

Digital Marketing

Designed by University of Bucharest for the Skills4Retail Initiative

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Skills4Retail
Building sustainable growth

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1. Introduction to digital marketing

1.1. What is digital marketing?

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1.1. What is Digital marketing?

- Digital marketing can be defined as "the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, primarily on the internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium" (Desai, 2019).
- Digital marketing refers to the use of online channels and platforms to promote products and services. It encompasses a wide range of activities such as the following:



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Social media advertising

- A form of digital marketing that involves paid promotions on social media platforms to reach specific audiences.

- It allows businesses to create targeted ads based on user demographics, interests, behaviors, and other factors.

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Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

- The process of improving a website to increase its visibility on search engines (e.g., Google, Microsoft Bing, Yahoo, etc.) whenever people search for: products, services, or information (Search Engine Land, 2024).

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Social media marketing (SMM)

- The process of using social networks to build a company's brand, increase sales, and generate website traffic. In addition to providing companies a way to interact with existing customers and reach new ones, SMM offers specially designed data analytics, allowing marketers to track the results of their efforts and identify even more ways to engage (Hayes, 2024).



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Content marketing

- A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience (Content Marketing Institute, 2024).

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Affiliate marketing

- An advertising model in which a company compensates third parties for generating traffic or directing users to the company's products and services.
- The third parties are affiliates, and the commission motivates them to find ways to promote the company (The Investopedia Team, 2024).

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Native advertising

- A form of paid advertising where ads match the look, feel, and function of the media format in which they appear. They blend "natively" and seamlessly into the webpage.
- Unlike banner or graphic ads, native ads don’t really look like ads, so they don't disrupt the user’s interaction with the page (Outbrain, 2024).

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Marketing automation

- A type of software that allows companies to effectively target customers with automated marketing messages across channels, including email, websites, social media, and text messages to generate leads. This technology is a segment of customer relationship management (CRM) and is typically used by marketing departments to eliminate repetitive tasks from staff workflows and increase overall marketing efficiency (Fluckinger, 2024).

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Email marketing

- A strategic approach to inform subscribers about new products, discounts, and services, while also nurturing customer relationships through educational content that highlights brand value and maintains engagement between purchases. (Intuit, 2024).



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Pay-per-click (PPC)

- A form of advertising where ads are displayed on a website or search engine, and payment is made for advertising based on the number of users who click on that link. PPC advertising enables advertisers to pay solely for user interactions, ensuring that marketing budgets are allocated efficiently and effectively (Coursera, 2023).

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Inbound Marketing

- A method that helps attract customers by creating valuable content and experiences that resonate with the audience. It prioritizes content creation and sharing information as a way to reach customers, rather than relying solely on advertisements.
- It can help create an engaging environment for customers by providing educational tools, interactive media, or communication opportunities in addition to familiar products (Amazon Ads, 2024).

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Online Public Relations (Online PR)

- The activity of public relations communicators through available online communication channels and communication tools.
- In addition to the online pages of traditional media, these channels include social media, blogs, and websites (Smart PR, 2024).



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Why is it essential to use digital marketing?

Precise targeting	Performance measurement	Lower costs	Direct interaction to customers
• Allows for specific audience segmentation and targeting based on demographic, behavioral, and geographic data.	• Provides the ability to monitor and measure the impact of campaigns in real time.	• Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing can be more cost-effective, offering a higher return on investment (ROI).	• Enable fast and efficient two-way communication between brands and consumers.

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Digital marketing in retail

- In the retail sector, digital marketing refers to the strategic use of online channels to drive foot traffic to physical stores or sales through e-commerce platforms.

- *Example:* A clothing retailer may run Instagram ads targeting local customers, or send promotional emails for flash sales.

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Activity. Digital or traditional?

- Classify the following activities as digital marketing, traditional marketing, or a combination of both. Explain your choices. Which activities combine digital and physical customer experiences?
  - A supermarket distributes printed discount leaflets.
  - A fashion retailer sends personalized promotional emails.
  - A customer scans a QR code to access a product discount.
  - A cosmetics brand collaborates with an influencer on Instagram.
  - A store displays a digital screen promoting a new product.
  - A retailer launches a loyalty app offering personalized rewards.
  - A customer sees an online advertisement and purchases the product in-store.

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Activity. The retail digital marketing detective

- Choose a retailer such as Zara, Sephora, IKEA, Decathlon, or a local supermarket. Investigate its website, social media profiles, mobile app (if available), and email marketing (if you have access to its communications). Then, answer the following questions:
  - Who is the retailer's target audience?
  - What digital channels does it use?
  - How does it promote products and offers?
  - How does it encourage customers to purchase?
  - How does it encourage repeat purchases?
  - What could the retailer improve?

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1.2. The evolution of digital marketing and its importance

- In the contemporary world, **technology** has become increasingly important. As a result, we live in times where the theme of **digitalization** is a transformative force, reshaping our daily lives and fundamentally changing the way we interact, work, and perceive the world around us. Thus, the concept of **digital marketing** has emerged as an indispensable companion for modern business strategies (Catană & Barbu, 2024).
- **Digital marketing is a current field that has its origins at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century**, with the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web platform, within the context of the information society (Ayhan, 2017).



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- Over time, digital marketing has evolved from the simple interaction of customers with a company's or product's website to the exploitation of modern digital technologies, such as (Dwivedi et al., 2021):
  - **digital devices and platforms** (e.g., Internet of Things, Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, etc.)
  - **digital media** (e.g., email marketing, search engines, etc.)
  - **digital data** (e.g., audience profile information)
  - **digital technology** (e.g., chatbot)

- **Digital marketing is influenced by factors such as** (Balaji, 2021)**:**
  - audiences,
  - platforms,
  - technologies used,
  - quality content,
  - expenses,
  - interactions



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- **Retail marketing** has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. Traditionally, retailers relied heavily on offline channels such as:
  - newspaper ads, used to promote weekly offers or store openings;
  - TV and radio commercials, aimed at mass audiences;
  - printed catalogs and flyers, often distributed door-to-door or in-store.
- While these methods helped build brand awareness, they lacked precise targeting, real-time performance data, and personalization.

- In contrast, **today's digital landscape allows retailers to reach the right customers at the right time with highly targeted, measurable, and cost-effective strategies.** This shift has been driven by tools and techniques such as:
  - targeted Facebook & Instagram campaigns
  - influencer marketing
    - collaborating with content creators or influencers helps retailers tap into engaged communities.
  - Google Shopping ads
    - product-based ads that appear at the top of Google search results, showing product image, title, price, retailer name, reviews (if available)
  - dynamic remarketing
    - show personalized ads across the web to users who previously visited their site or app. These ads display exact products users viewed, alternatives or complementary items, and promotional offers to encourage return visits.
  - product feed optimization
    - retailers need to maintain high-quality, accurate, and optimized product feeds for platforms like Google Merchant Center (for Shopping ads), Facebook Catalog (for Instagram Shop or Facebook ads), and marketplaces (e.g., eBay, Amazon etc.).

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Activity. Build the digital marketing timeline

- Put the following developments in chronological order and discuss their impact on retail.
  - AI-powered product recommendations and conversational shopping.
  - The growth of social media marketing.
  - The emergence of e-commerce and online shopping.
  - The rise of mobile commerce and shopping apps.
  - Search engine marketing and early online advertising.
  - Influencer marketing, short-form video and social commerce.

- **Which development has had the greatest impact on retail, and why?**

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1.3. Digital marketing strategies

- A **digital marketing strategy** is a comprehensive plan that outlines how an organization will use digital channels to achieve its marketing objectives. It is crucial as it provides a roadmap for businesses to connect with their target audience, generate leads, increase brand awareness, and drive conversions in the online space.
- There are some steps for creating a digital marketing strategy:

- 1. Understanding business objectives
- 2. Defining the target audience
- 3. Creating buyer personas
- 4. Setting SMART goals
- 5. Digital marketing tactics
- 6. Budget allocation
- 7. Creating an action plan
- 8. Measuring and monitoring activities
- 9. Optimizing activities
- 10. Data evaluation and analysis

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1. Understanding business objectives

- Setting **clear business** objectives is essential as it **provides direction for all marketing efforts** and ensures alignment with the organization's overall goals and vision.
- Common business objectives include the following:
  - increasing sales revenue
  - expanding market share
  - improving brand visibility and reputation
  - enhancing customer loyalty and retention.
- **Digital marketing objectives should be closely aligned with global business goals** to ensure that marketing efforts directly contribute to the organization's success.

- *Example: **Increasing revenue by 20% in the next year.***
  - ***Motivation:** Increasing revenue is a common objective for many companies, reflecting the desire to improve financial performance and strengthen market position.*
  - ***Relevance to digital marketing:** This objective can be supported through various digital marketing tactics, such as search engine optimization to increase online visibility, social media advertising to attract new customers, and content strategies to educate and engage the audience.*
  - ***Measurability:** Revenue can be measured in financial terms and tracked over time to evaluate progress toward the goal.*
  - ***Resource acquisition:** To achieve this objective, additional resources may be required in terms of marketing budget, team, and technological tools.*
  - ***Deadline:** The objective has a one-year fiscal timeline, providing clarity and guidance for digital marketing efforts throughout the period.*

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2. Defining target audience

- **Understanding the target audience** is essential as it enables companies to create personalized and relevant marketing campaigns that resonate with the needs, preferences, and behaviors of their potential customers.

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3. Creating buyer personas

- **Buyer personas** are fictional representations of ideal customers based on market research and real data. They include demographic information, goals, preferences, and purchasing behaviors.



- ***Example of a buyer persona:***
  - ***Name:*** ***Aida***
  - ***Age:*** ***30 years old***
  - ***Occupation:*** ***surgeon***
  - ***Objectives:*** ***Increasing brand awareness***
  - ***Personal interests:*** ***travel, technology***
  - ***Preferred communication channels:*** ***social media, e-mail***

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4. Setting SMART goals

- **S**pecific – clearly defined and focused
- **M**easurable – quantifiable and trackable
- **A**ttainable - realistic and achievable
- **R**elevant – aligned with business objectives
- **T**ime – with deadlines

- *Examples:*
  - Increasing website traffic by 25% within six months.
  - Achieving a 5% conversion rate in email marketing campaigns by the end of the month.

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5. Digital marketing tactics

- There are various digital marketing channels and tactics available to companies. **Choosing tactics that align with business objectives and the characteristics of the target audience is crucial.** Moreover, it is important to adopt an integrated marketing approach that uses multiple tactics for the greatest impact.

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6. Budget allocation

- **Budgeting and resource allocation** are crucial for the efficient distribution of resources and maximizing return on investment (ROI).

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7. Creating an action plan

- **Key elements of an action plan** include:
  - **setting objectives**
  - **defining tasks**
  - **assigning responsibilities**
  - **establishing deadlines**
- Establishing **realistic milestones** is essential for guiding implementation and monitoring progress effectively. Additionally, assigning tasks and responsibilities according to team members' skills, expertise, and availability ensures optimal resource utilization and project efficiency.

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8. Measuring and monitoring activities

- Monitoring campaign performance is essential for **evaluating effectiveness, identifying areas for improvement, and making data-driven decisions.**
- The most common used measurement tools are Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, etc.

- *Example of KPIs:*
  - *website traffic*
  - *conversion rates*
  - *click-through rates*
  - *Return on ad spend (ROAS).*

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9. Optimizing activities

- **Continuous optimization** involves testing, analyzing results, and making adjustments to improve campaign performance over time. **A/B testing** allows marketers to compare different versions of a campaign element to determine which performs better and optimize accordingly.
- **Agility and responsiveness to market changes**, consumer behavior, and industry trends are key to maintaining campaign effectiveness.

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10. Data evaluation and analysis

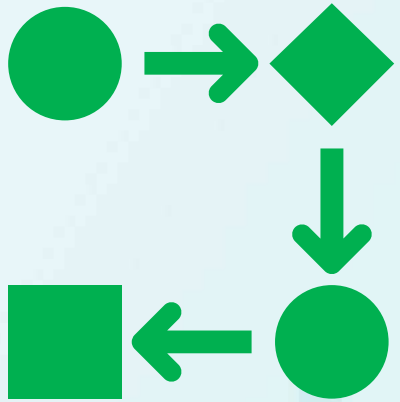
- **Evaluation** plays a critical role in assessing the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and shaping future strategies.
- Through **data analysis**, marketers can uncover valuable insights, trends, and patterns that inform strategic decisions.
- To ensure effective communication and support strategic planning, these findings should be compiled into **comprehensive reports** that include clear visuals, key performance metrics, in-depth analyses, and actionable recommendations for stakeholders.



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Exercise: Develop a digital strategy for a small retail shoe store launching a new product line

- Define your ideal customers: demographics, interests, behavior
- Create a dedicated landing page for the new product line
- Ensure mobile optimization of the web page
- Create a social media campaign (organic + paid)
- Create an email marketing campaign
- Create a partnership with local micro-influencers



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Glossary of terms (1/3)

Term	Definition
Digital marketing	The marketing of products or services using digital technologies, primarily on the internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium.
Social media advertising	A form of digital marketing that involves paid promotions on social media platforms to reach specific audiences.
Search Engine Optimization	The process of improving a website to increase its visibility on search engines (e.g., Google, Microsoft Bing, Yahoo, etc.) whenever people search for: products, services, or information
Social Media Marketing	The process of using social networks to build a company's brand, increase sales, and generate website traffic.
Content marketing	A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience

Glossary of terms (2/3)

Term	Definition
Affiliate marketing	An advertising model in which a company compensates third parties for generating traffic or directing users to the company's products and services.
Native advertising	A form of paid advertising where ads match the look, feel, and function of the media format in which they appear. They blend "natively" and seamlessly into the webpage.
Marketing automation	A type of software that allows companies to effectively target customers with automated marketing messages across channels, including email, websites, social media, and text messages to generate leads.
Email marketing	A strategic approach to inform subscribers about new products, discounts, and services, while also nurturing customer relationships through educational content that highlights brand value and maintains engagement between purchases.
Pay-per-click	A form of advertising where ads are displayed on a website or search engine, and payment is made for advertising based on the number of users who click on that link.

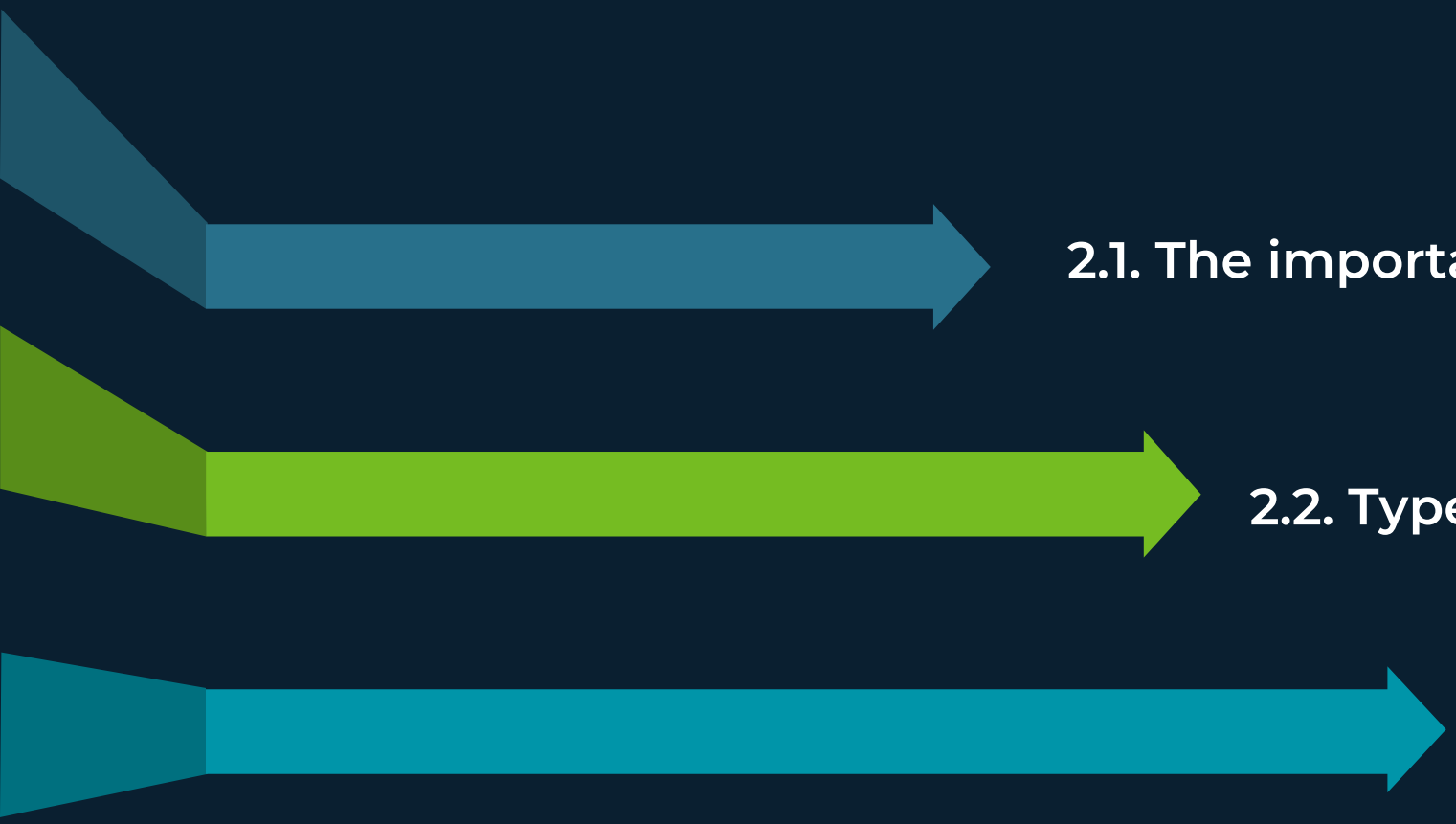
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Glossary of key terms (3/3)

Term	Definition
Inbound marketing	A method that helps attract customers by creating valuable content and experiences that resonate with the audience
Online Public Relations	The activity of public relations communicators through available online communication channels and communication tools.
Digital marketing strategy	A comprehensive plan that outlines how an organization will use digital channels to achieve its marketing objectives.
Buyer persona	A fictional representation of ideal customer based on market research and real data.
Continuous optimization	It involves testing, analyzing results, and making adjustments to improve campaign performance over time

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2. Key elements of a website



2.1. The importance of websites

2.2. Types of websites

2.3. How to create a marketing-oriented website?

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2.1. The importance of websites

- **Websites are** collections of web pages that contain various types of content accessible via the Internet. They are **essential in today's digital landscape.** They serve multiple roles, among which we highlight the following (Arasu, 2023):
  - communication,
  - information dissemination,
  - business promotion,
  - establishing an online presence.
- Having a website can bring benefits to individuals, companies, organizations, and causes.
- *Examples of popular websites:* Google, Facebook, Wikipedia



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GOOGLE

- **Google** is primarily known as a search engine but offers a wide range of services beyond search, including Gmail (email), Google Maps (navigation), Google Drive (cloud storage), Google Docs (document creation), YouTube (video sharing), and Google Photos (photo storage and sharing).
- The Google search engine helps users quickly and efficiently find information on almost any topic. Gmail provides email communication tools, Google Maps offers navigation and location services, Google Drive enables file storage and collaboration, and YouTube is a platform for entertainment, education, and video sharing (Merril, 2024).



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FACEBOOK

- **Facebook** is a social networking platform that connects people from all over the world. It allows users to create personal profiles, share updates, photos, and videos, communicate with friends and family through messages and comments, join groups based on interests or affiliations, and follow pages of companies, organizations, and public figures.
- Facebook serves as a communication hub where users can stay connected with friends and family, share important life events, discover and interact with content tailored to their interests, participate in discussions and communities, and even conduct business through Facebook pages and Marketplace (Kontentino, 2024).



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WIKIPEDIA

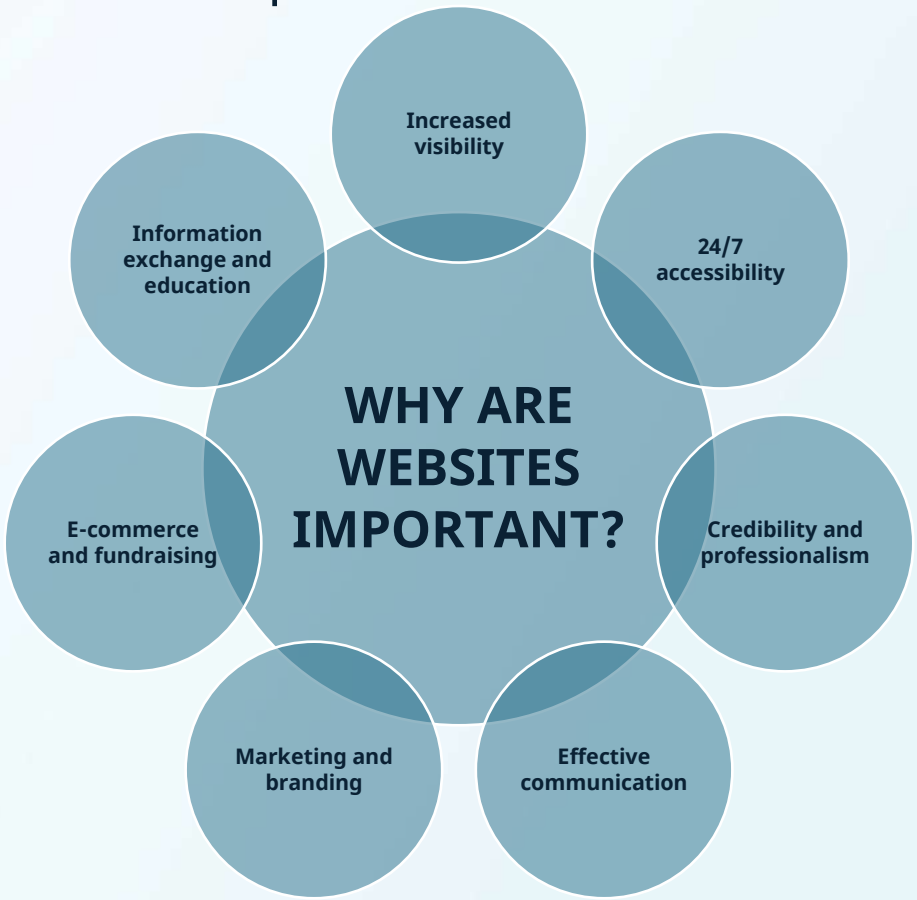
- **Wikipedia** is a free online encyclopedia that covers a wide range of topics in multiple languages. It contains articles written by volunteers from around the world, covering subjects ranging from history, science, and literature to pop culture, technology, and current events.
- Wikipedia serves as a valuable source of information for users seeking knowledge on a wide variety of topics. It offers comprehensive and well-researched articles that provide basic information, summaries, and references on various subjects. Users can also contribute to Wikipedia by editing and improving articles, making it a dynamic and evolving resource (Selwyn & Gorard, 2016).



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Why are websites important?

- The key reasons why websites are important are outlined below:



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- **Increased visibility:** A website provides a platform for individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to showcase their products, services, missions, and initiatives to a global audience. It allows them to reach potential customers, supporters, partners, and stakeholders beyond geographical boundaries, thus expanding their visibility.
- **24/7 accessibility:** Unlike physical stores or offices with limited working hours, a website is accessible 24/7, allowing individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to connect with their audience anytime and anywhere. This constant availability enhances convenience for customers, supporters, donors, and other
- **Credibility and professionalism:** A well-designed and professionally maintained website instills trust and credibility in the eyes of visitors. It serves as a digital storefront or virtual headquarters that reflects the professionalism, expertise, and legitimacy of individuals, businesses, organizations, and causes. A website with high-quality content, easy-to-navigate design, and updated information enhances credibility and fosters positive perceptions.
- **Effective communication:** A website serves as a central hub for communication, allowing individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to disseminate information, share updates, and interact with their audience in real-time. Through features such as contact forms, live chat, blogs, and social media integration, they can engage with customers, supporters, donors, and stakeholders, answer questions, and provide valuable resources.

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- **Marketing and branding:** A website is a powerful marketing tool that enables individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to effectively promote their brand, products, services, or messages. They can use various digital marketing strategies, such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, and online advertising, to attract and engage their target audience, drive traffic to their site, and increase conversions.
- **E-commerce and fundraising:** For companies and organizations, a website can serve as an online storefront or fundraising platform, allowing them to sell products, services, or merchandise directly to customers or accept donations and contributions from supporters. With e-commerce functionality, secure payments, and donation processing capabilities, they can generate revenue, raise funds, and support their operations and initiatives.
- **Information exchange and education:** Websites play a vital role in the exchange of information and education, providing individuals, businesses, organizations, and causes with a platform to disseminate knowledge, resources, tutorials, guides, and educational content. They can use their website to publish articles, books, case studies, videos, podcasts, and other valuable content that educates and informs the audience.

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2.1. Types of websites

- In today's digital era, websites come in many forms, each serving different purposes depending on the needs of users and organizations. From informative blogs and news portals to interactive e-commerce platforms and service-oriented business sites, the structure and functionality of a website are tailored to meet specific goals. For instance, a portfolio site highlights an individual’s work and skills, while a nonprofit organization might prioritize raising awareness and encouraging donations. With the rapid evolution of technology and user expectations, websites must not only deliver content effectively but also ensure a seamless user experience across devices. As such, thoughtful design, clear navigation, and strategic content play a crucial role in a website's success.

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- **Informational websites** are designed to provide visitors with information about a specific topic, product, service, or organization. They aim to educate, inform, and answer questions. These typically contain static content, such as text, images, and videos. These can include pages like About Us, Services, Frequently Asked Questions, and Contact.
- *Examples:* news websites, educational resources, company websites, and government portals.

- **E-commerce platforms** facilitate the buying and selling of goods or services over the internet. They allow businesses to reach customers globally, manage transactions, and process payments securely. These features include product listings, shopping carts, checkout processes, and secure payment methods. These may include product categories, search functionalities, customer reviews, and order tracking.
- *Examples:* Amazon, eBay, Shopify, and Etsy

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- **Blogs** are online platforms where individuals or organizations post regular entries (posts) on specific topics of interest. They serve as a means to share opinions, experiences, perspectives, and expertise. They typically present chronological entries displayed in reverse order, with the most recent posts appearing first. These may include categories, tags, archives, and comment sections for reader engagement.
- *Examples:* WordPress, Blogger, Medium, and HubSpot

- **Portfolio websites** showcase the work, projects, skills, and achievements of individuals or creative professionals, such as artists, designers, photographers, writers, and developers. They often feature galleries or portfolios of work, with descriptions, client testimonials, and contact information. These may include sections for resumes, biographies, and previous projects.
- *Examples:* Behance, Dribbble, GitHub Pages, and Adobe Portfolio

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- **Social media platforms** allow users to connect, interact, and share content with friends, family, colleagues, and online communities. They facilitate communication, collaboration, and networking. They offer user profiles, news feeds, connections with friends, messaging, groups, events, and content-sharing functionalities. These may include features such as likes, comments, shares, and privacy settings.
- *Examples:* Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Reddit

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Activity. Does every retail business need a website?

- Consider the following businesses:
  - A local bakery with one physical store.
  - An international fashion retailer.
  - A supermarket chain.
  - A small handmade jewellery business.
  - A furniture retailer offering home delivery.
  - A discount retailer operating mainly through physical stores.
- In group discuss:
  - Why would each business need a website?
  - What should customers be able to do on each website?
  - What could happen if a competitor has a better website?
  - Can a retailer succeed without an e-commerce website?

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Activity. Mobile vs. desktop website audit

- Choose one retailer's website and examine it on a computer and a smartphone, if both devices are available.
- Evaluate:
  - Navigation and menu accessibility
  - Text readability
  - Product image quality
  - Search and filtering
  - Add-to-cart functionality
  - Checkout simplicity
  - Page loading experience
- Rate each item from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent).

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2.3. How to create a marketing-oriented website?

- Creating a marketing-oriented website involves three main steps (Penalver, 2024):
  - 1. Identifying the target audience and conducting market research
  - 2. Setting marketing goals and KPIs
  - 3. Planning the website structure and content strategy
- Knowing the **target audience** is important because content and marketing strategies can be personalized, engagement and conversion rates can be improved, and resources can be allocated more efficiently.
- **Characteristics** of a target audience:
  - **Demographics:** age, gender, income, education, occupation, etc.
  - **Psychographics:** interests, values, lifestyle, personality
  - **Behaviour:** purchasing habits, brand loyalty, online behaviour



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- There are three main methods of market research:
  - **Primary data research** (surveys, interviews, focus groups)
  - **Secondary data research** (industry reports, competitor analysis, online resources)
  - **Using online tools** (Google Trends, social media analysis, keyword search tools)
- **Market research data analysis** means:
  - Analyzing survey results and feedback
  - Identifying trends and patterns
  - Drawing actionable insights for the marketing strategy

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- **Applying market research to the website strategy** (adapting the website to the audience):
  - Content strategy: topics, tone, format
  - Design and user experience (UX) considerations: appearance, color schemes, navigation
  - Marketing channels: social media platforms, email marketing, paid advertising
- **The importance of marketing objectives and KPIs:**
  - Provide direction and focus for marketing efforts
  - Allow measurement of progress
  - Facilitate data-driven decision-making

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- **Setting SMART objectives:**
  - **S**pecific – clearly defined and focused
  - **M**easurable – quantifiable and trackable
  - **A**ttainable - realistic and achievable
  - **R**elevant – aligned with business objectives
  - **T**ime – with deadlines
- **Common KPIs for websites:**
  - **Traffic metrics:** page views, unique visitors, bounce rate
  - **Engagement values:** average session duration, pages per session, social shares
  - **Conversion values:** conversion rate, number of leads, sales revenue
  - **SEO metrics:** keyword ranking, organic search traffic, quantity and quality of backlinks
  - **Email marketing metrics:** open rate, click-through rate, conversion rate

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- **Aligning KPIs with marketing objectives:**
  - Matching KPIs with specific marketing goals
  - Prioritizing KPIs based on business objectives
  - Using KPIs to monitor and adjust strategies
- **Tools and techniques for tracking KPIs include:**
  - Google Analytics,
  - Social media analysis,
  - SEO tools,
  - Email-marketing platforms
- **Using KPIs to drive continuous improvement:**
  - Periodic review of KPI performance
  - Identifying trends and areas for improvement
  - Making data-driven adjustments to marketing strategies

WEBSITE STRUCTURE

- The structure of the website and content strategy matter because they enhance user experience (UX) and navigation, improve search engine optimization (SEO), and ensure that the content aligns with marketing objectives and audience needs.
- A **website structure** refers to how the content and pages of a website are organized and interconnected. It involves the hierarchical arrangement of web pages and their relationships. This structure helps visitors and search engines navigate and understand the website's content effectively (Studio, 2024).
- **Website structure** plays a crucial role in user experience and navigation, and several common formats have become standard in web design.

HIERARCHICAL

SEQUENTIAL

MATRIX

DATABASE

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- The **hierarchical website structure** is the most common website structure. It is based on a parent page (homepage) with secondary pages (categories and subcategories) branching out from it.



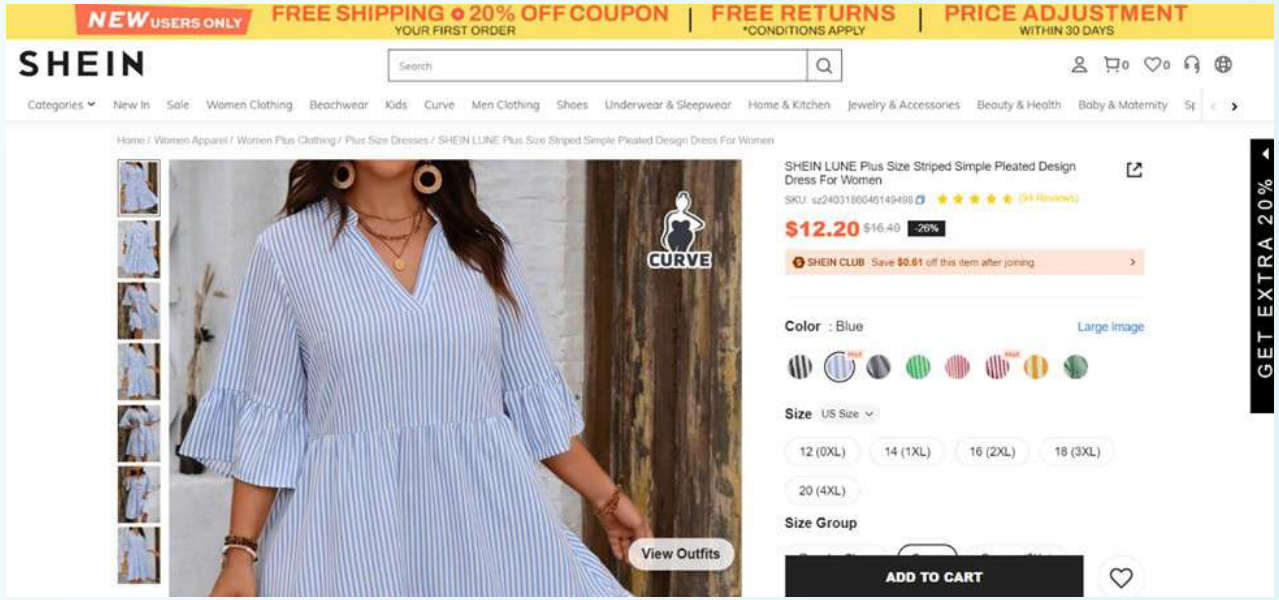
www.unibuc.ro

- A **sequential website structure** is a design approach that guides users through a series of steps or a specific sequence of content to achieve the desired outcome or experience. This structure is particularly effective for storytelling, illustrating a process, or leading users through a logically progressing journey. It ensures a focused and linear flow of information, making it easier for users to understand and interact with the content.



www.vola.ro

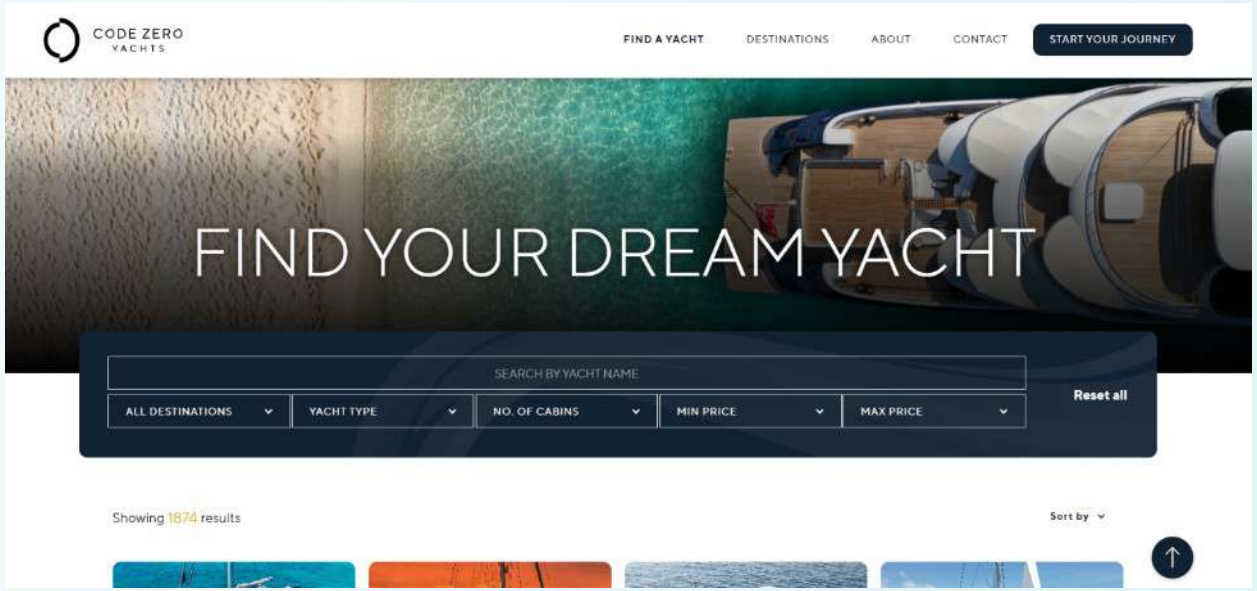
- Although the **matrix structure** is one of the oldest website models, it remains relevant due to its flexibility. This model allows visitors to navigate freely without strict categories, offering multiple access points to the site's content. While it might seem chaotic, it prioritizes user experience through robust interconnectivity, comprehensive menus, and advanced search functions. Categories and pages exist but are not sequentially organized for users. This freedom enhances the browsing experience, making it suitable for diverse content platforms.



www.us.shein.com

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- **Database-driven website structures** create dynamic, personalized experiences by utilizing visitor-provided information such as personal details or preferences. This allows the site to pull relevant content from its database, such as customized details or product pages. To implement this, websites require software that can handle internal or integrate with external databases, and interfaces must be designed to display dynamic, personalized information. This structure enhances the user experience through tailored content.



www.codezeroyachts.com

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- Effective website development begins with careful planning of its structure and content strategy, ensuring that both user experience and business goals are aligned.
- There are some **steps for creating a sitemap:**
  - Identifying main pages (homepage, about, services, contact, blog)
  - Organizing subpages and categories
  - Ensuring logical and intuitive navigation

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DEVELOPING A CONTENT STRATEGY

- **Elements of a content strategy:**
  - Content goals and objectives
  - Audience analysis and content needs
  - Types and formats of content (articles, videos, infographics, podcasts)
  - Content calendar and publishing schedule
- **Aligning content with the user journey:**
  - Understanding the stages of the user journey (awareness, consideration, decision)
  - Creating content for each stage

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- Effective web writing relies on three core principles: **clarity** to ensure comprehension, **conciseness** to maintain attention, and **scannability** to enhance user navigation.
- **Clarity** of a website involves the following things:
  - **Use Simple Language:** Write in a clear, simple, and easy-to-understand manner for your target audience. Avoid jargon or complex terminology unless absolutely necessary.
  - **Organize Information:** Structure your content logically, with clear headings and subheadings. Use bullet points and numbered lists to break down information into digestible chunks.
  - **Avoid Ambiguity:** Be precise in your wording to prevent misunderstandings. Clearly state the main points and avoid vague or ambiguous language.
  - **Provide Context:** Ensure every piece of information is presented within its appropriate context. Use examples or explanations to



- **Conciseness** of a website involves the following things:
  - **Use Simple Language:** Write in a clear, simple, and easy-to-understand manner for your target audience. Avoid jargon or complex terminology unless absolutely necessary.
  - **Organize Information:** Structure your content logically, with clear headings and subheadings. Use bullet points and numbered lists to break down information into digestible chunks.
  - **Avoid Ambiguity:** Be precise in your wording to prevent misunderstandings. Clearly state the main points and avoid vague or ambiguous language.
  - **Provide Context:** Ensure every piece of information is presented within its appropriate context. Use examples or explanations to clarify complex ideas.



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the European Union

- **Scannability** of a website involves:
  - **Use Descriptive Headings:** Ensure headings and subheadings accurately summarize the content that follows. This helps readers quickly find the information they need.
  - **Highlight Keywords:** Use bold or italic text to emphasize key words and phrases. This makes it easier for readers to scan and grasp the main points.
  - **Short Paragraphs and Sentences:** Break the text into short paragraphs and use concise sentences. This improves readability on screens and encourages users to keep reading.
  - **Bullets and Lists:** Present information in a structured format using bullet points or numbered lists. Lists are easier to scan than blocks of text.



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- Careful planning of a website's structure and content strategy is essential to ensure a seamless user experience, clear information flow, and alignment with the website’s overall goals.
- **In practice, planning and managing website content is facilitated by tools such as:**
  - **Popular CMS platforms:** WordPress, Joomla, Drupal
  - **Editorial calendar tools:** Trello, Asana, Google Calendar
  - **SEO tools for content planning:** Ahrefs, SEMrush, Yoast
- **Once the content is created and published, it is important to measure its performance to evaluate its effectiveness and guide future improvements.**
  - **There are some key metrics to monitor:** Traffic, engagement, conversion, shares
  - **Using analytics tools:** Google Analytics, social media insights
  - Adjusting content strategy based on performance data

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Retail websites

- Should emphasize:
  - clear product categories,
  - intuitive filtering,
  - seasonal landing pages,
  - prominent call-to-action buttons like 'Add to Cart' or 'Reserve in Store'.
  - integration with inventory systems
  - integration with customer reviews.



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Activity. Build a website wireframe

- A new online store selling sustainable home products wants to launch its first website.
- Design a homepage wireframe that includes:
  - Logo and navigation menu
  - Search bar
  - Main promotional banner
  - Clear headline and call to action
  - Featured product categories
  - Best-selling products
  - Trust signals, such as delivery and returns information
  - Customer reviews or sustainability information.
  - Newsletter sign-up
  - Footer with contact and policy links

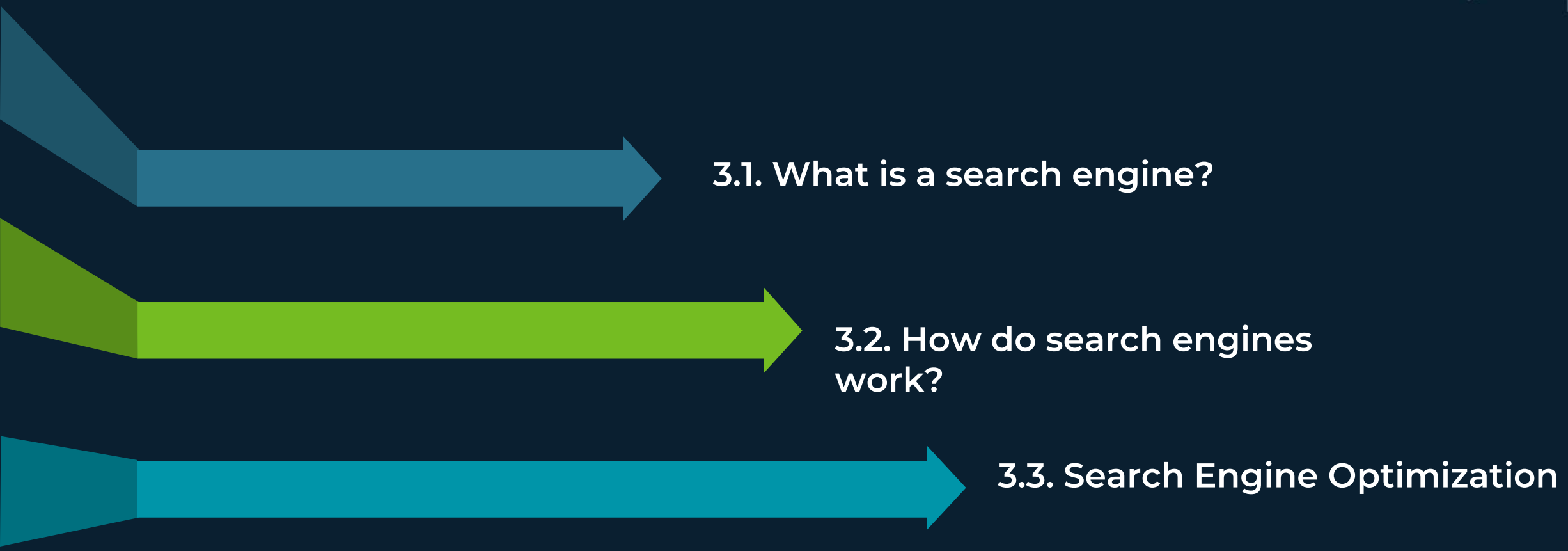
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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Website	A collection of web pages that contain various types of content accessible via the Internet.
Blog	An online platform where individuals or organizations post regular entries (posts) on specific topics of interest.
Portfolio websites	Showcase the work, projects, skills, and achievements of individuals or creative professionals, such as artists, designers, photographers, writers, and developers.
Social media platforms	It allow users to connect, interact, and share content with friends, family, colleagues, and online communities.
Website structure	It refers to how the content and pages of a website are organized and interconnected.

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3. Search Engine Fundamentals



3.1. What is a search engine?

3.2. How do search engines work?

3.3. Search Engine Optimization

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3.1. What is a search engine?

- A search engine can be defined as **a software system designed to perform web searches**, allowing users to find information on the internet.
- **The importance of search engines:**
  - Search engines are essential tools for finding information, navigating the web, and quickly accessing a vast range of content.
  - They play a significant role in the digital landscape, influencing how information is consumed.
- ***Examples of search engines:***
  - **Google** is the most widely used search engine, known for its comprehensive indexing and advanced algorithms.
  - **Bing:** Microsoft's search engine, offering important features such as image search.
  - **Yahoo:** One of the older search engines, still used by many for its portal and search capabilities.



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The history of search engines

- **The history of search engines** is a fascinating journey that traces the evolution of how we access and organize information on the internet. Below are the most significant milestones:
  - **1990:** *Archie*, the first search engine, is created to index FTP (File Transfer Protocol) sites.
  - **1993:** *Gopher*, an early text-based search protocol, is developed.
  - **1994:** *WebCrawler* is launched, the first search engine to index full text.
  - **1998:** *Google* is founded, introducing PageRank and revolutionizing search with algorithm-based ranking.

- Search engines have **evolved from simple keyword matching to sophisticated algorithms considering hundreds of factors**. Then, **AI and machine learning were integrated to improve search accuracy and personalization**.
- Today, they are developing features such as **voice search, image search, and real-time updates**.

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3.2. How do search engines work

- **Web crawling** is the process by which search engines use bots/spiders to visit web pages and collect information. Crawlers follow links from one page to another, gathering data and storing it in a database.
- ***Example of a crawler:*** *Googlebot:* Google's web crawler that indexes billions of pages.

- **Indexing** is the process of organizing and storing the collected data in a way that facilitates retrieval. The search engine processes the data gathered by crawlers, extracting relevant keywords, metadata, and other information. The data is then stored in an index, a massive database of web content.
- ***Example of an index:*** *Google's index* contains hundreds of billions of web pages, organized for quick retrieval.

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Search algorithms and ranking factors

- **Search algorithms** are complex formulas that determine which pages appear in search results and in what order.
- **Ranking factors:**
  - **Relevance:** how well the content matches the search query.
  - **Authority:** the credibility of the source, often determined by the number of quality backlinks.
  - **User Engagement:** click-through rates, bounce rates, and time spent on the page.
- ***Examples of ranking factors:***
  - ***Google PageRank:*** evaluates the importance of web pages based on the quantity and quality of links.
  - ***Algorithm updates:*** *Google Panda* (focuses on content quality), *Google Penguin* (penalizes link manipulation).

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3.3. Search Engine Optimization

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the practice of optimizing web content to improve its visibility and ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs).
- **Importance of SEO:**
  - Higher visibility in search results leads to increased organic traffic.
  - Essential for businesses to attract and retain customers.



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On-page and off-page SEO factors

- To understand how websites achieve higher visibility in search engine results, it's essential to explore both on-page and off-page SEO factors.
  - **On-page SEO factors:**
    - **Content quality:** high-quality, relevant, and engaging content.
    - **Keywords:**
    - In-depth keyword research to find the terms the audience is searching for.
    - Strategic placement of keywords in titles, headers, and text.
    - **Meta tags:**
    - **Title tags:** a concise and descriptive title for each page.
    - **Meta descriptions:** a brief summary of the page’s content that appears in search results.
  - **Off-page SEO factors:**
    - **Backlinks:**
      - Links from reputable websites pointing to your content.
      - Both quality and quantity matter; spammy links should be avoided.
    - **Social signals:**
      - Activity and sharing on social media can indirectly influence social rankings.
      - Engaging content that is widely shared can attract more visitors and backlinks.

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Effective SEO strategies

- Implementing effective SEO strategies requires a solid understanding of best practices that help improve website ranking and visibility.
- **Efficient SEO strategies:**
  - **Valuable content:** Provide content that answers users' questions and fulfills their needs.
  - **Ethical link building techniques:** Use methods like guest blogging and partnerships to build quality backlinks.
- **Common mistakes:**
  - **Keyword overuse:** Overstuffing content with keywords in an attempt to manipulate rankings.
  - **Poor link quality:** Obtaining backlinks from low-quality or irrelevant sites.
  - **Ignoring user experience:** Having slow-loading pages and non-mobile-friendly designs.



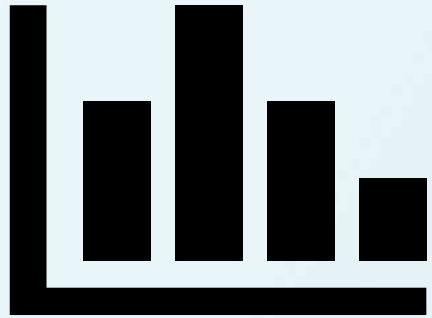
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Google: Search Engine Features and Optimization Tools

- **Among the many search engines available today, Google stands out as the most widely used and influential**, shaping the way people find and interact with information online.
- **Google features and special functionalities:**
- **Unique features**
  - **Knowledge graph:** Display relevant information about a topic directly in the search results.
  - **Featured snippets:** Highlights a portion of a page that directly answers a search query.
- **Functionalities**
  - **Voice search:** Allows users to search using voice commands.
  - **Local search:** Provides results based on the user's geographical location.

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- **Google search operators** are special commands that help refine and narrow down search results for more accurate and efficient information retrieval. Effective search techniques:
  - **site:** Search within a specific site *(e.g., site:wikipedia.org search engine).*
  - **intitle:** Find pages with specific words in the title *(e.g., intitle:SEO tips).*
  - **filetype:** Find specific types of files *(e.g., filetype:SEO guide pdf).*



- **Google Analytics and Search Console:**
- **Introduction to Google tools**
  - **Google Analytics**
    - Tracks and reports website traffic.
      - **Key metrics:** sessions, users, page views, bounce rate.

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Activity. Think like a customer

- Imagine you want to buy a new pair of running shoes.
- Write down five searches you might perform before making a purchase.

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Activity. Search results detective

- Search for retail-related phase, such as “best coffee in town”.
- Identify and record:
  - Sponsored results, where present.
  - Organic website listings.
  - Shopping or product results, where present.
  - Images, videos or local business results, where present.
  - The information displayed in each result.

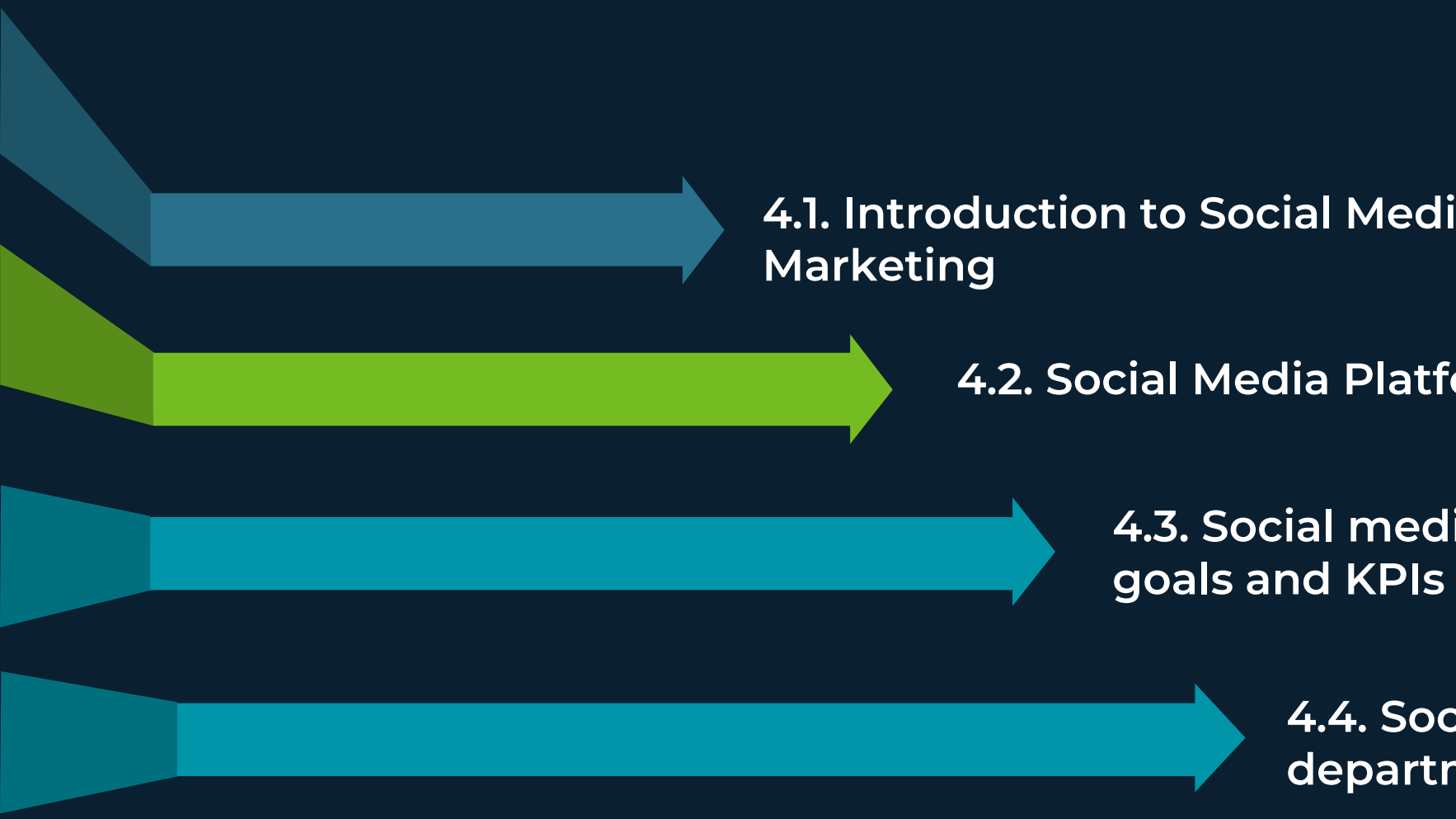
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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
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Search algorithms	Complex formulas that determine which pages appear in search results and in what order.
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	The practice of optimizing web content to improve its visibility and ranking on search engine results pages.
Google search operators	Special commands that help refine and narrow down search results for more accurate and efficient information retrieval.

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4. Social media fundamentals



4.1. Introduction to Social Media Marketing

4.2. Social Media Platforms

4.3. Social media benchmarking: goals and KPIs

4.4. Social Media and company departments

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Introduction to Social Media Marketing

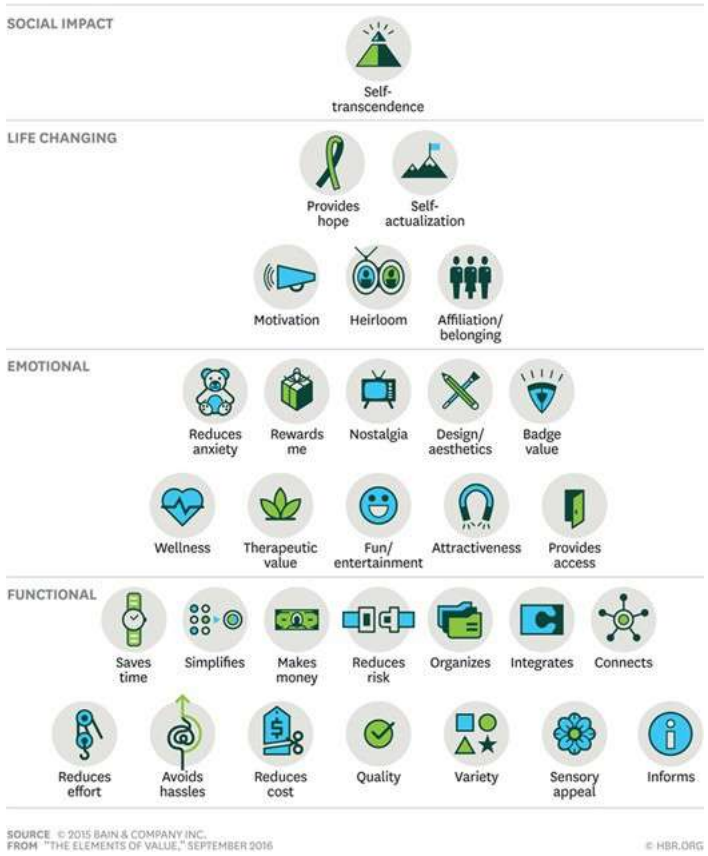
SMM

= A specific company process used to create and promote marketing-related activities in the online environment, using social media platforms to "deliver" VALUE.

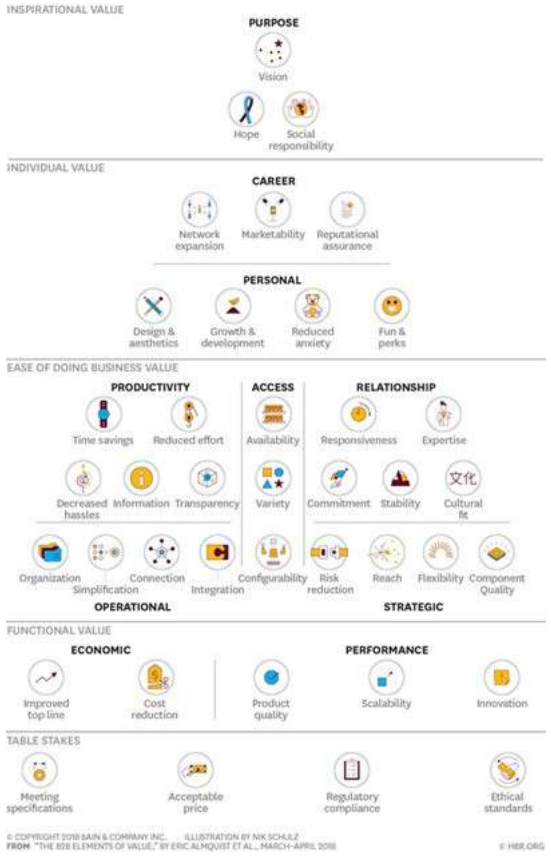
= a process by which a company creates, communicates and delivers offers in the online environment through social media platforms in order to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders; the aim is to increase VALUE for these stakeholders by facilitating interactions, sharing information, (personalized) recommendations, and ultimately promoting direct marketing (“word of mouth”) between them about existing or “trending” products and/or services (or SaaS).

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Introduction to Social Media Marketing



Introduction to Social Media Marketing



Activity. Why should retailers use social media?

- Consider a retail business:
  - The one in which you activate;
  - A supermarket chain;
  - A national electronics shop;
  - A local bakery;
  - Any other example.
- Discuss the following questions:
  - Why would each business use social media?
  - What information would you share with your customers? Why?
  - How could social media help the business attract new customers? How could it loyalize existing ones? How could it help boost sales based on its existing customers?
  - Do you consider any of them having the possibility to benefit more than the others from social media marketing? Why?

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Social Media platforms

Rank	Platform	Monthly active users (MAU)	Launch date	Headquarters
1	Facebook	3 billion	2004	Menlo Park, CA
2	YouTube	2.5 billion	2005	San Bruno, CA
3	Instagram	2 billion	2010	Menlo Park, CA
4	TikTok	1.5 billion	2016	Culver City, CA
5	Snapchat	800 million	2011	Los Angeles, CA
6	X (Twitter)	611 million	2003	Mountain View, CA
7	Pinterest	498 million	2005	San Francisco, CA
8	Reddit	500 million*	2010	San Francisco, CA
9	LinkedIn	<350 million	2006	San Francisco, CA
10	Threads	175 million*	2023	Menlo Park, CA

*Number of monthly active users worldwide, updated April 2024. (Source for Threads: Statista, 2024).

**Unique Monthly Visitors for Reddit.

Source: adapted from (Walsh, 2024)

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Social Media platforms

FACEBOOK

Reasons to use the platform:

- 3 billion users (individual profiles, groups and business pages)
- Easy to understand KPIs: posts, likes, shares, comments, etc.
- The algorithm rewards engagement through the aforementioned indicators – similar to YouTube, Pinterest, etc.
- Excellent for paid or organic promotion
- Easy to use, allows for establishing customer relationships, lead discovery, etc.

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Social Media platforms

FACEBOOK – template (for creating a marketing plan)

Facebook Marketing Plan Worksheet

Source: JM Internet Group - http://www.jm-seo.org/

- **Introduction**. What do they say? Failing to plan is planning to fail. This worksheet helps you begin to brainstorm a step-by-step Facebook marketing plan
- **Facebook Page Concept**. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your Facebook page. What angle can you give it that will be in sync with friends, family, and fun on Facebook? If Facebook is a party, what type of party are you going to throw on Facebook?

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Social Media platforms

- **Target Customers**. Define who needs your product or service. Segment these customers into specific groups, often called mindsets or personas. Who wants what you have? Are they on Facebook? Indicate if so and explain what they are “doing” on Facebook.

Type 1: _____

Type 2: _____

Type 3: _____

□ Yes, our customers are on Facebook. □ No, they are not.

- **Facebook Marketing Value**. Summarize the marketing value, if any, you see in Facebook for your company:

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Social Media platforms

- We see marketing value in Facebook: a lot some neutral not much

- The primary value(s) from Facebook to our company are:

 Interacting with existing customers Social sharing, customers will likely share our content

 Finding new customers eWOM (Electronic Word-Of-Mouth)

 Being discovered via Facebook Customer Continuum, nurturing customer evangelists

 Staying in contact with customers Trust indicators: we need to be on Facebook

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Social Media platforms

- **Post Interactivity**. Why will potential customers “like” your Facebook Page? What will they “get” out of it? And for individual posts, why will they like, comment, and even share your posts?

They will like our Page because:

They will like our Posts because:

Post Concept #1

They will like this type of post, because:

Post Concept #2

They will like this type of post, because:

Post Concept #3

They will like this type of post, because:

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Social Media platforms

- **Facebook Responsibility**. Who will be responsible for Facebook marketing at your company?

 Facebook set up issues:

 Text issues/content:

 Graphical / photo issues:

 Facebook content issues:

 Finding other people's content to share:

 Creating our own content to share:

 Text content:

 Image/photo content:

We plan to post to Facebook: _____ times per day/week/month

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Social Media platforms

- **Other Thoughts and Ideas about Facebook**. Having researched a) whether your potential customers are on Facebook, and b) what competitors are doing on Facebook (and/ or companies to emulate in terms of their marketing, even if not in your industry), what general thoughts, concepts, “big picture” ideas do you have about Facebook?

We see potential in Facebook for our business marketing plans because:

After we’ve set up our Page, we believe we can do the following types of posts and they will help us grow our Facebook community because:

We will measure our success on Facebook by the following metrics:

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Social Media platforms

LINKEDIN

Reasons to use the platform:

- Sponsored content: target audience – professionals (LinkedIn feed)
- Sponsored posts: professional conversations in a professional way
- Dynamic ads: personalized
- Text ads: easy-to-use format already in place

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Social Media platforms

LINKEDIN – template (for creating a marketing plan)

LinkedIn Marketing Plan Worksheet

Source: JM Internet Group - https://www.jm-seo.org/

- **Introduction**. What do they say? Failing to plan is planning to fail. This worksheet helps you begin to brainstorm a step-by-step LinkedIn marketing plan
- **LinkedIn Profile Concept**. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your LinkedIn profile(s). What angle can you give it that will be in synch with the role of usefulness LinkedIn? How are you going to become a “useful expert” on LinkedIn in and on what domain? What employees will need to participate?
- **LinkedIn Page Concept**. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your LinkedIn business page. What angle can you give it that will be in synch with the role of usefulness LinkedIn? How are you going to position your Page as a “useful expert” on LinkedIn in and on what domain?

Social Media platforms

- **Target Customers**. Define who needs your product or service. Segment these customers into specific groups, often called mindsets or personas. Who wants what you have? Are they on LinkedIn? Indicate if so, and explain what are they “doing” on LinkedIn -

Type 1:

Type 2:

Type 3:

 Yes, our customers are on LinkedIn. No, they are not.

- **LinkedIn Marketing Value**. Summarize the marketing value, if any, you see in LinkedIn for your company, at either the profile and/or business Page level

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Social Media platforms

We see marketing value in LinkedIn: a lot some neutral not much

The primary value(s) from LinkedIn to our company are:

 Interacting with existing customers Finding new customers

 Being discovered via LinkedIn Staying in contact with customers

 Social sharing, customers will likely share our content

 eWOM Customer Continuum, nurturing customer evangelists

 Trust indicators: we need to be on LinkedIn to look substantial

We see value in:

 individual profiles, why:

 company page, why:

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Social Media platforms

- **Post Interactivity**. Why will potential customers “connect” with you at a profile level and/or “follow” your company at a Page level? What will they “get” out of it? And for individual updates, posts to Pulse, or posts by the Page, why will they like, comment, and even share your posts?

They will follow our Page/ connect with our profile because:

They will like our updates/ posts because

Post Concept #1

They will like this type of post, because:

Post Concept #2

They will like this type of post, because:

Post Concept #3

They will like this type of post, because:

How is the posting strategy different for individual profiles vs. the company page?

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Social Media platforms

- **LinkedIn Responsibility**. Who will be responsible for LinkedIn marketing at your company? At the profile level? At the businesss Page level?

 LinkedIn set-up issues:

  Text issues/content:

  Graphical / photo issues:

 LinkedIn content issues:

  Finding other people’s content to share:

  Creating our own content to share:

  Text content:

  Image/photo content:

We plan to post to LinkedIn: _____ times per day/week/month

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Social Media platforms

- **LinkedIn Schmoozing and Research**. LinkedIn is a great research tool (find customer prospects) as well as a schmoozing tool (reach out to customers with an ‘excuse’ to contact them, give them something enticing to start a conversation).

We will research the following types of customers on LinkedIn:

We will reach out to them in the following ways:

They will want to interact with our employees (profiles) and/or company (Pages) because:

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Social Media platforms

- **Other Thoughts and Ideas about LinkedIn**. Having researched a) whether your potential customers are on LinkedIn, and b) what competitors are doing on LinkedIn (and/ or companies to emulate in terms of their marketing, even if not in your industry), what general thoughts, concepts, “big picture” ideas do you have about LinkedIn?

We see potential in LinkedIn for our business marketing plans because:

After we’ve set up our profiles and/or Page, we believe we can do the following types of posts, and they will help us grow our LinkedIn community because:

We see the relationship between our LinkedIn profiles (employee level) and the LinkedIn Page (company level), as:

How will the profile(s) help the Page and the Page help the profiles? Will advertising be used?

We will measure our success on LinkedIn by the following metrics:

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Social Media platforms

INSTAGRAM

Reasons to use the platform:

- Stories (ephemeral), Reels (vertical videos), shoppable posts
- Main target audience: people under 35 (approx. 68%)
- Possibility to receive, provide, and analyze comments within photos – long-term relationships + interaction

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Social Media platforms

INSTAGRAM

How to create an Instagram strategy:

- Create/choose a (simple) marketing promise but deliver it through a sophisticated message – photo + video + emotions
- Unique visual narrative – personalized content
- Build a story (visual storytelling): authenticity + sensory (appeal) + archetype + relevance
- Choose a theme (create the roadmap to tell the story – for content, posting frequency, etc.)
- Occasions: the visual story (narrative) can appear at key moments (you can use landscapes, people or other intangible elements)

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Social Media platforms

INSTAGRAM – template (for creating a marketing plan)

Instagram Marketing Plan Worksheet

Source: JM Internet Group - http://www.jm-seo.org/

- Introduction. What do they say? Failing to plan is planning to fail. This worksheet helps you begin to brainstorm a step-by-step Instagram marketing plan
- Instagram Account Concept. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your Instagram business page. What angle can you give it that will be in synch with the photo-centric focus of Instagram? If Instagram is a party, what type of party are you going to throw on Instagram?

Social Media platforms

- Fun vs. Not Fun & Strategy. A fun company in a fun industry (e.g., Airbnb) has an easier time of it on Instagram, vs. a non-fun company in a non-fun industry (e.g., All State Insurance). Which are you, and based on that fact, what's your basic strategy?
- We are a □ fun □ not fun company / product / service in a □ fun □ not fun industry. Accordingly, we will post the following types of photos / videos based on themes that are □ directly relating to our product or service or □ only indirectly relating to our product or service:

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Social Media platforms

- **Target Customers**. Define who needs your product or service. Segment these customers into specific groups, often called mindsets or personas. Who wants what you have? Are they on Instagram? Indicate if so, and explain what are they “doing” on Instagram.

Type 1:

Type 2:

Type 3:

 Yes, our customers are on Instagram. No, they are not.

 “Kinda sorta” (e.g., ONLY in rather non-related ways; after all, everyone is sort of on Instagram)

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Social Media platforms

- **Instagram Marketing Value**. Summarize the marketing value, if any, you see in Instagram for your company:

We see marketing value in Instagram: a lot some neutral not much

The primary value(s) from Instagram to our company are:

 Interacting with existing customers Finding new customers

 Being discovered via Instagram Staying in contact with customers

 Social sharing, customers will likely share (rePost) our content

 eWOM (electronic Word of Mouth) Customer Continuum, nurturing customer evangelists

 Trust indicators: we need to be on Instagram to look substantial

 Using Instagram #hashtags to comment on, and catch the wave of timely topics

 Using Instagram #hashtags to nurture our own customer community

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Social Media platforms

- **Post Interactivity**. Why will potential customers “follow” you on Instagram? What will they “get” out of it? And for individual Posts, why will they like, comment, or even share your Posts?

They will follow us on Instagram because:

They will view / like / comment / share our Posts because

Post Concept #1

They will like this type of Post, because:

Post Concept #2

They will like this type of Post, because:

Post Concept #3

They will like this type of Post, because:

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Social Media platforms

- **Video Content**. Videos can drive high interaction on Instagram; and you need videos to really deploy your Instagram story. What type of content do you see that you can post in video format, and what sort of “stories” can you post to your Instagram story?

Video Concept #1

They will like this type of video, because:

Video Concept #2

They will like this type of video, because:

Instagram Story Concept #1

They will like this type of story, because:

Instagram Story Concept #2

They will like this type of story, because:

You will use Boomerang for video Yes, we love it! No, it’s stupid or irrelevant.

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Social Media platforms

- **Instagram Responsibility**. Who will be responsible for Instagram marketing at your company?

 Instagram set-up issues:

  Photo issues

  Video issues

We plan to post via Instagram: _____ times per day/week/month

- **User Generated Content**. Why will users interact with your content? Even better, how can you motivate your customers to interact with your brand on Instagram, and even possibly upload brand-friendly content?

Users will interact with our Instagram content, liking, commenting, and sharing it, because:

Users will upload their own photos or videos that are friendly to our brand because:

 We will use a brand-friendly hashtag(s):

 We will set up an Instagram content, based on the following concept:

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- **Other Thoughts and Ideas about Instagram**. Having researched a) whether your potential customers are on Instagram, and b) what competitors are doing on Instagram (and/ or companies to emulate in terms of their marketing, even if not in your industry), what general thoughts, concepts, “big picture” ideas do you have about Instagram?

We see potential in Instagram for our business marketing plans because:

After we’ve set up our Instagram account, we believe we can do the following types of Posts and they will help us grow our Instagram community because:

Post Type:

Post Type:

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We will measure our success on Instagram by the following metrics:

- Likes to our Business Account.
- Shares of our posts
- Comments on our posts
- Traffic FROM Instagram TO our website or eCommerce store
- Other metrics:

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Social Media platforms

YOUTUBE

Reasons:

- Many active users
- Long-form + short-form videos (YouTube shorts) similar to TikTok
- Users are 2x more likely to buy something because they saw it on this platform and 4x more likely to use it to learn about a brand, product, or service compared to other platforms
- Good for content (organic as well as paid growth)

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Social Media platforms

YOUTUBE

Strategic approach to paid advertising:

- **Brand awareness ads (brand awareness)**

Bumper ads: cannot be “skipped” – 6 seconds long;

Non-skippable in-stream ads: this ad can be played before, during or at the end of a video;

Masthead ads: shown above the “home feed”.

- **Engagement and consideration ads**

Skippable in-stream ads: can be “skipped” after 5 seconds. this ad can be played before, during or at the end of a video;

YouTube BrandConnect: connects content creators in the UK, Canada and the US with other brands.

- **Ads that encourage people to buy, subscribe or take action (the importance of CTA).**

In-feed video ads: the audience is reached through images displayed whilst they browse YouTube Home and can be shown on Gmail as well;

Video action campaigns: skippable ads that can also run before, during, or at the end of a video.

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Social Media platforms

YOUTUBE – template (for creating a marketing plan)

YouTube Marketing Plan Worksheet

Source: JM Internet Group - http://www.jm-seo.org/

- **Introduction**. What do they say? Failing to plan is planning to fail. This worksheet helps you begin to brainstorm a step-by-step YouTube marketing plan
- **YouTube Account Concept**. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your YouTube account. What is the concept behind your channel, and why will people want to watch, interact with, and even share your videos?
- **Target Customers**. Define who needs your product or service. Segment these customers into specific groups, often called mindsets or personas. Who wants what you have? Are they on YouTube? Indicate if so, and explain what are they “doing” on YouTube .

Type 1: _____

Type 2: _____

 Yes, our customers are on YouTube. No, they are not.

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Social Media platforms

- **YouTube Marketing Value**. Summarize the marketing value, if any, you see in YouTube for your company:

We see marketing value in YouTube: a lot some neutral not much

The primary value(s) from YouTube to our company are:

 Supportive use of video: using video to support our website / social media content. Finding new customers Being discovered via YouTube search Social sharing, customers will likely share our videos Viral marketing Customer Continuum, nurturing customer evangelists Trust indicators: we need to be on YouTube to look substantial

- **Video Interactivity**. Why will potential customers “subscribe to” your YouTube Channel? What will they “get” out of it? And for individual vidoes, why will they like, comment, and even share your videos?

They will subscribe to our Channel because:

They will like / watch our videos because

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Social Media platforms

- **YouTube Responsibility**. Who will be responsible for YouTube marketing at your company?

 YouTube set up issues: _____

  Text issues/content:_____

  Graphical/photo issues_____

 YouTube video production issues:

We plan to create videos for YouTube: _____ times per day/week/month

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Social Media platforms

- **YouTube Promotion**. What mechanisms will promote our YouTube videos?

 Supportive use of video: we will post videos to our website, use for other social media.

 Search / SEO use of video. People will search for our videos, and the following keyword queries are relevant:

 Share / viral use of video. People will share for our videos, and the following emotions are relevant (e.g., humor, shocking, sentimental, outrage, support of a cause, etc.):

Video concepts:

 External promotion (e.g., advertising, Facebook, Twitter, website, email):

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- **Other Thoughts and Ideas about YouTube**. Having researched a) whether your potential customers are on YouTube, and b) what competitors are doing on YouTube (and/ or companies to emulate in terms of their marketing, even if not in your industry), what general thoughts, concepts, “big picture” ideas do you have about YouTube?

We see potential in YouTube for our business marketing plans because:

After we’ve set up our channel and begun to upload videos, we believe we can do the following types of videos, and they will help us grow our YouTube community because:

We will measure our success on YouTube by the following metrics:

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Social Media platforms

TIKTOK

Reasons:

- Algorithm that promotes user-relevant content displayed on the For You Page (FYP)
- Uses short format (that can incorporate specific sounds/music, effects and filters)
- Affiliate marketing works well (/+influencer)
- Videos attract attention + the entire (video) content can be easily scrolled throught
- Humor increases the effectiveness of the message

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Social Media platforms

TIKTOK

Advertising options:

- Biddable Ads: in-feed video ads (they appear in the video stream on the user's platform). Segmentation criteria: age, gender, location, interest, device type
- TopView: reclamă video, pe întreg ecranul, care poate dura până la 60 secunde; full-screen video ad, which can last up to 60 seconds;
- Brand Takeover: ads that start once the app has been opened and are limited to one merchant (marketer) per day;
- Hashtag Challenge: a 6-day ad in which users are encouraged to use a personalized hashtag to participate in the respective challenge. There is also Hashtag Challenge Plus for eCommerce retailers and users can even buy the products specific to the respective challenge;
- Branded Effects: companies can create their own interactive elements, filters, 3D objects to increase brand awareness;
- Shoppable TikTok Videos: videos with URLs that direct traffic to the product page or the merchant's website.

Social Media platforms

TIKTOK – template (for creating a marketing plan)

TikTok Marketing Plan Worksheet

Source: JM Internet Group - http://www.jm-seo.org/

- **Introduction**. What do they say? Failing to plan is planning to fail. This worksheet helps you begin to brainstorm a step-by-step TikTok marketing plan
- **TikTok Account Concept**. Take your Business Value Proposition, and adjust it (if necessary) so that it makes sense for your TikTok business account. What angle can you give it that will be in synch with the video-centric focus of TikTok? If TikTok is a party, what type of party are you going to throw on TikTok?

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- **Fun vs. Not Fun & Strategy**. A fun company in a fun industry (e.g., Airbnb) has an easier time of it on TikTok, vs. a non-fun company in a non-fun industry (e.g., All State Insurance). Which are you, and based on that fact, what's your basic strategy?

We are a □ fun □ not fun company / product / service in a □ fun □ not fund industry. Accordingly, we will post the following types of videos based on themes that are □ directly relating to our product or service or □ only indirectly relating to our product or service:

- **Target Customers**. Define who needs your product or service. Segment these customers into specific groups, often called mindsets or personas. Who wants what you have? Are they on TikTok? Indicate if so, and explain what are they "doing" on TikTok:

Type 1:

Type 2:

□ Yes, our customers are on TikTok. □ No, they are not.

□ Kinda sorta (e.g., ONLY in rather non-related ways; maybe not yet but in the future on the platform)

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Social Media platforms

- **TikTok Marketing Value**. Summarize the marketing value, if any, you see in TikTok for your company:

We see marketing value in TikTok: a lot some neutral not much

The primary value(s) from TikTok to our company are:

 Interacting with existing customers Finding new customers

 Being discovered via TikTok Staying in contact with customers

 Social sharing, customers will likely share (repost) our content

 eWOM Customer Continuum, nurturing customer evangelists

 Trust indicators: we need to be on TikTok to look substantial

 Using TikTok #hashtags to comment on, and catch the wave of timely topics

 Using TikTok #hashtags to nurture our own customer community

 Using TikTok trending sounds to nurture our own customer community

 Using TikTok trending topics to nurture our own customer community

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Social Media platforms

- **Post Interactivity**. Why will potential customers “follow” you on TikTok? What will they “get” out of it? And for individual Posts, why will they like, comment, or even share your Posts?

They will follow us on TikTok because:

They will view / like / comment / share our Posts because

Video Concept #1

They will like this type of TikTok, because:

Video Concept #2

They will like this type of TikTok, because:

Video Concept #3

They will like this type of TikTok, because:

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Social Media platforms

- Video Content. Video storytelling can drive high interaction on TikTok, and you need videos to really deploy your TikTok story. What type of content do you see that you can post in video format, and what sort of “stories” can you post to your TikTok account? For example, might you use “challenges” or “contests” to encourage video engagement?

Video Concept #1

They will like this type of video, because:

Video Concept #2

They will like this type of video, because:

TikTok Story Concept #1

They will like this type of story, because:

TikTok Story Concept #2

They will like this type of story, because:

You will use Duets for video Yes, we love it! No, it’s stupid or irrelevant.

You will use trending sounds for video Yes, we love it! No, it’s stupid or irrelevant.

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Social Media platforms

- **TikTok Responsibility**. Who will be responsible for TikTok marketing at your company?

 TikTok set up issues:

 Video issues:

We plan to post via TikTok: _____ times per day/week/month

- **User Generated Content**. Why will users interact with your content? Even better, how can you motivate your customers to interact with your brand on TikTok, and even possibly upload brand-friendly content? Pay special attention to challenges and/or contests, but don't forget superfan/influencer engagement via tags and comments:

Users will interact with our TikTok content, liking, commenting, and sharing it, because:

Users will upload their own videos that are friendly to our brand because:

 We will use a brand-friendly hashtag(s):

 We will set up TikTok content based on the following concept:

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Social Media platforms

- **Other Thoughts and Ideas about TikTok**. Having researched a) whether your potential customers are on TikTok, and b) what competitors are doing on TikTok (and/ or companies to emulate in terms of their marketing, even if not in your industry), what general thoughts, concepts, “big picture” ideas do you have about TikTok?

We see potential in TikTok for our business marketing plans because:

After we’ve set up our TikTok account, we believe we can do the following types of videos, and they will help us grow our TikTok community because:

Video Type:

We will measure our success on TikTok by the following metrics:

 Likes to our Business Account.

 Shares of our videos

 Comments on our videos

 Traffic FROM TikTok TO our website or eCommerce store

 Other metrics:

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Activity. Choose the right platform.

- Make the right fit between the list of retailers and the social media platforms that you consider as being most suitable: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest, or X.
  - A furniture retailer sharing interior design tips and tricks;
  - A clothing store targeting Gen Z;
  - An electronics retailer posting product tutorials;
  - A retail company (of your choice) looking to recruit new employees.

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Social Media benchmarking: goals and KPIs

- Marketing ROI = (Sales Growth - Marketing Cost) / Marketing Cost
- Marketing ROI = (Sales Growth - Organic Sales Growth - Marketing Cost) / Marketing Cost
- ROI = (Revenue-Costs) / Costs
- ROI = [(Revenue or gain from investment 2 costs of investment)/(Costs of investment)] and multiplied with 100 for percentage conversion (Van Looy, 2022, p.65)

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Social Media benchmarking: goals and KPIs

KPI	Explanation
Cost per click (CPC)	“The cost of a social media post divided by the number of people who clicked on the link within that post.”
Cost per lead (CPL)	“The cost of your social media activity divided by the number of leads that activity generated.”
Cost per thousand impressions (cost per mille, CPM)	“The cost of your social media activity divided by one-thousandth of the number of impressions that activity generated.”
Cost per view (CPV)	“The cost of your social media activity divided by the number of views that activity generated.”
Earned media value (EMV)	“When measuring the impact from using influencers, metrics such as cost per engagement (CPE) or EMV are often used to measure the value of their activity. EMV is calculated using the formula EMV = impressions × CPM × adjustment variable. The adjustment variable is the action which indicates your goal is met. It therefore could be link clicks, engagement rate, sales or another criterion.”
Impressions	“The total number of times your content has been displayed on a social media feed. This metric includes every instance your content is loaded in a user's feed—whether it's an original post or a share.”

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Social Media benchmarking: goals and KPIs

Video Views	"The number of times users have watched your video content on social media."
Post Reach	"The number of unique users who've seen your social media post."
Follower Count	"The number of users who've chosen to follow your social media profile. This count can include both individuals and brands."
Audience Growth Rate	$\left[\frac{(Ending\ \#\ of\ Followers - Starting\ \#\ of\ Followers)}{Starting\ \#\ of\ Followers}\right] x\ 100$
Reactions	<<Reactions are a basic form of engagement. They typically involve users clicking a "Like," "Love," "Celebrate," or similar button.>>
Comments	"Comments are written responses that users add to your social media content. These responses can be directed at the original post or serve as replies to other comments."
Shares	"Shares occur when users repost your content on their own social media profiles."
Saves	"Saves are when users save your post for viewing later.?

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Social Media benchmarking: goals and KPIs

Average Engagement Rate	$\left[\frac{(Total\ Engagements - Total\ Posts)}{Total\ Followers}\right] x\ 100$
Click-Through Rate	$\left[\frac{Number\ of\ clicks}{Number\ of\ Impressions}\right] x\ 100$
Conversion Rate	$\left[\frac{Conversions}{Total\ clicks}\right] x\ 100$
Sales Revenue	"Sales revenue from social media is the total amount of revenue that can be attributed to your social media marketing efforts."
Review Ratings	"Social media reviews are customers' feedback about your product or service posted on social media platforms. And they're usually accompanied by a rating."
Customer Satisfaction Score	$\left[\frac{CNumber\ of\ Satisfied\ Customers}{Number\ of\ Responses}\right] x\ 100$
Brand Mentions	"Brand mentions are instances when users mention your brand on social media. This can be in the form of a tag or a mention in a post or comment."
Branded and Campaign Hashtags	"Branded hashtags are unique to your company (like a company name or slogan). And campaign hashtags are created for specific marketing campaigns."

Activity. Which social media post is more successful?

- A retailer publishes two Facebook posts (you can also choose a specific activity).

Indicator	Post A	Post B
Likes	250	400
Comments	20	50
Shares	15	60
Reach	5,000	10,000

- Answer the following questions:
  - Which post do you prefer and why?
  - How many reactions did each post have?
  - What are the two most important indicators for you, and why?

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Social Media and company departments

Social media and Public Relations: direct communication with the target audience. PR should provide social media guidelines (what information to send outside the company), create FAQ sections, databases (information about critical issues), and social media monitoring.

Social media and Marketing: brand communication and other elements (marketing channels) + KPI

Social media and IT: information retention, automation, information management systems

Social media and HR: selection of qualified people with relevant skills for social media marketing + formal and informal relationships between employees in social networks

Social media and Procurement: trademarks, licenses, etc.

Social media and Legal: GDPR, competition law / copyright, terms and conditions, etc.

Social media and Sales: existing platforms and converting leads into customers

Social media and R&D: research and development can be oriented towards monitoring social media trends + other relevant information

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Activity. Who should address the problem?

- A hypermarket receives the following customer messages on a social media platform:
  - “The product advertised last week is no longer available in the … store.”
  - “I purchased a damaged product.”
  - “I cannot complete my online order. The website is broken somehow.”
  - “Are you hiring for the new store?”
  - “When will the new collection be available?”
- For each message, you have to:
  - Identify the company department(s) that should be involved.
  - Explain what actions the department(s) should take.
  - Suggest a response to the respective customer.
  - Are such comments/questions helpful? How could they be used, and by which department?

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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Social media marketing	The process through which firms develop, communicate, and deliver different marketing offerings in the online environment by using social media platforms, with the purpose of establishing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and creating value through interactive communication, information exchange, personalized purchasing recommendations, and word-of-mouth about existing and emerging products and services.
Key Performance Indicators	The set of metrics used to evaluate the most critical aspects of a company's performance to help guide its current and future development.
Marketing plan	The structured planning process specific to the field of marketing that is aimed at achieving established marketing objectives. It is closely linked to the development of marketing strategies that align with the company's values and goals.
Target customer	The individual who receives personalized marketing materials regarding specific products or services, based on their previous shopping preferences.

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5. Content marketing basics



5.1. Defining content and digital content marketing

5.2. Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content

5.3. Content marketing campaign

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Defining digital and digital content marketing

Anything displayed online can become a content element – vital in marketing activities: text, video, images, radio, infographics, graphics, etc.

Content marketing

= the practice of using blog posts, podcasts, videos and images to promote a product or service

Digital content marketing

= the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying consumer needs/demand profitably, in the context of digital content

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Characteristics of content marketing

Important and specific features of content marketing:

- **Information recombination**: different types of information can be integrated into the same system/platform
- **Accessibility**: instantly accessible through electronic means / digital channels
- **Interaction (navigation)**: when digital products are used
- **Speed**: content available instantly
- **Almost 0 marginal costs**: the expense derived from incremental transactions / customers is almost non-existent

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Activity. What is content marketing?

- A sports retailer wants to promote running shoes.
- Take into account the following messages:
  - A: “Buy running shoes today! 35% discount!”
  - B: “5 reasons to use running shoes.”
  - C: “Watch our latest tutorial now on how to choose the best running shoes for different surfaces.”
- Answer the following questions:
  - Which message would help customers make a purchasing decision, and why?
  - What content should be used to encourage customers to gain trust in the retailer?
- Identify online examples of text content, images, videos, product information, buying guides, and customer advice that are relevant in your field of activity and explain your choices.

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Blog

- Useful for communicating with stakeholders
- Can be integrated into the site or designed separately (Google upranking - SEO) + diverting traffic
- Regular posts (to get visitors used to it)
- Targets specific customer needs (interests)
- + evergreen content
- Posts to expose product issues/transparency

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Blog platforms

- **WordPress**: a blog can be created very quickly because it is intuitive
- **Ghost**: it is an open-source blog that can also be used for newsletters as well
- **Wix**: blogs and websites
- **Blogger**: also useful for obtaining a domain
- **Tumblr**: people explore microblogs
- **Weebly**: useful in blogging, but also has a free version for e-commerce and useful for other marketing purposes
- **Medium**: many professionals, such as CEOs, writers, and researchers expose their ideas

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

E-book

- The trend of replacing printed books with digital ones
- Can be easily updated
- Can be used for database building (e.g. through landing pages)
- Can have interactive elements, images (with redirect links)
- Can contain complex information that would not necessarily fit in a blog
- Allows the search function
- Contains keywords (to increase organic traffic)
- Can have a relevant title for SEO purposes but also a CTA or something to attract attention

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Interviews with experts

- Advantage for companies because it gives credibility, increases interaction + SEO, interactions for leads, and increases the interest of professionals
- The transcript can be converted into content for other platforms (blog, infographics, snippets, etc.)
- The company can enjoy the notoriety of the expert
- Interviewees can share the content increases traffic + access to the followers of the respective experts
- A network of experts can be established

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Brochures

- Allows the conversion of substantial information into a simplified, accessible, and shareable form
- Attractive names: 5 simple steps for…
- Can contain keywords SEO
- They are cost and time-effective
- Structures information well
- Educates specific consumers
- Can present your own products and services
- Can integrate AR (augmented reality)

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Brochures

Key elements:

- Call to action
- Cover page: to capture attention + attractive title that reveals what information will be displayed + visual elements of the brand
- Content page: redirect links to other sections of the brochure
- Body (the actual content): relevant + well-structured + links to other resources (e.g. for further knowledge)
- Contact form/information
- Call to action

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Newsletter

- Establish long-term relationships with customers
- Can monitor conversion
- Directly address the consumer
- Increases interaction with customers / can be redirected to the website, product page, etc.
- Increases awareness
- Personalized content
- = part of direct marketing
- Can be addressed to a specific target audience based on criteria / fields in the database
- Can increase trust / shows seriousness
- Should be sent regularly
- Uses CTA + interactive components: forms, surveys, etc.
- Metrics: click-through rates (# of clicks / # of emails sent x 100), unsubscribe rates (# of people who unsubscribe / # of emails sent x 100)

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Podcast

- Audio and/or video
- 2019 Survey (94% of listeners participating in the study listen to podcasts while doing other activities) → can lead to “brand engagement”
- Can be integrated into the website or distributed on other platforms such as Google Podcasts, Spotify, iTunes
- Series can be created (for recurrence)
- Can be focused on specific topics of consumer interest

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Public Relations

- Creating and maintaining customer trust and loyalty
- Increases brand visibility
- Wider audience
- Exclusive articles featuring personalities, interviews, blog posts + relations with journalists
- Requires transparency
- Can clarify aspects of negative publicity → can rehabilitate the company's image
- Redirects traffic to the website
- Requires monitoring of online activity: articles, conversations, and almost instant feedback should be provided
- Materials can be similar to storytelling
- Case studies, success stories, updates on company activity (innovations, CSR, etc.) can be presented

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Core questions for creating a PR plan	The meaning
WHAT?	What is the overall goal and purpose/desired outcome?
WHO?	Who is your target audience? Who will be involved in the implementation?
WHY?	Why do we organize it? Is this a one-time launch/event/celebration/anniversary/kick-off/fundraiser? Create messaging for internal and external use and publicity
WHEN?	What are the dates of the event/launch/campaign?
WHERE?	Where will it take place (offline/online)? What social media platforms to use? Where will the event or campaign need to be publicized? What are the targeted media outlets?
HOW?	All logistics that need to be figured out and who is responsible for it.

Source: adapted from Teter, 2025. Strategy shared by Jennifer McGinsley

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Target Audience Use this column to list out which sections of your audience base you want to reach	**Key Message** Use this column to list out the key messages you want to deliver through PR efforts	**Journalists & Channels** Use this column to list out the journalists and the channels to target	**Deadline & Key Dates** Use this column to list out tentative and hard deadlines for each activity
Priority: High	Key message #1 Key message #2 Key message #3	Journalists: People writing about the same industry, your competitors, etc. Channels: Social media, events and conferences, email outreach, etc.	(Tentative deadline) (Hard deadline)
Priority: Medium	Key message #1 Key message #2 Key message #3	Journalists: People writing about an adjacent industry, indirect competitors, etc. Channels: Newsroom, content (blogs, videos, case studies, podcasts), etc.	(Tentative deadline) (Hard deadline)
Priority: Low	Key message #1 Key message #2 Key message #3	Journalists: People writing about different industries. Channels: Interviews, website content (blogs, whitepapers), social media engagement, etc.	(Tentative deadline) (Hard deadline)

Source: adapted from Pradhan, 2024

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Q&A sessions

- Can be used at the end of press conferences, live podcasts, live webinars, forums, etc.
- Very useful in clarifying the audience
- Shows professionalism and transparency + clarifications = helps in the acquisition process
- Platforms such Yahoo! Answers or Quora can be used
- Increases customer trust in the company
- Questions and answers can be converted into marketing content: FAQ sections, infographics, etc.

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Videos / virals / live / feed

- Useful because there is infobesity and the content can be processed more easily
- Live – useful for transparency / behind-the-scenes content
- Direct interaction with customers
- Increase in notoriety
- Questions can be addressed and answered
- Authenticity + credibility

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Vlog

- Video blog
- The message conveyed through vlogs is essential in marketing: what/how is said matters + non-verbal indicators
- They are informative, educational, can influence the purchasing decision

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Website

- The language used matters: technical or adapted to the target audience
- Adapting the format so that it is optimized according to the device (e.g. m-commerce: tablets and phones)
- Other elements of content marketing can be integrated: blog, videos, brochures, infographics, etc.
- Metrics

Unique Website Visitors: a visitor enters the page and interacts with the elements of the website (unique visitors – IP)

Traffic by Source: where the customers come from

Time spent on page: duration

Conversion rate: the completion of a certain action by the user

Bounce rate: the percentage of visitors who leave the site without taking any action

Organic traffic: visitors who come from unpaid sources

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Content marketing platforms. Ways to generate content.

Webinar

- Sharing information via voice, text, slides, etc. They are basically online seminars
- Tend to be topic-specific
- Good for building consumer trust
- Information can be converted into other content marketing elements
- No space constraints; low/almost non-existent costs (the moderator, expert can be paid + costs for various platforms, etc.)
- Platforms: Microsoft GoMeeting, WebEx, GoToMeeting and ReadyTalk

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Activity. Choose the adequate content format.

- Consider these retail situations:
  - 1. A furniture retailer wants to explain how to decorate various rooms.
  - 2. A beauty cosmetics retailer wants to explain how to apply different types of face cosmetics.
  - 3. A supermarket wants to announce its monthly promotions.
  - 4. A bookstore wants to recommend the new books.
  - 5. An electronics retailer wants to show the features of the newly launched laptop.
- For each of the five situations, do the following:
  - Choose the suitable content format(s).
  - Explain your choice(s).
  - Recommend a title for the content.
- Create a blog post, a retail brochure, plan a product video, create a newsletter, and plan a live Q&A session.

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Content marketing campaign

Steps for creating a campaign:

- Establish your target audience and identify their specific need for information
- Create a strategic content plan: aim to disseminate information without becoming an obvious product promotion. Information should be relevant and free
- Determine the format/ channel: webinar, poster, podcast, online courses, infographics. Content can be downloadable.
- Use a magnet title: CTA + relevant + clear
- Organize information – chapters, subchapters
- Redirect traffic to the company page/ landing page (via Google, affiliate marketing, etc.)
- Answer questions
- Follow-up: you can reach out to customers if you get their contact details

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Activity. Plan a basic content marketing campaign.

- Consider a retailing business that serves your interests. Develop a simple content marketing campaign by answering the following questions:
  - Who is the target audience?
  - What is the information that it should contain?
  - What type of content would be suitable?
  - What title would you give it?
  - Where would you publish it?
  - How would the content encourage customers to perform a specific action (name it)?

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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Content marketing	The development and distribution of engaging and/or compelling content in various formats in order to attract new customers and retain existing ones.
Digital content marketing	The management process of digital content used to identify, anticipate, and effectively meet customer needs while ensuring profitability in the context of digital materials distributed across electronic channels.
Stakeholder	Those individuals or groups whose interests are influenced by an organization's activities.
Call-to-Actions (CTAs)	A proactive strategic approach to determine audiences to respond promptly or take immadiate action.

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6. E-mail marketing essentials



6.1. An introduction to e-mail marketing: definition and KPIs

6.2. Email marketing strategy

6.3. Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

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An introduction to e-mail marketing: definition and KPIs

Email marketing is relevant for digital and direct marketing because it involves low costs, high return on investment and results can be measured (there is direct communication).

Allows sending messages directly and instantly + personalized / allows content adaptation

Can convert clients, retain them, or stimulate sales on existing customers

Key performance indicators (KPI):

Click-rate: the number of people who click on the link in the email out of the total emails sent

Click-through rate: how many people clicked on the link, CTA or image divided by the number of people who saw the email

Open rate: the percentage of those who open an email out of the total subscribers

Bounce rate: the number of unsent (undelivered) emails out of the total emails sent

Unsubscribe rate: the percentage of subscribers who opt to unsubscribe (no. of unsubscribes / no. of emails sent)

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An introduction to e-mail marketing: definition and KPIs

E-mail marketing

= a unique form of communication, viewed as both an art and a science, that delivers value to the subscriber's inbox

= a digital marketing channel used to interact with potential or existing customers

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Activity. Evaluate an e-mail campaign.

- Consider the following data:
  - 30,000 e-mails sent within the campaign to different individuals.
  - 20,000 people clicked the link.
  - 100,000 total subscribers.
  - 1,000 unsent e-mails.
  - 500 individuals who unsubscribe.
- Determine the following:
  - Click rate.
  - Open rate.
  - Bounce rate.
  - Unsubscribe rate.

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E-mail marketing strategy

Steps to create an email marketing strategy:

- Setting goals: can be **general** (money generation, notoriety, loyalty, etc.) – aligned with company objectives; **financial** (increasing sales – traffic to website, in stores, participation in events, etc.); **time-specific** (automation, scheduling)
- Creating an efficient and qualitative e-mail list: criteria such as age, gender, residence, income, number of purchases, interests, favorite products, etc. Free or limited providers: Mailchimp, Microsoft Access, HubSpot, Brevo, GetResponse, Campaign Monitor, ConvertKit, MailerLite, etc.
- Creating relevant and valuable content: consumers expect to receive content relevant to their interests. The ultimate goal is to generate conversion. Competitors can be studied for examples of best practices. Call-to-action elements are relevant and can become buttons, text, banners, etc.

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E-mail marketing strategy

Can be used in/for:	CTA examples
Newsletter	Discover how.., Read about.., Learn more, Find out more, Find out how.., Read on to master.., Read the full story, Keep reading, Show me how.., Uncover.., Learn why.., How it works, See more news, Dive in, Get the full recipe, Download your copy, Discover recent trends, Watch now, See what's new, Take me to.., Explore more ideas
Sales	Buy now for.., Shop now, Activate your discount code, Explore new styles, Shop sale, Order now, Order [product name], Get [product name], Add to cart, Shop what's new, Shop new arrivals, Shop new collection, Try it out, Try [product name], Pre-order now - [price], Shop bundle, Get men's/Get women's
Abandoned cart	Keep shopping, Take another look, Use your discount, Return to cart, View my cart, Finish checkout, Continue to checkout, Complete my order, Take me to my order, Resume your order, Seal the deal, Reveal new price, Check out with 15% off, Checkout now, Activate free shipping
Repeat purchase	Buy again, Get some more, Reorder now, Upgrade now, Top up, Restock now
Seasonal	Shop gift guide, Grab offer now, Claim your coupon, Buy 15% off before Dec 25, Explore discounted offers, Get [Product name] 30% off, Get my gift, Shop final sale, Shop the limited editions, Shop holiday deals, Shop holiday sale, Shop express gifts, Shop now and save, Shop gift cards, Start gifting, Redeem your offer, Browse Father's Day offers, Get mom a [Product name], Save $15, Give an e-gift, Get it by Christmas, Apply discount
(Software as a Service) SaaS	Yes, I'm interested, Enroll for free, Sign up for free, Start a free trial, Get ready now, Save 50% on subscription, Join now, Request demo, Book a call, Explore features, See [Product or Feature] in action

E-mail marketing strategy

Types of (persuasive) strategies	Additional information
Offerings	Uses factors that influence the purchase decision: incentives, promotional offers.
Appeal to authority	Persuading the individual through authoritative figures/ experts/ reputable sponsors.
Scarcity	The game between supply and demand that generates the fear of missing out (FOMO).
Snob appeal	For premium products that offer a sense of belonging to an elite group.
Celebrity	Using celebrities for their fame.
Statistical proof	Generates transparency and trust.
Humour	May increase receptivity.
Social appeal	A social norm can cause individuals to align with that mindset. It can be based on recommendations.
Contrasting appeal	Promoting competitive advantages/ differentiators.
Romantic appeal	Incursion into emotions such as desire or passion.

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Activity. Sending the right e-mail to the right customer.

- A sports retailer targets the following types of customers:
  - Customers who regularly buy sports clothing.
  - Customers who are interested in basketball.
  - Customers who are interested in football.
  - Customers who did not buy anything in the past six months.
- For each type of customer, you have to:
  - Choose a strategy type and explain your reason(s).
  - Set the strategy goals.
  - Write a short subject line.
  - Explain what you want to achieve with the e-mail.
  - Suggest a suitable e-mail topic.

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

Steps:

- Identify those ideal customers: segmentation
- Set a clear objective
- Email database: if it doesn’t exist, can it be created/purchased? (e.g. Vistaprint or DirectMail.com)
- Choose the campaign type: sales/promotion, newsletter, transactional, lead generation

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

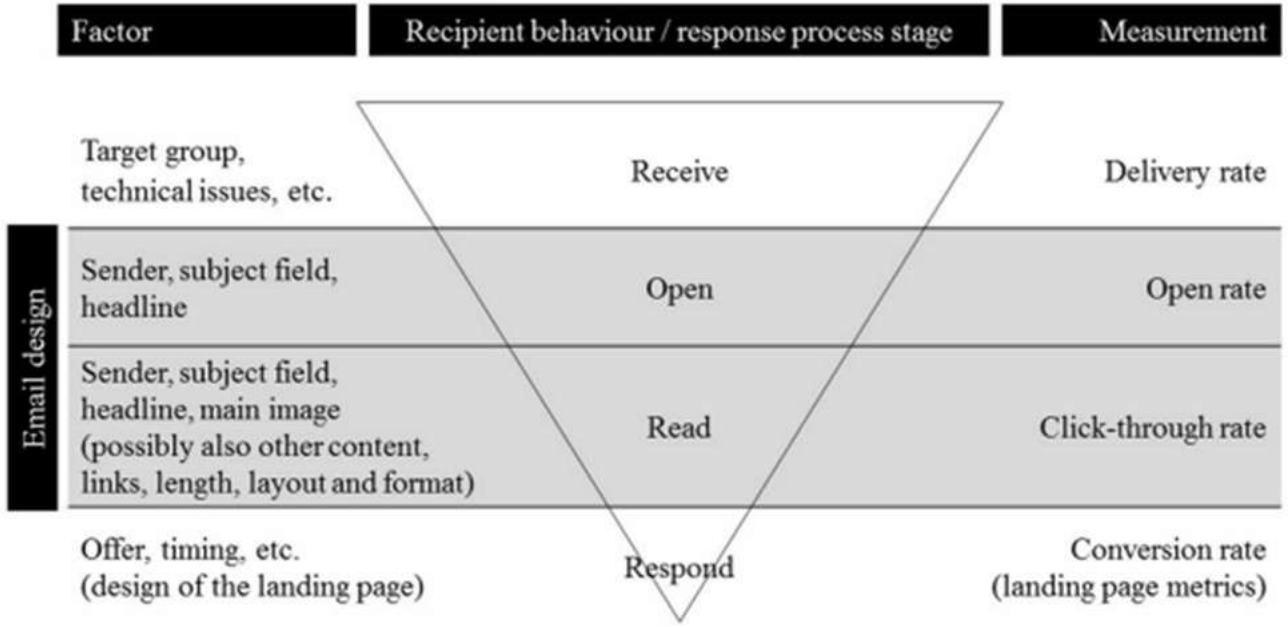
Steps for effective campaigns:

- Establish the topic: make it attractive + CTA
- Maintain clarity: focus on a specific topic
- Choose a CTA that appears with recurrence
- Personalize the email
- Avoid spam
- Use adequate language
- Test the campaign: e.g. A/B testing
- Update the database

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

Template for testing the newsletter design



Source: Hartemo, M., Suomi, R., & Hakala, U. (2016). Towards Improved Performance. Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations, 14(3), 1–16. doi:10.4018/jeco.2016070101

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

Platform	Best For	Pricing for eCommerce	Unique Features	Why choose it?
Brevo	Small to mid-sized businesses	Starter: $9/month; Business: $18/month	Transactional emails, SMS marketing, CRM features	Use Brevo for its strong automation and diverse communication channels
Mailchimp	Versatile all-in-one marketing solution	Free for up to 500 contacts; Paid plans start at $11/month	User-friendly email builder, social media ad tools	Perfect for email marketing newbies with room to grow as you expand, but can cost high
Hubspot	Comprehensive marketing automation	Starter: $20/month; Professional: $890/month	Comprehensive CRM, marketing automation	Best for those integrating marketing with sales processes seamlessly
ActiveCampaign	Advanced automation and segmentation	Starts at $15/month	Behavioral tracking, advanced automation	For those looking for fast and easy automation
Engage 🏆	Personalized customer engagement	Custom pricing	Done for you email marketing	Ideal for businesses wanting to save on time and cost, without sacrificing efficiency
Constant Contact	Small businesses and nonprofits	Lite: $12/month; Standard: $35/month	Event marketing, list segmentation	A straightforward choice for small teams needing a simple solution
Kit	Shopify users	Free for up to 1,000 subscribers; Paid plans start at $29/month	AI-powered marketing, product recommendations	A no-brainer for Shopify users looking to automate their marketing effortlessly
Mailerlite	Small businesses and bloggers	Starts at $10/month	Drag-and-drop editor, basic automation	Affordable and easy to use, perfect for getting started without the fuss
Omnisend	eCommerce businesses	Standard: $16/month; Pro: $59/month	Product recommendations, discount code generators	Automate sales with revenue-focused features

Source: https://www.convertcart.com/blog/ecommerce-email-marketing-platforms

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

Omnisend	eCommerce businesses	Standard: $16/month; Pro: $59/month	Product recommendations, discount code generators	Automate sales with revenue-focused features
Litmus	Email testing and analytics	Basic: $99/month	Email previews, analytics	Ensure your emails shine across devices with comprehensive testing tools.
Mailjet	Transactional and marketing emails	Essential: $17/month	Team collaboration, real-time editing	Built for smaller businesses, it's what you need for beginner email marketing
Mailgun	Developers and technical users	Foundation: $35/month	API integrations, high deliverability	A developer's dream for reliable email sending and strong infrastructure
Drip	eCommerce CRM	Starts at $39/month	Behavior-based automation, personalized workflows	A great but not so cost-effective email automation tool
Email Octopus	Budget-friendly email marketing	Starts at $9/month	High deliverability, simple automation	Cost-effective and simple, ideal for those watching their marketing budget
GetResponse	Automated marketing	Email Marketing: $19/month	Landing pages, webinars	For those in need of a feature-driven email platform (but reliability is in question)
Moosend	(Mostly) Cost-effective email marketing	Starts at $7/month	Automation, landing pages	For mid-sized eComm businesses, who want features without shelling out way too much
SendX	Easy-to-use email marketing	Starts at $7.49/month	Unlimited emails, powerful tagging	Perfect for blasting out 'unilimited' emails without blowing your budget

Source: https://www.convertcart.com/blog/ecommerce-email-marketing-platforms

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Developing an e-mail marketing campaign

AWeber	Small businesses and entrepreneurs	Lite: $12.50/month	Automated sequences, hundreds of templates	AWeber holds your hand as you start out, growing with you as your ambitions soar
Benchmark Email	Small to mid-sized businesses	Starts at $23/month	Drag-and-drop builder, real-time analytics	Great for teams valuing simplicity, but might need more features as you scale
Campaign Monitor	Design-focused email marketing	Lite: $12/month; Essentials: $29/month	Advanced personalization, beautiful templates	Your go-to for visually stunning emails that stand out
Keap	CRM and marketing automation	Starts at $249/month	Payment collection, automation	A powerful CRM-marketing hybrid, but the price tag isn't for beginners
Klaviyo	eCommerce businesses	Only email: $45/month; Email+SMS: $135/month	Segmentation, SMS integration	Your golden ticket for Shopify, just keep an eye on the costs as you grow
Sender	Budget-conscious marketers	Standard: $6/month; Professional: $12/month	High deliverability, pre-designed templates	Cover the basics without breaking the bank, but don't expect fireworks
Campaigner	Advanced email marketing	Starter: $79.95/month	Transactional emails, advanced automation	A playground for eCommerce pros who love tinkering with endless options
SendGrid	Developers and enterprises	Basic: $15/month	API integrations, reliable deliverability	Built for developers who care about infrastructure, not aesthetics
Adobe Campaign	Enterprise-level marketing	Custom pricing	Advanced segmentation, multi-channel management	Enterprises will love it, but small businesses might want to look elsewhere
Selzy	Small to mid-sized businesses	Lite: $7/month; Standard: $15/month	Pre-made workflows, SMS options	A quick-start option that's friendly on the budget and your patience

Convertcart

Source: https://www.convertcart.com/blog/ecommerce-email-marketing-platforms

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Activity. Create a promotional e-mail.

- Choose the business that suits your interests. Choose an existing product line or a new one. Create a promotional e-mail and cover the following:
  - Mention who the target group is and how you can reach out to more individuals within the same category.
  - Create: a subject line, the main image to include, links, the length of the content, layout and format.
  - What call-to-action(s) do you include?

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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
E-mail marketing	A direct marketing approach that involves the use of electronic mail to communicate commercial or fundraising messages to a target audience, primarily to promote products or services.
E-mail marketing strategy	A digital marketing initiative that uses emails to reach out to a group of targeted customers with the purpose of creating and maintaining relationships, promoting products or services, encouraging customer engagement, and increasing conversion rates.

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