

Treating digital marketing as wasteful is a mistake

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23 Nov 2022

For the uninitiated digital marketing may seem like a money pit that brands pour money into without seeing a return on investment.



Source: www.unsplash.com

In the offline environment, executives expect to see an immediate ROI, which translates into increasing sales or more feet through the door.

But beyond more “likes” and increased followings on social media platforms, they fail to see the value in digital campaigns, or reconcile digital marketing efforts and business ROI, which leads to digital marketing being undervalued, and not being seen as a big business driver, causing frustration for marketers.

Viewing online marketing as wasteful expenditure is a mistake though, because in an increasingly digital world, if you’re not marketing yourself where your customers live, you don’t exist.

Ace up their sleeves

Digital marketers are experts at making products or services discoverable online. Much like traditional marketers, digital marketers help brands reach their target audience and promote products by leveraging the tools at their disposal, from search engine optimisation and social media, to email marketing, analytics, and Google Ads, so they are not only able to target specific audiences and build customer trust, but they are also able to deliver measurable results through analytics.

It is here where digital marketers can meet the right expectations for executives. Convincing them about the importance of digital marketing to the bottom-line through analytical measurements, especially because executives themselves are usually analytical people. And of course, because if you can't measure anything, you can't improve it – nor can you manage it – which is why any digital marketing campaign must include tools such as Google Analytics, to give you sight of the online sales funnel.

While bigger companies might have departments or outsourced providers to do this work, for small businesses, these tools are also generally accessible.



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Executives, just as well as marketers, also need to understand that digital marketing is not about quick fixes, and it cannot be a spray and pray effort: it needs to be strategic, following the online sales funnel – a series of steps that attracts customers, leads them to make a purchase decision, and convert them – or else it is a waste of budget.

By examining your sales funnel, you can optimise your sales and marketing efforts.

Demonstrating effective digital marketing campaigns through RICE (reach, interaction, conversion, and engagement strategies) could foster this, and can also simplify strategic objectives and targets in a language palatable to executives. Here's how to go about it, and hopefully do so successfully:

Reach

Pick the platform that is most appropriate to your business' needs and use it effectively. LinkedIn might be the best and only place for executives to market themselves, but Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok all serve different purposes and audiences. Basic research about these platforms and their audiences should inform your decision regarding the best fit for your campaign objectives and business deliverables.

Interaction

Create engaging content so customers can find you, either through videos, quizzes, or by writing opinion pieces in the media, and sharing it. LinkedIn is the best platform for brands and individuals to market themselves, which is also where you might want to publish blogs. But if, for example, you are a barber, you could create TikTok or Instagram content around tricks to keep the perfect beard. So, choose the best fit platform for your business and its objectives.

Conversion

Offer potential customers something for interacting with your content, either through discounts, referrals, or incentives to encourage them to continue supporting you such as memberships.

Engagement

Most small businesses fail to look beyond the sale – they don't do enough to get repeat business. Caring about your customers after the purchase means putting a complaint handling process in place. Encourage customers to subscribe to your content so your business stays top of mind (without being too much in their face).

Failure to create a long-term digital marketing strategy is setting your business up for failure. And failing to measure impact could easily alienate your internal customers such as your executives. So, as a digital marketer, being strategic and intentional not only help you secure engaged audiences who often become loyal customers to your business - but add to this adequate analytical tools to measure and track impact, you'll easily alleviate fears of your executives and secure their confidence. This should help your executives see value in digital marketing for your business.

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