. Greater and Faster Communication

The last thing your sales team should do is keep a potential or current customer waiting, and replying to a query quickly is a sign of true professionalism and establishes trust. You can save your customers time by using a CRM, as it offers a set of customizable, ready-to-use email templates, proposals, documents, invitations, quotes, etc. This saves your team time and ensures your customers get a response as soon as possible.

Another important benefit of a CRM is that it helps your team draft messages, and schedules their dispatch days, weeks, and even months in advance!

Customer Relationships as a Sales Priority in 2022

Your leads and customers are more than a simple sales opportunity. You may have the best services and products on offer in 2022, but you will not sell a thing if you do not provide the best customer service. Building strong relationships with the consumer should be your greatest priority as you head into the new year - because, without this, your sales are sure to take a knock.



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