



Digital
Marketing
Institute

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL MARKETING

Study Notes

Introduction to Digital Marketing

LESSON 1: PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL MARKETING.....	5
CONCEPTS	6
What is digital marketing?	6
Inbound and outbound	6
Types of media.....	7
Owned media.....	7
Paid media	8
Earned media	8
TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING	8
Traditional marketing channels	8
Traditional media versus digital media	9
Categories	9
Characteristics.....	10
3i PRINCIPLES.....	12
Methodology	12
Deep dive	12
DIGITAL CHANNELS	13
Which channels to use.....	13
LESSON 2: DEVELOPING MARKETING OBJECTIVES	16
SMART OBJECTIVES	17
What are they?	17
Specific objective.....	17
Measurable objective.....	17
Achievable objective	18
Relevant objective.....	18
Time-bound objective	19

CASE STUDY: SMART OBJECTIVES	19
Examining objectives	19
LESSON 3: DIGITAL RESEARCH.....	22
AUDIENCE RESEARCH.....	23
Definition and benefits.....	23
Data types.....	23
AUDIENCE LISTENING TOOLS.....	25
What is it?.....	25
Audience research platforms.....	25
Social Media.....	25
Marketing Research.....	26
Surveys.....	26
Behavior Analytics	26
CULTURAL RESEARCH	27
What is it?.....	27
Cultural influences	27
Benefits of cultural research	28
Cultural research tools	28
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH	29
Benefits of competitive research	29
Platforms involved in competitive research.....	29
INDUSTRY TREND RESEARCH.....	30
What is it?.....	30
Porter’s competitive forces.....	30
Benefits of conducting industry trend research.....	31
Tools to track industry trends	31
CASE STUDY: CARTIER	32

How Cartier reached their audience.....	32
LESSON 4: CONNECTING WITH THE CUSTOMER	35
THE BUYER'S JOURNEY - INTRODUCTION.....	36
What is it?.....	36
THE BUYER'S JOURNEY	36
Stages of the buyer's journey.....	36
MARKETING FUNCTIONS.....	37
What are they?	37
Deep dive	38
INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING	39
360 marketing	39
Benefits of a 360 marketing campaign	39
ALIGNING THE BUYER'S JOURNEY WITH CHANNELS	40
Components of digital marketing.....	40
The different stages	42
TOOLS FOR DIGITAL MARKETING	43
Digital marketing tools.....	43

LESSON 1: PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL MARKETING

CONCEPTS

What is digital marketing?

Before we begin our journey into concepts of digital marketing, we should think about how we would define digital marketing. The advent of the internet, and the number of devices and platforms that people use to connect and share content, has given rise to the digital marketing era. Simply put, this online space is where you will find your consumers and grow your business.

Digital marketing is the use of new media or digital technology to achieve marketing and business goals.

If we wish to be more specific, digital marketing can be defined within the parameters of technologies using digital formats and the internet. This ranges from computers to mobile technology, and even things like digital billboards. Moreover, digital marketing encompasses online shared experiences such as social media or digital marketing software. These, in turn, help marketers create, distribute, and track their campaign on digital platforms to drive success.

Inbound and outbound

Two of the most important principles in digital marketing are outbound and inbound marketing.

Outbound

Outbound marketing begins with the brand advertiser pushing out a message to a specified target audience with the objective being to drive awareness of a product or service. This is done by rapidly spreading word of the campaign product or service to the target audience using, for example, visual display banner and video formats multiple times to ensure people remember the product. This is known as 'drive product recall,' and is achieved through audience reach and repetition. It is your more traditional way to do marketing. Essentially, you have a message, you have an audience, and you are pushing that message to your audience. Your hope is that the message captures your audience's attention. This concept applies to digital marketing as much as traditional marketing.

Inbound

Inbound marketing is the exact opposite; it's almost like reverse marketing. Inbound marketing involves trying to pull your audience towards your content, brand, or service. It is about attracting those people who are already interested in your product or service so that they seek you out and engage. With inbound marketing, potential customers find you through channels such as blogs, search engines, email subscriptions, word of mouth, and online reviews/recommendations. As a marketer, you are attempting to find ways to create the conditions where people are drawn to your brand via your content, with the objective of turning them into a customer.

In today's business world, inbound marketing is the most important aspect to digital marketing as it allows you to attract customers who consider your content or service relevant to them. The strength of inbound marketing is 'user intent'. What do we mean by user intent? In essence, it is the audience who have the internal drive to take action to find your product. This action is based on their own needs, and how and when they want to proceed with a sale or conversion. Good inbound marketing provides efficient and effective routes for your audience to come to your brand. It stands apart in its

effectiveness at encouraging audience action – particularly when that audience has a finite attention span from consuming a limitless amount of content on their devices and platforms.

Types of media

Digital marketing comprises, among other things, three different media channels: owned, paid, and earned.

- **Owned media** is the media that you create and manage.
- **Paid media** is media or advertising that you have paid for to drive banner and video visibility, or clicks and traffic, to your product, website, or service.
- **Earned media** is free publicity generated by consumers, PR, influencers, and people who speak about and share content related to your brand or product. Earned media is generated either in response to content you've shared, or via voluntary mentions; in many cases, these people will be your brand advocates and will actively promote your brand because they like you!

While it is important to consider each media type independently, you must also consider how they can work together, and harmoniously, to produce an all-encompassing, successful digital marketing campaign. For instance, you should explore how paid media will promote your own content, and, in turn, how your own content will help to influence earned media?

Owned media

To begin, owned media incorporates a company's own content, packaging, point-of-sale, and the people who come into contact with consumers. It's the stuff a brand creates to promote itself. Owned media promotes your brand in a very personal way by exhibiting your company's values and highlighting what the product or company does.

Some key questions you should ask when considering owned media are:

- What am I going to talk about?
- What do I want people to see?
- What type of message do I want to get across to my audience?

Think of owned media as a source for developing your brand personality. For example, when you post on social media, try to avoid posting something dull and boring. Instead, aim to post something that is true to your values and what you represent.

Some benefits of owned media include the cost efficiency, flexibility, longevity, and power of developing a go-to platform for your audience. Owned media is important for creating trust and legitimacy in the market. It acts as a main platform for communicating all that the company is, sells, and does.

However, there are challenges to driving audience engagement from owned media, as it can take some time to build a reputation and trust that guarantees high levels of traffic to your website, blog, or other digital assets.

Paid media

Our second media type, paid media, comprises any form of media designed to promote your brand or content on the internet for a fee. Examples of this includes social media advertising, paid search, display adverts, or paid influencers.

Paid media helps you to scale up your digital marketing campaign and reach more people than non-paid formats. In tandem with various reporting tools such as Google Analytics, you will be able to analyze who is seeing your media and how the audience engages or interacts with your campaigns. This, in turn, enables you to adjust and optimize your paid media performance. With paid media you can take ad formats and brand content and show it to people who you believe will find it relevant, useful, or engaging. Essentially, this means you have control over where, when, and what is seen. The drawback is that you have to pay for it!

Outbound paid media is useful for building awareness and generating familiarity, as it provides the basis for audience reach, ad repetition, and defined audience targeting. Inbound paid media like paid search and types of remarketing are great ways to drive sales and conversions. However, with the advent of ad blockers, for example, there are challenges to the efficacy of paid media, particularly with today's ad saturation and the ability to skip or report ads.

Earned media

Finally, earned media is the ultimate goal for brands and digital marketers. It is where you have created a good piece of content, shared it through various platforms – including paid promotion – and now people are engaging with it and actively sharing it with their friends because they view it as important, relevant, interesting, or even funny. Effectively, earned media is about people interacting with your content without you having to put in the effort to drive traffic. Furthermore, your brand can borrow the legitimacy of normal people sharing your content, and this builds trust and credibility far quicker and far more effectively than paid media ever could.

Earned media comprises shares, reviews, mentions, and reposts; anything that allows your content to appear on people's social media timelines, for example. That is why earned media is so valuable. It has already established a level of trust – it comes personally recommended – and this is something a paid ad cannot do. People will question the relevance of a paid ad because of its very nature, because of the fact that it has been paid for.

Some benefits of earned media include the fact that it creates credibility, is organic, and tends to live on longer than paid or owned media.

However, as this type of media is at the mercy or discretion of internet users, particularly in an age where content can 'go viral', it can become difficult to control the direction your earned media moves. In worst-case scenarios, viral content adopts unintended negative meanings. Also, it can be difficult to understand how effective earned media is in driving action or resonating with your audience. We should always consider if it is bringing people to your brand or content for the intended reasons you set out.

TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Traditional marketing channels

Now, let's look at new and traditional marketing, and how strategies on both sides align and differ.

Traditional media, or old media, are often defined as the “established or traditional means of mass communication, especially compared with digital methods”. Quite simply, media that didn’t develop with the digital era are the ones most likely to be considered as traditional and part of a traditional media strategy.



Traditional marketing media includes direct marketing, outdoor, print, TV, and radio broadcast, and “word of mouth” referrals.

- **Direct marketing:** This involves promoting and selling directly to the end buyer from the manufacturer with no other media owner involved. For instance, it includes letters or flyers, coupons, brochures, and general any other print material delivered to a consumer’s mailbox or hand.
- **Print:** This is advertising that uses physically printed media to reach consumers and prospects, such as newspapers, brochures, and magazine ads
- **Outdoor:** Similar to print but on a larger scale, these are billboards (also called 48 sheets or the even larger 96 sheets), bus stops and smaller placements (also called 6 sheets), bus sides, building wraps and installations, and so on.
- **Broadcast:** Known as on-air advertising, it is the primary revenue generator for commercial television and radio stations. Examples include film, TV, product placement, program sponsorship, cinema, and radio.
- **Referral:** Referrals often happen spontaneously. This form of marketing involves promoting products or services to new customers through referrals, usually by word of mouth. For instance, it includes fidelity cards with vouchers and discounts for sponsorship.

Traditional media versus digital media

Even if traditional and digital marketing can work hand in hand, they are profoundly different in their communication style and effect on consumers.

Based on these differences, marketers need to strategically plan where they will invest and what will be the best ratio between traditional and digital media budget. Each media will talk to a different audience and have a different impact on the audience’s perception of a company.

Features	 Traditional	 Digital
The way media is consumed by an audience	Mass Audience	Individual Audience
The level of investment committed to the medium consumed by an audience	Passive Audience	Active Audience
The development of a message to a broader or niche audience	Many	One-to-one
The strategy of acquiring audience attention via push or pull content tactics	Outbound	Inbound

Categories

There are five main categories where we can compare traditional and digital media:

- **Reach:** This is the total number of different people exposed to the media. This helps define whether a media is more geared toward mass or individual reach. Reach covers whether the message is consumed by a number of people at the same time or only by one individual.
- **Frequency:** This relates to how often the audience sees your media.
- **Engagement:** This refers to the level to which an audience can interact with the content. How invested is the audience when the message is received?
- **Relationship:** How is the message received and perceived by the audience? The relationship between the media and the audience is defined by the nature of the message, and how targeted, familiar, and relevant it is to the audience.
- **Method:** This comprises the main tactics used to bring the consumer through the buyer's journey. As we saw earlier, this can be made by pulling consumers through content or pushing content to them. Each channel will have a certain level of scope, depending on how the content is found and used, and how it influences the buyer's journey.

Characteristics

We will now take a closer look at these categories.

Mass or individual media

When people are looking at cinema or TV, or listening to radio, the experience of the message through these media is a group experience. The medium is consumed in a group situation, such as watching TV with the family, listening to the radio in the car with other people, or going to catch a movie in a full movie theater. These are group experiences where all eyes and ears are receiving the same stimuli.

Consider social media, email, and apps. Although the medium is shared, the content is customized for the individual. Most people use the same social media, email client, and apps to consume content. However, thanks to technology, consumers present at the same time can see an infinite variation of content based on who is logged in - this is an individual experience.

Passive or active audiences

When planning an overall media strategy, depending on the goals, marketers will create more engaging ad formats on media that appeal to a more passive audience. Digital and traditional can be active and passive. However, digital marketing leads to more active media engagement because of the nature of the formats and channels it involves.

For example, when an ad is showing on TV, the audience has no means of responding to the message. This is a passive medium.

Active media are any form of media where the consumer can physically engage with the content, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Content on digital platforms has been developed to be highly engaging – consumers can share, comment on, like, tweet, and pin it. This gives digital marketing an additional active characteristic.

One-to-one or one-to-many

In traditional marketing, the message given is singular. In other words, because of the group experience, the traditional marketers will develop a single message that will deliver the same content to individuals. In digital marketing, marketers can create multiple versions of the same message, and

target users whose profile definitely fits their target audience. The brand experience aims to treat the consumer as an individual by delivering personalized, relevant content.

Outbound or inbound

This is a push strategy that begins with the brand or advertiser showing ads to as many people as possible, hoping that it will resonate with some of them. For this reason, it is harder to track and more expensive.

On the opposite side, inbound strategy as we defined earlier aims to attract interested consumers to your content, brand, and offer. This marketing model was greatly facilitated with the development of digital technology, as we talked about earlier. The use of cookie tracking, SEO, topics, blogs, and influencers helps brands resonate with a specific audience so they come to you.

Relationship between traditional and digital media

Digital and traditional marketing, new and old media, don't work separately. Actually, they can complement each other and be used with flexibility to achieve marketing goals. This example shows how digital and traditional marketing work together, multiplying the brand experience across media. This repetition and resonance make a company even more relevant because it is present online but also offline, on billboard, posters, TV, magazines, and so on. Traditional media, because of its importance, cost, and reach, can complement digital strategy by bringing legitimacy to products and brands that become part of the familiar scope.

Let's take the example of Jane:

- Jane is watching TV when an ad comes on about the hair conditioner she bought. This prompts her to tweet the company after seeing its Twitter handle at the end of the commercial.
- After seeing this ad and remembering her experience with the product, Jane goes online, on desktop and mobile, and tweets and visits the company website or downloads its app to see what's new.
- She goes on the website and sees a banner using the same commercial she just saw on TV, expanding on the message and content. It tells her that the founder of the hair product company will be interviewed.
- Jane tunes in and watches the interview later that day.
- She also wants to find a store because she wants to talk with a member of staff about the product and problems she has had.
- She goes into the store, having all the previous information and experience, and buys a product. At the cashier's desk, she notices a poster mentioning the brand's presence on Facebook.
- She takes out her phone and decides to follow the company on Facebook so she can read or watch some of its content.

Think about your own experience. This is important to give you a sense of how they actually work together. They really can complement each other.

3i PRINCIPLES

Methodology

The Digital Marketing Institute has developed a methodology that helps to guide digital marketers towards achieving their goals. This methodology, which is central to the key components of digital marketing, comprises three principles: initiate, integrate, and iterate.

Collectively, this is referred to as the 3i Principles. The principles are designed to get you to think about a digital marketing strategy or campaign from start to finish. This helps marketers ensure they are hitting key targets, reflecting on what worked, and understanding what requires refinement.

Initiate

The initiate principle of digital marketing states that the customer is the starting and finishing point for all digital activities. The core of this principle can be summed up as: 'Let the customer decide'.

Iterate

Iterate emphasizes the importance of tweaking a digital marketing campaign in response to user interaction. In short, the more iterations undertaken, the more effective the campaign becomes as you seek to adjust and scale based on feedback, customer engagement, and data.

Integrate

The integrate principle is about taking your efforts across digital channels to drive an outcome that is greater than the individual channels on their own. This also involves integrating both digital and any traditional marketing efforts in a unified way into your overall marketing campaign strategy.

Deep dive

Let's take a look at each of the principles in more detail and discover the key questions we should be asking ourselves when deploying the 3i methodology.

Initiate

You want to start with what the customer actually wants and work backwards through your strategy towards your objective. Consider who are they, what are they interested in, what resonates with them, and what products have they already tested? What actions can you take using digital platforms that will add value to your organization and customer experience? This insight can be uncovered through customer research; in this way, you should try to understand how your customer would like to be talked to. You can use consumer research, past data collected from your campaigns, as well as any internal or commissioned company research to draw insights to guide your strategy. It's a good idea to research any roadblocks that your strategy needs to overcome in order to efficiently reach the audience. By starting with the customer and translating the customer view and insights into a tangible digital strategy, you increase your chance of achieving your goals.

Iterate

The Iterate stage is about testing and improving your activity now that you understand more about the audience, the channels they use, and how they view your brand online. In terms of digital

messaging, targeting, and channels, you know what you're going to do, but you want to make sure it's going to work. So during the Iterate stage, you apply your learnings from live or historical customer engagements with your campaign to improve performance. The iterate part is about A/B testing, putting your brand out there, and modifying targeting and messaging to adapt and optimize your digital campaign to deliver on your objectives.

In the Iterate stage, ask: Do they engage with it? If they are not engaged, what can you change to make them more engaged? Did you go through the right path? Did you position your product in a way that resonates on the market? Are you filling the market gaps? Is your content engaging, is it interesting enough? Is your audience targeting correct? Are your keyword choices driving the desired action from the audience? Once you've done all this testing, you can begin to improve by doing more of what worked and pulling back on what didn't work, with a view to producing a refined campaign. This applies across time, as you can use your learning during and after each campaign to continually get insights from online engagement with your customers and then acting on the results.

Integrate

At this point, it is time to start thinking about integration. The Integration stage is focused on two parts: selling your strategy to get approval from the organization to move forward, and then integrating your findings and strategy across the different channels. In order to achieve the first part, you can rely on the data uncovered during the Initiate phase and apply the findings to the broader business goals and challenges by showcasing how your strategy works for the business. Additionally, if you plan on using new channels or testing new digital marketing software, you might want to think about how these integrate into the existing processes and organization of your team. Here you are helping the digital transformation mindset of your organization by integrating digital into all relevant aspects of business processes. From this point you can then look at integrating your campaign across multiple digital channels and any traditional channels if appropriate.

In essence, the Digital Marketing Institute's 3i Principle methodology is a key system for devising, executing, and reflecting on your digital marketing activity to drive optimal performance.

DIGITAL CHANNELS

Which channels to use

Research can help you make informed decisions about what channels you should use and prioritize. Especially when working within the limits of a budget, marketers need to choose the channels that will cost-effectively help them to reach the set objectives. In some cases, you may only use one or two, and in others you may include multiple channels in your plan.

What are the types of digital channels available to marketers today?

- **Email and automation marketing:** Marketing emails and automation are used for conversion and loyalty. Emails and automation aim to reach out to the customers at the right time to lead them to a conversion destination, such as a landing page. Common email objectives include raising interest, converting sales and retaining customers by providing additional value to the brand and product.
- **Paid search (PPC):** This channel will help you get high value traffic and clicks from an interested audience. As the audience is actively searching for keyword related to their issue, using paid search helps to bring you top of the list when customers are searching and ready to buy or take action.

- **Organic search (SEO):** Optimizing for organic search is a key tactic in digital marketing because it leads to discovery, awareness, interest, and conversion without paid effort. SEO makes your content visible to the audience and easily searchable on Google and other search engines without the need to pay for clicks.
- **Website optimization:** Optimizing your website is essential to create an environment where visitors can engage with your brand content and easily take valuable actions on your site such as buying a product or contacting your team with minimal fuss. Optimizing speed, navigation, responsiveness, content, and conversion processes will help drive more of those valuable actions and lead to better performance.
- **Display advertising:** Thanks to the targeting capabilities of online display, companies can target audience interests, age, gender, community, keywords, and more. So the ads shown to the audience are highly relevant, which drives higher awareness and consideration as well as traffic.
- **Content marketing:** Content marketing is key to the inbound strategy, which in turn is central to a digital marketing strategy. Well-developed and targeted content increases brand personality and likability. Through content, consumers discover your brand values, experience, and world, and can identify with the brand but also learn more about the product and how it solves their problems. Content strategy impacts all stages of the buyer's journey as it is central to all points of contact, and it is the final destination for a lot of marketing tactics. Content is also key in going viral and creating word of mouth as users will share content that is impactful and humorous, or that surprises them.
- **Social media marketing:** Social media platforms are primary channels for creating awareness and interest through content and social engagement. Advertising can be targeted and re-targeted to appeal to the conversion objective. Social channels are also important channels in the Retention stage of the buyer's journey as the primary platform for customer to get information and updates from the company.

NOTES

LESSON 2: DEVELOPING MARKETING OBJECTIVES

SMART OBJECTIVES

What are they?

When you start thinking about your digital marketing strategy, one of the key considerations is objectives. A well-known convention for writing down efficient objectives that will satisfy business and marketing stakeholders is to use the SMART model. When defining your objectives, they should have the following qualities:

SMART:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time-bound**

If you keep that in mind, you'll have the framework to make sure that your objectives are complete, understandable, measurable, and can actually help you develop a better strategy.

Before starting work on your goals, it is useful to discuss business objectives with the relevant stakeholders and understand how and where these are achieved on the business side.

Specific objective

Having a **specific** objective means having a well-defined and clear goal, stating exactly what you aim to achieve. The objective needs to be crystal clear, and anyone who reads it, even outside the Marketing department, should understand what it hopes to achieve.

Here are some tips to make your objectives specific:

- Think **simple, sensible, and significant**.
- When defining your goals, think about the following **questions**:
 - What do I want to accomplish?
 - Why is it important?
 - Who is involved?
 - Where is it located?
 - What resources or limits are involved?
- Write down a **summary** of your goal and reshape it to be as specific and clear as possible.
- The goal should describe an **action** that involves the customer.
- Sometimes a **unique objective** is clearer and more realistic than having too many that will dilute your impact and focus.

Measurable objective

Once you have specified the aim of your objective, the second step is to make the objective **measurable**.

This means that you need to have an obtainable goal that can be measured using numbers – for example, increase website visits by 10% by June.

You can verify this aspect of your objective from the following questions:

- What are the current key performance indicators (KPIs) for the business?
- What digital data can you leverage? This includes traffic, cost per click (CPC), lead generation, social media tracking, among others.
- What is the current situation and what evolution do you expect to see?
- How much?
- How many?
- How will you know when the objective has been accomplished?

At the end of the campaign, you should be able to look back and precisely quantify your impact and be able to translate the numbers in a business target.

Achievable objective

Now you need to think about the execution of this objective. Is it **achievable**? Is it too ambitious? Do you have the resources necessary to achieve this goal? It's the reality check.

Crafting an achievable objective means that it is reachable within the current available skills, budget, and time, and it takes into account the potential constraints or limits that exist.

To define the achievability of your objective, think about the following points:

- How can you accomplish this goal?
- How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?
- What is the allocated budget that you currently have for this?
- How many hours a week can the team work on this? Who will be the point of contact responsible for achieving the goal?
- What things may stop the team from reaching their goals?

Relevant objective

At this stage, you need to ask yourself whether this objective is **relevant** in the bigger picture. Remembering what we said at the beginning of this section, the marketing objectives should tie in nicely with the business objectives. Even if you started by studying the business objective to develop the marketing one, once the marketing objective is crafted, take a step back and check that it is still relevant.

Here are some questions you can ask to check your objective against the overall goals and business priority include:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts or needs?
- Is this the right team? Are you the right person to reach this goal?
- Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

Time-bound objective

Finally, your objective needs to be time-bound in order to set limits to the time spent on this particular objective and to fit the business timeframe in terms of target, product development, and other major time-bound events.

An objective needs be achieved within a set timeframe. This helps to create focus, and meet deadlines milestones.

A time-bound goal can be identified by answering these questions:

- When?
- What can I do today?
- What can I do six weeks from now?
- What can I do six months from now?
- Based on research, what is the appropriate timeframe that should be given to achieve this goal?

Selecting the length of time you think it will take to reach your goal will help you figure out how aggressive you need to be with your marketing efforts.

CASE STUDY: SMART OBJECTIVES

Examining objectives

Having looked at each stage in the SMART objectives model, we can now evaluate some examples of how this system can be implemented in a real business situation.

Example 1:

Increase the annual banquet dinner (March 28th) attendance by 150% by emailing out 300 additional invitations to program sponsors and volunteers, having ten local businesses sponsor tables, and asking guests to RSVP by January 15th.

What do you think about this objective? Do you think it's precise enough? Does it fit into the SMART model? For example, is it specific? Well, if you examine it closely, we know who we're targeting, and how many invitations we want to send.

We know exactly when the annual banquet takes place, March 28. Therefore, we can say it is time-bound. And we know when we want them to answer, by January 15, so that's another example of this objective being time-bound – the T of our SMART objective. Now, is it measurable? We have a component here, 150%. So at the end of this campaign, the company will be able to evaluate the success of their goal by asking: "Did we achieve this attendance, did we increase the attendance by 150% by emailing 300 additional invitations?"

Is this goal achievable? With the information available to us in this context we can't really know, but we can imagine that the company has done its research and knows, approximately, how many people usually answer, and how many extra invitations it will need to send to raise the attendance of the event.

Now, is the objective relevant? Well, again, this depends on the context, but we can imagine that as part of its main strategy the company wants to raise awareness with sponsors and other guests. Crucially, we can infer that the company wants to make sure these sponsors and guests come to the event because, perhaps, it is launching a new product or service, and the company intends to exhibit its new values and direction.

Example 2

Drawing from the overall marketing budget of €90,000.00, the PPC element of the campaign will use €22,500 (25%) of the available funds. Within the 12 month period, the PPC campaign will deliver 12 new customers, each with a lifetime value of €7,000.00. PPC will deliver a total return of €84,000, a total ROI of 273.3%.

Example 3

By September 21st, 2019, increase website traffic by 21% using owned content optimization to drive customers to our site organically by increasing our website authority, delivering 13 new customer per month.

Take a look at the other examples here and see if you can spot each quality in the objectives.

- Do they fit into the SMART model?
- Are they specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound?

NOTES

LESSON 3: DIGITAL RESEARCH

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

Definition and benefits

The main research that all marketers use before even thinking about the campaign is audience research. Audience research is designed to establish the size, composition, and characteristics of a group of individuals who are, or could be, potential customers. It's important to note that this research is about the people and individuals who make up your target audience.

Goal

The goal of all audience research is to find consumer insights that can help you deliver on your campaign or business objectives. Because the goal of a digital marketing strategy is to influence the buyer's journey, marketers need to connect with the audience by knowing what they think, how they behave, and how they live their lives. You should know your audience as well as you know your best friend!

Benefits

One of the key benefits to conducting audience research is the ability to identify obstacles. For example, are other brands trying to communicate with your audience but not experiencing much success? Why? By being aware of such obstacles you can then develop appropriate, personalized content that is more relevant to your audience. Moreover, you want to find ways to stay ahead of your customers and discover solutions that anticipate future needs they may have. Audience research allows you to understand your customers, and ultimately makes you more effective in delivering your digital marketing strategy by catering to their needs.

To focus efforts, it is common practice to create a buyer persona. This is a description of your ideal customer in terms of motivations, demographics, and channels used to access the internet. Buyer personas help digital marketers choose the channels and messaging that will resonate with their ideal customer and efficiently deliver on objectives.

Data types

Before we examine the various tools available to us, let's look at the data that you'll want to gather when you conduct audience research.

We have three types of data:

- Demographic
- Psychographics
- Behavioral

You want to have a good understanding of the three of these because each of them will give you different insights into your audience.

Demographics

Demographics are the hard facts about your audience.

Some examples of facts would be:

- Whether they are male or female
- How old they are
- What their profession is
- Whether they are married
- Where they live
- Whether they go to college

This information is about their social aspect and relative place within their society. It's not very personal, but it helps you peel back the first layer of understanding your audience; it gives you an initial glance at their make-up.

The socio-economic data in demographics include: gender, age, income level, occupation, marital status, location, number of children, education, religion, family size, ethnicity, nationality, social class, industry, number of computers, and generation.

Psychographics

Psychographics are much more detailed and complex. They can uncover anything that your audience might be interested in: their beliefs, life goals, or opinions. It's about gaining a deep understanding of your audience's aspirations so that, when you talk to them, you are speaking a language that resonates with what they really want.

Psychographics can include: activities, interests, opinions, attitudes, values, lifestyle, and loyalty. It's about their lifestyle, their personality. For instance, maybe you want to reach someone that's 21 years old and works as an accountant, but also loves basketball. As there can be many different people types in your audience, you need to conduct demographic and psychographic research so that you really know who they are and avoid making any assumptions. This will help you navigate away from potential pitfalls or running campaigns that target the wrong audience.

Behavioral data

This is about how people use your product, or even how they navigate on your website, and how they use the different media that you want to use as your marketing channels.

What do they do on Facebook? How long do they stay? Why do they click? Where do they click? All of this is very important because it will allow you to transform the journey of your audience on your website and social media and know exactly where you need to target your effort. This data can tell you a lot about your customer. For example, when are they on your website? What time are they on Facebook? Maybe it's in the morning, maybe it's at night, and you don't want to miss those opportunities to engage with your customer.

By observing what people do, and how they behave online, using your product or using your competition's products, you can understand the limitations of the user experience and perception to improve your message and overcome obstacles.

Behavioral data can include:

- Online activities such as social media use
- Website visits
- Product and content use

- Where they click
- What the usual consumer path is on your site
- Other relevant buying habits including brand preferences and product usage

So audience research is really about giving you all the context and information you need. It is central to any digital marketing strategy because if you don't have this data, how do you know where and how you are going to communicate?

AUDIENCE LISTENING TOOLS

What is it?

By definition, audience listening is the process of monitoring what people are saying on digital media channels about your brand, your products, competitors. This insight can help you devise a strategy that will influence consumers based on what you've "heard" from listening to them.

Every day, countless members of your target audience discuss topics that relate to your brand, either directly or indirectly. They don't care whether you hear about it or not, and they're not taking special steps to comment and discuss their topics of interest on your social media channels. So you might not hear what they are saying. By engaging in audience listening, you make these insights visible to the marketing and business organization.

Audience research platforms

The main types of platform that marketers will use in the digital landscape to conduct audience research are:

- Social media
- Marketing research companies
- Survey providers
- Behavior analytics platforms

Using these tools can help marketers focus their attention on the type of content and messaging they need to develop in order to engage their target audience. You need to know what media is the best point of contact, raise awareness, and understand the words and images that the audience will want to engage with.

All these tools will give access to direct consumer insights such as tweets, comments, engagements, or third-party data analysis.

Social Media

You can use your social media analytics and platforms to analyze the existing data on your community of followers, and their likes and friends. Start creating a picture of who your current customers are. You can also research social media to look at audiences that follow competitors and understand more about their profile. This goes across all social media platforms that have strong analytic tools developed, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.

Social media platforms gather knowledge or insights gained from analyzing social media data. These are useful for removing the manual work by accessing collected and analyzed data directly.

Some examples of social intelligence tools are Hootsuite, HubSpot, Social Intel, Nuvi, and Affinio. Most of these are paid services because they provide extra data visualization and analysis. However, they enable you to gather the data from several social media platforms in one place and also monitor conversations.

Marketing Research

Marketers can tap into secondary research developed by third-party research companies such as PRIZM from Claritas, eMarketer, Euromonitor, Nielsen, and Spark. These can be given as free reports or you might require a business subscription to the platform providing the research data. You can also choose to commission market research specifically designed for your business, bearing in mind this can be time consuming and expensive.

Usually, because it is less expensive, marketers will use digital insights as a quick way to get strong data. Bear in mind that, because the data is a public and shared resource, it will less likely bring new insights or decisions. A competitor with access to the same data might have already taken the direction you are considering. The more specific the research is, the better because this can help you to successfully communicate with the audience. Bear this in mind when using secondary data, as it is always better to have a mix.

Surveys

Suppose you want to collect specific data related to your product or a specific trend you are interested in. Researching within your current audience using online survey platforms is a cheap and convenient way to carry primary audience research.

Platforms such as SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Zoomerang, or AYTm surveys are a great source of primary data. They can be very powerful if they are well designed and ask the right questions. Also, they can be sent to hundreds or thousands of customers as required. Online interviews are another way to collect qualitative primary research, and direct interaction with relevant customers using tools such as Nebu or Skype.

Behavior Analytics

Behavioral analytics focuses on providing insight into the actions of your audience and customers. Behavioral analytics is used in various scenarios to identify opportunities to optimize in order to realize specific business outcomes. Google Search data provides insightful sources of consumer behavior because you can see what they are looking for.

You can then see what they do on your website after they search and click on your link. This enables you to see the full journey to help understand what triggered their interest.

You can also see where traffic and clicks are concentrated on your website using heatmaps. This involves using tools to color code the website to see the actions that people take there, where they move their mouse, and where they click. Knowing how people interact with your website is invaluable information for digital marketers.

CULTURAL RESEARCH

What is it?

Cultural research involves investigating the ways in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations, and power.

Cultural influences

When you begin your efforts into cultural research there are five key factors to consider.

Geographic influences

Each country, city, and neighborhood has its own ways of communicating, its own historical influences, and its own perception of the world. People might have lived in a place their entire life, and others might be new. This can influence their perception heavily as they are stimulated by different experiences built over time. Think about how differently you would communicate with Japanese and American people and how this influence comes from their location and cultural history.

Influential figures and movements

Cultures revolve around icons who are famous specifically within the group. Each country, subculture, or fashion trend is created and grows around a number of individuals who have actively been involved in the development of the cultural movement, either historically or currently. They can be political figures, singers, artists, or activists, or just someone who become a “name” in that culture as the ideal representation of its value.

Language and memes

Language and image reference, or memes, are at the heart of creating resonating content. You should go beyond the simple language barriers that you need to overcome to enter new markets and look at how people actually talk, and the words, expressions, and memes they use to express feeling and ideas. All these can help you understand the preferred type of communication, whether it's formal or informal, and how to leverage these styles of communication to integrate within a community.

Historic and current news

Tying in the previous points, history, news, and events influence the direction taken by a cultural movement, and create a richer cultural experience. New cultures carry a smaller set of influencers, experiences, and groups that are seeking shared experiences to grow visibility. Other cultures are small and never develop as they do not share news or are not part of the visible spectrum of media attention, and these will be harder to study as their history and news are not central.

Rules and mores

The cultural aspect of groups, places, religions, and beliefs usually comes with a set of implied rules. An easy example is the dietary requirement of religious beliefs, such as not eating pork or beef, and so on. Other rules might be subtler in certain cultural movements such as not using certain brands because of their values, or avoiding specific colors that carry an unwanted meaning.

Benefits of cultural research

Cultural research brings many benefits for marketers interested in reaching out to multiple target audiences across class, location, and culture. Some marketers may have a niche audience that share a similar culture and thus will focus on their code and value, while others might promote products that can be sold across multiple cultures and get involved in cross-cultural marketing efforts.

Export a campaign successfully in other cultures

When thinking about expansion into new markets, digital marketers may need to rethink their entire strategy. They need to assess what in the marketing strategy needs to change, from the content to the messaging, positioning to visuals, and also media choices. Marketing to US audiences can be very different from marketing to Europeans. This applies to across countries but also across cultures in the same countries.

Adapt the positioning and offer to fit in a global context

If a marketer cannot adapt the marketing strategy for each subculture that they are targeting, then cultural research will help them find a common ground that will resonate with most of their audience. Using cultural research can be insightful in finding common patterns across audiences.

Prevent potential misconceptions or offensive content

Cultural research is essential for reducing the risk of misunderstanding or causing offense that could attract negative publicity to the company. By knowing the cultural background of the audience, marketers can reduce risk and have their campaign successfully accepted by that new culture.

Cultural research tools

Marketers in the digital era have an array of tools that can be used to conduct cultural research. These tools are also useful for classic audience research but make it easier to target specific cultures.

Here are some of the most common tools used for cultural research.

Social media conversations

Keywords, Facebook groups, Twitter communities, hashtags, and influencers are a powerful way to understand how a specific community is talking and interacting, and how involved they are with your brand or product.

Research

Audience research firms will develop their own research on specific cultural groups and make it available for marketers. This can be done by firms such as eMarketer, Nielsen, and so on, but also by specialized firms that will create dedicated reports and case studies about what made or broke brands when working on cross-cultural campaigns. Scholars' research is also a beneficial source of insight, as this can be more in-depth and really targeted to specific sub-cultures.

Dedicated platforms

Another way to use digital media to develop your cultural research is to follow the consumer journey through content. By finding and visiting niche websites, influencers' accounts, dedicated apps, bloggers, and forums, you can learn about all the previous issues we have already discussed, and see what values are most important to the cultural group. This can be even prolonged by consuming other forms of media such as TV shows or movies that resonate with the audience.

COMPETITIVE RESEARCH

Benefits of competitive research

Competitive research provides insight into what the competition is doing in terms of marketing, what their message and positioning is, how well they are received, what part of the market they are targeting, and the success they are achieving online.

When researching the competition, there are three insights that you want to look for.

Strategy

Understanding what media and content strategy your competition has adopted can help reduce friction and prevent overlapping throughout the process of competitive research.

Target market

Understanding your competitors' target audience more in-depth can provide insights on your own target audience and how it should differ, based on how your product solves the problem for them. It also can help you understand the challenge, depending on the similarity of your target audience.

Message

Understanding the competition's message will enable you to differentiate yourself from the competition. Brands with similar messages get less credit and visibility and cause confusion in consumers' minds. Your brand needs a differentiation element that will make it stand out at all stages of the buyer's journey. Ideally, your message should be better and resonate with the audience, so it stands out more than the competition.

Platforms involved in competitive research

With digital media today, companies share such more information with their customer than before and must be more transparent, as required by the public. This means that more information about competitors is available and is easily collectable through one place: The Internet!

Different platforms are involved in the collection of competitive insights.

Social media

Similar to gathering audience insights, social media is an infinite source of insights, conversations, hashtags, mentions, reviews, comment, and so on. Using dedicated monitoring tools to centralize your research can help you keep an eye on what the audience says about your competition (be it positive or negative), where they delighted the customers, and where they lack quality. Additionally, you can see how people compare your business to others and, for example, how much more volume

their brand generates in terms of community density. Some tools to help you with this include Twitter, Feedly, and Brandwatch – all of which are designed to track conversations.

Competitor assets

As simple as it sounds, visiting your competition's website, downloading their white papers or quarterly reports, listening to their webcasts or podcasts, and participating in their online events is a great way to understand their business, how they position themselves, and how they deliver their message. By putting yourself in the consumer's shoes, you can understand how the buyer's journey is designed and how your competition goes on converting their audience at each stage. For example, through their blog, you can understand their primary focus and how they position themselves as experts in the market. You can also understand the traffic on your competition's assets through software such as Alexa and understand where their traffic is generated and thus refine your media strategy.

Search

Search is a powerful insight into how people find a product and what they are looking for. By analyzing searches, you can know what the consumer problem is and how it is solved. You can use search tools such as SEMrush or SpyFu to understand how your competition ranks for specific keywords. Are they ranked on keywords you are not using? What is their ranking? What is the advantage on these specific keywords? Additionally, you can search to keep track of new content generated by your competition by using Google Alerts.

Content analysis

In addition to social media monitoring, you can use tools to monitor other forms of content that your competition is distributing. This can help you understand their media strategy. You can follow their newsletter with Owletter, use Kompyte to track their website changes, and so on. Many tools exist for you to track changes, traffic, bounce rate, click rate, reviews, and so on. This can be used to help you better understand your own position and where you have to go, but can also be used to set targets if you are working as a challenger on the market.

INDUSTRY TREND RESEARCH

What is it?

Industry trend research involves monitoring changes and advancements that are taking place in and around an industry category in order to stay ahead of the competition.

Industry trend analysis enables a company to develop a competitive strategy that best defends against the competitive forces or influences them in its favor. The key to developing a competitive strategy is to understand the sources of the competitive forces. One example of a methodology to conducting industry trend research is Porter's Five Forces, which we will look at in the next slide.

Porter's competitive forces

According to Porter's Five Forces, customers, suppliers, substitutes, potential entrants, and competitors are crucial to evaluating industry trends and competition.

- **Industry rivalry (degree of competition among existing firms):** Intense competition leads to reduced profit potential for companies in the same industry.
- **Threat of substitutes (products or services):** Availability of substitute products will limit your ability to raise prices.
- **Bargaining power of buyers:** Powerful buyers have a significant impact on prices.
- **Bargaining power of suppliers:** Powerful suppliers can demand premium prices and limit your profit.
- **Barriers to entry (threat of new entrants):** These act as a deterrent against new competitors.

Benefits of conducting industry trend research

The role of industry trend research is to understand the movement within these forces, to prepare and ultimately be able to predict their direction in order to adapt a strategy that will strengthen the company's presence on the market.

Keeping up with audience's communication style and medium

This is highly beneficial for companies by providing behavioral changes across many areas in the industry. It can inform a company that users are no longer reacting to tweets but are now engaging more with videos, that they are no longer using this platform but another, or that they are looking for new ways of solving a similar problem, for example.

Identify market opportunities

This information on consumer and competition behavior helps performance based on the audience communication style and medium, identifying market opportunities with new needs or values that become important to consumer. They can help you to plan the next marketing strategies based on the predictive analysis of market trends.

Plan next marketing effort

By predicting needs, you can increase customers' loyalty by providing them with a solution to future issue that they may face. A company needs to adapt to the existing trends of its market while looking for new trends that may present an opportunity. If a company doesn't adapt to the trends, it is likely to lose its audience by becoming irrelevant.

Tools to track industry trends

There are a variety of tools available to track industry trends.

Here are some examples.

Social media monitoring

By identifying the density of conversation on social media you can find trends and insights where consumers are looking and what they want next. Tools such as TweetDeck, Google Trends, and Twitter trending topics can help you identify the patterns online to see what is trendy at the moment. This is a reliable source of instant trend information. However, it is a reactive approach, as you might find a trend only after it is already well known.

Market research reports

Most industry trend research studies are conducted by research firms that have the resources to survey, interview, and analyze trend data and then make actionable reports. Some examples of online companies that provide regular free insights on industry trends are Euromonitor, eMarketer, Qualtrics, Nielsen, Crimson Hexagon, and PwC. The advantage of these types of firms is the availability and quality of the data, as these are generally large scale and statistically more accurate. Requesting reports from research firms specifically for your company can be a way to find trends that are more granular and resonate more directly with your target audience. However, it can also be expensive and time consuming.

Search analytics

Keywords are fantastic indicators of trends. Much like the stock market, you can look at the keywords that are on the rise and bet on their evolution and the insights that they can provide. The main tools for analyzing keywords are Google Ads and Google Trends, but other tools include the Amazon Keyword Trends tool or Wordtracker.

Academic research

Individuals who look at the market and think about its potential evolution are great sources of predictive trend research. Scholars study specific behavior by using hard data, theory, and testing, and then can develop insights into what the future of an industry is likely to be. Therefore, academics and scholars are a great source of predictive analysis who can provide insights into the development of the digital marketing strategy. You can find research from universities, such as MIT, Harvard, Oxford, and so on, but also through scholar databases such as Google Scholar or Base.

CASE STUDY: CARTIER

How Cartier reached their audience

Like all jewelry brands, Cartier wanted to make an impression for Valentine's day. To do so, they decided to use social media advertising. This was because they knew the power of the audience targeting options available, but also the product awareness and consumer interest-driving qualities of social marketing among key audience groups. The enhanced awareness and audience engagement of social media users contributes directly to high conversion rates and sales through Facebook, or via other channels working together.

Objective	Tactics
Drive online sales of a selection of fine jewellery during the Valentine's Day shopping period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UK• Aged 18 and above• Interests in art, jewellery, fashion accessories, luxury goods or one of its high-end competitors
	Results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2X return on ad spend compared to previous campaigns• 40% improvement in relevance score on "For Him" campaign• 25% improvement in relevance score on "For Her" campaign

You can see the tactics and targeting Cartier used to reach their perfect audience. Think about it for a second. How do you gather information so granular to understand what your audience knows,

likes, and follows, and where they are buying already? Audience research is the key to creating powerful campaigns because it allows your brand to reach the people who will be most interested in you.

To gain these insights, Cartier might have used a set of tools including:

- **Social media and competitive research**, to know how their competition was positioned and who their audience already follows.
- **Google Ads keyword research** and **social media monitoring**, to find related interests and what searches are driving people to action.
- **Demographic research** based on their internal database of clients for the demographics targeting age and job.

Granular analysis of your audience using digital tools can help define such precise targeting. Facebook's targeting tools are also very powerful at providing suggestions based on past campaigns and the entire data set of all ads that have run on their platform. Cartier could also have used retargeting to target past customers, or lookalike audiences to target people who have similar traits to their existing customers but aren't a customer already. This is a great way to expand targeting to potential new customers based on their existing customer profile.

But research doesn't stop at targeting. It is essential to use what you know about your audience to develop the types of content and messaging you want for your ads. This will help create the most effective and engaging tone for your copy and text, as well as the ideal look and feel for your images, banners, website, and videos. In this stage you have to understand what triggers the audience's interest and communicate this in your ads, website assets, and content to drive engagement and action.

This is a very simple example of how audience research is used in everyday campaigns to resonate and push well-rounded content. As a result of their efforts, Cartier saw a 2x return on ad spend, became 40% more relevant to men (as they were targeting couples), and 25% more relevant to women.

Can you think about other campaigns that you have seen and thought they were well targeted in terms of location, content, and product? Think about the last ad you saw that really caught your eye and took you to the website, and maybe even the product page. How do you think the marketers have researched and found information about your taste? These are some of the key questions to consider when you look at an advert that resonates with you, and try to understand how you might take a similar approach to advertising your own product or service.

NOTES

LESSON 4: CONNECTING WITH THE CUSTOMER

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY - INTRODUCTION

What is it?

After looking at the number of marketing channels available to you, how do you construct a plan utilizing the SMART goals methodology, and how do you conduct research?

Now it's time to examine the **buyer's journey**. The buyer's journey is the process a consumer goes through before purchasing a product or service. This process can look different depending on the industry or product you are associated with, but generally has five main stages from awareness to retention, and it is commonly visualized as a funnel.

When you target an audience, you must consider where in the buyer's journey this audience sits. Do they already know your product? Have they tried it before? Have they ever purchased from your competitor's brand? What do they think about your brand and product? What are the pain points that would prevent this audience from purchasing your product?

Understanding the context around your audience and the elements needed to move them down the funnel are critical for a successful digital marketing strategy. Their place in the buyer's journey will influence the media you choose to communicate with them. The idea is to uncover insights and use them in your digital marketing strategy to move your audience through the stages of the funnel.

You should aim to create your own buyer's journey based on research, adding precision to the general model. This is deeply rooted in the inbound methodology – in other words, how to attract a highly-qualified audience by providing the necessary tools for their decision-making process.

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

Stages of the buyer's journey

To simplify the decision-making process that all consumers go through, we can reduce it down to three main consumer touchpoints:

- **Awareness:** Being aware of your company
- **Consideration:** Researching how your company fits in their life
- **Conversion:** Making a purchase decision, or taking action

Each stage comes with its own challenges and goals that will drive a marketing strategy. We can develop this three-stage journey a little further into a five-stage funnel for even more precise consumer targeting.

- **Awareness:** To communicate a benefit, and tell them about a brand, product, event, or offer
- **Interest:** To increase emotional engagement
- **Consideration:** To bring your company to the forefront of the choice
- **Conversion:** To convert intent into action
- **Retention:** To make the consumer feels special and increase the chances of recommendations

Awareness

The Awareness stage represents the moment when the consumer becomes aware of a problem they want to solve in their life and perceives your product ad as a potential solution. In this stage, marketers should focus on creating visibility and recognition. This is a critical stage for new products, brands, or added benefits to an existing product. This stage will focus on getting your product out there, implementing it as part of a broader scope of existing solutions for an issue.

Interest

The Interest stage represents the moment when the consumer is looking for options that will help solve their problem. At this stage, the consumer has a selection of ideas in mind but will need more information and experience to make a decision. This is a quest for knowledge that, in the digital marketing landscape, translates into reading reviews, blog articles, social media, and ad product websites in order to gain as much information as possible.

Consideration

The Consideration stage represents the moment when the consumer knows about your brand and thinks it might be a good fit for their needs or what they are trying to achieve. They may have other brands in mind, but your company is in the mix. At this stage, inbound strategies are highly effective because, if correctly used, they ensure that the brand or product more frequently appears in the consumer's search results and social media feeds.

Conversion

The Conversion stage represents the moment when the consumer is ready to buy your product or take action on your site. The consumer has done their research and, based on their needs and motivations, has decided on a product as the best solution for their problem. At this stage, the consumer has not yet paid for the product or service, and the role of the marketer is to create a point of contact to drive the conversions. This is generally achieved with targeting and re-targeting, promotional offers, and creating a sense of urgency.

Retention

The Retention stage is often overlooked, but it is a key stage for ensuring reoccurring revenue and creating a group of active brand advocates. Once the consumer has used the product and is satisfied, it is crucial to provide added value and create a real relationship. In this stage, you are addressing an already convinced consumer who thinks your product is great for them, but you still need to keep them satisfied and create a desire to come back to your product. The more you know about your customers, the more you will be able to provide additional value to them and delight them, not only with your product, but with your brand experience and personality.

MARKETING FUNCTIONS

What are they?

Marketing functions are defined as the various roles of a marketing team in helping a business promote their brand and products by differentiating them from competitors' products.

These marketing team functions can be summarized as:

- Planning

- Awareness
- Conversion
- Retention
- Analysis and Optimization

Deep dive

Let's take a deep dive into these functions.

Planning

The purpose of the Planning function is to set time-bound actions that will lead to achieving your marketing objective. For this function, marketing needs to work closely with the product and business team to understand and align with their goals. It also provides an insight into the best direction to develop and adds value to the decision-making process by bringing the consumer and community perspective into the discussion. This function also lays the foundation for the following marketing functions by communicating the objectives and necessary costs of the digital marketing strategy that will achieve the global business objectives and promote and retain product adoption.

The activities in Planning are: analyzing business needs, doing research, developing objectives, goals, setting deadlines and budget.

Awareness

The purpose of the Awareness function is to increase the number of people who know your business and its offering. This function aims to create relevancy of a product/brand/company to potential customers. If we take a new product that is just being launched, the Awareness function is the most important and will help put the name of the product in consumers' minds when thinking about the product category.

The activities in Awareness are: identifying market opportunities, developing creative concepts, media strategy, content, and leveraging PR, influencer and branding formats.

Conversion

The purpose of the Conversion function is to turn an individual within an audience from a prospect to a lead or customer. This function is more tactical and requires less creative differentiation.

The activities in Conversion are: developing offers and messaging, testing, and adjusting content, leveraging paid search, retargeting, and email.

Retention

The purpose of the Retention function is to nurture existing customers to increase their loyalty. This function is about nurturing by providing extra content, experience, promotions, and so on. By providing added value to your product brand and experience, you are likely to encourage customers to come back on their own terms because they like your brand or offering.

The activities in Retention are: identifying buyers needs and expectations, developing nurturing strategy, exceeding expectations, providing additional value, and monitoring post sale activity.

Analysis and Optimization

The purpose of the Analysis and Optimization function is to gather data and find insights to change the existing planning and inform future Digital marketing strategy plans. This last function is important for presenting the success of the strategy to the broader business organization. It is the role of the analyst to understand marketing results in terms of their impact on wider business objectives.

The activities in Analysis and Optimization are: gathering performance data, analyzing reason for success and failure, pausing underperforming campaigns, reproducing success, and adapting strategy.

INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING

360 marketing

Traditional and digital marketing both have unique strengths that can be used throughout the buyer's journey to achieve your broader marketing goals. By thinking this way, you can understand the importance of aligning with other marketing departments, beyond the digital marketing team. Working in collaboration is key to moving your potential customers through the funnel and converting.

Using the full circle of marketing tactics is called a 360 or integrated marketing strategy, as it aims to engage consumers at all touchpoints throughout their day. The mainstream definition of a 360 marketing strategy is that it is a marketing plan that is both online and offline, across all digital channels, on social media, and anywhere that your customer spends time.

It's a holistic promotion that truly covers all touchpoints. In short, to be truly 360, a campaign would need to include everything that is used by your consumer – mobile, digital, search, and social, as well as any relevant traditional channels like TV, radio, or print.

If your audience is digital native, you may not have an offline or traditional media element. But if you do, let's take a look at the benefits of a 360 marketing campaign that implements both traditional and digital marketing.

Benefits of a 360 marketing campaign

We have briefly touched on a few advantages of a 360 marketing campaign already, but let's list some precise benefits of an integrated 360 marketing campaign.

Covers entire buying cycle

First of all, it covers the entire buying cycle. Each media channel, offline or online, is good at achieving specific marketing objectives. When channels are used together, they can cover the full spectrum of the consumer's journey to help efficiently move them through the funnel towards purchase, conversion, and retention.

Uses every point of contact

An integrated 360 campaign taps into each audience's point of contact with your brand. In today's media landscape, your audience is not attached to one particular type of media. They will travel across digital, television, print, and other media. Being present across the most impactful and

important touchpoints allows your brand to resonate and move with your potential customers as they go through their day. Integrated marketing campaigns allow you to adapt to media consumption changes such as seasonality and daily trends.

Optimizes for scale and relevance

An integrated 360 campaign optimizes for scale and relevance. Traditional media types are good for scaling as they reach a large number of people in a short amount of time. Just be aware of the cost and time it takes to create and produce ads and assets to run on traditional channels. Digital media channels are good for relevance and attracting specific consumers, with lower costs for production and shorter lead times to create the assets. A 360 campaign can help attract the ideal consumers who are most likely to convert while helping your brand get discovered by potential new customer prospects.

Implements both traditional and digital marketing

360 marketing campaigns provide a complete marketing experience to the audience. For the audience, having a full brand experience is a bonus. If they have already experienced the brand online, they might want to experience it offline through the store experience or see the brand in the street or on TV when they don't expect it. That, for brands, is a great cyclical process; it creates familiarity with the audience, and aids recall. We should also consider the notion of dual screening. This is where marketers target an audience while they consume traditional mass media like TV while receiving targeted messages online, as is the case with trending Twitter hashtags during live TV or breaking news events.

Enables you to effectively measure results

Finally, an integrated 360 campaign enables you to measure results effectively. Traditional media choices are hard to report on in terms of ROI. Therefore, using digital strategies can help shed some light on how the audience actually interacts with and reacts to the campaign, and can also help measure the impact of traditional media. For instance, if a brand runs an ad on TV at 8pm, and the corresponding website analytics reports an upward trend at that time, we can draw some conclusions on the effectiveness of the ad based on the actions taken online. The difference between normal online activity and a traffic or sales spike around the time of a TV ad is a good measure of the impact of the TV ad.

ALIGNING THE BUYER'S JOURNEY WITH CHANNELS

Components of digital marketing

Digital marketing has a set of primary components or channels that are used to achieve the marketing goals set for each function. These will overlap because multiple components can be used for different functions. Working in collaboration is key to moving your leads through the funnel and converting.

Content

Based on the inbound methodology, content is king. It is your content that attracts interested consumers and encourages them to find out, learn, and research about your product and brand. Content marketing is the number one priority in your inbound strategy as it will be at the center of all

efforts and campaigns as the added value to build trust with the consumer, and eventually convert them into customers.

Display and video advertising

Based on an outbound strategy, marketers and brands can drive awareness and consideration by using engaging banner and audio-visual formats displayed to audiences who fit a certain profile on channels across the web. This can be done by targeting interest groups, programmatically or using retargeting methods to ensure you are targeting the ideal audiences at all times. Goals and KPIs for video and display tend to be awareness-driving outcomes rather than direct conversions through the channel.

Social media marketing

Through content distribution and social engagement, social media marketing enables you to create a real connection with consumers, keep them informed, and make it easy for them to reach your website, ask for information, and provide feedback. Social media allows you to showcase your brand's personality and connections with other companies, influencers, and causes, making your company more relatable.

Paid search

This channel is directly tied to conversion and sales. Because consumers turn to their search engine to find answers, being top of search engine results pages (SERPs) is a competitive advantage. Knowing that consumers online will click on the top links presented and rarely look past the first page, it is essential to be visible when consumers search and are ready to buy.

Search engine optimization

SEO is most useful for discovery and researching activities on search engines. Good SEO means your content will be considered more relevant by search engine and will hopefully list your website closer to the top of the page in the organic, non-paid search results.

Email marketing

The consumer doesn't always proactively come on your website or find you on Google. However, email marketing is the channel that allows you to reach out to subscribed consumers who want to hear from you.

Automation

By using specialist software, digital marketers can set up campaigns to automatically engage prospects and customers at key times using email marketing and social media channels. You can set up a workflow which is a number of rules for sending emails or delivering social content to different people on your prospect or customer list to keep them engaged with your brand as they come to a purchase decision. This is called lead or prospect nurturing, and it can have a very positive impact on consumer purchase patterns.

Analytics

This enables you to connect each campaign, visits, and conversions, and tie it all together to understand the consumer journey through your marketing channels and sales funnel. Different campaign analytics tools are incorporated in the various social media platforms, search engines and email service providers. You can also track website visitors using web analytics to understand what happens after a user clicks on your campaign ad and land on your site. Both campaign and website analytics are essential for optimization of channels by providing marketers with the data to make informed decisions.

The different stages



Awareness and Interest

The Awareness and Interest stages are driven by discovery when the consumer slowly becomes aware of their problem and the potential solutions. This stage is driven by your content's relationship with the main topic. A user may not carry out a detailed search, meaning that positioning on a broad topic and sharing content that stands out (video or advertising) will help your product become part of the conversation. The ideal situation is for your content to be engaging and interesting, bring added value to the conversation, and provide solutions to the consumer's problem. Developing a strong social media presence and engagement is recommended for bringing your product forward organically and on your target timeline.

Consideration and Conversion

Consideration and Conversion are stages where the consumer is more focused. At these stages, the customers know the available solutions and are now wondering which one to choose by looking for additional information, experience, reviews, and creating a mindmap of the best quality/price/value ratio. As consumers will likely search for additional information by asking precise questions about the product, you need to optimize your content for search engines and invest in paid ads on keywords translation to ensure the 'Consideration' stage is well-integrated in your strategy. The more your product or brand is associated with a specific topic and keyword, the stronger the association will be shaped in the consumer's mind. This can increase content discovery and engagement significantly.

Retention

Retention uses more personal components, such as email marketing automation and analytics, to provide a consistent customer experience, reaching out, following up a purchase, and using the correct information to create a sense of intimacy between the customer and the brand. Using information such a birthday date, membership start date, or favorite topic or product can produce engaging content that triggers an emotional response from the customer.

TOOLS FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing tools

Your digital marketing strategy will be defined by the channels you will be using. The channels shown here also coincide with the modules you will explore in this program.

The main digital channels are all covered in the course.

Website optimization

Let's start with **website optimization**. This is the art of creating – and continuously improving – websites to optimize the visitor experience, resulting in high visitor satisfaction, better user experience, and high repeat visit and conversion rates. Having a useful and functional website is key, because if your website is not optimized, it will result in the customer having a bad experience or finding it difficult to purchase from you.

As such, web optimization is about designing your website so that the customer flows through your content, goes from your blog to your product page, to your e-commerce, and eventually makes a purchase. Crucially, it is very important that the website is optimized to facilitate shopping on different devices. People now browse across different devices, which can lead to them searching for a product on their mobile phone to check some information, for example, and then later finalizing the purchase on a desktop computer. Therefore, you want to make sure that the experience on mobile is as good as the experience on desktop.

Outbound

Next up, let's look at **social media marketing**. This is a form of outbound digital marketing that most people are very familiar with, as it utilizes social networking platforms to increase brand or product exposure and cultivate relationships with consumers. Social media marketing is about creating visibility and interactivity with your audience. This is one of the most, if not the most, important channels you use to speak to your audience in an outbound manner. When your audience engages, it can change the dynamic to inbound; they can message you back, seek out and actively share your content, repost, like, comment, and ask questions. Moving your communications on social media from an outbound media platform, where you push out your posts to an audience, to a two-way outbound/inbound conversational channel is the ultimate goal for digital marketers.

Display and video advertising are outbound, awareness-generating digital channels that combine the science and precision of online audience targeting with the emotional engagement of audio/video and creative visual formats. It generates engagement, brand affinity, recall, and traffic from a highly targeted audience. There are numerous ad formats and techniques to engage your target audience on channels like YouTube, websites across the internet, and social networks, all of which will be discussed in detail during this module.

Inbound

Let's take a look at some inbound channels now.

To begin we have **paid search** or PPC as it is also known. PPC is an inbound method of advertising on Google, Yahoo, Bing, or other search engines, and paying only when the searcher clicks your ad. Paid search is key to being discovered when people are actively looking for products or solutions.

Essentially, when a consumer becomes aware of your product through display or social, for example, they are driven to take action when the time is right for them. The value of paid search is in user intent – that is, the searcher is looking for a product and is likely to take action when they find it – and there is real competition for this type of traffic. Using paid search is a good way for you to be on top of the search results page quickly and easily for the types of searches you want to be associated with.

Alongside paid search, digital marketers can use **SEO** or search engine optimization techniques. This is the process of driving inbound traffic from the free, organic, or natural search results on search engines. These are the search results below the PPC results, on local search on Google Maps, or the dynamic results like expandable dropdowns that appear on Google when someone searches. SEO is about making your website as attractive as possible to search engines like Google. The search engine will then match the websites which offer the most accurate solution to a users' search query. In the best digital marketing strategies, SEO works in tandem with paid search to provide multiple ways for searchers to access your content and buy your products online.

Content marketing is an effective inbound method that involves the creation, publishing, and sharing of content with the aim of building brand reputation, awareness, and affinity. You must develop a strong content strategy to increase your brand personality and likability. Nowadays you can't just be a product, you need to be a brand that has values and takes part in everyday life; a brand that shares about everyday events in areas near where your consumer lives, or a brand that shares articles about a great new artist that they want to promote. You need to be more than just a product. You need to interest people because what you do is what you believe in, and you share the same values. Building an effective brand personality is the true value of content marketing.

Next, we have **email marketing**. Email marketing is a subscribed inbound channel used to deliver advertisements, offers, education, and other marketing content directly to an interested user's email inbox. Based on the type of content in your email broadcasts, you can drive efficient inbound traffic and conversions from your subscribed audience. An email marketing campaign is a real opportunity to get your content, news, or information into the hand of your customer; and the content therein should make them want to click on any relevant links, go to your website, and take action.

Web analytics is the collection, measurement, analysis, and reporting of web data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage. This is where we use data to understand our website visitors and the channels they use to engage with our content and convert or buy on our site. It also helps us understand who they are; for example, their location, languages spoken, devices used (mobile, desktop, or tablet), if they've been on the site before, and numerous other data points that we can use to report on the success of our digital marketing activity, and improve future performance.

And, finally, **digital strategy** is the establishment of a set of practices and goals that guide your long-term digital objectives and operate across all digital channels that your customer utilizes. The strategy piece draws together everything you know about your audience – available channel options, budget, and timings – to create a plan that uses digital media to deliver on a business objective. The digital strategy is the roadmap to success for any digital marketer. It will act as a guide to efficiently execute the various actions required to target your audience, and ultimately deliver on your goal within budget and timeframe.

These nine channels and modules will be discussed in much greater detail throughout the duration of this program. Upon completion you will have a thorough understanding of how best to utilize them throughout the various digital marketing strategies you will devise for your business.

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