

Introduction To Integrated Marketing: BUILDING A HOLISTIC MARKETING STRATEGY



Many B2B marketers invest fortunes in their campaigns. They buy the very best tools and seek out cutting-edge technology. They gather mountains of data about their prospects. They create whole libraries of marketing content.

The real magic, however, happens when an organization ties together all these pieces into a single, finely tuned B2B marketing machine. That's why it's so important to take a holistic approach to your marketing campaigns, ensuring that each component – including email, online events, social media, blogs and more – supports and empowers the others.

Organizations that practice a holistic approach to marketing can reap big benefits: According to Aberdeen Research, 65% of best-in-class B2B marketers integrate their email and social media campaigns, compared to an industry average of just 51%. And combining email with social media is just one integrated marketing tactic among many!

The following guide will explore seven key areas where your company could adopt integrated marketing tactics. By combining email, social media, online events, web content, analytics and more, you can turn these individual components into a world-class marketing machine that's far more than the sum of its parts.

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1. Email

The Challenge:

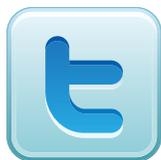
Email is the original “social media” platform. It’s powerful, it’s pervasive, and the email address is the one piece of data you’re almost certain to have about every prospect in your database. At the same time, low click-through rates mean that marketers still struggle with two key questions: How to reach the right audience, and how to create more compelling email content.

The Solution:

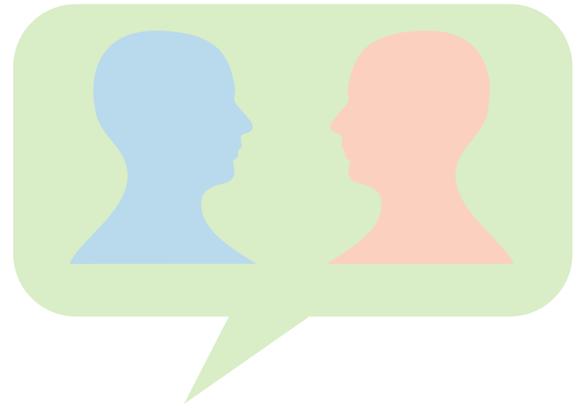
Social sharing options allow your marketing email to reach a vast new audience. According to one study, for example, messages shared on LinkedIn got click-through rates that were 370% higher than email sent without social sharing options, while those shared over Twitter saw their click-through rates climb by 190%.

Pro Tip:

Make it easy for your recipients to share marketing email by including buttons for at least one (and preferably more) social network. Fewer than one in five marketers currently include sharing links in their email today, so there’s a lot of room for improvement here.



2. Social Media



The Challenge:

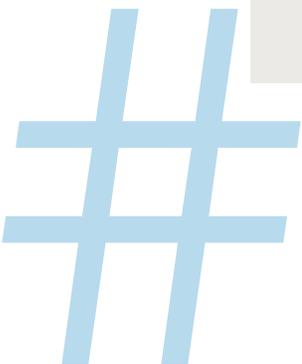
Social media provide a great platform for identifying, engaging with and building relationships with your prospects. At least that's the theory. In practice, however, a 2012 eMarketer study found that just 7% of marketers consider social media marketing a mature and well-optimized part of their mix, and just 11% said that social was a major source of new leads. So how can B2B marketers turn social media from a peripheral player into a key contributor to their marketing campaigns?

The Solution:

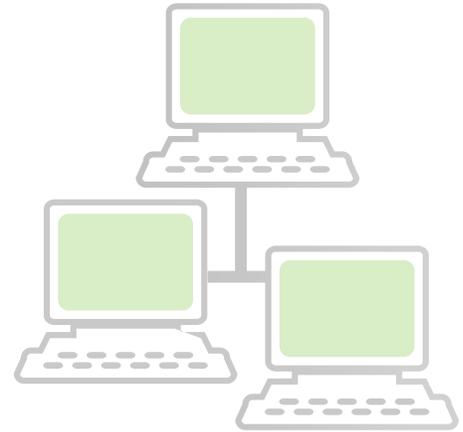
Take advantage of social media's greatest strength: Its ability to amplify and increase the impact of your other marketing programs. This includes adding social sharing buttons to your email (see above), blog posts and other resources, allowing readers to share them quickly and easily. Create hashtags for your live events to build buzz and start online conversations. And when conversations start, use social monitoring tools to track them, participate and build relationships with your followers.

Pro Tip:

Pick choice bits of content – key statistics, quotes from live presentations or photos – for your social media posts. Consider automating some of your social media posts, or parts of them, but always leave some room for spontaneous, off-the-cuff posts.



3. Online Events



The Challenge:

According to Content Marketing Institute research, 70% of B2B marketers say that the webinar is their most effective content marketing resource. Their audiences agree: A Business.com study showed that 67% of business leads seek out webinars for valuable information. But how can marketers ensure that their webinars and webcasts continue to generate buzz – and leads – rather than simply disappearing into a company’s content archive?

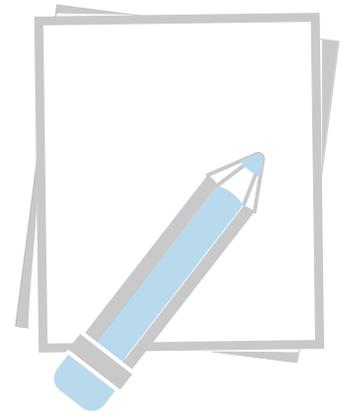
The Solution:

Make your webinars a gift that keeps on giving – a source of rich, useful content that can feed your campaigns for weeks or even months after the fact. Extract the most interesting snippets, and use them to create blog posts or social media posts that link back to the archived event. Also consider building extended content marketing campaigns that start with a white paper or e-book, climax with a live webinar, and continue with blog and social media campaigns.

Pro Tip:

Use an online event management tool that provides detailed analytics on registrations, attendance and participation. This data can provide valuable fodder for future campaigns and follow-up efforts with prospects.

4. Blogs



The Challenge:

Blogs are one of the most commonly used content marketing tools: According to the Content Marketing Institute, 65% of all B2B marketers publish blogs, up from just 51% in 2010. Yet 42% of these marketers question the effectiveness of their blogging efforts. That's not surprising, since many blogs feature a seemingly random collection of posts that aren't coordinated with other elements of a company's marketing campaigns.

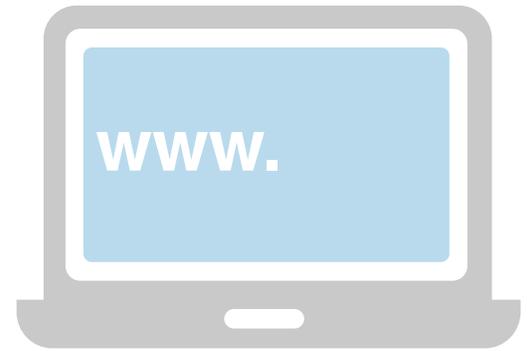
The Solution:

We've already discussed the role that social sharing buttons play with all of your content, including blogs. But blogging really shines as a search engine optimization (SEO) tool for your business. The key is to update your blog regularly (at least once a week – Google loves fresh content!) and to make judicious use of keywords in your blog posts. Also, when a blog post references other content from your integrated campaigns, be sure to include a call to action that moves your potential leads to the next step in the engagement process.

Pro Tip:

Create an editorial calendar to coordinate your blogging with other new content, email marketing campaigns, webinars, product launches and other key events. Too many B2B marketers assume they can keep an eye on their blog schedule without a formal calendar – and most of them are wrong.

5. Landing Pages



The Challenge:

It takes a lot of effort to craft a marketing campaign. You need content, a schedule, social media support, and perhaps a pay-per-click campaign or even a direct mail effort. Yet according to MarketingSherpa research, 44% of the inbound clicks these campaigns generate lead to the company's home page. Not surprisingly, many of those prospects get lost or bored or frustrated – and ultimately go elsewhere.

The Solution:

Sending your prospects to a dedicated landing page can double your conversions; testing and tuning your landing pages can boost conversions even more. That's why every piece of content that includes a call to action – email, blog posts, social media or anything else – should lead your prospects to a landing page that's customized to provide a specific offer or piece of information.

Pro Tip:

Use a tool that creates trackable, unique URLs to tie your landing pages to specific campaigns or content. That way, you'll get the intelligence you need to test, tune and improve your landing pages over time.

6. Web Site Intelligence



The Challenge:

The overwhelming majority of a typical business web site's visitors are anonymous – and they stay that way. Unless they provide additional information, there's no way to know how or why they came to your site. Did they respond to a particular campaign? Are they associated with a specific company? Did they respond to a particular search term? If you can't answer these questions, then you often can't judge the effectiveness of your integrated campaign efforts.

The Solution:

A number of vendors offer solutions that allow marketers to correlate their incoming web site visitors with their marketing campaign activities. One common method involves using unique URLs for email or social media links that set a tracking cookie on the user's Web browser. This allows a marketing automation platform to keep track of where visitors are coming from, and what brought them to the site.

Pro Tip:

Web site intelligence tools aren't the same thing as Web analytics. The former focus more on generating intelligence about individual leads, while the latter generate more generalized traffic reports.

7. Integrated Analytics



The Challenge:

Web site intelligence is an important part of any integrated marketing toolkit, but B2B marketers need more – a lot more. They need tools that measure the performance of every individual marketing channel. They need to know how activity in one channel (say, social media) affects activity in another (such as Webinar registrations or email opens). And they need tools that close the loop on marketing campaigns by showing how many prospects turn into qualified leads and, ultimately, customers.

The Solution:

There are a lot of marketing analytics and reporting tools on the market, and many of them are quite good. The key is to understand your marketing campaigns: the content you intend to use, the channels and platforms you will employ, and the results you want to get. Once you have made those plans, you can work backwards to pick the right analytics solution for your business.

Pro Tip:

Measuring the effectiveness of your campaigns is only half the battle. The other half is experimenting with new approaches and adjusting your campaigns on the fly.

Integrating your marketing efforts gives you a range of tools and tactics that work together to amplify all your results. Integration also lets you meet prospects where they are – wherever they are. And with marketing automation, managing multiple integrated tools becomes easy.



About Act-On Software

Act-On Software provides marketing automation for the Fortune 5,000,000. We give small and mid-sized businesses the ability to do sophisticated, multi-channel marketing, via a simple yet powerful package of integrated capabilities. Our customers increase their revenue, reduce their cost of customer acquisition, and interact with their prospects and customers using online capabilities including email, the web and social media.

Until now, these capacities were available only to large enterprises spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in software and resources; Act-On has changed all that by levelling the playing field. With a relentless focus on customer success and continuous innovation, Act-On today is the fastest-growing marketing automation company in the industry.

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