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5 trends in 5 years: What is next for digital marketing

March 30, 2017



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With each passing year, people are consuming an ever-increasing amount of digital content. As a result, the marketing industry is responding to keep pace, and some would even argue **76 percent of marketers**, to be exact that marketing has changed more in the past two years than in the past 50.

There is no telling exactly what digital marketing's future holds, but these five up-and-coming trends will keep you up-to-speed:

1. In-store experience will still matter, but in a different way

Retailers are always looking for ways to enhance the in-store experience, and digital technology will be their boon.

After all, 84 percent of millennials use their phones in-store, be it to check product information or consult with friends before making a purchase.

And though only 50 percent of consumers are open to being "tracked," 74 percent of millennials say they would not mind getting location-based mobile alerts. Talk about an opportunity to tip off nearby consumers of relevant offers and promotions in-store.

Mass merchandiser Target piloted a program similar to this through its iOS application. With the help of beacon technology, the retailer tracks customer movements, then sends relevant messages for deals around the store based on customers' locations. It puts the offer directly in their hands.

Putting it together: As far as the technology goes, it is fairly inexpensive beacons generally run from \$40 to \$80.

Beyond that, the remaining costs involve the time and resources necessary to develop and distribute the content to consumers. You can find apps that will run you as little as \$29 a month.

Location-based marketing is not just a big-box chain game.

2. Analytics will go social

Social is already one of the easiest ways to make one-on-one connections with consumers. That is probably why

about nine out of 10 businesses are active on social channels.

Yet not even a third of companies are collecting data from social channels. These insights show which posts had the most engagement and when.

Social analytics can also help track where you stand compared to similar brands.

And with social media comprising 24 percent of marketing budgets in the next five years which is more than double where it is today investing in these channels should keep you from falling behind.

Putting it together: As you go social with analytics, track the conversion rates after people view your content and do it by channel.

Monitor social interactions.

Keep tabs on changes in search volume, and compare it to the competition.

You will get a sense of which networks and posts drive the most engagement, letting you better strategize your future decisions.

3. Video will rule the school

Social video has already begun to take off. In fact, four times as many people prefer it to text.

On average, adults spend 5.5 hours a day watching video. But many companies are still dragging their feet when it comes to social video.

While part of it has to do with cost a professional video comes at a hefty price the apprehension also stems from the channels themselves. Marketers are just unsure how to leverage 10-second Snapchat snaps or one-minute Instagram videos.

Embracing social video now should help you outpace the competition, especially because 69 percent of marketers plan to increase their video content budgets. You will have the chance to develop more timely, relevant and responsive ads that resonate with consumers.

Putting it together: Creating videos helps you build brand awareness, improving customer engagement and generating more leads.

So look for ways to incorporate video into your marketing mix.

Focusing on topics relevant to your target audience is a good place to start, but consider sharing the spotlight with causes your customers hold dear.

You may also want to offer tips, produce an instructional video or two, or even tie it to a cultural phenomenon.

4. Cross-device marketing will reign supreme

With the average consumer owning nearly four connected devices, more opportunities exist to drive engagement across multiple channels.

Think about the potential effects of a television spot coinciding with a mobile ad.

It is all about second-screen engagement.

The consumer has the TV on in the background, but the real connection is made in the palm of his or her hand. This multichannel approach could drive greater awareness and do wonders for your next campaign.

Keep in mind, though, that different devices require different approaches, designs and messages not to mention tracking the consumer across multiple devices.

If you do not have data alignment, tackling this approach can take a while.

Putting it together: When designing a cross-device campaign, revisit your audience. Define it across multiple devices with as many data sets as possible. This will help you re-strategize to accommodate for multi-device marketing.

And resist the urge to repurpose content each channel deserves its own attention down to the smallest detail.

5. Mobile will stay mobile

Your consumers will not stop moving.

As of 2015, nearly two-thirds of U.S. consumers owned a smartphone.

By end of 2016, one in four U.S. consumers were predicted to own a wearable device. Marketers will need to shift their efforts to make way for constantly moving devices.

Putting it together: By now, most marketers are used to mobile marketing, but keep in mind that catering to mobile trends is becoming even more important.

Wearables' popularity brings a fresh medium into digital marketing, requiring some tweaking to your digital efforts.

Think about how long you glance at your watch your messaging will need to squeeze into that amount of time and attention.

And while that may feel limiting, wearables open up new avenues as well.

Wearables measure biological responses, giving marketers a much more up-close connection with their audiences. Considering this when strategizing a new campaign creates a host of new possibilities.

FIVE YEARS MIGHT feel distant, but these trends are already here and they are only ramping up. Will your marketing team act or react?

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