



WHAT'S UP WITH B2B DIGITAL MARKETING?

Ask any marketing pro how digital marketing has changed over the past five or six years and they'll likely ask how much time you have to chat. The reason? Digital marketing is experiencing a massive transformation and everything that held true a few years ago is no longer the case today.

Think back to 2015. There was no pandemic, limited-to-no spam regulations and everyone's focus was getting the largest possible lists of prospects to target with email blasts. Fast forward to 2021, and the new reality includes:

- GDPR, CAN-SPAM and CCPA regulations and their impact on the numbers game for outbound marketing.
- The growth of marketing tools that promise new and innovative outreach channels – but are often used incorrectly.
- Audiences increasingly desensitized by the constant flurry of irrelevant messages
- The need for marketing measurements to meet corporate goals now more than ever.

The culmination of this reality is simple: People don't want to be treated as a number and are smart enough to know when they are. Today's prospects want personalization.



CHANGE CREATES OPPORTUNITY

While the digital marketing landscape is changing, marketers should embrace this as an opportunity for improvement. If anything, today's market provides the opportunity to make more meaningful connections with our target audiences. Doing so comes down to two key terms: quality and alignment.

FROM "HOW MANY?" TO "HOW GOOD?"

The truth is that volume-driven marketing doesn't work anymore. People are too smart and too desensitized for a generic message to lead to action. Moving beyond the numbers game, marketers should instead be looking to create actionable leads through better targeted messaging.

This means shifting our mindset from the number of leads to their quality. Are these targets the right level? The right industry? Do they have decision-making ability? These are the questions that should eclipse traditional "how many leads are in the database?"

Let's constantly remind ourselves (and our colleagues) that 200 low-quality leads are nowhere near as valuable as 20 high-quality ones. And let our actions reflect as much. Quality trumps quantity every time.

FROM "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?" TO "WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?"

However, quality leads only retain their worth if treated as such. Simply put, we need to start thinking of leads as individuals, not just names on a list. With individuals, you can have a conversation.

Meaningful conversations are more likely to get prospects to convert. For instance, if you're hosting an event, of course you'll send a short, succinct email inviting a prospect. But take personalization further than "Dear [First name]". Why not mention the specific benefit(s) relevant to their company? Your goal is to show the recipient you know something about them and their organization.

Remember, too, that targets want to be neither forgotten (what have you done for me lately?) nor spammed (no thanks). Get this art-science mixture right, and your prospect is more likely to become a customer.

USE TOOLS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

There's no shortage of marketing channels we can use to reach our audience. The challenge is using them correctly and orchestrating them seamlessly. The aim is to be present wherever our targets are most likely to visit, and to stay top of mind with consistent, relevant messaging.



Since each marketing tool has a purpose, avoid using them for the sake of simply using them. If a tool fails to create a richer experience along the customer journey, it's not appropriate. Email has long been a default component of almost any campaign. In today's world, however, we should consider email as a nurture channel, complementary rather than primary. On the other hand, channels such as direct mail may be worth resuscitating: when personalized (see above) something tangible can break through and convert.

SUCCEED IN THE NEW REALITY

There's no recipe for guaranteed marketing success – some things don't change! But allow your campaigns to be shaped by these three attributes:

1. **Focused** – deliver hyper-targeted content by role or account.
2. **Complementary** – use approaches and channels that support each other.
3. **Personalized** – Provide messaging that addresses specific pain points or needs – don't just guess.

Most of us focus on gaining prospects, of course. But don't forget about existing

customers. After all, marketing should be in it for the long haul. The buyer's journey continues on beyond the milestone when a prospect becomes a customer – make sure it's a smooth path, not a bumpy road. It's our job to assist in customer retention and cultivate evangelists.

TIME FOR AN UPDATE

The pandemic has changed everything – and marketing is no exception. It's never been more important to take a critical look at what's working, what's not, and what can be improved. Quality beats quantity. Conversations create conversions. And trust leads to long-term relationships.



Arketi Group is a public relations and digital marketing firm that helps business-to-business technology organizations accelerate growth through intelligent strategy, messaging, public relations, digital marketing, branding, and lead generation and nurturing.

For more information, contact Mike Neumeier at mneumeier@arketi.com or 404.451.7832 – or visit arketi.com.