

THE EMERGING SCIENCE OF - MARKETECHNOLOGY -

Online technology has been expanding into marketing operations at phenomenal rates and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. This means that design agencies and marketing professionals have to constantly readjust their way of thinking in order to deliver results. They now not only need to be skilled at the more 'traditional' aspects of marketing, but also need to have a clear understanding of how these emerging technologies can be integrated with existing techniques in order to make a real difference to their clients' sales strategy.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MODERN MARKETING BRAIN

Product/Service Analysis:

A company's products or services form the backbone of the business and therefore it's vital that companies **really** understand what it is they actually sell but more importantly, what benefits they can offer their customer base.

Target Analysis:

Simply knowing what your target markets are is one thing but actually knowing **who** they are, what they respond to and how they'll interact with your communication is quite another. Every target is different and hence has different issues, requirements and barriers to purchase that need to be addressed. Therefore, segmenting your markets and identifying who the final decision makers are within the buying process is vital as it will provide you with a much better understanding of how to communicate with them and will ultimately lead to higher returns.

Competitor Analysis:

Truly knowing who you're up against and keeping a close eye on their progress or offering can provide you with very useful insight that could keep you ahead of the pack. (or catch up and pass it if you're starting from behind). Try to find and take advantage of their weaknesses and avoid treading in areas where they are stronger unless you are confident you can offer a similar or better service.

Sales Cycles:

How do you win new clients? What are the typical touch and tipping points that customers respond to? When are you successful and when do you fail? Points such as these should be considered continuously to help you define and redefine the best process possible.

Strategy:

There are hundreds of ways to get your message in front of a potential client. But running off and spending a lot of money or resources on marketing avenues that haven't been thought about properly almost certainly leads to poor returns and a lot of wastage. Any business, large or small, should adopt a structured, scalable and flexible marketing strategy from which the company can grow.

'Traditional' Marketing Media:

Although with the advent of the internet a brand new world of marketing mechanics has emerged (see left side of brain), there is still a place for the more traditional media such as TV, print, radio and exhibitions. And we don't think they will be disappearing any time soon either. The challenge has simply become to integrate the new with the old correctly to create a complete and targeted marketing approach.

Partnership/Affiliate Marketing:

Working with other companies that enhance and complement your own service offering can be useful both for new referrals as well as being able to help an existing client to solve particular issues going forward. Your choice of partner is of course imperative as you will both need to be after the same size or type of client and need to be able to grow at the same time.

USPs/Messaging:

Get your selling points and sales messaging wrong and all the hard work, as well as your budget, will ultimately be wasted. Strategically speaking this is the most important part of the entire marketing process as it will determine how you draw the potential client's attention, how you explain your solutions to their issues and how you'll convince them to use you instead of your competitors.

Image & Tone of Voice:

Everyone knows that a first impression (or first impact as we like to call it) will very often mean the difference between making a sale or not. Therefore your brand image and marketing materials **MUST** be designed and written properly and with the customer or end-user in mind. It should be eye-catching and engaging but should always speak to customers in the way that they wish to be spoken to.

Internal/external company culture:

Many people do not consider a company's culture or atmosphere to be an integral part of the marketing process. But what happens to all the new clients that you've managed to attract when you offer them poor customer service or your staff don't sound very accommodating over the phone? And how can your business ever operate at optimum level when your employees aren't engaged or stimulated to do their jobs properly?

Increased Business
Impact

Brand
Strategy

APPLYING
PROVEN
MARKETING
TECHNIQUES

KEEPING UP
TO DATE WITH
EMERGING
TECHNOLOGY



fig.1

Google:

Google has been around almost as long as the internet itself and has grown so large that it now has a finger in a monstrously large amount of online pies. You can also guarantee that when some new craze or change hits the internet Google will be aware of it (and probably offering to buy it up). So naturally it makes sense to keep an eye on them and learn as much about this internet gateway as you can so you'll always be one of the first to take advantage of new ways to market.

Blogs:

Blogs, although time consuming at times, can offer a very cost effective way to raise brand awareness amongst potential clients and with many blogs now becoming niche information portals they can greatly help with your website's search engine optimisation.

Search Engine Optimisation

Ranking high in search engines (without paying directly for it) is of course a great way to boost site traffic but because the internet is progressively getting more and more saturated with websites and information it can be very hard to get your site to the top of the first page. External links, article marketing, social media, ezines, online pr, metadata and keywords will of course help but make sure that these are all targeted towards a specific (and preferably niche) search term so they can work together seamlessly.

Email

Email marketing is very much the online equivalent of direct marketing. It's a relatively cost effective way to hit large audiences but the drawback is that the response rates can be very low. If you do wish to go along this route make sure your email lists are right for your campaign and focus on your sales messaging to ensure that the email will get opened and read. Do NOT over-clutter the email with information and keep the layout as clean and concise as possible. Remember, you can always provide more detailed information when they click through to your site.

CRM, Document- and Data Management:

Online CRM and data management systems can help organisations to really learn and understand about their customers' buying habits, to find out what they want and how you can potentially up- & cross sell to them. These types of management systems are becoming more and more widely accessible on smaller and more cost effective platforms, however integrating them into legacy systems can be difficult.

Websites:

In today's world your company's website is probably the most important marketing tool, or rather portal, in your entire arsenal. So in order to make the absolute most of it and attract the business that you're after it is imperative that it is thought about and structured correctly from connectivity and hosting all the way through to navigation, design and functionality. Get your website wrong in the first place and any other online initiatives you may embark upon will, in most cases, be next to useless.

Social Media:

Social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn have exploded onto the internet over the past few years, along with applications such as Paperli, Hubspot, Buffer etc. that can help manage the information that you upload, collate or send out. Because social media is free in most instances it is fast becoming one of the most popular ways for businesses to interact with their customers.

But businesses should be careful about the type of information they put out to potential customers and should aim to structure and monitor their approach to social networking to avoid staff sending out mixed messages or worse, create negative publicity because someone accidentally uploaded something offensive.

Analytics

Keeping a close eye on how visitors interact with your online initiatives can be hugely beneficial to your overall marketing strategy, both on- as well as offline. You can identify where what visitors go and what information they seek and adjust your advertising or promotional materials accordingly, ultimately reducing budget wastage.

Online Advertising:

Pay Per Click/Conversion/Action/Engagement/Etc advertising can offer a quick and highly targeted means of reaching your core audiences. Your ads can be placed directly in front of specific webusers when they enter the relevant search criteria making the ultimate chance of a sale much higher. But make sure you keep monitoring the campaign continuously to avoid spending your budget in the wrong places. Also try split-testing campaigns with different messages/visuals to find the most productive way forward.

Mobile:

Definitely the one to keep a close eye on. Although still in its relative infancy mobile marketing is becoming ever more popular, especially with the advent of smart and android phones. SMS, internet, email, podcasts, videos, radio, apps and games are all accessible by users at almost any given time or place making this an extremely attractive market for advertisers to look into.

Extranets:

Extranets are a great way to allow constant contact and interaction with clients, suppliers and/or resellers of products and services. A good extranet can be used for content localisation and personalisation and allows businesses to automate much of their online sales and marketing process including email campaigns and alerts. It can also be used to showcase new products, special offers or can be used to train resellers on how best to sell a product or service. The downfall however is that a good extranet doesn't usually come cheap and tends to be used predominantly by bigger organisations.

Intranets:

Intranets can be used for staff training, internal notices, news and updates or employee blogs to name but a few. They can offer a great way to create an atmosphere and community within the workplace which can increase employee empowerment and which in turn can have a massive impact on the business as a whole.