



# DEVELOPING A Digital Marketing Strategy

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Traditional marketing methods — newspaper, TV, radio, and billboards — are no longer attracting customers in the Internet age.

**W**e are solidly in the age of the empowered consumer. Research of virtually all products known to humankind can take place entirely in the digital realm. Along with research, personal and self-directed conversations can happen with a variety of reliable sources that the client can choose from and at any time they want.

While most customers have changed the way that they shop, too few salespeople have accepted this permanent change in the buyer's journey. Many reports state the customer has completed as much as 70 percent of the buying process *before* they ever think of getting into their car and driving to a store and digital marketers use that to their advantage.

If you have shopped online, you will notice that a pop-up window invites you to “chat” with a “real” person. This is the only way the two-dimensional world of online shopping can have any human touch. No matter the effort used by online e-tailers to connect with a prospect, they can only present a façade of assistance.

#### THE BEGINNING

Most showrooms have some digital presence today, whether it is a direct e-mail campaign or sharing posts from a vendor on various social platforms. To get the most from *your* digital marketing efforts, you must have a strategy that goes beyond non-permission marketing. Spreading someone else's digital efforts at the connection or changing your home page a few times a year is *not* a strategy.

The secret to social media success is not some whiz-bang app; it requires a commitment to learning something new, hard work, increased effort, monitoring, and analysis.

#### DIGITAL MARKETING IS MANDATORY

Traditional marketing methods such as newspaper, TV, radio, and billboards have been the go-to

marketing tools for decades and are still part of the overall marketing strategy. However, they have become increasingly ineffective and their use will continue to diminish.

Marketing digitally is more affordable, can be tailored specifically for your customer demographic, and can be integrated into the marketing plans of stores of all sizes. The digital phenomenon also decreases the time it takes to go from marketing idea to implementation. The most tactical reason to incorporate a digital marketing methodology is that it is immediately available to your prospective customers at the touch of a finger when they are in the research phase.

Ignoring the changes in the buyer's journey and not modifying your marketing to match the times we are in puts your company at risk. Not being an immediately available and viable option for today's buyer will jeopardize your existence.

With all the advancements in technology, it is easier than ever to implement a digital marketing strategy. This applies to all members of the channel — from a one-person operation to a multi-location showroom.

While the size of each type of company will determine the details in their approach to online marketing, the basics for them are the same. Consider this: everyone who works in the showroom is a part of an in-house production company. That means it is important to be comfortable with the various methods of fabricating and distributing content with the tools you have on-hand.

#### REACH, AND MOTIVATE

There are many tools for reaching potential customers with an efficient digital marketing strategy, such as pay-per-click, Google Adwords, email blasts, SEO, and retargeting. While there are many ways to make an impact in the digital world, this article will focus on the social side of digital marketing.

#### THE SOCIAL SIDE OF MARKETING

For 2017, eMarketer (<https://www.emarketer.com/Article/This-Year-More-Than-Half-of-Americans-Will-Use-Facebook/1013560>) predicts that Facebook usage will grow to 167 million, followed by Instagram with just under 100 million. These two platforms are being consumed many times daily in the manner that people would have looked at a newspaper in the past and the forecasted growth will continue through 2020.

There is a well-known marketing statistic that states: “3 percent of your market is actively buying your product, 56 percent are dis-interested, and 40 percent will soon enter the market.” With digital marketing and social media, you have a way to engage with all prospective customers no matter where they are in the buying cycle.

#### CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT HAS SHIFTED

It is impossible to discuss any sales or marketing-related materials without tripping over the word “Engagement,” but what does it mean? Basically it means there are strategic actions in being involved with the client both pre- and post-sale.

The change in buying mannerisms has produced a customer profile that is further advanced in the “discovery and option phase” of their shopping activities than their counterparts of the past.

Much of the marketing done in the digital world is a rehash of a printed ad strategy that falls short of client interaction. Social media marketing provides what no other type of marketing can an immediate two-way conversation. People do not want to see product or sale posts all the time. To increase your customer exposure and engagement, you must produce content that is worthy of being seen.

#### IMPLEMENT A STRATEGY

The strategy you employ consists of a series of steps, the first of which is to determine who you will be targeting in your campaign. If you answered “everyone,” then you are thinking with a billboard mentality. Social media platforms allow you to specifically target members of your audience and present them with a specialized marketing campaign.

“To increase your customer exposure and engagement, you must produce content that is worthy of being seen.”





## Don't jump into every social media platform there is! First discover how your defined customers interact with the digital media they use.

### BRAINSTORM PERSONAS

A limited definition of a buyer's persona is a hypothetical depiction based on real and market data such as demographics, patterns of behavior, and other customer-related motivations. A lighting store will have several of these personas, such as: Homeowner (both the new homeowner and the remodeler), Builder, Electrician, Designer, and Retail Client. The more you drill down into the details, the better off you are.

### LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Don't jump into every social media platform there is! First discover how your defined customers interact with the digital media they use. Over time, you can add more platforms.

I would always recommend to my sales trainees that they must shop the competition to learn more

about who the opposition is. With the Internet, you can learn volumes about your competitors without stepping into their stores. Take a look at how they use social media in their marketing. The goal isn't to mimic their strategy, but to know what is possible.

### CAMPAIGN GOALS

This is the next step in your digital marketing strategy. What do you want to accomplish from your marketing efforts? It may be building your brand, gaining more page likes, Web site visits, or the contact information from a warm lead. Decide on one of them. Just like any goal setting activity, you must set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Bound.

### ATTRACT AND ENGAGE POTENTIAL CLIENTS

Now that your goal is clear, how will you attract and engage people? Begin with the creation of content. This is the point in your social campaign that can make you appealing to your selected persona or have them click on the "show me less" button. Your posts must be captivating enough to want them to continue to learn more about you or the subject you are featuring.

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Some of the types of posts that work are answers to general or repeated questions. If you can respond to common questions that clients have in a short video, they will watch it and they will share it. Keep your videos under one and a half minutes (1:30). Since many people do not have the volume up when scrolling through their social feeds, I add in captioning, so the spoken words are seen on the screen.

Stimulating engagement from potential clients is not about only offering a sales promotion or keeping the conversation one-sided and only focused on your company. Just as in any conversation when one talks only about themselves, the other person gets bored. To avoid turning off clients ask your followers pertinent questions, have contests, become an outlet for local information, and simply be nice to people.

**PLAN YOUR POSTS**

Depending on your social media platform, the number of posts you make daily or weekly and the timing of the posts makes a difference. Some posts are better made at certain times during the day. In addition, the platform determines the right time to engage with people.

With a focus on Facebook, a showroom can post 2 to 4 times a day with its original content as long as

that content is new and engaging. When only sharing content produced by a vendor, you are missing out on great opportunities to impact and interact with clients.

An indispensable tool in your digital marketing strategy will be your marketing/editorial calendar. A marketing/editorial calendar is a structured and well-thought-out series of digital events compiled in one place so that all your bases are covered. This is your blueprint for defining the content you will share, the platforms that you will share it on, and the frequency that you share. Your marketing/editorial calendar is yours to design, so make one that works for you. There is no right or wrong way to build your calendar; just build one.

**THE CHALLENGE**

The biggest obstacle in this new system of marketing is confidence. It is not enough to dip your toes in the digital pool; the players who want to succeed must embrace the digital changes with full belief in the returns that will come from those efforts.

There is not much time left to begin this new part of your marketing strategy. Resisting the change to reshape yourself or your business must be put aside. We are all living and working in a digitally impacted environment. ❖

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# Light the Way to Market Expansion

**HKTDC Hong Kong International Lighting Fair (Spring Edition) 2017** is a leading industry event which creates opportunities for participants to connect with buyers from all over the world. Its 2016 edition attracted nearly 20,000 buyers from 108 countries and regions, including such renowned names as TASCIBRA (Brazil), Globe Electric Company Inc (Canada), B&Q China (the Chinese mainland), Moebel Rieger GmbH & Co. KG (Germany), Crompton Greaves Limited (India), Landmark Group (UAE), and EpiCentre K (Ukraine).

Organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the fair hosted more than 1,300 exhibitors in 2016. The fair's exhibitor profile represents the industry trends in lighting, such as energy-efficient products with a strong focus on LEDs and smart lighting solutions, the new frontier of lighting technology.

**Your Place in the Spotlight**

To draw maximum attention from buyers, exhibitors are grouped in thematic zones. For 2017 these include Advertising Display Lighting, Avenue of Chandeliers, Business of IP Zone, Commercial Lighting, Decorative Lighting, LED & Green Lighting, Lighting Accessories, Parts & Components, Outdoor Lighting, and Trade Service & Publications.

**Highlight Zones**

**Hall of Aurora** is the perfect environment to attract buyers of branded collections.

**LED & Green Lighting** is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the lighting industry.

**World of Professional and Industrial Lighting** encompasses a variety of situation-specific lighting, providing a showcase for lighting for warehousing stadiums and other commercial purposes, safety lighting and emergency lighting.

**Avenue of Chandeliers** creates a stunning showplace for the chandelier lighting which is so desirable to buyers.

**Advertising Display Lighting** offers a themed space for lighting products used for advertising, promotions or marketing purposes.

**Events around the Fair**

The Networking Reception is an international gathering of lighting professionals in an informal atmosphere to relax, exchange notes and make new contacts. A programme of seminars and forums explores many aspects of the lighting industry, from lifestyle trends to emerging markets.



**April 2017, Peak Sourcing Month**

April sees a number of important fairs in Hong Kong. They create a synergy of trading opportunities.

- April 13-16 **HKTDC Hong Kong Electronics Fair (Spring Edition)**  
**HKTDC International ICT Expo**
- April 20-23 **HKTDC Hong Kong Houseware Fair**  
**HKTDC Hong Kong International Home Textiles and Furnishings Fair**
- April 27-30 **HKTDC Hong Kong Gifts & Premium Fair**  
**Hong Kong International Printing & Packaging Fair**

**First-time overseas buyers are entitled to exclusive travel incentive.**

Pre-registration is required. Please contact HKTDC New York Office at Tel: (1 212) 8388 688 or E-mail: new.york.office@hktdc.org for details.

**HKTDC Hong Kong International Lighting Fair (Spring Edition) 2017**  
Date: April 6-9, 2017  
Venue: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

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