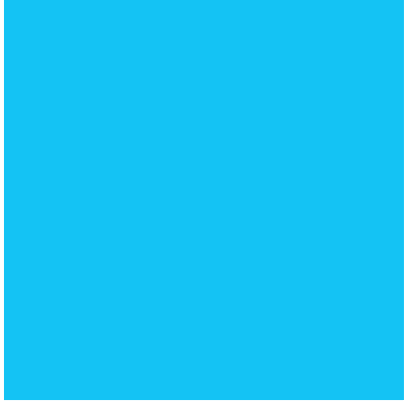













The Changing B2B Marketing Landscape

Napier

Contents

The Changing B2B Landscape 2
The New Age of PR 4
Paid Media 7
Earned Media 12
Social Media 16
Owned Media 18
Addressing the Shift in B2B Buyer Behaviour 22
Print Communications 27
The Rapid Changes in Direct Marketing 31
Website Design 41
Video Production 47
Campaign Measurement 52
B2B Marketing Measurement 62

WE



TECH

www.napierb2b.com

Napier

The Changing B2B Landscape



During the course of the last decade, there has been somewhat of a tectonic shift in the way marketers communicate, advertise & promote themselves to their target audiences, with the emergence of digital significantly changing the way marketers & PR professionals are required to interact with their customers, prospects, and the media.

As these marketing dynamics continue to change, there is increased pressure on marketers to adapt their strategies, with a particular focus on the way they engage with the market, present their brand, the activities they conduct, and how and when each are conducted. While a significant amount of companies have embraced digital, and subsequently adapted their traditional PR and marketing approaches accordingly, there are still a number of marketers who have yet to conform to this changing landscape.

While the rise of digital has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the changing B2B landscape, other factors have contributed to the need for PR and marketing departments to adapt their strategies. The recent global economic turmoil, for example, has led to increasing prominence being paid to budget allocation within organisations, and as a result, the value of each business area has been under continued scrutiny.

With marketers under more pressure than ever to prove the value of each activity they undertake, this guide has been designed to outline how PR and marketing has changed over the course of the last two decades, and subsequently how marketing teams can effectively leverage both new and traditional channels in order to implement highly successful campaigns in a modern day B2B environment.

The New Age of PR



The 1990s may have been deemed the golden age of PR, with budgets generous & organisations truly appreciative of PR's value, however as the media landscape has evolved, PR practice has had no choice but to evolve with it. Although PR today looks very different from the 1990s, it is much broader, and in many ways more important, than it was a couple of decades ago.

While the more traditional media channels can still be effective, there is no denying that the proliferation of digital channels has not only reduced the power of their more traditional counterparts, but has also changed the dynamics of customer communications.

Arguably the most significant different is the role of public relations itself. PR has come a long way in the last two decades, and is now much more than just building relationships with journalists, writing & distributing press releases and organising product launches. While the process of convincing a third party, typically a journalist, to report favourably on your brand remains a significant role of PR, it has since shifted to meet the opportunities provided by the digital revolution.

As in industry we are now making considerations beyond the idea itself; longevity, shareability, distribution and even redistribution are all taken into account as part of the blueprint, this is paradigm shift from thinking of outreach as an afterthought. Content needs to self-propagate, live in its own right, and evolve beyond its initial immediate requirements. As we embrace these higher production values we will see a lower volume of content, with a growth of single concepts designed to fulfil multiple requirements, delivered in sprints and many formats.

With an increasing number of channels to consider, in an incredibly crowded and competitive digital landscape, PR professionals must be able to operate in a real-time environment, via a multitude of channels, while communicating with both target audiences & industry influencers

are a range of different levels of understanding. With this advancement in technology, PR can be categorised into four types of media: Paid, Earned, Social and Owned (PESO).

Paid Media



Paid media is not only an effective way to promote your brand, products and services, but it is increasingly being used to promote content, driving traffic to your owned properties. The reality is, it doesn't matter how brilliant your content is if nobody knows about it, and while it is possible to leverage owned media channels for this purpose, paid media enables content amplification across external channels and streams, in order to reach target audiences who wouldn't otherwise be exposed to your content.

Although paid media has become less about banner ads and more about content development, online advertising efforts such as retargeting, PPC and in fact banner ads can still be effective elements of a successful digital marketing strategy.

It is no surprise that as the digital landscape evolves, the line between PR and advertising continues to blur. The fact that the primary format of paid media is advertising, provides a clear example of how digital has integrated PR with other marketing tactics. This further emphasises how far PR has come in the last two decades, with PR and advertising both two very separate entities back then. Despite common scepticism of paid media, there is no denying that the benefits make it a clearly worthwhile effort; increased reach, improved targeting and analysis and data feedback to inform real-time future campaigns. Here are some tips that will help you implement or leverage your paid media efforts:

Define the three elements of paid media campaigns

Paid media has the ability for companies to deliver and scale a message to the right people, at the right time. To ensure you really are maximising the return on your investment by driving down costs and earning more value from your media buying initiatives, you need to define three things: who exactly should see the ads (targeting), what the ads should say (messaging), and what needs to be achieved (the goals and objectives).

Social media advertising

In recent years, social media platforms have advanced their advertising offering, making it much more simple & effective for marketers to get the most out of their paid social efforts. With most sites offering a self-service ad platform, marketers can quickly and easily target their ads. Business platforms, particularly LinkedIn offer options including job role, interests, industry, and experience, as well as more general demographics such as gender and age). When setting up display ads on either, you will be able to set up daily budgets, as well as bidding ranges.

Native advertising

Additional to PPC advertising on social media channel, is the more recent option of native advertising. Native advertising refers to content that is designed to integrate seamlessly with digital channels in order to be perceived as less of an ad, and more like any other piece of content on the site. Many of the tactics used by this type of advertising have been around for decades, and have since been modified for use in sponsored content. With it being consumed every day in vast amounts, and with 75% of publishers now offering online native advertising, it is an opportunity that at the very least should be considered. To be successful in your efforts, avoid pushing your product or service, rather combine promotion with content that's deemed valuable, informative or entertaining to prospects. Native advertising that's used as an attempt to sell, is a sure fire way of wasting time and money, whilst potentially damaging credibility.

Use powerful copy

LinkedIn ads are short at only 75 characters for the description and 25 characters for the headline, and Twitter ads are even shorter. With that in mind, ad copy needs to be clear, concise and ultimately straight to the point. Don't spend all of your time fretting over your targeting approach, because like anything, if the content isn't there it will be a fail no matter who sees it. Along with your CTA,

remember to include site links and, if relevant, ad extensions.

Leverage SEM

When it comes to SEM efforts, highlight your unique selling point (USP) in your copy. Paid search is a highly competitive tactic, and your ads will be both above and underneath your competitors, therefore highlighting and conveying the key points that differentiates your product or service increases your chances of taking traffic from your competition, and helps your chances of your PPC ads performing well. That said, successful paid search campaigns require constant monitoring and optimising, after all if you're not testing, you're losing traffic and potential customers. Test different elements of your campaigns, such as headlines, fonts, colours, offers and landing pages, as well as keywords to identify if they convert, which can also help determine whether or not your SEO strategy should focus on them, as this is far more cost-beneficial in the long-term.

Provide a strong call to action

Explain explicitly what action you want your prospects to take. At the end of the day, no matter how good the creative is, the purpose of the ad still boils down to this one request, and for maximum effect make sure you include direct instructions to do something, encourage them to respond straight away, and if relevant a no-obligation statement that reduces or eliminates risk, for instance encouraging a free trial isn't requesting that somebody purchases there and then.

Be consistent and integrate as part of a bigger campaign

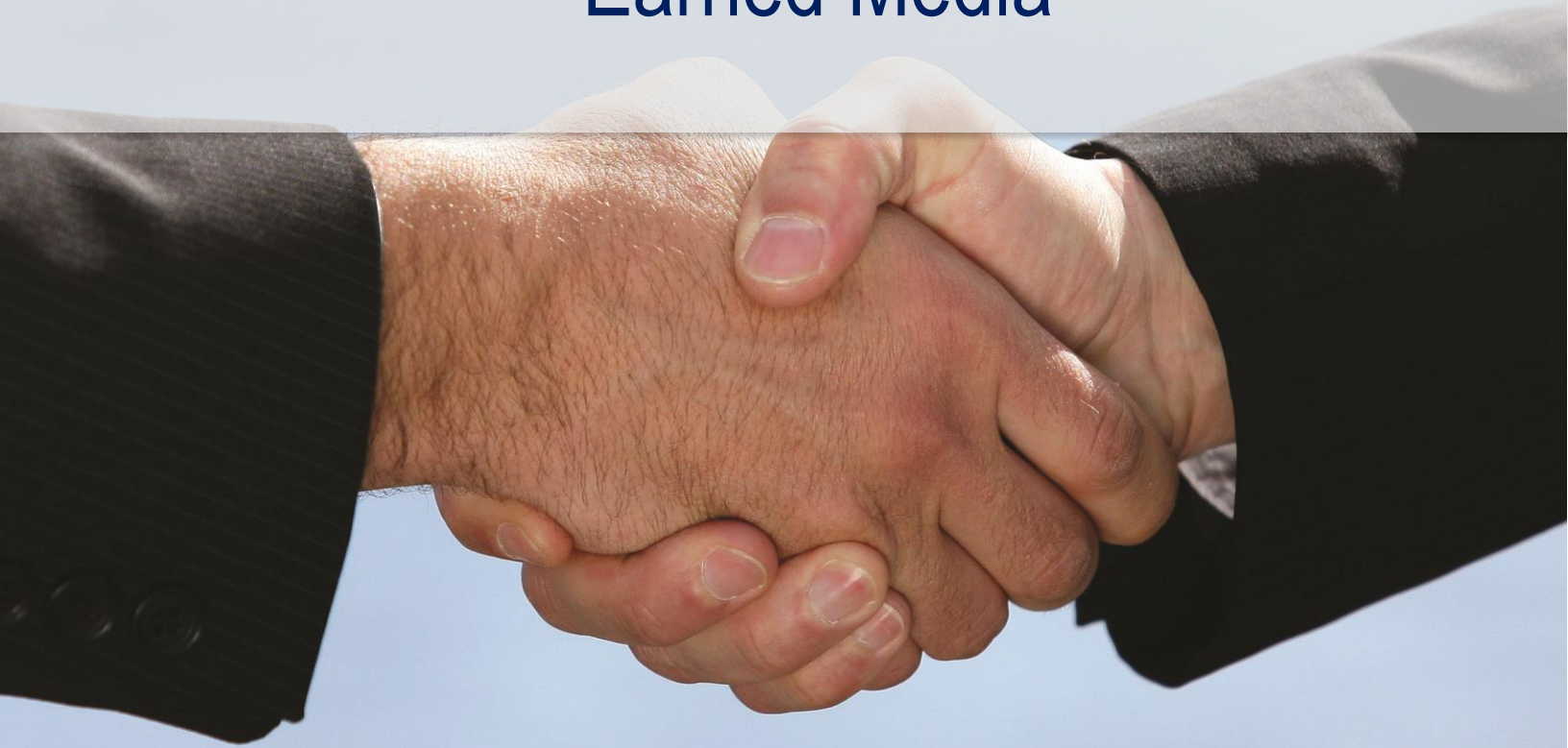
Paid media tactics are usually the most beneficial when leveraged as part of an integrated marketing communications campaign, so don't forget to keep marketing messages consistent across all channels. Additionally, your paid media tactics should seamlessly integrate and influence your earned and owned media efforts. Thanks to native advertising, and even SEM marketing, you are able to amplify the reach of earned and owned

content, and share it with the right audience. The unfortunate reality is that most of your earned media coverage won't have the reach or volume to influence all of your target prospects, but paid media gives you the option to promote your latest earned media wins. Additionally, encourage social sharing to generate earned media.

Retargeting works

Despite the common misconception, retargeting can be an extremely powerful tool for B2B companies. The simple fact is, the majority of visitors won't convert on their first visit, especially with the path for B2B decision making far more complex than that of B2C. Oh, and 44% don't tend to convert until 2 weeks or more after their first visit. So with that in mind, why risk being the "forgotten one", and why wouldn't you do all you can to encourage these prospects to return to your site, whilst increasing your chances of being shortlisted as a potential vendor? The structure of both retargeting and banner ads, should answer any queries or doubts your potential customers may have, while explaining (or linking to an explanation of) why your product or service is the solution to their problems.

Earned Media



Despite the struggle to survive faced by some trade publications, earned media, generated by traditional media and analyst relations, remains a key part of almost all campaigns. The influence and endorsement generated by earned media makes any coverage much more powerful. With the data now available to marketers, earned media campaigns can be optimised by monitoring, analysing and understanding the results.

Monitor your earned media efforts

Constantly that is. Set up Google Alerts for your brand, products/services, and other keywords or people. Additionally, use a platform such as TweetDeck to constantly monitor tweets that include your brand name, and if you have the budget, online media monitoring platforms such as Meltwater can be used to monitor all online press coverage for your company.

Use your competitive intelligence

Monitor competitor coverage and observe what tactics they're using. Using your competitive intelligence will give you an insight into each of these things, while also enabling you to capitalise on their mistakes, potentially giving you greater audience engagement and increased share of voice. Consider having systems in place to track mentions of both your company and relevant product or service related keywords.

Make it easier for the journalist

There may be new approaches to PR thanks to the digital era, but traditional approaches are still valuable and media relations shouldn't be neglected. One of the most important things to remember when it comes to building and maintaining relationships with journalists, is that they have their own priorities, deadlines and editorial calendars to work towards, and cannot be expected to work to your company's communications plan. With these journalists already bombarded daily with pitches, your pitching efforts need to be targeted, specific and ultimately relevant to their publication and readership, as generic journalist pitches

won't be taken seriously, and most definitely won't lead to a follow up call and ultimately coverage.

Have a website page specifically for journalists

Journalists have limited time, and being seen to go out of your way to help them out will often place your company in good stead, while additionally ensuring your company is written about in the most accurate sense. A simple, effective and appreciated way to do to this is to have press page on your website that hosts information, relevant company stats, recent news coverage and other valuable materials. While journalists writing about you will still typically come to you for additional information, providing the basic knowledge, gives them a clearer understanding, reducing the time needed to research the story.

Respect the journalists' role

At the end of the day, journalists aren't there to sell your product or services, but rather to tell a story, capture relevant news for their publication while making a fair and accurate assessment of your company's offering, launch or announcement. Failing to respect their role not only limits your chance of positive, if any, coverage, but also makes it much more difficult to build and maintain lasting relationships.

Exercise due diligence

While monitoring media packs and forward features lists remains a key tactic in understanding what topics' publications are talking about and when, social media has leant way to a new real-time information source. Social media can, and should, be leveraged by PR professionals, to monitor how and when reporters are talking about topics in your industry, and responding with valuable content, tips or even links.

Media relations is two-sided

Possibly the most effective way to build and maintain effective media relations, is to add genuine value to the journalists' role. While being considerate of their time

constraints, and as such doing all you can to help them is the first step in building these relationships, to be of help and provide value when nothing in return is expected is a sure fire way to earn respect.

The reality is, media relations is a two way street and expecting them to go out of their way to help you, yet giving them nothing in return won't do you or your company any favours.

Social Media



The proliferation of social media channels has made it possible for companies to not only engage with their audiences directly, but also to encourage positive exposure from customers, prospects & industry influencers. While these new approaches to earned media may not have diluted the importance of media relations, the more recent approach of encouraging word of mouth marketing on social media platforms, in order to build awareness, credibility and trust, is an approach that all companies should be leveraging alongside media relations.

Get people talking

In a positive way of course. While easier said than done, all brands should strive to achieve successful word of mouth (WOM) and referral marketing, after all with B2B purchases decisions typically based on trust and relationships, having brand advocates can make half the sale for you. WOM may well be the oldest form of marketing, but the amplification of social media has made it a million times more possible for opinions, recommendations and unfortunately the criticism of a company to be spread amongst potential prospects. You can use this to your advantage, it's a great opportunity to be make your brand more human and relatable. If you can respond positively and efficiently with a solution to any criticism you have the opportunity to win back that customer and show potential customers you are proactive. While there is no quick fix, building relationships with industry influencers, regularly engaging with your audiences and positioning your company as a thought leader are each important steps in carving out a successful WOM strategy.



Owned Media

One factor that has contributed to the shift in media consumption, is the ability for companies to maintain their own media channels, including company websites, social media channels, blogs & email-newsletters. While earned media coverage will continue to be of unparalleled value to a brand, it has become almost an expectation that brands are leveraging these channels to communicate directly with their audience.

A consistent issue with owned media, however, is that many companies are in fact using it for over promotion of their brand and offering. With that in mind, the following tips will ensure you are avoiding this and leveraging them to effectively engage with both existing & prospective customers.

Integrate PR with SEO

SEO can no longer be perceived as the underdog in marketing, and with Google continuously fine-tuning its algorithm, you must accept its' increasing importance, and the essential need for it be integrated with all online PR & marketing efforts. Begin by developing a keyword glossary, highlighting the keywords that are pain point- oriented for both customers and the media, using Google's free AdWords keywords tool to generate the data needed to create this glossary. Additional efforts that should be made include conducting a technical SEO audit of your website, as well as optimising your content by improving content usability for users first and only then making it findable by search engines.

Create content and channel strategies

Integration of both online and offline techniques are an essential part of an effective strategy, and fully understanding how all of your channels will work together is a priority, in order to try and guide your audience in the most desired direction. When it comes to content strategy, consider your team's skillset in order to identify who can develop each

type of content, and identify clearly the issues that your existing and potential customers care about. This will allow you to develop a flexible editorial calendar.

Understand the marriage of marketing tactics

Successful digital PR campaigns won't happen if you can't acknowledge that PR no longer works in isolation. SEO, for example, should no longer be an after-thought, and has become a fundamental part of PR in the digital era, as is both social media & content marketing. The simple fact is, PR is no longer a one dimensional tactic, and the most effective PR strategy is one that seamlessly combines each, enabling companies to transform static news into conversations, while communicating directly with target audiences.

Manage the tone of your communications

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. So when it comes to your marketing communications, being clear, confident and compelling in your content, is just as important as the content itself, and with the communications landscape representing somewhat of a battleground, you can have the most valuable content in the world, but if it fails to engage the reader, game over.

Repurpose content

PR has become much more than just conveying a message to your audience, with companies now required to educate and engage with them. The challenge is that this requires the management of multiple information channels, something that takes a lot of time and effort. Or does it? Repurposing content is a practical and effective way to extend the "shelf-life" of content, and needn't take the time or resources many marketers fear it will. Consider taking press releases or articles and adapting them into a blog post, SlideShare presentation, infographic or a social media post.

Share your own news

By taking a press release and crafting it into a blog post, you are able to put your own perspective on the story, emphasising what makes it newsworthy, and why exactly the industry should care about it. This is a really effective and engaging way to share your own news, while supplementing the traditional (and still relevant) press release. Additionally, this drives inbound interest to your website and more specifically directs prospects to the pages that are relevant to the story, further helping with your websites search ranking.

Become a storyteller

The best, and arguably only way for brands to effectively engage with prospects through narrative, is to tell them something that they will care about, or more specifically something that will benefit them and their business. This is where owned media differs from press releases and journalist pitches. While it's key to impress journalists with the capabilities of your brand and offering, building relationships directly with prospects requires the ability to resonate with them, speak their language and make them believe that your product or service is the solution to their problems.

Addressing the Shift in B2B Buyer Behaviour



With individuals increasingly well-informed, and more in control than ever of their own information consumption, they are now far less dependent on sales reps to get hold of the information required to make buying decisions. Technology has evolved, and the B2B buyer has evolved with it, and while companies may have traditionally been able to use their product and/or service collateral as a source of effective lead generation, with buyers directly requesting this information, this shift in power has changed the dynamics of B2B buyer behaviour.

Despite B2B audiences evolving as quickly as the media and channels around them, the following points will serve to provide some insight that will allow for the development of high- value resources which, if managed effectively, will not only resonate with the target audience, but potentially regain some element of control.

Value is the secret to lead gen

Your target audience may not be banging at the doors for product information, but with the right tactics, you can retain some element of control over your content, further encouraging prospects to give up their personal details in exchange for this collateral. While the abundance of information now available significantly reduces the customers reliance on your company in the earlier stages of their decision making process, many individuals will still provide their details in exchange for high-value, typically very technical information. Nowadays, it is unlikely that anyone will request anything they aren't convinced will be of incremental help to them, and for this reason you should meet them halfway by providing some content that can be immediately accessed, using a registration wall to capture the information of individuals who wish to download more in-depth information.

Track their journey

Advanced software has made it possible to accurately track a prospects customer

journey, while making informed decisions and intelligent approaches, based on what stage they're at in the sales funnel. Recognising their needs and acknowledging their challenges, will make them feel valued and understood, as does knowing the correct and most appropriate time to engage with them, whether this be over a call or email. Just because someone has downloaded a whitepaper doesn't mean they're about to jump ship and engage with a new supplier, so trying to pitch to them after one download may scare them away, after all you wouldn't propose after one date would you?

Identify the reason behind their purchase

The process of tracking their journey gives you the insight behind their decision making process, and making an assumption (and getting it wrong) could, and probably will, be the difference between consideration and dismissal. While this reason will probably be improvements in productivity, tracking which pages they visit, which content they consume, and if possible obtaining insights directly from sales, you will be able to make an informed guess into the reasons behind their purchases, helping to strategically plan an effective nurturing approach.

Tailor content for each stage of the sales funnel

By tracking and monitoring a prospects journey, you can send them relevant content that addresses their specific needs. At the highest point of the funnel are prospects who don't have an existing relationship with your company, may have little knowledge of your brand, and may well be in the earlier stages of their decision making process. Appropriate content would be short, digestible pieces, such as blog posts, videos and infographics, which specifically address their challenges. These should be easily searchable, further amplified through social media and paid media efforts. As prospects begin to display awareness and some level of interest in your company, they will usually be willing to invest some time & information into learning more about your offering. At this stage you

should offer more in-depth, higher-value, detailed content, for instance whitepapers, guides, webinars, e-newsletters etc., in exchange for contact information. Finally, as leads become closer to conversion, you must begin to show interaction by providing them with demos, trials or free assessments, as well as initiating direct contact via the phone.

Get social with prospective buyers

While few buyers will actually use social media as a critical part of their B2B purchasing process, they will still expect you to be active on social channels. As a company operating in this digital era, it's a smart move to integrate your social media activity with your content marketing efforts, especially to amplify this content, engage with prospective buyers and establish a thought leadership positioning. Companies who fail to do this, run the risk of missing out on the 5% of B2B buyers who allegedly do use social media as an important part of their research, as well as the remainder who will still expect to find them on these channels.

Don't neglect offline buyer engagement

There is a non-digital world out there (shock, horror!), that still offers opportunities for buyer engagement. According to the Buyersphere study, a third of B2B buyers still attend exhibitions or trade shows as part of their purchasing decision process, suggesting that such events remain an effective and valuable tactic, especially for offline engagement. That said, the most effective approach is one that integrates offline efforts with online tactics, for a complete integrated approach. Additional to this, the one area of offline engagement that is still as important as ever is the need for direct communication, whether this be over the phone or face-to-face.

Marketing automation's place in the buying journey

Being able to identify a buyers' purchase reason, track their journey, provide the content which answers the questions your prospects are struggling with, as well as

knowing the right time to engage these buyers, and through which channels, is typically a far more complex process than many companies would like, especially for bigger companies with a larger sales pipeline. Fortunately, the advancements in technology has paved way for software that manages the majority of this process for us, while delivering the data and knowledge that can drive engagement and increase conversion rates. Marketing automation's biggest advantage is in its ability to enable marketers to tailor their activities to the customers buying process, something which is undeniably increasingly valuable to a company, particularly as these behaviours continue to evolve alongside technology.

Understand the emotional process

B2B purchase decisions are often fuelled by personal emotion, with the decision process typically driven by a combination of fear and desire. B2B buyers can be faced with an element of fear when it comes to these purchase decisions, with this fear typically being for the loss of professional credibility, and potentially even their job security should they make the wrong decision. Another emotion often attached to these decisions is desire, typically for profit, efficiency and security. The most successful companies are those that can effectively counteract their prospects fears, and to do this, brands will need to highlight these pain points through their ongoing marketing communications efforts, with the intention of raising awareness, while building credibility and trust among target audiences. Brands that fail to do so may well be associated with a sense of risk, and are subsequently less likely to be selected as a vendor.

Print Communications



It's true, print advertising continues to survive, and flourish, in many regions across the world. In Europe, and particularly Germany, readers' affinity for print has not waned, and it therefore continues to offer value, particularly for brand advertising.

Of course print has some drawbacks, particularly in terms of the limited ability to track results. Dedicated URLs and phone numbers, as well as QR codes, offer some opportunity to analyse effectiveness, but only tell part of the story. But despite the limitations, and the uncertain future, print remains a medium that marketers in many B2B industries need to continue to consider.

Acknowledge the plusses of print

In an era where print is very much referred to as a dying medium, perhaps it would be worthwhile to acknowledge the positives that print still offers. Firstly, it has staying power. Influential trade magazines still have a following, and as such a trade mag has the potential to remain in the office for a long period of time, passing the hands of many prospects. The same can't be said for digital… There's also no denying that a full page ad can be extremely powerful for branding, especially when it features bold graphics and unique brand imagery. Finally, print tends to be more engaging for its audience, as prospects tend to spend more time consuming the contents of a print publication, and brands tend to have more space to better communicate the complexities of a highly technical product or sales message.

The arguable death of printed sales collateral

Despite still being used by many companies to communicate both company and product information, printed brochures are very much dubbed a seldom-read, waste of money by many marketers. And with increased pressures on budget allocations, it's no surprise that many are averse to the heavy investment

associated with the printing and distribution of sales collateral. The problem is, sales people still argue the value of printed collateral on their sales pipelines, and it has to be said, if it is a tool that delivers ROI for the business then why stop just because digital has made waves in the marketing world (okay, perhaps more of a tsunami). The good news for both divisions, however, is that printed collateral can (and should) take a leaf out of content marketing's book…bible. People no longer want self-promoting material, they want value. While sales brochures still have their place, consider focusing printed efforts on best practice guides, enabling you to demonstrate expertise using a tool that is essentially a sales brochure, yet is a more attractive, better-structured version of a whitepaper.

Be creative, but more importantly be focused

When it comes to print advertising, your initial focus should be on the message you're trying to convey, and only then should you become creative with it. One mistake marketers make in both print and digital advertising, is that their message gets lost due to the ad being too creative to be clear and ultimately understood by the audience.

Remain consistent

Whether this be print ads, printed sales collateral or direct mailers, ensure that they reinforce the messaging and branding that the rest of your marketing efforts are. It's crucial that companies effectively integrate online and offline techniques, by making the visual and messaging work across all key channels, varying them to fit the context of the medium.

Do your research

Obvious as it may seem, when you are planning your advertising, ensure you are selecting relevant publications to advertise in. Ideally decisions should reflect your business and marketing goals, but if you have a particularly limited budget, and are using your advertising

spend to increase sales or registrations etc., then it may be more beneficial to target vertical publications that are specifically targeted to your audience, not necessarily just your industry. On the other hand, if you are hoping to achieve a broader industry awareness, then horizontal publications may be the better choice. Always check the publications readership information which should include circulation and audience demographics, as well as their forward features list which can highlight which issues might be particularly beneficial and complimentary to your advertising efforts.

The Rapid Changes in Direct Marketing



There's no denying that digital has significantly impacted the evolution of direct marketing (DM), but what can be denied is the fact that DM has gone entirely digital. It hasn't. Granted, the internet has become one big direct marketing machine, but the principle of DM remains the same as it did twenty years ago. The fact is, regardless of the medium, channel or technology being used, direct marketing remains just that – direct. So while email, social media and, even more recently, marketing automation have made their (much appreciated) appearances, direct marketing can be just as effective through the more traditional approaches (telemarketing and direct mail), as it was 'back in the day'.

In my opinion, there are three (very broad) camps when it comes to marketers, the "can't accept change, won't accept digital" camp, the "offline is outdated, digital all the way" camp, and the "traditional marketing isn't dead, digital just made it smarter" camp. So while direct marketing can no longer be defined in terms of any one medium, companies that aren't adopting an integrated, multi-channel approach, using a range of both online and offline techniques, limit their own success, and with one-to-one marketing more data driven than ever, the following tips will help ensure you are effectively managing your campaigns in the evolution of DM, while leveraging data to enhance both online and offline techniques.

Email Marketing

Back in 1991, Hotmail launched the world's first free web based email service, a move which marked the beginning of inundation marketing. Fast-forward over twenty years, and the cost effectiveness & subsequent high ROI from using email marketing as a tactic has been acknowledged, and as a result, inundation marketing has well and truly skyrocketed. As email recipients became swamped with marketing message after marketing message, advancements to email platforms came into play, enabling users to determine which emails they wish to receive, and which they'd rather go unnoticed. Unfortunately for marketers,

email sending has since required a far more strategic approach.

Email starts with a database

First and foremost, as a marketer, you should strive to build and maintain a relevant and accurate database, and by making the most of every opportunity – trade shows, web registrations etc. – you will be able to continually develop far better segmented and targeted email lists, which stands a better chance of achieving greater ROI from your campaigns.

Subject lines are the gateway to opens

When it comes to the email creation itself, one area which often gets little consideration is the subject line. While marketers tend to graft over the email content (and rightly so), it is in fact the subject lines that are the gateway to getting your emails read, and if they fail to entice the recipient, then the contents of your email will be a wasted effort. With that in mind, subject lines which are concise, specific, relevant and ultimately intriguing, are arguably the most effective.

Only valuable content will move prospects along the sales funnel

While subject lines may be responsible for your open rates, it is the contents which will drive CTR. Or if we're being pessimistic, it may well drive your email straight to the deleted items file. Email content that is both compelling and highly-relevant tends to achieve the greatest ROI, and it is for this reason that your email lists should be segmented and targeted. While in B2B, it isn't always possible to provide offers and incentives, it should in fact be remembered that B2B buyers are responsive to what they perceive to be of value to them, and whether an email is for lead gen or lead nurturing purposes, addressing a user's specific challenges and needs with, you guessed it, valuable content, is far more likely to resonate with your target audience and drive your click-through rates.

Emails must have an action

Arguably the biggest objective of an email campaign, is to drive traffic to a specific landing page. For this reason, avoid trying to communicate every little thing, after all long-winded paragraphs in email just doesn't work, but what it does do is encourage the reader to hit delete. It is also worth noting that call to action's (CTAs) should instruct your audience on what they should do. For instance if you want them to download a whitepaper, tell them to download the whitepaper. Don't rely on them to read between the lines. That said, your CTAs only stand a chance of working, if your copy has done the job of encouraging them it will be of value to them.

Marketing Automation

There is an all too common misconception that marketing automation is a type of email marketing. It isn't. It may well encompass automated email, but the fact of the matter is that marketing automation extends well beyond email – think integrated marketing, landing pages and advanced analytics.

A second misconception is that marketing automation drives web traffic – it doesn't. It converts traffic into leads. With the emergence of digital marketing well and truly having opened the doors to a wealth of B2B data, marketing automation was the first to revolutionise the use of this data, by creating more effective marketing campaigns through scoring, nurturing and revenue attribution.

Data should be the driver of your marketing decisions

Perhaps the biggest change in direct marketing (aside from the abundance of new channels) is the evident shift from product-centric campaigns, to the more customer-centric campaigns. The art of effective marketing is about getting the most relevant message, to the right customer, at the right time, via the right channel, and while this has, to some extent, always been these case, marketers now have access to tools that enable them to leverage vast quantities of data,

enabling the most personalised and relevant marketing messages.

Aligned sales and marketing

Data may well be the driver in the success of these campaigns, but they will fail from the get go if there isn't a good line of communication between sales and marketing. The ability to define your audience is the foundation of any marketing automation process and, office politics aside, if both departments fail to cooperate, it will be extremely difficult for marketers to define what sales considers to be the typical make-up of a qualified lead, and as such effectively automate lead scoring.

Effective lead scoring

It's important to appreciate that lead scoring cannot determine whether a prospect is going to convert to a customer. While technology may have evolved, we're still a while off predicting the future, and for now this insight should be leveraged to make sales teams more efficient by using qualification and prioritisation.

When setting up a scoring model, it's worth grasping the difference between actions that indicate interest and actions that indicate intent. Whitepaper downloads, for example, indicate interest, as opposed to viewing a pricing page or requesting a product trial which both indicate intent.

Getting started

If you have yet to incorporate marketing automation into your marketing mix, relax, you're not the only ones. Marketing automation may not be a 'quick fix' to sales, and will require time and resources, however there is no point committing to a full-scale deployment until you've worked out exactly how it can deliver value for your company. Simply put, start small and scale. But make sure you have something that's actually worth automating, and by this I mean a steady flow of fresh, relevant and ultimately valuable content.

Landing pages

Used correctly, the process of marketing automation can deliver far greater results than traditional email campaigns, however a big part of achieving this is in the art of the landing page, and the challenge is in building landing pages that actually convert. The key is to present valuable information in a logical way, using a visually inviting format, while avoiding the hard sell.

It works well to be clear of the value in the headline, as this element is usually first to catch the persons eye. The clearer the value, the greater chance you have of generating conversions.

It's also important to maintain the prospects interest throughout the process, so avoid giving away too much information within the email, but enough to encourage them to click through to the detail on the landing page. That said, try and describe this detail as concisely as possible, preferably using short sentences and bullet points, remember less is more as people don't have the time, patience or intent to read an essay. Landing pages should also grab attention, while in-keeping with your brand and not offering too much of a distraction.

Creating forms

In order to capture leads, those leads need to want to be captured. So to speak. The challenge is, even with the most valuable content, and visually enticing landing page, you're still at risk of losing prospective leads at the final hurdle if you aren't using an effective registration form. Rule number one: don't ask for their life story. Too many marketers do, and as a result too many prospects change their mind. Keep it short and sweet and don't ask for anything that isn't critical to your sales process.

Dynamic content

One mistake many companies make is asking prospects to fill out forms time and time again. Not only will this irritate the prospect, but it seriously risks them dropping out of the sales pipeline. And what for? Information you've already

obtained? Using dynamic content to display different content for these prospects, keeps them interested, avoids irritating them and helps transition them through the sales funnel.

Coupling dynamic content with marketing automation enables you to display content, either within a landing page or email, according to pre-determined rules based on a lead's attributes. Using customer insights obtained from website tracking, registrations, social media, historical analysis etc., you will be able to personalise the content presented to them based on various factors including product/service interests, content preferences, buyer personas, purchase history and location. This will allow you to deliver highly tailored messaging, influencing your prospect to take the next step on their buyer journey.

Telemarketing

New channels may have come into the mix, but good old fashioned telemarketing will never get old, because at the end of the day, no matter how advanced technology gets, at some point people still want to talk to other people. Despite still having a stigma, telemarketing is in fact very different in a B2B environment than it is in B2C, firstly because it doesn't require trying to sell to people who are half way through their dinner, and secondly, done correctly, it is about reaching out to potential buyers with a solution to their business problems. Granted, they may not always need your product or service, nor be in a position to want any further information at that point in time, but the majority of B2B buyers are receptive to these calls as it is their job to procure products or services for their business.

Do your homework prior to the call

I kid you not, I've known of people to live in seventh story flats, yet receive calls from companies trying to sell them a conservatory. Now while this isn't quite B2B technology, the principle still applies – for god sake do your homework, know who you're talking to, and to the best of

your ability know everything about that person that will help convert them into a customer.

There are still many companies that do in fact use cold calling techniques, and for this research is more important than ever. Granted, it's not possible to know absolutely everything, but if, for instance, you ask to speak to someone who left the company several years previous, is completely (and obviously) the wrong person to speak with, or you are addressing the person by the wrong name, you are destined to fail, as is your company's reputation with whoever it is you're speaking with.

Move over content, knowledge is king

The truth is, telemarketing may be far from dead, but just like everything else, it has been affected by the evolving digital landscape. Albeit in a positive way. Data drives telemarketing just as much as it does marketing automation, social media marketing or any other type of marketing communication, and this insight allows for more tailored sales calls.

Additionally, use the insights now available to guide the conversation, allowing for this personalised approach. Showing that you really understand the customer will have far better outcomes than taking a shot in the dark.

Take a strategic approach

There's nothing worse than someone reeling off a list of benefits of their product or service on the other end of the phone, and this approach is a sure fire way to encourage any prospect to cut the call short. A more strategic approach, however, would be to use effective questioning to determine whether the benefits of your offering are actually useful to the prospect. This additionally allows them to talk about their business and its needs, and from this you can better present your offering within the context of their world.

Use as part of an integrated campaign

I've talked about cold-calling, which can have highly effective results, particularly amongst smaller companies who are looking to introduce themselves and get an idea of any potential prospect interest, however generally speaking telemarketing should be used as part of an integrated marketing campaign. Email marketing or even advertising, for instance, may generate leads, and automated campaigns may nurture those leads, however it often takes somebody to actually pick up the phone and convert these leads, and even if these prospects are not yet ready to convert, telemarketing can be highly effective in helping to move these prospects down the sales funnel.

With that in mind, it again emphasises the importance of an aligned sales and marketing team. To make effective calls, salespeople need to be equipped with the information and insights about these prospects, for instance their history with the company, as well as an understanding of their position in the sales process, as indicated through their website activity and social media behaviour.

It's as much about you as it is the product

Okay, it's more about the product, but no matter how good your product or service is, people don't tend to buy from people they don't like, and for this reason it's important to just be yourself, avoid scripts, and take the time to get to know the prospect in order to build a relationship. Additionally, it should go without saying that it's crucial to be respective of whichever stage the prospect's at in the sales cycle. It's highly unlikely a prospect will convert on the first, second, even third call, hell they may never convert, and therefore displaying any sort impatience is just bad sales practice.

Vary your calling times

If you're struggling to get through to a decision maker, try making the call at

different times of the day, and if getting past the gatekeeper is the biggest struggle, consider calling outside of regular office hours. It's surprising just how many executives get into the office early, and stay later than half five, the latter of which can be a great time as people tend to be more receptive at the end of the day.

Postal mail in a digital era

There seems to be somewhat of a misconception that postal mail is no longer valuable in this current digital age, when in actual fact developments in technology have arguably done the opposite and to a certain extent have benefited the traditional marketing approach.

Aside from the fact that receiving print mail pieces often makes a welcome change to the vast amounts of emails we tend to receive on an hourly basis, whilst delivery and open rates are much higher than can be achieved with email. Technology has also served to improve direct mail campaigns (think the video in a card approach). However it's more important than ever to think creatively and take advantage of the unique characteristics of postal mail: simply replicating the content from an email campaign will never be cost-effective.

The most effective direct mail efforts are those that work as part of an integrated, multi-channel campaign. Creative direct mail pieces can be an extremely effective way to stand out amongst the clutter and pull recipients online. With the right calls to action, aesthetically pleasing visuals and engaging copy, offline marketing efforts can be as, if not more, effective than digital communications.

Website Design



Web design has come a long way in the last two decades, and there is no denying that technology has been the key driver in its' evolution. Twenty years ago, websites were solely text-based, resembling a series of documents strung together by links, and even when, several years later, images made an appearance, it took them almost as long to load as it took the user to turn on their PC and dial up to the internet. With that in itself emphasising just how far technology has matured, and the subsequent shift in a websites ability, organisations have had to adapt their sites accordingly, transitioning from a basic practicality design to one that is built around the user experience.

Strictly speaking, B2B websites should do seven things; provide users with the information they came for quickly, lead prospective customers down a path, be aesthetically pleasing, allow for simple navigation, be both desktop and mobile friendly, be built to scale, and finally, remain modern and up-to-date. The reality is your B2B site needs to be much more than some code that showcases your company logo and contact information, it needs to be an essential part of your sales strategy, and with that in mind, the following tips will serve to ensure your web design is as effective as it possibly can be.

Do your research

Just as any marketing campaign should be well thought-through and planned to within an inch of its life, so should website design. Rushing straight into designing the website is nothing short of a recipe for disaster, and while of course it is a critical element, it is an element that should be tackled only once a plan to enhance the user experience has been established. The best way to establish this plan? Go straight to the user. In order to understand if these users are able to find the solutions to their business problems by navigating your website, it's important to establish exactly what they were looking to solve using your product, the reasons that contributed to their decision to purchase your product or service, what mattered the most when evaluating their options, as well as understanding their buying process.

Additional to understanding user perception and opinions, it's also key to understand the views of both the sales and marketing teams. Considerations to how things such as – how the brand should be perceived, why exactly your customers choose your company over your competitors, what exactly your unique advantages are, what problems your product and/or service solve, the facts you can essentially brag about (awards, customers, market share, analyst reports etc.), and perhaps most importantly what the goals are that your new website needs to achieve - are key to creating a successful, customer-centric website.

Additional to interviewing sales teams, as well as the prospects & customers themselves, consider reviewing web analytics reports, interviewing your customer service team, establishing topics of interest through keyword research, monitoring social media activity and leveraging your in-house database to create a buyer persona, allowing you to establish a plan of how to sell to your customer through your website.

Audit your current website

Chances are you already have a website, and understanding what currently works, what doesn't and what your buyers have been looking at is a great way to get started. With regards to your content, consider which pieces are the most sought after, how exactly users are navigating through the site and where the traffic is coming from. When it comes to metrics, you should consider what the current conversion rates are from being a visitor to a quality lead, as well as understanding SEO - how optimised your pages are.

Additionally, messaging, usability and focus should be considered, for instance is there much clarity in the marketing messages, are there distractions on the site (have you placed various CTAs on the page, taking the user away from a flow towards a desired action), are the users confident that the solution is what they need and are their most common

questions acknowledged and answered, is the site design, look and feel appropriate to the established buyer persona, & does it effectively present the brand image, and finally is the site easy to read across a range of devices?

Allow for simple navigation

The vast majority of people (your customers included) won't spend very much time trying to understand how to navigate their way around a website that is anything other than simple to use. I know I wouldn't. What I would do, however, is head straight to the next best alternative (read: your competitor). At the end of the day, if a user struggles to use your website, they will become confused, this confusion will lead to frustration, and this frustration will lead to a lack of sales conversions.

I'm sure you'll agree that it's in everyone's best interests to have a site that is easy to navigate around, and with that in mind, your websites design should incorporate a clear navigation structure, with the primary navigation being kept simple and the content being grouped into logical umbrella products or services. Additionally, navigation options should be limited and your website copy should include plenty of links throughout to encourage user retention.

Website Copy

B2B buyers consume vast quantities of content, and the most successful companies are those that have developed their websites into a source of this required information. Additional to this (and with thanks to Google's continuous algorithm updates), the quality of website content has become a key driver in the success of a company's search ranking, and with these points in mind, website copy should be an integral element of your websites design. To achieve this, it's important to ensure that your site copy clearly explains how exactly your products and/or services will benefit the user, whilst avoiding the use of overly technical jargon. Getting the right balance with your keywords is worthwhile, as you should avoid overusing relevant keywords, as well as going too light.

Visual

The simple fact is, it doesn't matter how good your content is if you're users don't look beyond the homepage. By that I mean if your website isn't aesthetically pleasing, you're seriously limiting your chances of being so much as acknowledged by potential buyers, let alone providing them with a positive user-experience and putting them on the path to conversion.

There may not be a one-size fits all approach, and unfortunately what one person may deem attractive, another may not, however, there are certain things all companies should consider when designing a website.

Bold, block colours, for instance, have become a popular choice for B2B websites, but it should be remembered there's a difference between standing out, and jumping out. In certain instances, multiple bright colours can work (think Microsoft), yet in other instances it can look messy, distasteful and downright unprofessional (in my personal opinion). Colour is indeed important, however don't get too wrapped up in becoming eye-catching, that you fail to portray your company's image and branding correctly. Strictly speaking, your websites colour scheme should incorporate the colours of your logo, and colours which compliment it.

Aside from navigational structure, content and colour schemes, another area that can let companies down in their design efforts is a lack of consistency. Both the branding and visual design should encompass both continuity and consistency, in order to provide structure and a more streamlined feel.

Responsive Design

With smartphone and tablet adoption increasing at a rapid pace, it stands to reason that your website should look and function the same across all web browsing platforms. Arguably the most effective way for this to be achieved is to build a website using a responsive web design. One of the biggest benefits of this type of

web design is that it provides a great user experience across many devices and screen sizes, and is arguably more beneficial than hosting a separate mobile site, designed for a specific device and screen size. There are also the benefits that these sites have one URL and the same HTML, regardless of the device, making it easier for Google to crawl, index & organise content, ultimately helping your SEO performance.

Video Production



In recent years there has been tremendous growth in video consumption among the B2B buyer, with more and more CEOs expressing a preference for watching corporate videos over reading text on the same page. But despite having become a powerful medium (after all as many as 92% of B2B buyers watch video online, with 43% watching these videos when specifically researching products and services), B2B corporate video is still relatively under-utilised as a marketing medium.

The reality is, video is far from being a new or revolutionary concept, after all companies have been producing product demos, client testimonials and senior management interviews for years. What is different, however, is the impact these videos are having on the B2B buyers' decision making process, and as a result the quality expected from these videos has substantially increased.

Despite this, video is no longer the high-cost, time-consuming, tactic it once was, and with that in mind, here are some tips to ensure you are successfully leveraging video as part of your integrated campaigns:

Understand and effectively address the purpose of the video

First things first, know exactly what your video is trying to achieve. Whether that be to generate leads, build brand awareness and/or positioning, demonstrate your product or service, educate, or entertain, crafting a successful video requires a clear direction and plan. Once you know what goals you're trying to achieve, other elements to consider include the video type and tone. Video formats include interview, presentation, montage, on-location/at event, documentary and how-to or case study, whilst you could consider corporate or creative, humorous or serious, formal or relaxed tones to best meet the needs of your audience.

Educate your prospects and generate leads

After all, this can be the difference between being shortlisted as a potential vendor, and not even being considered.

No pressure. YouTube is a highly effective channel to host videos such as tutorials & product demos, customer testimonials, executive interviews, or even just videos that use storytelling to demonstrate your solution to their problems, as a way to inform and educate prospective customers. Video is a great tool for lead generation, although as your prospects aren't mind readers, make it clear what you want them to do, just as you would with an ad or any other marketing communication. By including a clear, concise and direct call-to-action, as well as the URL of a landing page, where your audience can access more information, request a demo or download an e-book, you increase your chances of generating valuable leads.

Influence the buyer's decision process

In order to demonstrate understanding of prospects needs at different stages of the sales cycle, you must have a selection of videos that attract, acquire, nurture, inform and sell. . Ultimately, creating content that aligns with what your prospective clients want to know, enables you to position yourself as a credible and trusted source of information. For instance, for individuals wanting solutions to their problem, ensure there is content available to educate and inform, demonstrating your understanding of such challenges, while positioning your product/service as this solution. As buyers move along the sales funnel, demonstrate your capabilities, emphasising that you're the best choice for them by highlighting credentials and case studies. Additionally, video can be used as a push tactic for prospects further down their decision making process, by promoting relevant and valuable videos through a series of targeted email campaigns.

Turn existing content into video

I've mentioned the benefits of repurposing content, and video is a great example. Most types of content, whether that be tip sheets, whitepapers, blog posts or small snippets of e-books, can be scripted and crafted into short videos. It's

worth remembering that while short, easily digestible videos are more sharable, longer form videos are valued and it is down to you to decide which videos are appropriate for which. Again, this is an example of where videos can be used as different stages of the sales funnel. In the earlier stages, these videos should realistically be kept at under two minutes, while being interesting and straight to the point, whereas videos used as a push tactic for prospects further down the funnel can be longer and more detailed.

Consider going professional

If your budget warrants it, consider hiring a professional actress when filming videos. While in some cases it is more effective and believable to showcase real company employees, for instance on product demos, for others it can make a real difference to the quality and professionalism of your videos by having someone who is both believable and engaging. Again, if you don't have the internal resources, it can pay to outsource script development and animated video content. It's additionally worth considering that different language versions should be translated, and if possible, presented by native speaking individuals.

B2B video needn't be boring

There's a misconception that B2B videos have to be conventional and, dare I say it, uninspired, in order to remain professional. The fact is, business buyers are still human, and while B2B is of course a serious business, with important and often costly purchase decisions to be made, it is still possible to be engaging, inspirational and even, to an extent, humorous within your video efforts. In recent years, storytelling has established itself as a tactic of its own, and can enable marketers to tell their brand story in an engaging manner, in a way that leaves a lasting impression on the audience.

Emotion outsells logic

Assuming that B2B buyers make entirely rational decisions when it comes to their purchasing decisions couldn't be further from the truth. The reality is, B2B buyers

typically make higher-risk purchases, and as such tend to have a far greater emotional connection to their vendors and service providers, than the average consumer does. After all, you wouldn't lose your job for buying the wrong brand of toothpaste would you?! For marketers, the use of video in B2B can be an extremely effective tool for provoking this much needed emotional response from an audience. Whether it be through use of a montage of your company's work and the impact it has on its buyers, customer testimonials, animation, or any other type of video, the end result should be to help buyers envision what they can do with your offering, and how it can help them achieve their own personal and professional goals. In achieving this, you stand a far better chance of provoking an emotional connection that reduces potential risks and drives immediate action.


Campaign Measurement

Whether you're running an email, PR, advertising, or any other type of marketing campaign, it goes without saying that you should constantly monitor, refine and ultimately learn from your efforts, because every time you do this, you improve your performance, increase ROI, and become one step closer to achieving your business goals.

Despite this, however, there are many marketers that fail to measure their campaign performance effectively, or even worse, fail to measure them at all. The truth of the matter is, when it comes to campaign measurement, there isn't a one size fits all approach, and while it can be incredibly easy to obtain the data from your marketing efforts, it's how you use this data that counts. It is worth remembering that effective measurement must start with planning, after all you can't judge whether you've met your objectives if you don't know what they were to begin with. With marketers now expected to be just as analytical as they are creative, the following tips will help ensure you are measuring and optimising your campaigns to the best of your ability.

PR Measurement

Demonstrating the value, and ultimately ROI of PR isn't always as clear cut as it is in other business areas. Fortunately, for PR professionals, if you've done the groundwork (read: planning), you make it a whole lot easier to understand what exactly you're measuring, further easing the pain of reporting back on the campaign's success. Aside from knowing your objectives and which metrics are the best to track, you should begin any measurement campaign by tracking both press and online mentions, as part of your media analysis.

That said, media analysis does extend beyond a simple count of press mentions, and should be as much about qualitative analysis, as it is quantitative (if not more). Following a PR campaign, monitoring the number of times your story was covered and the publications which covered it is highly important, but understanding

whether the coverage was positive, neutral or negative should not be disregarded. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but "any PR is good PR" isn't always the case (at least not in my opinion), after all negative publicity may cost you future business. From here, you should look at whether the intended audiences were reached, and to what extent they were exposed to the message.

On a different note, PR should be measured by the effect it's had on the social audience. There are plenty of services that make it simple to monitor online mentions and their sentiment, growth in followers, the degree of customer engagement via these channels, and perhaps more importantly how much word of mouth marketing you're achieving online.

The Valid Metrics Matrix

If you want goals with specific key performance indicators and a measurement plan that covers everything from public affairs to employee engagement to brand marketing, then the Valid Metrics Matrix may be for you.

The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) partnered with the PRSA and developed this framework. This series of matrices that are easy to use, show what to measure for all different types of PR programs.

You simply select the right chart by the type of program you are doing, determine what you are trying to change about the target audience and the select the relevant metrics in the box in the matrix.

The idea is built around the marketing funnel and outputs, outcomes and outtakes concepts. Columns correspond to awareness, knowledge, consideration and action (awareness, engagement, knowledge and action for social media), whilst the rows are used to represent the activity, intermediary effect (impact on media and other influencers) and the effect on the target audience.

The Valid Metrics Framework adds great strength and validity to how practitioners evaluate public relations and turns public relations from media flacks to valuable business associates.

Email Measurement

An email campaign is only as good as the statistics it produces, and marketers that fail to measure these campaigns are missing out on an opportunity. An opportunity to understand what went well, what didn't and most importantly what they can learn from this to improve.

Track the direct performance of an email

While most, if not all, email service providers (ESP) will provide the data that can drive this insight, many marketers still lack the ability to actually use it to improve the performance of future campaigns. Open rate, click-through rate, bounce rate, deliverability, email sharing/forwarding rate and unsubscribes, are all examples of external KPIs, each providing an indication of how various elements of the email performed, for instance a low open rate may be a result of a poor subject line or even bad timing, and CTR reflects the quality of the email contents and CTAs. Unfortunately, there is an all too common belief that email campaigns have been highly effective purely because they achieved above average open rates. Yes, open rates are a good metric to track, and low open rates aren't exactly a brilliant reflection of your campaign, however this particular stat doesn't tell the whole story of how the campaign has performed and the impact it's had on meeting objectives. It barely even touches on it.

Your measurement efforts should extend beyond external KPIs

In order to get an idea of the bigger picture, you're email measurement efforts needs to extend beyond these external KPIs, towards the internal ones, which are typically the metrics that measure the results of a campaign against the campaign's objectives - conversions,

generated leads, ROI per email, revenue, average revenue per email delivered, no. of sales per campaign, site registrations etc.

When it comes to the KPIs which impact your bottom line, it's worth remembering that it often requires integration between your email platform and other sources of information. As an example, conversion rates require insight from your website analytics, and the number of sales per campaign will require ecommerce data. It is worth noting that not all metrics will be applicable to your campaign and business objectives.

Optimise your campaigns

All KPIs are great for determining factors such as message relevance, interest and engagement (leads generated & site registrations etc.), business ability to sell (total conversions), strength of the brand and campaign (unsubscribe rate), list quality (deliverability rate) etc. The challenge is, one particular email campaign isn't justifiable enough to determine these factors, and it often takes a trend analysis to make accurate judgements. Additionally, it is worth implementing testing variations for different emails, as this can help to optimise your campaigns and significantly improve your website traffic and leads.

Test, test & test again

There are a multitude of different variables that can be A/B tested, including subject line, content offer, templates, layout, frequency, timing, messaging, colour, font size, CTA etc. Obviously be strategic in your testing efforts, it's not possible or even effective to test many at once, but over time the more you test, the better you can refine your marketing approach.

Content marketing

Content may well be king, but it will only maintain its title if it is measured and then optimised. The potential issue with churning out piece after piece of content, without any real awareness of how it's consumed, is that at the end of the day

you are probably wasting time, resources and ultimately credibility.

Content consumption

With that in mind, your initial focus in measuring your content metrics, should be around the consumption of this content, so think page views, downloads, views, and from here you can even get as specific as to track the number of repeat visitors, the time spent on the site or those that went on to consumer further content. These metrics provide insight into the quality and ultimately value of the content, and it's 'stickiness' factor. Measuring on-site engagement provides insight into how successful your content has been in driving a prospect to your website.

Aim for brand lift

One thing content should aim to achieve is increased sentiment, and while brand lift may well be a more abstract metric, it is an important metric nonetheless. In order to measure the effect content has on lifting brand perception of your company, you should track user recognition of your brand through your content (think Hubspot), whether your content has helped improve brand recall, whether your company is perceived as more favourable, and ultimately whether your content plays a part in converting leads into customers.

Traffic won't pay the bills but it will help improve ROI

Quality content should drive traffic to your website, and a key way to measure this is to track organic traffic from search engines. While traffic alone won't pay the bills, it is an effective way to identify which content resonates best with your audience. With social media a platform for content amplification, it is also worth monitoring how much traffic is driven from these channels.

Successful content creation will resonate with consumers

Social media interactions are another great way to understand how this content resonates with online audiences, and can be tracked through tweets, retweets, social shares, comments, mentions etc. This can further help to plan effective social and content marketing strategies using these channels. Finally, you should monitor how social media interactions affect your other marketing channels, for instance an increase in social media activity may increase your number of email subscribers and web traffic.

Consistency increases influence

By consistently distributing quality content on a specific topic, you may experience an increase in mentions and coverage by the press, and by monitoring these press mentions you can establish how much of a thought leader you are in your industry. It's also worth tracking how many journalists seek your input on certain topics as well as how often you're approached to speak at industry events.

Don't dismiss lead gen

Arguably the most important content metric to measure is the amount of leads generated as a result, and ultimately how many convert. This metric is the one that brings in revenue to your business, and is the end goal for any marketing effort, and by monitoring the impact that your content has on your conversion rate you are able to better target your audiences and create compelling content marketing campaigns that resonate with their needs.

Measuring Your Website and Landing Pages

All marketing campaigns should be designed with the intention to drive traffic to your website or landing pages, and by achieving this, you are already halfway there. Where some companies cut themselves short is, you guessed it, tracking a websites performance. With easily accessible, and often free programmes, such as Google Analytics, there really is no reason why you shouldn't be monitoring and tracking user insights, and using these metrics to

optimise and improve both your websites and landing pages performance.

To start with, it's worth monitoring the total number of individual website visitors, as this data can determine how effective your content and marketing campaigns are at driving visitors to your site. Additional to this, consider tracking the number of repeat visitors you get. As well as providing insight into their purchase journey, it also indicates how valuable your content may be.

Your marketing campaigns may well be delivering, but if your visitors are leaving your site almost straight away, making no interactions, there is a likely chance your website isn't seen enticing your users to navigate around your website, or at the very least stay on the page. This would suggest either your landing pages need optimising, or additionally your site could pose problems itself, whether that be through the architecture or having no clear CTAs.

Being clear on the specific sources of traffic to your website, gives you an idea of how effective both your SEO efforts are, whether that be through organic or your link-building efforts. There are typically three types of traffic sources – organic, direct and referral – organic traffic being that which came from a link found on a search engine results page, referral traffic coming from a link on another website and direct traffic coming from a user directly going to your website, whether that be through the URL, or through a link in an email, social media site or any content produced.

Other areas that are worth monitoring are both the most and least popular pages, for obvious reasons, as well as the number of indexed pages (the pages on your site that have received at least one visit from an organic search).

Successful campaigns are those that can elicit a response or action, and with many actions now directing to a landing page, these conversion rates should most definitely be measured. This insight shows

just how well you've been capitalising on the website traffic, and by monitoring the conversion rates for visitor to lead, lead to customer and visitor to customer, you are able to identify where you're doing well and where your sales funnel may be failing to convert those leads into customers.

Marketing Automation

Marketing automation is a data haven, but it's how you obtain and make use of this data, that will determine how effective your measurement efforts are. Back in _ when marketing automation reared its insightful head, it well and truly upped the marketing game, by enabling marketers to adopt customer intelligence like never before. User behaviours, personas and demographics can easily be identified and used to segment target audiences, simply through monitoring a customer's activity on your website, their previous activity, their demographic information and how they're engaging with your brand. Using this insight you can segment leads into relevant lead nurturing campaigns.

Email is indeed an element of marketing automation, and as a result, some of the same metrics apply. Both click-through and conversion, for instance, can determine just how effective the content promoted in your lead nurturing campaigns are, and whether it is appropriate for the audience targeted and their position in the sales process. Should an email offering a free demo or trial, for instance, fail to achieve clicks, it may well indicate that the leads aren't quite at that stage, and additionally, if leads are no longer downloading content, it could be that they require more in-depth information or a product trial.

Successful campaigns are those that are measured and optimised, and one of the ways this can be achieved in marketing automation is by determining when and how often to send the emails. Unfortunately, there is no set rule, and it comes down to understanding the needs of different lead segments.

The length of time it takes for leads to become customers will vary, but obtaining an understanding of whether the sales

cycle varies for certain product/service purchases is a great way to strategically plan your nurturing campaigns. Strictly speaking, analytics can provide a hell of a lot of insight, but there is nothing more insightful than your sales team. They may be the best people to provide insight of the customer journey, and will help to inform future communications amongst different groups of leads, and what will maintain their engagement.

B2B Marketing Measurement



Successful campaigns are those that are integrated, and while each element should indeed be measured in isolation, the most successful marketing measurement is that which can analyse results holistically. A comparison of different channels can form a picture of which tactics have the biggest impact on achieving both your marketing and business objectives.

It is worth comparing the number of both customers and leads generated from each marketing effort, as well as the revenue generated from such activities. This data can help ensure you are not only driving the highest ROI from your efforts, but also helps to ensure that you are making the best use of your budget.

Every year, marketers wait with baited breath for the following years' marketing trends (okay, perhaps a slight exaggeration), but the truth of the matter is many marketers are easily influenced by what another person believes to be an outdated or emerging tactic or channel. Of course it goes without saying that you should be aware of both channel and tactic perception, but should you disregard a particular channel because someone in the industry has said that it's no longer valuable? No you shouldn't. What you should do, however, is monitor these channels and/or tactics, and if you see a declining trend in their performance then perhaps it is time to wave goodbye, if not then it is obviously valuable to your bottom line, and you should make decisions accordingly.

The reality is, marketing measurement isn't a one size fits all approach, and while each of the metrics discussed should at the very least be acknowledged, the most effective campaign measurement metrics are the ones that are right for your marketing efforts, and are in line with your objectives. The ability to truly measure success, first requires you to determine what exactly success looks like to you.

Napier - B2B Technology PR & Marketing Specialists

Napier ensures you stand out in today's cluttered media, with compelling campaigns that cut across conventional and social media.

We build our campaign plans from clients' business goals, finding the best strategies, media and messages to reach and engage your audience. We're always adapting, creating new ideas and approaches.

Talk to us to find out more.



Mike Maynard - *Managing Director*

Mike began his career as an electronics design engineer, later making his move into marketing when he switched from European Applications Manager to European Marketing Manager at American semiconductor company, IDT. In 2001, he acquired Napier and has since directed major PR & marketing programmes for a wide range of technology clients. He is also Chair of the PRCA B2B Group, and lectures in PR at Southampton Solent University.



Dave Ingle - *Associate Director*

Dave has more than 25 years' experience in marketing and communications roles, developing a broad experience that encompasses influencer relations, content creation, social media, corporate & internal comms activities across both B2B and B2C sectors. In his career Dave has worked in senior roles at some of the leading international agencies including Ogilvy, H&K Strategies, Waggener Edstrom and Edelman, working with brands such as Microsoft, BT, Nvidia, Philips, P&G & GE.



Aimee Goodsall - *Business Development Executive*

Aimee is responsible for creating and maintaining long-term relationships with prospective and existing clients, as well as managing Napier's marketing campaigns, using a range of online and offline techniques, such as the use of research conducted by the agency. She has gained a BA (hons) degree in Marketing from the University of Chichester.



Cara Heasman - *Marketing Specialist*

Cara brings a range of experience to Napier having previously worked on PR, social media, advertising and marketing campaigns. She has also built valuable experience in the luxury consumer market, working at Rolls-Royce Motorcars, and has gained a BA hons degree in Public Relations and Communications, from Southampton Solent University.

Napier

t: +44 (0)1243 531123
w: www.napierb2b.com
e: info@napierb2b.com