

A guide to building a solid digital marketing plan

By  Patrick Mkala

7 Apr 2022

To be relevant and effective in today's rapid world, businesses must embrace a sound digital marketing strategy. The world is digital-first and silos where different channels exist in isolation hark back to a bygone era that has no place in a modern, agile business



Source: © Mkael Blomkvist [pexels](#)

However, going digital for the sake of it is futile - digital marketing strategies need to be tailored towards each business and its own set of unique goals and objectives, and they must be measurable.

What should a digital marketing strategy entail?

The point of departure is understanding that a marketing strategy must be aligned to the business's goals, and that everything you do from a marketing and communication perspective is geared towards achieving those goals.

This makes marketing integral to achieving the goals, and not an afterthought or department that gets attention now and then. If marketing, and how you leverage digital tactics, is geared towards achieving a set of goals then it follows that how you set goals is paramount.

The good old-fashioned SMART goals are a good starting point: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

Measurement most important

In 2022 and beyond, measurable becomes the most important of these characteristics - and this goes beyond merely knowing whether you achieved a goal or not (return on investment), measurement also develops insights which influence ongoing decision-making, such as which tools are right for the job, so to speak.

We are blessed with an abundance of tools across channels and platforms, but this can also become overwhelming. This is why measurement and data should become integral to a digital marketing strategy as you'll be able to define which tools on which channels are tailored best towards achieving a set of goals.

The data one gathers on this journey enables a digital marketer to build intelligence around the target audience: first, you're able to target the right audience, but then also build texture and colour around their preferences.

This all happens in real-time, and being data-driven, it means that unlike in the past where a campaign would run its course and its success would be analysed after the fact, a digital marketer can see in real-time whether the content is resonating and triggering the desired reactions from the audience, or whether the campaign needs to be tweaked and adjusted.

The pandemic and the future

It's become a cliché to say that the pandemic accelerated digitisation, but it's true. While the digital shift has been in the making for some time, captive online audiences during the various lockdowns meant more businesses needed to change how they communicated with their customers.

Video has become even more important, with short-punchy videos leading the pack - driven by consumers who prefer on-demand content that they can watch where and when they want.

Also, this has meant that marketers need to find concise, clear, punchy and relevant content. More than ever, content is king.

Creditable results

The media landscape also changed - it is smaller and paywalls have shot up all over the place as publishers, too, have needed to rethink their revenue models. This means that to have a voice on these channels, paid media must form part of an overall communication and marketing strategy. It plays a very important role in the post-Covid consideration stack.

The pandemic has pushed and squeezed businesses that have had to streamline their operations and become more competitive. In this environment, C-suites demand measurable and credible ROI.

We all know the move away from presenting advertising value equivalent (AVE) started many years ago with the Barcelona principles, but CEOs and CFOs today want to see exactly what their rand spend has resulted in, for example: "this is how many potential customers have been reached, this is how many engaged with the content, these are the keywords that have garnered the best results," and so on. Hard, measurable results.

The role of privacy

Looking ahead, in a few years' time, privacy is likely to play an even larger role in a digital marketer's life. Privacy laws are important, but it means that marketers must use the increasing data that they gather to build comprehensive audiences.

Stakeholder mapping and profiling is going to become even more important. You must know your audiences, where they are, the conversations they're already having and how they like being reached.

A good marketing plan

Understanding all of this, and how the world has evolved, we land on an important question, then, for digital marketers. What constitutes a good digital marketing plan?

A good marketing plan must:

- Identify and profile the target audience.
- Be data-driven.
- Identify and set measurable goals and then use appropriate tools to reach these goals.
- Understand that there's no substitute for quality content and that visual storytelling leads the pack.
- Embrace paid partnerships.
- Allow for analysis, reiteration and real-time tweaking.

A good digital marketing plan that is grounded in these fundamentals gives the marketer, and the business by extension, a competitive advantage when it comes to engaging with, and influencing, consumers.

Without this, you're just contributing to the clutter and risk being swiped away in favour of more relevant content. Trends change and channels evolve, which means that consumer behaviour is far from static.

A good digital marketer needs to stay as close to these changes and nuances as possible. It's as much a science as it is an art.

ABOUT PATRICK MKALA

Account Manager at DUO Marketing + Communications
■ A guide to building a solid digital marketing plan - 7 Apr 2022

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>