



Digital
Marketing
Institute

DIGITAL CHANNELS

Transcript

Digital Channels

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LESSON 1: CHANNEL PLANNING

Inbound and Outbound Marketing

Before we start talking about digital channels, let's talk about two of the most important principles of digital marketing. These are the concepts of inbound and outbound marketing. They're very different and we need to be able to distinguish them.

So let's begin with outbound marketing. It's a concept that we're all kind of familiar with from the world of traditional advertising and marketing. Outbound marketing begins when the brand pushes their message out to a specified audience, usually with the intent of driving awareness of a product or service or sale, different things like that.

It's generally done online using things like banner ads and video formats that are served to people multiple times to ensure they remember the product. Now, this is known as product recall, and it's achieved through audience reach and frequency, again and again. Just to note, other formats include TV, radio, print. All those traditional media formats are also a form of outbound marketing. You're not necessarily looking for the product, but they show you the ad because you kind of fit a certain profile and you just might be interested in it. Outbound marketing really is more your traditional way to do marketing.

Now let's talk a little bit about inbound. Inbound, on the other hand, is the exact opposite. It's kind of like reverse marketing. Essentially, it's when people seek you out. Basically, the audience comes to you. It's about anticipating audience needs and creating the type of content or choosing the type of keywords that people might ask Google as a question to solve their problems. And you're going to provide a solution to this with your reaction.

Inbound is really clearly shown in the world of search marketing, and that is SEO and PPC. So, think about the journey: they type something into Google or a search engine, you present them with your solution, they choose it, and they come to you. That's what inbound is.

So the goal is to drive traffic from those people who are actively seeking you out as a solution to a need or a want. With inbound, potential customers find you through channels such as search engines, email subscriptions, word of mouth, blogs, online reviews, and recommendations. The value of inbound marketing is the user is looking for solutions. They're in a certain mindset. They might buy something that might be comparing a service but they are actively in the market for a solution which you can offer.

So from a motivational point of view they're showing what's called intent. Now that's what drives them towards you with intent-driven mindsets. They're far more likely to take action or buy something because they're in the market.

So inbound is a far more valuable type of traffic. It's highly valuable to a business from a commercial perspective, and it has to be top of mind for any digital marketer. So if you think about a user searching for something like hotels in Vienna, or is reading reviews for Viennese hotels, they're probably looking to book a hotel in Vienna.

So, we really want to be visible at the time when they were seeking out this type of content, so we can capture their need or want and turn it into our own business opportunity.

This compares with outbound, which is a more passive mindset. People aren't actively looking for a hotel in Vienna. But they fit a certain profile and they're not actively seeking at that time, but they've

now become aware of your offering. So, in the future or when they're ready, maybe that awareness influences them to interact and become inbound.

So when we think about it as a marketer we have a number of tools available to us. We're always attempting to create the conditions where people are drawn to your brand via your content, your search keywords with the objective of turning them into a consumer. They're coming to you.

Now inbound marketing, it's usually suited to those conversion-based objectives – sales, leads, that kind of stuff. Outbound is more suited to awareness-based activities.

Now just in case we think that there's a strict split between the two, in most cases, you'll probably need to use a combination of both inbound and outbound techniques to deliver on your business objective. So while they're distinct and different, they do work together to drive towards your goal.

Challenges of Channel Planning

As consumers go online using different channels and various devices – like mobiles, tablets, desktops, as well as household devices, like smart TVs and personal voice assistants – digital marketers are presented with a number of opportunities and challenges.

So, let's look at some challenges. One of the main challenges is actually capturing that consumer attention. The three main drivers of this challenge, of attention, are very diverse but we'll look at all of them. The first is the increasing number of competing channels, which splits the audience into smaller fragments. Another one you really have to consider are things like the amount of content which consumers consume and how much they engage with it online. The challenge for us as digital marketers is to continually produce the most appropriate and effective content types to engage them again and again. It's a lot of volume and we have to consider that. Now, the third is the concept of multi-screen users. This is where consumers use multiple devices to consume different content. Again, it splits the audience.

All of these are considerations for channel planning. So, we, as digital marketers, need to find an ideal mix of channels and devices to really engage our consumers effectively. Now, in this fragmented, multi-channel world, it's really important to remember that a cohesive, digital marketing strategy will use all kinds of channels.

So, our challenge is to be not put off by this fragmentation but to use it to our benefit. When deciding on a channel mix, we should choose channels that are aligned to our same goal and work together to drive optimum results from a multi-screen, always-on consumer. Now, with this in mind, only channels with a clear purpose in the path to achieving our objective should be included in our plan.

So, it's not just choose what's popular. It must serve a purpose.

Cross Media Planning

In the complicated world of cross media and channel choices, there are tools to help research consumer trends, identify new opportunities, and enhance or optimize existing channel strategies. So, some tools we can use – and tools that are free to use – are things like the Consumer Barometer. It is a free tool and it's accessed on thinkwithgoogle.com. It's a great website. It's full of all kinds of free case studies in different verticals, on consumer insights, across markets, devices, channels, locations, platforms, and it's a fantastic resource to really help with your channel planning.

We can use both free and paid resources. There are some excellent free and paid resources like Econsultancy, Forrester, and The Drum, so they will have their paid piece but equally they'll have a blog which you can access for free. And when combined with your own customer data from things like your CRM, your analytics, and your advertising platforms like Google Ads or Facebook, different things like that, you can really start to paint a clear picture of the trends to help you establish and enhance your strategy, find new opportunities, and plan across all kinds of media.

Of course, it's not as simple as picking out a few channels and watching the results pour in. We must consider a number of factors to deliver the optimum outcome. Let's take a look at these factors. They include things like the consumer activity, consumer behavior, the channels that customers and you might use, different things like seasonality and how that might affect performance, it's a serious consideration.

There's also brand awareness. Do people know you? Are they looking for you? That kind of thing. Budget is a massive consideration in terms of what can we spend and what can we achieve. Then again, we have our creative choices and our ideas about how we can engage with our audience.

Again, available content, can we produce it? Can we deliver it? And then the ability to quickly change or modify the strategy as per market activity and new data. We have to be nimble. All of these are considerations for our cross media planning.

Digital and Traditional Marketing

Since the dawn of the internet, marketers have been comparing the effectiveness of traditional versus digital media all the time. It's what they do. Traditional channels really are the older forms of media, like TV, and radio, and print, you know the kind. And then digital is obviously digital marketing methods that use things like the internet, mobile phones, and other digital formats.

Firstly, let's take a look at digital to help understand the value of digital. So we'll look at some benefits to really get a feel for what that is. Now, some of the benefits of digital marketing include things like consumers actually spend more time online than ever before. In fact, it has surpassed TV as the preferred media choice for many consumer segments. And you can't actually reach some segments without advertising online. I don't have a TV. You can't effectively market to me unless you do it online. So that's a consideration.

Now, another benefit of digital marketing is production costs tend to be a lot lower. Content and communication prices, all of that stuff. It's much easier to produce the ads and things you need to advertise.

Another thing we have to consider, and it's really important, is that the flexibility of digital is built in here. It's possible to modify the strategy mid-campaign to reflect new insights garnered from the performance, and make those changes to spot new opportunities and move your campaign towards getting the best possible outcome.

Another important factor with digital marketing is it's highly trackable, from initial interaction, all the way to purchase, or lead submission, or whatever. So, defining things like a precise ROI in digital is highly achievable compared to non-digital channels. Those are important distinctions, and we must keep them in mind when justifying our position.

Now, that's not to say that there's no need for traditional channels. It's actually important that they work together, because as part of your media mix, we will include traditional channels. And some of

the benefits of those traditional channels include things like that fact that it's high impact. If you run an ad in the Super Bowl, it's a high-impact ad that will work out to a large range of consumers.

Another thing, it can provide is creativity. Some of the most creative ad formats have been in print, or still, you know, images, or radio ads, or TV. It's a highly creative format. We've also got branding, because a strong presence in high-consumer areas enables companies to get maximum brand impact. There's also that prestige element of traditional marketing. So, doing a big TV ad, a big outdoor conversion, something like that, it comes with a certain amount of prestige that is really noticed by consumers, and probably the board of directors.

Now, there's also an emotional connectivity with the consumer. You really can connect your brand with the consumer using traditional marketing. And there's numerous examples of times when using both digital and traditional channels together. And a multi-channel media plan really leads to positive and excellent results.

Now, it's always worth looking at considerations. So, while it's straightforward enough to measure the impact of digital channels on conversions, on sales or engagement, the challenge is actually to measure the effectiveness of traditional channels on campaign activity.

One way of doing this is to use things like baseline changes in performance of your digital channels, pre and post campaign. So what does normal look like? And if things go up, you can attribute this to the influence of the traditional channels.

Another key driver of this is: did your brand search increase? Because traditional media can drive awareness of your brand, and now people are actually looking for you. This is a great indicator of traditional media performance, and will translate into positive, bottom-line benefits for your company or your business. Now, it's essential that we use traditional and digital channels together in a consistent way. So, aligning the online look and feel of a campaign messaging – its colors, all of that stuff – drives higher performance. Alignment across your channels increases audience recall, and your campaign becomes more recognizable for people who see it across all the different channels, whether it's online or offline. They will recognize it through the consistency.

Now, thinking about your audience, we always have to go back to the audience. Let's compare traditional and media formats and how they're consumed by the audience, because it's a little bit different and important to look at the differences.

So firstly, we have mass versus individual. When people are watching TV or listening to the radio, it can be more of a group experience. The medium is consumed in a group situation. So, when you're watching TV with the family, or listening to the radio in the car and different things like that, you're all receiving the same message. You're all hearing the same things, and it's exposure to the same stimuli. It's a group experience where all the eyes and ears are receiving that single, focused message, so it has to be adaptable to everyone.

However, if we look at social media, email and apps for example, the medium is the same, and they're used the same by different people, but the content can be customized for the individual. Most people use the same social channels, the same email platforms, and common apps, just to engage with content or whatever exactly it is they're doing.

But thanks to things like technology, we're able to understand who that person is, and we can adapt our messaging to what consumers actually want to see, and deliver them a personalized variation of

the content based on their preferences. It's far more impactful for them, and that is an individual experience. So that's the difference between mass and individual.

Now, if we look at passive versus active, it's something we will have heard about a lot in our lives. So passive audiences consume things like TV and radio, sometimes without any direct engagement with the channel. They're not really interacting with it. And then when the ads come on, they might not even be paying attention. So, it's much more of a passive kind of experience. It's more of a one-way communication stream, in reality, and therefore, it's less impactful.

On the other hand, we have active media. This is a form of media where consumers can engage with it. With active media, it really tends to be digital, like Facebook, or Google, and different channels like that. Because content on digital platforms has been developed to be highly engaging, consumers can share, comment, like, tweet, pin, do whatever it is, but they're doing something with that content. It's a two-way form of communication, where the consumer can react, and essentially, they can talk back. That's the difference between passive and active audiences.

Now, another characteristic is the concept of one-to-one versus one-to-many communications. As digital marketers, we can create multiple variations of the same message. This means we can tailor our message to different people, and engage them more effectively. By doing this, brands can also aim to individualize, to personalize, and become more relevant to the consumer, because it's about them, and that's what technology can deliver for us.

And finally, we've got the concept of inbound/outbound, a key differentiator between traditional and online media. Outbound is, "I'm the brand and I push my message out on TV, radio, or print, or whatever." And inbound is, "I'm a digital brand and people are coming to seek out my content on social media, subscribe to my email, because they want to hear from me, or search for me online. In essence, they are coming to us."

So the inbound/outbound split is a great differentiator between our traditional and our digital channels as we can see the differences unfold.

Digital Channel Mix

Within our channel mix, each channel has specific audience functions. Some channels are used to increase awareness of our product, service, or sale, and so on.

Along with channels that encourage consideration, these channels are called 'assisting channels' as they help bring the consumer along the journey and assist them towards taking action.

There are also what's known as closing channels. These are the channels that consumers typically use before taking action, converting, buying something or filling out a contact form, and so on.

A conversion is a valuable action on our site so it's always good to know as much as we can about the channels that bring people on site to convert.

Common closing channels include:

- Paid search or PPC
- Organic search
- Email marketing

While a lot of attention is justifiably spent monitoring closing channels, assisting channels are essential components of the digital marketing ecosystem.

Let's take a step back before the conversion stage in the consumer journey to look at some consideration-driving channels that assist in the process. These include social media, some affiliates, and certain types comparison content.

But consideration channels are only part of the puzzle. If we take a step back further again to the top of the funnel, we must consider the importance of awareness-driving channels in bringing people into the funnel and assisting the conversion. Typically, awareness-driving channels – like display banners and video – help organizations spread the word of their product and can act as the starting point for the consumer journey towards conversion. These channels can drive a lot of clicks and traffic, and they may assist conversions or sales by bringing consumers who may not have been aware of your product into the purchase funnel.

As digital marketing is outcome based, if a channel doesn't directly deliver a conversion, it probably assists the consumer in taking action to some degree. Assisting channels that drive awareness and consideration include social media, video advertising like YouTube, online display, content marketing and blogs, and so on.

Just remember, as they don't typically finish the sale, they are considered assisting channels as they helped bring consumers along in the conversion journey.

While we can easily measure the effectiveness of closing channels through the number of direct conversions or sales they have delivered, we need different metrics to understand the value of assisting channels.

To help measure performance, some common KPIs applied to assisting channels include:

- Post-impression conversions
- Post-click conversions
- Assisted conversions
- Increases in closing channel conversion rates
- Possible lower costs per lead or costs per sale

Digital Channel Types

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.

So, what are the types of digital channels available to marketers today? They are Email Marketing, Paid Search (or Pay-Per-Click, PPC), Organic Search (or Search Engine Optimization, SEO), Website Optimization, Marketing Automation, Display Advertising, Content Marketing, and Social Media Marketing.

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 keywords 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 retargeted 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.

Mobile Marketing

When we think about consumers today, we must adopt what's called a mobile-first approach. This is simply where advertisers begin with the mobile as their first point of interaction with the consumer. And they create an experience that aims to draw people into the funnel from early-stage mobile interaction because that's what people use to get their information from the start.

And not only is this approach rewarded with better organic search rankings. Studies have actually shown that there is a direct correlation between higher mobile traffic, which may not directly convert, and overall site conversions, as many people begin their research phase on a mobile device. So, if they start researching, they're far more likely to go ahead and convert.

You also need to consider mobile consumer behavior. For example, it's actually quite difficult to enter your credit card details in a mobile phone on a small screen. This means that mobile web traffic doesn't directly lead to many online sales, but it has been shown that the more traffic you're getting from mobile, it does positively impact revenue and sales when people convert on a desktop device.

I just want to make a distinction between what's called mobile web and mobile apps. Mobile apps use tokenization, where they save your profile details and your credit card, and it's much easier to convert using an Uber app or different things like that.

Now, in the world of connectivity and 360 consumers, it's important to note that mobile is relevant really at every stage of the purchase journey, from awareness to consideration and then from conversion to retention. So, this means that the mobile mindset must be a mobile-first approach, and this is central to our digital marketing success.

I'm going to talk about the mobile funnel now because you can convert your funnel and it does require some specific optimization to make it work effectively. Put simply, it has to be easy to use. It has to have ease of access. It also must have simplified purchase checkouts. Don't make it too complicated or difficult to get through lots of details.

Tokenization does help. Are your credit card details saved? Are your details saved? Things like shareability. Can it be shared amongst your social peers on your native mobile apps, and so on?

Suitability to a mobile screen. It's actually quite small. So, can I see the checkout in my purchase journey there? And then obviously navigation through touch screens. These are all considerations to optimize your mobile conversion journey.

Now, of course, the ultimate goal is to make it as simple as possible for the mobile user to navigate through the journey. Remember that the limitations of small screens, and keypads, and things like mobile internet, can just get in the way of a simple conversion journey.

It's always best to minimize what's called friction in the journey. These are the things that get in the way. Mobile consumers also tend to be concerned with a number of factors that may affect whether they convert or not. These include things like security and site speed. So, downloading heavy images and heavy sites on a 3G network or a 4G network can eat up people's credit, and that's a consideration why they may not proceed.

And then finally, we've also got the difficulty in submitting lots of details via a mobile touch screen. As a rule, you should only ask for the details you really need. For example, lots of sites ask for things like address and date of birth, when they certainly don't need it, just because they think they should ask for it. So, if you're asking for things like that, think, "Do I actually need to collect this information to proceed?" Because if not, it's just friction.

A tip for everyone is you can use what's called field-specific keypads, like the number keypad or the email keypad, to make it easier for people to complete online forms. This is where the keypad changes to your mobile keypad when you're entering your phone number, or to an email keypad when you have to enter an email address – makes it ever so slightly easier.

However, moving on from a pure digital world, let's focus on the advantages of mobile for marketing a business with a physical presence. So, one of the most impactful advantages of mobile is things like Google Local and Google Local marketing. This involves using things like Google Maps, where consumers will just navigate to your store using their mobile phone.

Likewise, redeemable in-store promotions. For example, if you check into a store with your Facebook account, you can get a free coffee. What that does is it brings an online experience to an offline transaction. So, you're getting direct revenue and commercial activity via the online-offline interface.

And the true value of mobile really is the ongoing connectivity that brands can have with their audience because you can connect with your consumer at any point during the day using mobile technology. Keep in mind that, all the time, marketers should be thinking about how we can actually add value to their day by giving them helpful utility, like map locations, interesting content, or promotions that's actually relative to the physical location of that mobile user. So, can they go in store? These are key opportunities that marketers should be thinking about when doing any kind of mobile activity.

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. Using the full circle of marketing tactics is known as a 360 or integrated marketing strategy. The common definition of a 360 marketing strategy is that it is a marketing plan that is both online and offline, on social media, and more. It's a holistic promotion that truly covers all the bases.

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 they 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 lands 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 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 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 mind map 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 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 as a birthday date, membership start date, or favorite topic or product can produce engaging content that triggers an emotional response from the customer.

LESSON 2: INBOUND CHANNELS - SOCIAL AND CONTENT

Content Marketing Strategy

A content marketing strategy is an ever-evolving plan that determines the types of content that you're pushing out, how they're aligned to your business goals, who the content is intended for, and what content formats you'll use.

This is an ongoing process for content marketers. It's very important for content marketers not to work in a bubble, but to work with those around them to define what content is created, what purpose it's serving to the wider business goals, and how effective it is in helping achieve those.

Moving through a complete content strategy process will help you create meaningful content, seeded to the right audience, that is measured and optimized to inform future content campaigns. Each of the main steps includes a number of activities. These must be carried out sequentially to make logical sense and avoid investing time ahead of schedule in an area that is undermined by later learnings.

Developing a content marketing strategy is a cyclical process. Your learnings from the measurement phase should always be fed back into the research and planning phase of each campaign to help evolve your strategy.

Looking at a typical content marketing cycle, you can see here that there are six phases.

We start off with the research phase. With this, you'll be looking at your intended audience. You'll be finding out as much about them as possible, where they live and what content formats they react to. The activities involved are social listening, competitor audits, audience segmentation, and platform research.

You will then work to align your business objectives, wider business targets, and KPI setting with your content needs. This comes in to the planning phase, in which you are looking at individual content formats you need to resource for; the channels you need to be active on; and the pain points, information, and education you're going to supply to your intended audience.

We move then into the content creation and curation phase, which we're going to cover later in more detail.

Next, how is that content published into the content ecosystem? The activities involved here are: platform selection, content promotion, and content outreach.

Further, how do we measure that content? The activities involved here are: social listening, monthly content reports, and content audits.

Finally, the measurement, insights, and analytics gleaned from the measurement phase are then implemented into the strategy for the next cycle phase.

As you can see, the entire process follows a cyclical fashion and, essentially, we're going to revisit this content strategy piece annually, potentially even two or three times a year.

Buyer Personas

Customer personas help you understand your customers and your prospective customers better. This makes it easier for you to tailor your content, messaging, and tone – as well as product development and services – to the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of different groups.

A buyer persona for content marketing acts as a sounding board to assess what they think, how they feel, and their behaviors, so you can align your content to resonate best with them.

The purpose of buyer personas in content marketing is to help you adjust your targeting and make sure that your writing is focused; and that you're relevant in terms of the topics that you're creating content around. It also helps provide valuable insight into conveying your message to the right audience at the right time. This will help you avoid waste for your content marketing efforts, and will help keep you focused on your content marketing efforts.

Secondly, consider formats. Looking at the individual formats that your target audience consumes most informs how they are consuming content. Being able to provide the types of content that they're more likely to actually interact with will again help you avoid waste. It will give you the information and perspective you need to make objective decisions about how to craft your brand messages through the most consumed and widely accepted formats and platforms.

Finally, discover the channels your audiences are inhabiting. Personas allow you to get a grasp of your audience's channel behavior. Where are they having conversations? There's no point in creating content within a vacuum. It's as simple as that. Create content where your audience is already active, and leverage their online behaviors to the maximum effect for your business and your content marketing.

It is important to consider your users' objectives when developing your consumer personas. What are they actually setting out to achieve? What is their need? Why would they consider your business at that moment and time? Where are they based? What language do they speak? What time zone are they in? What cultural significance does their location have in terms of their buying behaviors? Being conscious about the cultural context of what it is that you're advertising – and avoiding waste by complying with the cultural context at a user's particular location – is very important.

What are their job details? What earning power do they have? Do they have the authority to action a purchase with your business, or are they somebody in a very junior level who'll flag the opportunity to their boss? What kind of a person are you targeting with your content? Make sure that you're reaching the right person and that you're not reaching somebody who's completely irrelevant.

As we've touched on previously, what platforms are they inhabiting? Where is the conversation happening with your target audience? Make sure that you're going where they are.

What devices are they using? What kind of connection do they have? Are they still operating on a 3G network? Or are they using 4G or LTE? This will influence the type of content you're creating. Make sure you're creating content that's relevant for your audience's device, not just from a size perspective, but also from a data perspective as well.

Purchase behaviors. What is their path to purchase? How elongated is their decision around actually purchasing from you? Do they research? Do they speak to their friends? Identifying what their entire purchase behavior is will help you adjust your content marketing to that particular persona at that moment in time.

And lastly, what are their interests? From a personal context, how can you access them through sport, or music, or TV, or film? What issues are they trying to solve? Being able to embed your brand within other cultural contexts will allow you social permission to access them on a personal interest level. That will make you seem credible and make you more accessible, but only if your content is relevant.

You can see here three sample personas that may be involved in any content marketing plan. You can see Jane has a particular background that's very different from Brad's, and Tom's background is very different from Jane's.

Understanding your personas allows you to get a more complete knowledge of not only their job title but their background. Their needs and their interest sets offer up important information on how to access them emotionally, but also illustrate what motivates and frustrates them. This can help you paint a picture of your ideal customer. It's vital to flesh out these personas based on their content and information needs to position your brand or business as the solution to their requirements.

The hardest working customer personas are developed with field research, focus group research, surveys, and interviews with your target audience.

Social Media

Social media is an essential digital channel to engage an audience and distribute your content effectively. You just put it out there. It can be seen as an outbound channel where a brand pushes its message out there. However, it does become an inbound channel once a consumer starts engaging, and that's a key differentiator. But let's look at some considerations when we're thinking about including social media a part of our media mix.

The first one is cost. Obviously, cost is top of mind. What can we do? What can we get? The main cost of engaging with consumers via social media includes time, from the length of time it takes to create and curate a community to actually producing the content and the assets required to nurture the community again, and again, and again. It takes a lot of time to do that stuff. It's our first cost.

Our second cost is resources. So, social posting software, content production, media budgets, all of these are main resource costs. How can we get that into the mix and how can we deal with this? And finally, really important is staff. Managing a social channel, managing the community, briefing designers, gathering content, reporting and demonstrating the value of the channel require specific skills and a dedicated person to do it effectively. They're all costs we have to consider but it's all achievable and it's all doable within the digital marketing context.

An important consideration now for any social media strategy is consumer mindset. So, it's essential to recognize that consumers are in different mindsets when they're on different social networks. For example, the mindset of someone on LinkedIn is very professional. They're thinking about jobs and that kind of activity. Whereas the mindset of someone on Snapchat is lighter and fun-filled. Two very different mindsets we must consider when choosing our channels. And, when deciding what channel to choose as part of our social media mix, you must take the type of the tone of the channel into account to determine if it aligns with our brand and our campaign messaging. It might not be the right fit or it might be the right fit. We have to figure that out ourselves, and we do this by stress-testing if a channel and the message encourage social media users to react to your campaign or content in a valuable manner to either engagement or conversion. So, just sense-check this. Sense-check your choice. Simply ask a couple of questions. Firstly, is this the right channel for my audience

and my brand? That's a key question to ask. Is this the right consumer mindset for my objective? Is the ad messaging and tone right for this audience? All important questions.

Key to successfully engaging an audience is the ability actually to identify your audience's personas based on their value to the business. This is an important driver – their value to the business. Personas help you focus your efforts because they allow you to create the kind of content and online social media experience that will be most relevant to your high-value personas – again, the ones that are worth most to your business and your bottom line.

So, this streamlines your workload. It allows you to prioritize the activities that will most useful to the highest-value audiences. Again, focus on business outcomes. And, when creating personas, just consider how this translates into social media channel behaviors in terms of what content is likely to deliver on your KPIs or your objectives.

This is especially important really when creating content for awareness or conversion goals because they're very different. What goal is it? Always verify the appropriateness of your content and delivering your KPIs really just against those valuable personas.

That's your sense-check, that keeps you on track, and that keeps you focused on those core business goals and opportunities.

Setting Up Social on Key Platforms

Let's look at how you can set up a business Page on Facebook.

There are two ways to do this. The first is to create a standalone page from your Facebook profile. However, this is quite basic and has limited functionality.

The second is to create a free Business Manager account, and create or import client pages to that account. Facebook Business Manager allows you to post content and create ad campaigns, and is the most efficient way to manage your Facebook presence for business.

To create a Business Manager account, follow these steps:

- Login to Facebook or create a new profile
- Visit <https://business.facebook.com/> and choose to Create an Account
- Enter Your Details
- Go to Business Settings
- Click the Pages tab
- Click Accounts and click Pages
- On the right-hand side of the Page, click Add New Pages
- Select Create a New Page
- Enter the page name and other details, and upload creative assets when prompted to do so

Facebook Tip: It is also possible to Add an Existing Page which you own, or Request Access to a Page from a client.

It is recommended that digital marketing professionals choose to run and manage social activity through Facebook Business Manager, as it allows for more precise targeting options, centralized management of all pages and ad campaigns, integration with Instagram, and other enhanced features that aren't as readily available through native page creation. Overall, you can do more, and

do it faster, with Business Manager, and this will give you an edge over competitors who opt for the native platform.

How can you set up a Twitter account for a business? You simply sign up for a new profile on Twitter.com, enter your details and set your password, and add a cover photo, bio, and so on.

On the surface, there is no difference between a Twitter account used for business and standard Twitter accounts. With Twitter, you can sign up for an account and simply use it for business.

However, additional features are likely to be rolled for business accounts in the future.

Next, let's look at setting up a Company page on LinkedIn.

Businesses need to set up a Company page to avail of additional features, such as advertising and analytics, on LinkedIn. A Company page on LinkedIn requires all of the same creative assets as the other social channels, such as a cover photo, profile pic, and 'about us' or bio information. However, it is more professional and business-like in tone, to match the audience of this professional social network.

To create a Company Page on LinkedIn, follow these steps:

- Click the Work icon in the top-right corner of your LinkedIn home page
- Click Create a Company Page
- Enter your Company Name and choose a URL
- Check the verification box to confirm you have the right to act on behalf of the company in the creation of the page
- Click the Create page button

Next, Instagram. How do you set up an Instagram business account?

As Instagram is a mobile native app, you need to set up your account by downloading the app to your phone, and then connecting to Facebook. From there, you can change your Instagram profile to a business account in the app, and begin to market your products. If you have a Facebook company page for your business, you can link your Instagram business account to your company page, and manage paid promotions through Facebook Business Manager.

To set up an Instagram business account, follow these steps:

- Download the Instagram app on your mobile phone and Connect to Facebook
- Go to the App menu and choose the Settings icon
- Choose to Switch to Business Account
- Add your business details, bio, and so on
- Connect your Instagram business account to your Facebook company page

Finally, let's turn to Snapchat.

Snapchat doesn't have specific business pages. But in the majority of cases, it's possible to promote your business on Snapchat using standard features, such as lenses and stories. In addition, extra functionality for paid promotion is available to businesses who are signed up to the Ads Manager.

Simply download the Snap app on your mobile phone and sign up. Then go to ads.snapchat.com, and enter your business details to begin using the business functionality.

Five Key Steps for Creating a Social Campaign

Let's look at the fundamental steps necessary for building a social media marketing campaign.

To start, all of the social ad platforms require you to name your campaign. Avoid vague names like "Campaign 1 March 2020". Name your campaign something you or your team will easily recognize and understand.

When you've named your campaign, the first step in designing an effective one is to set your objectives for the campaign. It's important to set objectives that can be achieved with digital marketing. For example, an objective of driving more sales could be achieved by increasing brand awareness on social media. And it's also important to align your objectives with Key Performance Indicators or KPIs, which we'll deal with shortly.

There are different types of social media objectives. These include awareness, site traffic, purchase, lead generation, and brand affinity. Be sure to familiarize yourself with all of these objectives to ensure that your campaign is optimized in a way that is meeting your business goals.

The second step in defining an effective campaign is to define your audience. Every campaign should have a clearly defined target audience. Knowing your audience is necessary if you want to produce the most resonant creative. So begin with your consumer and define your audience. Create target personas to establish audience channel and content preferences. You can do this by writing down all that you know about your ideal customer to create a profile of them; for example, their interests, location, gender, and age. Take note of the websites they visit, and how they like to be communicated with.

When you're done, your persona should represent the traits and characteristics of your ideal customer. You can then refer to your different persona types when planning and creating content for social campaigns. To maintain efficient audience targeting using paid social, you should set up remarketing tags on your site to serve ads to past visitors, or audiences with similar traits to your past visitors.

You can target multiple audiences in a campaign. These target groups are called ad sets. Each ad set will have its own audience target and choice of creative, so you can serve different messages to different audiences. You should always name your ad sets logically, so the name is easy to understand.

Pro Tip: Use persona templates to define your audience and help plan your campaign.

The third step in defining an effective campaign is to set KPIs – or Key Performance Indicators – and measure performance.

You can set KPIs to measure success as a standalone social campaign or as part of a multichannel campaign.

Remember, social is most impactful at engaging people at the start of the buyer's journey, in the awareness and interest stages. As a result, it's best to measure the effectiveness of social activity in how it influences higher numbers of sales in conversion channels, or how it has helped drive

awareness and increased the number of people searching for your brand from the normal level. Social shouldn't be measured with direct sales from social channels. Its function is to drive awareness and assist in driving sales and conversions.

It's important to assign KPIs, as they are the metrics you will track to understand whether or not your campaign is meeting your business goals. An objective of awareness can be tied to the following KPIs: reach and impressions, social engagements, follower growth, views, and app downloads. A site traffic objective can be measured by clicks and signups.

If your objective is in fact direct conversion, you can also measure this by clicks and conversions, or app downloads, if this is your KPI. If your objective is to generate leads for your business, you can track signups and app downloads as your KPIs. Finally, if your objective is to increase brand affinity, this can be indicated through social engagements, follower growth, content views, signups, and app downloads.

The fourth step in designing an impactful social media campaign is to set budgets and run dates for your campaign. So decide how much you're going to spend on each social channel, and decide how long you want your campaign to run. All of this activity should be detailed in your Media Plan.

Your Media Plan will show your total budget per channel, cost metrics – both CPM and CPC – and delivery targets, such as the number of impressions and clicks.

Pro Tip: Use a Media Plan template to detail your costs and run dates.

The final step in producing an impactful social media campaign is to design your creative content.

Design your creative in a way that's in line with each of the platform's best practices. But remember that it's also helpful to make your content look like matching luggage. That is, that they all have different sizes and shapes and designs, but they're part of the same set, visually. This will increase brand recognition and affinity.

Your creative should be designed as mobile-first. Most social media consumption happens on mobile devices, so it's important to design content that is optimized for a mobile environment. The creative should also have branding clearly upfront, but in a subtle fashion to avoid looking too promotional. It's ideal to launch your campaign with at least four creative variations so that the platform's algorithm can optimize against the best-performing content. As such, you should be updating your creative often to avoid consumer fatigue.

Choose the ad formats that are best for your campaign. And use a Posting Calendar to help you plan your campaign. A Posting Calendar is a centralized document you can use to detail your posting dates, content choices, social channel external links, and other details. Its role is to ensure you are always prepared in advance of the campaign going live. Your calendar can be modified to take into account market changes or new information that might affect your campaign.

Pro Tip: Use a posting calendar to plan your activity on a monthly or weekly basis.

LESSON 3: INBOUND CHANNELS - SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

SEO

Organic search is one of the most widely used inbound marketing channels. To organize your website for optimal SEO performance, there are three main areas of SEO to work on.

The first area is technical optimization. Put simply, does your website work? Does it load? Are there speed issues? Are there mobile issues? That's what technical optimization is all about. It has to work to be ranked.

The next stage is on-page optimization. Is the content on your website valuable? Does it get enough keywords? Are there variations in the page titles, in the headers, in the body copy, and in the image alt tags?

The third area is off-page optimization. This is attracting backlinks or getting links to your site. So, are you creating the type of content that attracts quality backlinks from good websites who want to link to your website as a source of useful content? So, if we focus on these three areas, we can significantly impact organic search performance. Just those three areas, technical, on-page, and off-page.

Generally, marketers work with the people who manage and control the website to optimize it. We actually don't dig in ourselves most of the time. It wouldn't be normal where we're actually editing the code or making these kinds of changes to a website. It's more common that digital marketers might brief a web developer on this or get stuff from a content team if you're not already part of that content team.

The objective of all of this is to structure the website in such a way to make it more visible and crawlable for inclusion in the Google organic database – or index, as it's known. The result of this is that your site will appear for more free organic searches. And those keywords, as you're trying to rank, will start to push and open up, reducing your need for things like paid search, although they will work together.

How Search Engines Work

While SEO changes frequently in small ways, its key principles do not. Since Google came onto the scene in the late 1990s, we can break SEO into three components:

- Technical optimization
- On-page optimization
- Off-page optimization

Technical optimization is the process of completing activities on your site that are designed to improve SEO but are not related to content. It often happens behind the scenes.

On-page optimization is the process of ensuring the content on your site is relevant and provides a great user experience. It includes targeting the right keywords within your content and can be done through a content management system.

Off-page optimization is the process of enhancing your site's search engine rankings through activities outside of the site. This is largely driven by backlinks, which help to build the site's reputation.

Search engine algorithms are computer programs that look for clues to give the searcher the exact results they are looking for. Search engines rely on algorithms to find web pages and decide which ones to rank for any given keyword. There are three steps to how search engines work: crawling, which is the discovery stage; indexing, which is the filing stage; and ranking, which is the retrieval stage.

The first step is crawling. Search engines send out web crawlers to find new pages and record information about them. We sometimes call these web crawlers 'spiders' or 'robots'. Their purpose is to discover new web pages that exist, and also to periodically check the content on pages they've previously visited to see whether they've changed or been updated.

Search engines crawl web pages by following links they've already discovered. So, if you have a blog post and it's linked from your homepage, when a search engine crawls your homepage, it will then look for another link to follow and may follow the link to your new blog post.

The second step is indexing. Indexing is when a search engine decides whether or not it is going to use the content that it has crawled. If a crawled web page is deemed worthy by a search engine, it will be added to its index. This index is used at the final ranking stage. When a web page or piece of content is indexed, it is filed and stored in a database where it can later be retrieved. Most web pages that offer unique and valuable content are placed into the index.

A web page might not be placed in the index if:

- its content is considered duplicate
- its content is considered low value or spammy
- it couldn't be crawled
- the page or domain lacked inbound links

The third step is really the most important step, and that is ranking. Ranking can only happen after the crawling and indexing steps are complete. So, once a search engine has crawled and indexed your site, your site can be ranked.

There are more than 200 ranking signals that search engines use to sort and rank content, and they all fit under the three pillars of SEO: technical optimization, on-page optimization, and off-page optimization. Some examples of signals that search engines use to rank web pages are keyword presence in the title tag, loading speed of the web page, and website reputation.

Keyword Presence in Title Tag – Whether the keyword or a synonym was mentioned on the page and within the title tag.

Loading Speed of Web Page – Whether the web page loads quickly and is mobile friendly.

Website Reputation – Whether the web page and website is considered reputable for the topic being searched for.

Google's main search algorithm is called Google Hummingbird, and it is responsible for deciding how to order and rank search engine results. In 2013, Google upgraded its main algorithm and named it Hummingbird. This upgrade included Google being better able to understand the meaning of keywords and to return more relevant results.

In 2015, Google announced RankBrain, which is a sub-algorithm of Hummingbird and an artificial intelligence system. It processes search results to provide more relevant results for users. This

further illustrates the importance of understanding the true meaning of keywords, rather than just matching keywords to pages that mention them.

How to Conduct Keyword Research

Before proceeding with on-page optimization, we need to conduct keyword research following these steps:

- Pick a topic to research. Focus on one topic or theme at a time. Imagine what the webpage you want to optimize looks like.
- Brainstorm keywords. Research keywords with similar meaning around a closely related topic. Focus on quantity over quality at this stage.
- Review keyword value. Gather keyword data to help decide how useful the keywords are, and whether they are within reach.
- Prioritize keywords. Decide which keywords are the most important, and which ones you wish to focus more on.

Your research topic could be a product or service, a source of information, or a brand or person. For example, ‘What size snowboard do I need?’ appears both informative and transactional but is considered informative as the searcher is researching before deciding to make a purchase.

When picking a topic to research, it’s important to focus on one topic at a time and make sure that it’s closely aligned to your objectives and your industry. As you carry out your research, it’s good to have a web page in mind as well as the needs of your customers.

Avoid being too generic or trying to research the whole website in one go. The most common mistake people make in keyword research is focusing on short-tail keywords that aren’t relevant enough for search engines to rank. For example, targeting the phrase ‘shoes’ on a running shoes page is too generic, and not relevant enough for search engines to choose and searchers to be happy with.

The next step is to brainstorming keywords. This involves coming up with a list of keywords that are closely related to the topic you have chosen. You’ll need to think of synonyms as well as plural and singular keywords. It is important to aim for quantity rather than quality, but the results still need to be relevant to your topic. Try to think of at least 10 keywords where possible.

When you are brainstorming, try to avoid straying too far off topic, trying to find only perfect match keywords, or stopping at two or three keywords.

There are some useful tools available to help you brainstorm for keywords. The first is search engine suggestions and related searches, with an example from Google here. You can see the star has been added to the keyword search to get more specific results. The related search suggestions give more ideas around the same topic.

Another useful tool is Google Keyword Planner, which is part of Google Ads. You can enter a keyword and it will give you a list of suggestions related to that keyword, as well as search volumes for the keyword. You can also use filters to customize your search.

Keywords Everywhere is another helpful tool for brainstorming keywords. It is a free Chrome plugin and that can be used with Google Keyword Planner and other search engine interfaces.

Another approach you can take to brainstorm keywords is to look at the keywords your competitors use. SEMrush is a popular competitor keyword analysis tool. You can put in a website's homepage and it will provide you with a list of that website's most valuable keywords.

As you brainstorm, compile a list of keywords and include the search volumes for them so that you can compare them later on. In this example, you can see a list of keywords in the left column and the search volume for each keyword in the right column.

There are five steps to reviewing keyword value and difficulty:

- Step One – Get the keyword search volumes
- Step Two – Get the keyword difficulty scores
- Step Three – Get the keyword rankings
- Step Four – Review the keywords
- Step Five – Assign a relevancy score

There are two key considerations when deciding which keywords are best for your topic and business: search volume and topic relevancy score.

Search Volume: The higher the search volume, the better the keyword is. For SEO we tend to target keywords at a country level, so select the most relevant country that you wish to target.

Relevancy Score: This is a subjective grading between 1 (high) and 3 (low) on how relevant a keyword is to a topic.

In this example, we have graded 'picking a snowboard' as a 3 for the relevancy to the topic. The topic is about snowboard sizing, so while 'picking a snowboard' is a related topic, it is actually a parent topic. You can also put an 'X' against keywords with zero search volume.

In some very niche industries, especially where there is a high average order value, you may still wish to target keywords that are flagged with zero search volume as it's still possible they may bring in traffic and conversions.

Keyword stuffing is frowned upon. If you look at a title tag, which is the blue clickable link in a search result, you'll see that it is a specific size. If that size is exceeded, it will be truncated; and if it is exceeded by a large amount, it will start to be ignored by search engines. On average, you can aim to work between three and five keywords into a title tag. It is important to focus on the most valuable keywords, and that's why prioritizing them helps.

Based on the metrics you have acquired, pick out the most important keywords. Keywords with a good relevancy score and good search volume should be most highly prioritized. There will also be a subjective factor regarding how good a fit the keyword is for the business, and the likelihood that it will convert into business objectives.

Always choose one P1 keyword. This is the most important one to focus on and is known as the primary keyword.

Choose two P2 keywords. Also known as secondary keywords, these are the next most important keywords after P1 keywords.

Choose three or more P3 keywords. Known as tertiary keywords, these are the next most important keywords after P1 and P2 keywords.

In this example, all of the keywords have been graded with 1 for topic relevancy which means they are highly relevant. So, in this case, prioritization has been decided based on search volume and subjectivity.

Conversion Rate Optimization

A core component of SEO is to create landing pages for different users and to optimize those pages with content or appropriate conversion mechanics and calls to action.

In the world of conversion rate optimization, landing pages can vary depending on the channel through which the users arrive. But in the case of organic search, it's best to create a landing page per keyword or keyword theme for which you are trying to rank. This makes it clear to the search engine that this page is specifically focused on one topic. When implemented correctly, you are more likely to appear for searches for the keywords contained in these pages.

On the page itself, you can include CTAs to drive action or adapt the tone of the page messaging to bring people along the conversion funnel. As people arrive on the landing page from a particular search theme, you can harness their search intent with your CTAs and specific text or copy to take them to the next step and closer to your business objective.

Search Engines

There are three main search engines globally. These are Google, Yahoo!, and Bing. You can see that their market share differs in different territories. This is an important consideration if you are doing international prospecting for e-commerce, or for lead generation, or any kind of search marketing in different territories.

For example, if you look at the U.S., Google has 87% market share, Yahoo! has 5%, and Bing has 6.5%. Within the European Union, Google has 91%, Yahoo! has a very low share, and Bing has a slightly higher share. In Japan, Google has 68% market share, whereas Yahoo! has 28%, and Bing has 4%. Within that particular geographic territory, there is a legacy issue with Yahoo! It is the incumbent search engine there, and it has been for a long time.

These are the types of considerations that you should look at when targeting different geographic areas. Different search engines provide access to different audiences and user types. For example, Yahoo! users might be older; or Bing users might use a specific type of mobile phone, such as Microsoft phones, as the default search engine is set to Bing. This also varies in different locations, so your territorial targeting could influence which search engines to include in your media mix.

At the same time, Google has between 85% and 95% market share in most of the geographic areas and. So, once you focus the majority of your attention on Google, you will cover up to 95% of the audience itself.

This is the cornerstone of all marketing. Always start with your consumer and look at their consumer behavior or purchase-decision cycle: the consumer identifies a need or a want, they search for solutions, they evaluate the alternatives, they decide to purchase, they purchase, and then they do a post-purchase evaluation.

Search behavior features in stages 2-6 of the purchase cycle, making it a highly effective channel to tie in with naturalized purchase decision-making. This is why search marketing is absolutely fundamental to the buyer process; in the modern age, people use search engines for their research to effectively dive into their consumer/buyer journey.

Search marketing has developed over time to be more and more efficient at driving the consumer's behavior or purchase-decision cycle.

Let's take a look at the evolution of AdWords. PPC began in the early 2000s as search engines became popular and as user habits, technology, and business developed online. New features have been added to enrich the advertising formats.

AdWords is Google's search marketing platform. It was launched in October 2000. Over the years, new features and more advanced targeting options have been added to develop the AdWords suite beyond paid search ads. In 2017, the new AdWords interface was launched, which was an absolute game-changing interface for AdWords. On July 24th, 2018, Google rebranded Google AdWords as Google Ads.

- 2000: AdWords Launched – AdWords was launched on the October 2, 2000. Priced as CPM.
- 2003: Content Network Launched – Google launches AdSense and the early stages of the Google Display Network.
- 2005: Quality Score and GA Integration Launched – Quality Score introduced to determine minimum bids. Google Analytics integrated with AdWords.
- 2008: Search Keyword Tool Launched – Google introduces automated keyword research to help advertisers grow their accounts with ease.
- 2009: Site Link Extensions Launched – Allowed users to add additional links below search ads to increase click-throughs.
- 2010: Phone Extensions Launched – Recognizing the increase in mobile search, searchers can now call businesses directly from AdWords Ads.
- Remarketing Launched – Now advertisers can create audience lists and serve ads back to people who have visited their site before.
- 2014: Location Extensions Launched – Link AdWords to My Business (maps) to physical locations for businesses.
- 2015: Gmail Ads Launched – Target users with ads directly in Gmail.
- 2016: Removal of Right-Hand-Side Search Ads – Removal of right-hand-side search ad units increases the number of top ads to a max of 4 and 3 below organic search as mobile search dominates.

Expanded Text Ads Launched – Biggest change to search ads in 15 years; now features two headlines, free-form body copy, and URL paths.

- 2017: AdWords Beta Interface Launched – Significant update to AdWords interface launched globally.
- 2018: Google Ads Launched – Tool was rebranded as Google Ads in July 2018

Campaign Elements

Keywords, ad copy, and landing pages are the three fundamental pieces of a PPC campaign. Always consider how these three items relate to each other to ensure your campaign is relevant to searcher intent.

Keywords – The cornerstone of paid search advertising. Keywords refer to what people are looking for, and what questions they are asking Google.

Ads – What users will see when they search on a search engine. Ads are how you, as a brand owner, respond.

Landing Pages – Where the user lands after they click an ad. Landing pages are where those people go after you have given your response.

If you think of it like a conversation, people have asked something, you've responded, and you've brought them somewhere. This is the journey of search and how people behave with search engines.

Keywords are what your potential customers would input into a search engine to find your product or service. Keyword lists are the lists of keyword combinations that you would like your ad to appear in response to. It's very important to consider whether consumers are looking for information, consideration, or conversion, and create your keyword lists around the type of search intent.

For example, if someone is researching, they will have different types of search queries than someone who is comparing options. And likewise, when someone is ready to purchase, they might have a purchase modifier like 'buy iPhone', 'book hotel', etc. In other words, consumers may signal their intent through the keyword itself. These basic human traits are something that you can build into your keyword lists, and then ultimately drive forward with your groups and campaigns.

Search Intent – Consider creating lists around the type of search intent. Consider whether they're looking for information (Top of Funnel Searches), consideration (Middle of Funnel), or conversion or sales queries (Bottom of Funnel).

Exhaustive List of Keywords – It is important to have an exhaustive list of keywords that your target audience is likely to search for. This is essential for building coverage and ensuring your brand is visible for the most valuable searches in a buyer's journey.

Keyword Functions – It's also important to know the function of each keyword and assign budgets to each group of keywords, depending on the part they play in a conversation.

Negative Keywords – Use negative keywords to cut out unwanted searches, such as low conversation or high cost and bad brand associations.

If you think of a search query – which is what someone types into Google – as a question, the next thing we have in the journey is the response. The response itself is your ad copy.

For example, someone has just asked a question, "What are the best hotels in New York". And you're going to come back with an ad that says, "We have a spa, and low rates, and we're five stars on Trip Adviser," or whatever it may be. You're going to respond with your best foot forward in terms of what they have just asked, and how that can be used to drive action.

The ad copy must be relevant. If they're looking for hotels in New York, the ad should say hotels in New York, and not hotels in London or B&Bs in New York. They are not actually looking for anything other than what they actually signified they're looking for.

The ad copy must be attractive. You could include an offer or a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and an Emotional Selling Proposition (ESP). There are different types of deployments of an ESP or a USP in different industries.

For example, the banking industry relies quite heavily on USPs. A unique selling proposition might be, "We have the lowest interest rates on mortgages". That is a unique selling proposition because they might, indeed, have the lowest interest rates on mortgages. The travel industry, however, relies more on ESPs and experiential type of search or purchase. An emotional selling proposition might be, "Have the most enjoyable sun holidays with your family". That's not a unique selling proposition but appeals to the emotions. If you can create a time for your family, that is an emotional selling proposition, which is a far more effective way of engaging with the audience.

The ad copy must be directional. Once you have actually engaged with that audience, you want to direct them towards some action. What we use at this point is a CTA or call-to-action. If you're a hotelier, you might say, "Book now"; or if you're a mortgage broker your CTA could be "Apply now". What you're trying to do at this stage is direct the consumer.

The search journey begins when the user has a need or a want. They look for solutions, they've asked Google a question, you've responded with your ad, given the answer, and then the next stage is they're on your landing page.

The landing page should deliver on the promise of the ad and resolve the user's need state. It also needs to be aligned to the ad copy. In other words, it needs to be relevant, attractive, and directional.

Good landing pages are related to what the searcher typed into Google, as well as the ad copy that they clicked. This increases the relevance of the search experience. If the relevance level is high, the searcher is more likely to engage with the page content. If you include CTAs, you can direct the searcher to take action on your website. This can be in the form of buying a product, downloading a document, or filling out a contact form, for example.

You should take the entire search experience into account when choosing or designing landing pages for search campaigns. Some elements of a landing page can be distilled into what is known as conversion rate optimization.

For example, in the slide image we can see a landing page that contains:

- product details to entice the searcher and quickly show how the product fits their needs
- details of how the product appeals to the searcher's persona and motivations
- a large clickable CTA to drive action
- appealing and aspirational imagery to quickly infer outcomes

Searcher behavior is different on mobile than on desktop devices. Mobile navigation has to be simple and easy to manage, with larger CTAs and readable font sizes for smaller screens. Google Ads takes into consideration how mobile optimized your landing page is, such as whether it is responsive and designed with mobile in mind. This will ultimately affect your quality score for mobile traffic.

Mobile experience is something that has become more and more important as mobile usage has increased. And with all of the updates to search engine algorithms, mobile is now a key consideration for everyone's search marketing campaign.

Paid Search

Now alongside organic search and SEO, the other part of the search mix is paid search, also known as PPC. It's mainly a closing channel and it's an inbound channel. It's a core inbound channel as searchers are literally telling Google what they want and, as a result, they will be central to your conversion strategy. They're asking Google for a solution and you need to give them the correct answer to take them to the next stage.

And, when thinking about your PPC, you should always have sales and conversion outcomes in mind because, when investing in PPC, it's really possible to see a direct return on investment as it is typically the channel that is the step before the person converts. So, it is a highly relevant closing channel, but it can be expensive.

So it's essential to measure the impact in terms of ROI just to justify the spend and performance to the people who are paying the bills and putting it in the media mix. Now, just to note, while the main PPC channel in the western world is Google Ads, the landscape is different in different markets. So, for example, in China, it's Badoo. And, in Japan, for example, we've got a really high prevalence of Yahoo! So, the main PPC channel that you choose will be dependent on the market that you're operating in. Just a consideration for everyone before we proceed.

Now even though PPC is fairly easy to measure using conversion metrics, it's important to recognize that they're not the only metrics we can use to measure performance. There are other metrics available to us on platforms like Google Ads. These are things like impression-assisted conversions or click-assisted conversions, which shows us how certain keywords assist in driving conversion during these true consideration searches and different things like that. It's not always about the last click.

Another way actually to measure success with paid search is to note any increases in brand search. In essence, there's only a limited number of people actually looking for your brand at any one time. That's just who's looking for your brand and it doesn't really change unless you do some traditional advertising, or some PR, some promotion, or awareness-driving activity like online display, or video, maybe some social media. This drives more people to search for you. As a result, it disrupts the market and any increases in brand search can be a result of activity in other consideration channels.

Brand searches are really valuable because they tend to have higher conversion rates, lower cost per click, and lower cost per conversion, because people are actually looking for you. And more than likely they're going to take action versus those highly competitive, generic searches, or non-brand searches where everyone is bidding on it, and it's much higher cost.

So, this would be an example of assisting and closing channels working together to drive results. We have those assisting channels which increase the number of people who are looking for a brand in our PPC and that ultimately leads to better results from the entire campaign.

LESSON 4: INBOUND CHANNELS - EMAIL, AFFILIATE, AND AUTOMATION

Email Marketing

Another essential channel to include as part of your channel mix is email. This is a high-ROI inbound channel and it's relatively inexpensive to send out many emails. And you're sending them out ideally to people who have explicitly said they want to hear from you and are therefore more engaged, super valuable in that regard. Furthermore, engaging past customers is an excellent way to keep your brand front of mind and encourage repeat purchases. And things like upselling new or higher-spec products as well as cross-selling related products and accessories are all great uses of email.

As digital marketers, we have a number of email types to choose from, which we may include in our channel mix. These email types include newsletters to let people know about relevant updates, and promotions to let people know about sales, discounts, and special offers.

Automated emails automatically engage people based on different conditions. Product updates let people know about new features or updates to existing purchases. And we have content waterfalls to distribute different content types designed to match typical consumer journeys, again, based on a number of conditions.

Always consider what might be the best email campaign type to deliver on your objective using best practice, past performance, and A/B testing. Now, depending on the type of email that you send, it's important to recognize that email can be a closing channel or an assisting channel. And based on its purpose – whether it's awareness, consideration, or conversion – appropriate KPIs need to be assigned to reflect the type of email that you are sending to show performance and its purpose.

Now, when thinking about the type of email to send, it's important to start with your goal and choose appropriately. When we have new customer acquisition goals, email types include introductory offers, access to onboarding content, and that kind of thing. We tend to do it within time limits to encourage urgency. For example, last five days, last two days, get them going; that's to onboard new clients with those introductory offers.

Furthermore, when we're working towards consumer retention goals, it's important to use things like access to exclusive content or the selection of products based on past purchases, discount codes, and free gifts. This type of thing is super engaging to past customers and that's a great way to retain those valuable people who've already bought from you before.

And then, of course, to measure success of our email efforts, it's essential to become familiar with the types of email campaign metrics that we have available to us. Sends are the number of people who you've actually sent the email to. Opens are the number of people who opened that email. Your open rate is the percentage of people who are sent the email who then went ahead and opened that email.

Clicks are the number of people who clicked a link inside the email. Click rates are the percentage of people who opened the email and then clicked the link inside the email. Unsubscribes are the number of people who don't want to hear from you anymore or don't want this particular email from you anymore.

Complaints are the number of people who complain that they were sent that email. As we get better at database segmentation and writing subject lines, we should see improved open rates. Likewise, when we create the type of email content that lives up to the promise of our subject line and our audience expectations, we will start seeing clicks within the email itself, and that's a sure sign that people are engaging with the content.

Now, in relation to other metrics, we always want to reduce the number of people who unsubscribe, and complain, and different things like that from our emails. And we can do this by optimizing personalization, send times, better managing our customer segmentation, and delivering different content types to people based on their preferences. All of that will reduce those negative metrics within our campaigns and allow us to move forward.

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is used most effectively in the world of e-commerce. Affiliates can be a small but profitable part of your channel mix. Affiliate marketing is an inbound channel and it's essentially where third-parties, also known as publishers or affiliates, promote a product or a service and they receive a commission for a successful sale or a lead delivered through their website. So, they're not selling something but they're pushing people along a journey on your behalf.

There's four main parties in the affiliate landscape. Number one, the affiliate or publisher. These are the people who promote your brand for a commission on the sale. Number two, the advertiser. This is the brand whose product or service the affiliate is actually promoting. Number three, the network. This is the software that tracks the sales and assigns the commissions. It's the middle-man that kind of manages everything. The customer is the person who buys the product after engaging with the affiliate's content.

While usually not the largest driver of traffic or sales for most companies, affiliate marketing can be a low-risk, high-return channel as part of your media mix. The reason is that publishers are only paid if they deliver a sale, not just when there's a click. So, you only pay once a sale has occurred, which makes it a much lower-risk channel versus something like PPC, where you pay for a click regardless of whether there's a sale or not.

PPC drives scale, and affiliates drive something else. So, there is a differentiation between the two. Compared to mass traffic and conversion channels like PPC and SEO, affiliate market really just tends to be a smaller channel in the media mix, but it can be really effective when deployed correctly.

Within the world of affiliate, we have to think about content types and the type of partners we want to work with to really optimize our performance. So, it's really important for digital marketers to understand the process of selling a product via affiliate networks. Let's take a look at that process now.

The typical affiliate customer journey involves just three steps. First of all, a customer reads a review or some content on the affiliate's website and clicks a link to the brand's website.

Number two, the customer has been influenced by the seemingly independent review or advice from the affiliate's website and buys on the brand's website. The transaction value is tracked and counted by the affiliate network.

Number three, the brand validates all sales via the network and is charged by the network for those sales. These fees are given out as a commission to the affiliates and that's how the process works. While the affiliate gets a commission for driving traffic that results in sales, tracking this is essential to ensure there aren't any fraudulent sales being recorded.

To manage this process, both brands and affiliates are connected via a middle-man piece of software called an affiliate network. This is a vital intermediary and it manages all transactions between the affiliates and the brands and just allows for transparency of payments. In the network

interface, it's also possible for brands to choose what affiliates they want to work with and for affiliates to apply to work with certain brands. So, it manages the whole thing from sales to who you work with.

All of this functionality is provided for a fee to the network from both the brand and the affiliate. Typically, networks are paid as a flat fee for both advertiser or affiliate, or as a percentage of the commission of each sale or conversion.

Now, it's always best to explore what is the best approach for you before signing up to any networks. So, look at the costings, look at all of that stuff, and that's how you decide how best to proceed when choosing an affiliate network.

Marketing Automation

In order to streamline certain tasks which can be effectively conducted by machines, saving both time and money, we can implement a series of automation tasks across our inbound marketing efforts. When applied correctly, marketing automation tools can do great things, like dynamically serve or modify web page content and personalize it to certain segments of your website visitors to get the best response, and send emails out to customer segments and leads based on criteria which is set.

For example, customers can be taken on different journeys depending on how they interact with your email content. A series of automation rules and journeys is called a workflow. Now, setting up a workflow is a list of what's called "if this, then that" settings, and it's a system that allows us to automate based on logic. Let's talk a bit about "if this, then that."

"If this, then that" is a way of using logic and options to decide what happens next after someone takes an action. For example, if someone clicks on email link one, then send email two. Or if someone does not click on email link one, send email number three. So, this allows us to anticipate what might happen. And it's anticipating and knowing what users might do with your content that allows you to kind of display different things on your website, create different scenarios, send different emails, and automate a different transactional workflow to engage with that consumer.

Of course, a further enhancement of automation is that many marketing automation tools can be integrated with your CRM, allowing you to personalize content on your website to individual users within that database or send them highly specific emails to their needs.

Let's look at some rules now. So, rules and workflows can be settled based on CRM segments relating to things like customer criteria. For example, how much did they spend in the last 30 days? This is a great way of figuring out what are the type of workflows you want to send for this particular person. We can also look at whether they're a top-tier client, we can look at their purchase history, we can look at length of time as a customer, and their location.

When deciding on your automation workflows, choose high-impact criteria as a way of segmenting customers and aim to deliver them the most relevant content for their needs and their stage of the customer journey because it's all about them.

Now, streamlining the automation processes can really increase the effectiveness of your digital channels by allowing the machines to automate and optimize the processes faster, more accurately, and at times when humans simply can't influence the channel mix. And in that regard, that is how marketing automation can enhance your overall channel strategy.

LESSON 5: OUTBOUND CHANNELS - DISPLAY AND VIDEO ADVERTISING

Display Advertising

Now, when thinking about consumer journey, we should begin by looking at the start of the funnel at the Awareness stage to see how we can expand the reach of our product, our promotion, or our service to a wide audience and bring them into the conversion funnel. One of the main channels at the top of the funnel is online display, advertising and video, and different things like that. They go hand in hand, things like YouTube ad display, banners, and so on, because these are outbound channels that show creative formats to people based on audience criteria.

We've got a certain number of targeting criteria, like behaviors, their location, the device they use, their demographics, and what they might be interested in. All of these things can help us understand how we can target different segments with this creative output to bring them into the funnel.

So, some of the key benefits of online display advertising include reach. We can reach a really large number of people very quickly and very cost effectively. Awareness, we can drive awareness of our product or service in that group. Branding, we're able to show our brand and our brand colors to all those people. And then, influence, we're able to influence them into the funnel to ultimately take action at a later stage.

And when deciding how to measure our online display and video, it's important to recognize that display and video is not a closing channel. But it can help assist in driving conversions via closing channels by bringing people into that funnel. Remember, it's outbound, and that's a key differentiator. So, when assessing the impact of our display activity, it's important to look at things like assisting metrics rather than direct conversions in order to evaluate performance.

This is essential to show the value of display.

Digital Display Creative Brief

A key task in running any display or video or outbound channel is the creative strategy. With this in mind, we need to do what's called creative briefing. It's an important task and component of any display or video campaign. The creative brief is a document that outlines your campaign theme, the audience you're going to target, the channels that will be used, the sizes of the things you want to create, the assets, the pixel dimensions, and other specifications related to the creative formats required for that campaign.

When we do all our research and we decide on our campaign idea, we can then go ahead and write a brief to give to our designers, to our creative team, or to our agency partners to produce the ads based on our requirements. We've written it down and then they have to go ahead and deliver.

An important thing to outline is why you would actually spend time writing a brief. Let's look at that in terms of the main benefits of a brief. First of all, it allows for idea generation by the creatives and the designers. It also defines the messaging and it gives a list of formats that the people actually have to go ahead and make. It challenges you to define what it is you actually want to achieve or communicate. And this is an amazing result which allows us to help align the creative production with the audience persona preferences, and all of those different factors to focus us in on our objective.

In a typical creative brief, we'll include a number of things. These include our brand guidelines. So, what exactly are our colors and what are our brand guidelines? It's essential to have it in there. The campaign idea, what is the main theme of the campaign? What are we trying to do? Our business goals, what are we trying to achieve?

Our audience insights, what have we unearthed from our research that can help the creative develop those ideas? The format, sizes, dimensions, and channels that'll be used are all key considerations of any creative brief. And don't forget any other mandates like your logo or your tagline or something like that that must be included in your brief for your campaign to get past key stakeholders in your organization.

Display Platforms

Display advertising has been a very prominent channel for many years and there are a number of platforms that offer display advertising solutions.

Google Display Network: Google Display Network allows advertisers to serve video and display ads to over two million websites, reaching 90% of global internet users. The network includes mobile apps and YouTube, and is available across all devices.

Facebook: Facebook has more than two billion users that you can target with ads, using strong, accurate user data such as their interests and location.

AdRoll: AdRoll has developed primarily as a retargeting platform, which uses its own remarketing pixel to target ads to consumers who have previously visited a website.

Criteo: Criteo is a specialist e-commerce retargeting platform that shows consumers ads for products they've viewed on the advertiser's website. This is a dynamic solution that responds to the unique behavior of the consumer to show them ads relevant to their onsite behavior.

Premium Network Buy: Premium Network Buys are usually bought through a media house. Advertisers can choose to serve their ads on premium websites such as news websites. These premium network buys can guarantee reach for a set budget and are usually bought on a CPM basis. As the name suggests, these buys do come at a premium in comparison to many self-service, auction-based platforms. The higher cost is down to the premium nature of their content.

There are a number of platforms you can choose from when running video advertising campaigns.

Social: Social media platforms include YouTube and Facebook. YouTube is a video-sharing social media network where advertisers can reach potential customers when the customer watches or searches for videos on the platform. Advertisers only pay when the user shows interest.

Facebook allows advertisers to display videos within the newsfeed of users that match their audience targeting while they're browsing the website.

Video on Demand: Video on Demand in many ways mirrors traditional TV planning. As users catch up on their favorite shows online, advertisers may choose to run pre-roll style ads. This is similar to how ads would run in the ad break of your favorite sitcom, for example.

Programmatic: Examples include video platforms such as TubeMogul and Videology. The emphasis here is on detailed audience profiles, and video advertising inventory is aggregated from a wide variety of sources.

Display Ad Formats

The Google Display Network (GDN) allows you to advertise in a variety of ad formats.

- Text ads are word-only formats, the same as on the Search Network but may display differently on the Google Display Network.
- Image ads can be static or animated in GIF or HTML5 format and are a great way of delivering your message or uplifting brand awareness in a visual way.
- Rich media ads are image ads that have interactive elements, animations or other aspects that can change depending on who is looking at the ad and how they interact with the ad.
- Responsive ads automatically adjust their size, appearance, and format to fit available ad spaces. They can transform into text or image ads. Responsive ads can also be shown as native ads which generally have good impression and CTR rates.
- Video ads are ads in video format that target YouTube or any website that has YouTube ads running on it.

Before creating your ad, you'll need to prepare a file that is sized and formatted appropriately. The Google Display Network offers a wide range of sizes of inventory, and advertisers can upload both non-animated and animated image ads, as well as HTML5 ads.

A static, non-animated image ad on the GDN can be created as a .gif, .jpg, .png, .swf, or .zip format. The size of these images is measured in pixels, and the file can be no larger than 150KB.

Animated image ads can be created in .gif format; the maximum length they can be is 30 seconds. If the ad is shorter, it can be looped, but it must stop after 30 seconds and must be slower than five frames per second. The maximum file size is 150KB.

If you choose to create animated HTML5 ads, you will need to upload a .zip file containing both the HTML file and any other files referenced by the HTML. The maximum file size is 150KB.

It is recommended that you upload ads in a variety of sizes because different websites will host different formats, and this will increase your potential reach.

Some of the most common ad sizes are:

- 250 x 250 – Square
- 200 x 200 – Small Square
- 468 x 60 – Banner
- 728 x 90 – Leaderboard
- 300 x 250 – Inline Rectangle
- 336 x 280 – Large Rectangle
- 120 x 600 – Sky-Scraper
- 160 x 600 – Wide Sky-Scraper

It is recommended to use the HTML5 file format to create animated image ads. HTML5 allows you to make your ads more visually interesting, and it renders better than an animated .gif ad.

Digital Display Tactics

So, once you've defined your campaign idea, your audience persona, and your creative brief, you'll now need to set up a campaign in such a way to reach your ideal audience. This is called targeting. There are two main types of targeting within display campaigns and video campaigns. They are audience and content targeting. The difference is audience targeting serves ads to people while content targeting serves ads on specific websites or types of content.

Let's take a look at audience targeting. The targeting options available to us for audience targeting are interests, so we can target people based on what they're interested in. Demographics, we can target people based on their age, their gender, their marital status, their income, different things like that. Location, we can target people based on where they're actually physically located.

And remarketing, we can target people who have been on our website before. They're in our email database, they've viewed the content on our YouTube channel, or maybe they've engaged with our app. So, they're highly engaged users and we can get back to those people and target those people. We also have similar audiences where we're able to target people who haven't been on our website before which are similar traits to people who are on our remarketing list. So, they look like people who have been on our site before, people who have looked at our YouTube channel, people who have used our app before, people who are in our database. 'Similar audiences' are what Google called them, and 'look-alike audiences' are what Facebook called them. They're a great way to acquire new customers who are similar to past customers. So, it's like acquisition with all of the information from your pre-existing customers. Very powerful tool.

Now, let's look at content targeting. Within content targeting, we have a number of options, too. We can do website or category targeting. This is called topic targeting. Essentially, the websites declare themselves to be a certain type of website, like a travel site or an education site, so we can just target all of those sites within a certain category.

We're also able to target using keywords. We can target specific web pages that contain keywords related to our campaign. For example, if you're a travel company and you have the keyword "holiday in Spain", your ad will appear on any news sites or beside articles or blogs that contain the keyword "holiday in Spain". The idea is that anyone who reads this article might be interested in your travel ad.

Another way to target content is actually target-specific websites or URLs. So, if we think that a certain website would be a good place to show our ad, we can do this and target that specific website because we want to target their visitors and their audience. Most campaigns now will have a mix of audience and content targeting where digital marketers can compare and determine which drives better performance. Is it my content targeting or is it my audience targeting?

However, for extra specificity, it's also possible to double up. We can actually add content targeting to audience targeting so we can target audiences, people who are on specific types of content. It's really specific.

But the downside of this is it really reduces the reach, because we have to target those people that follow those two criteria. That makes it a little bit less impactful if you have a mass awareness-driving campaign.

We can look at some advanced features, too. Let's deep dive into remarketing here, specifically for e-commerce. So, when we have an e-commerce site, we can serve ads to people who have just viewed a particular product on your website and dynamically insert that product into the ad that they've just viewed. So they're able to see what they've just viewed on your website in an ad to encourage them to purchase. Products are inserted dynamically into ads using what's called an XML product feed and this is delivered from your website from your e-commerce store. It's a URL feed that your website developer can set up in your e-commerce store to link your product and inventory to search engines and different engines like Google to AdRoll to Cratio. And this type of display advertising was once known as liquid advertising, but more commonly these days it's known as dynamic remarketing.

So, there are many channels to choose from as part of your digital strategy, each with its own specialty relating to the funnel, from awareness to consideration to conversion and retention.

As a digital strategist, it's our job to begin our channel choice with our objective in mind. It's always with our objective in mind. From there, we can choose a selection of the most effective digital channels which work together to deliver on our goals within our timeframe, our budget, and our resource limits.

