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7 HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL MARKETERS IN 2014

The digital world is changing fast. To keep abreast of developments, digital marketers should adopt these seven habits in the year ahead.



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The digital world moves faster than Usain Bolt on the track! Savvy online marketers need to keep up to speed with what's happening to ensure they're fully engaging with their customers. Luckily we've done the groundwork for you, so here are the new habits you need to embrace in 2014.



#1 - PRODUCE GOOD QUALITY CONTENT

A report by Circle Research saw that 56% of marketers surveyed had seen their sales boosted by content marketing. However, it's not enough to cram your web pages with relevant keywords – your content also needs to be useful and of a high quality. With the introduction of Google's new search algorithm, Hummingbird, the search giant is moving away from providing a straightforward search – it now wants to understand the intent of the search, rather than just the keywords in it. Google has an 86% market share in the UK, so it's important to take these changes into consideration.



If content marketing is a bit of a minefield for you, check out these articles:

- **9 Easy Steps to Create Engaging Content**
- **15 ways to optimise your evergreen content.**

#2 - GO VISUAL

While words will never die, the image plays a more important role than ever before online. Some of the fastest growing websites around – Pinterest, Tumblr and Buzzfeed – are all heavily visual, demonstrating the potential of shareable image-led content.

People are bombarded with so much information that most don't have time to take everything in. It makes sense, then, that pages or emails that look visually appealing will engage more with customers, as images are much easier to absorb when scanning than pages heavy with text. This doesn't mean that all your digital offerings should become predominantly image-led, but it does mean thinking about stripping your marketing back.

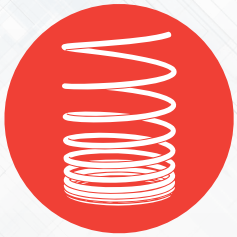
Ask yourself:

- **Do you really need to send out such text-heavy emails?**
- **Could your website be improved by adding illustrated images, charts or infographics?**
- **Could your company utilise image-led social media sites such as Pinterest?**

Need help with creating engaging image-led content? Try these:

- **A best practice guide to producing infographics.**
- **4 Unique Ways To Improve Your Pinterest Marketing**





#3 - ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY

While it's essential to have a proper plan with measurable objectives, it's also important to incorporate some flexibility into your workload. People consume digital media in a very different way now – tablets and smartphones mean they can access the web anywhere, anytime – and they expect to be kept up-to-date with everything in real time.

> *"**70%** of your marketing is the planned "marketing as usual" activity. **20%** of your marketing should be programmatic. **10%** of your marketing is purely responsive."* - *Ashley Friedlein, CEO Econsultancy*

While responding to real-time events means you can't truly plan, you still have to create scenarios. Discuss what events would work for your brand and how to react to them – would it be via social media, an email campaign or a blog post? Just remember NOT to shoehorn your brand into an event just because everyone else is.

If you're just dipping your toe into agile marketing, these tips show how real time marketing can be a big benefit to your brand.



#4 - THINK CROSS-PLATFORM

By 2014, mobile is expected to surpass the PC as the most popular way to get online. This is a huge change in how we consume the web and it means that companies will have to adapt content to be viewed across various platforms. Say hello to your new digital best friend – the responsive website. They are designed to resize automatically to the screen they are viewed on, ensuring your customer gets the full potential of your site.

And it really does work! These brands have all increased their mobile conversion rates via responsive design.

Aside from mobile websites, QR codes, SMS or MMS campaigns, augmented reality and apps are all valuable ways to engage with the modern customer.



#5 - TAKE SOCIAL ONE STEP FURTHER

More B2B marketers are jumping on the social bandwagon – 83% of marketers are now using social media to distribute their content.

It's no surprise why they've chosen this powerful medium. Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal. Advocates have been shown to drive ten times more action than that of paid-for impressions, proving that not only are social sharers a powerful marketing force to be reckoned with, but that they are also extremely cost effective.

And if you're still lacking inspiration or trying to figure out exactly what a hashtag is, these successful B2B social media case studies will help get you started.

Not surprisingly, good content is at the heart of all these successes, as is personality. Social media is a great way to humanise your brand while also engaging directly with leads.



#6 - GO BIG ON DATA

The latest buzzword in the digital marketing world is big data, but what exactly is it? Big data refers to the massive amounts of data that collect over time – including business transactions, emails, photos, videos, activity logs, unstructured posts such as blogs and social media etc – which is impossible to analyse and handle using common database management tools: a big data platform is required.

Big data isn't new data – it's your current data unified in one place. Implementing a big data platform can be expensive, but instead of tracking website traffic separately from financial data, and newsletter data separately from social media information, it actually makes sense to take a holistic approach and look at this information side-by-side. You'll learn so much more about your customers this way, and these insights will help you offer a more personalised service.

"Using large amounts of data allows you to suck subjectivity out of a system and make better decisions as a result."

- Michael Rosenbaum, Director, Catalyst IT Services



#7 - TAP INTO YOUR INTUITION

While big data can take us one step closer to understanding customers, a really successful marketer remembers that those leads/page impressions/ clicks are actually people.

"The only real valuable thing is intuition." - *Albert Einstein*

Successful campaigns require a personal understanding of your audience. Sometimes you need to step away from the data – big or small! – and put yourself into the shoes of a potential customer.

Some useful questions to ask include:

- **Where is your prospect's attention? And how do you grab it?**
- **What problems do they have that your company could help solve?**
- **Can a potential customer find all the information they need about your company online?**
- **Where do they feel at home? What methods of communication are they most comfortable with?**
- **What business values are most important to them?**

YOUR 2014 CHECKLIST:

To make sure you're ready to embrace 2014, you need to:

- ☑ **Produce good quality, relevant content.**
- ☑ **Make your digital communications more visual.**
- ☑ **Incorporate real-time marketing into your strategy.**
- ☑ **Ensure all campaigns work cross-platform.**
- ☑ **Use social media to help humanise your brand.**
- ☑ **Analyse all your data collectively.**
- ☑ **Tap into your intuition.**

Most of all have fun – all great marketers have a passion for the business and take great pleasure in it!



For more free tips on how to get ahead in 2014, read:

THE BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE: USE YOUR CUSTOMER DATABASE TO BOOST THE SALES PIPELINE.

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE EGUIDE NOW!