

Take a more strategic approach

and generate sustainable
success across all your
marketing activities

Strategy.

There's that word again. The one you've likely heard bandied about in thousands of marketing meetings; the word that's almost lost all meaning by this point.

Let's bring it back to what it really means for marketing: carefully planning your activities so your campaigns – and your whole business – see success over the long term.

Whether you're setting your objectives and goals for the year, the quarter, or just for the next campaign, a bit of strategic thinking can help you ensure your marketing activities deliver the right value, in the right way – for longer.

That's not to say you need a comprehensive, holistic marketing strategy in place to get results from a strategic approach. Sometimes it's impossible to do so, especially when you have your department budgets and other business units to work around.

However, even at the individual campaign level, some careful thinking about the longevity of your marketing activities can help you get maximum ROI.

So, if you're tired of not quite hitting the mark, fed up with wasting resources and dreaming of a day when you don't have to start from scratch every quarter, then read on for some valuable tips on how to bring even more strategic thinking to your campaigns.

Why change the way you do marketing?

You might already be getting strong results from your individual marketing campaigns. So, you're probably thinking, "why change what isn't broken?"

If you're in this position, then that's great news. But with even a little bit of extra strategic thinking, you could get so much more.

You could:

Get cross-talk between campaigns

By connecting your marketing campaigns across the entire business, you get valuable cross-talk between them – so your social campaigns help create brand awareness that your events can then build on, and vice versa.

Take a proactive approach

Being a bit more strategic also means you can get proactive with your campaigns, instead of simply reacting when you realise your pipeline is looking too lean for the rest of the quarter.

Adopt new channels and approaches

Strategic marketing also helps you use all new channels. That's because some types of marketing simply can't produce results quickly. So, if you're only thinking about the immediate future, you'll never get the full benefits of a long-term social media or content program.

Avoid duplicate effort

With a connected approach, you can also reuse existing assets to augment current campaigns. For instance, you can break down that successful white paper into a series of blogs or repurpose content from an old webinar to make a new ebook.

Build on cumulative results

A strategic approach also means you aren't starting from scratch each quarter. You continue building on existing ideas, audiences and social influencers to deliver strong cumulative results. For some marketing activities such as influencer engagement, this is essential, as these approaches must be built up over time.

Simply put, spending more time on strategy helps you make the most of your resources, get stronger results and more easily meet your marketing objectives.

Strategy starts with what you know

So, how do you start getting this kind of strategic thinking into your campaigns?

Like with many things, strategy is all about what you know. You'll need to have insights into your industry, your customers, your wider business and its objectives to take a truly strategic approach to marketing.

Know the macro trends in your industry

Big changes in your industry can be a good time to make big changes to your marketing. For instance, if many of your competitors are all building awareness around a new technology or innovation, what can you do to stand out?

This is where a strong social strategy could help you outmanoeuvre the competition. By targeting a more specific audience you can ensure your efforts aren't drowned out by a louder, more prolific competitor's social accounts.

Similarly, if you're aware of a new technology or trend on the horizon, it can be worth pivoting your content to talk about it early and establish your brand as a thought leader.

Know your customers

Great marketing always starts with the customer. To ensure your strategies are successful, you'll need to consider what channels your customers prefer, and how their buying patterns are changing over time.

You need to understand who they are, what their challenges and pain points are, what motivates them, and how they research, scope out and purchase new solutions. And you'll want a solid understanding of how the decision-making group looks: who makes the final decisions, who influences those decision-makers and how the group defines BANT criteria for lead generation activities.

Armed with this knowledge, you'll be in a strong position to assess how you can best reach customers with your marketing activities.

Know your organisation

Whether you head up a single department or the entire marketing function, you'll still have to carefully consider how your activities fit into what the wider organisation is doing – as well as your business' strengths, weaknesses and sales cycle.

For instance, if other regional branches or business units are doing their own marketing, what can you do to piggyback off their success (and help them do the same with your activities)? Likewise, how can you pace your marketing around the sales cycle to follow up and nurture leads at the right time?

It's not just other business units you need to consider. If your organisation relies on channel partners, it's worth thinking about how your marketing can connect with theirs effectively. After all, you don't want anyone accidentally cannibalising each other's market.

Know your wider objectives

Beyond just knowing what your business is doing across different units, you'll also want to be aware of broad objectives set by the board.

As an example, if your business is pivoting to new technologies like AI, you may need to change your marketing approach to help achieve this goal. You may want to target businesses in the technology sector that are more likely to invest in innovative solutions, and find them on industry-specific channels, rather than committing to campaigns on standard channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Strategy isn't just for the long term

You might look at all this and think: “how can I consider long-term marketing strategy when I still have to meet my quarterly targets?”

We'd argue that strategic thinking isn't just for long-term planning – it can also help you get more from individual campaigns.

That's because, even if you're just running a campaign for a single quarter, careful targeting and precise execution can help you get weven better results. And if your campaign does prove successful, some upfront strategic thinking can make it easy to scale out the campaign to different geographies, industries and product areas later.

Almost all individual marketing activities can be approached differently to achieve both short and long-term results:

Events

can be followed-up with targeted social campaigns to engage attendees and further build a community around your brand and event

Content

pieces can be structured into a broader programme that explores specific themes in depth – helping you build awareness and nurture leads through the buying cycle

Social

campaigns can be transformed from discrete posts into a strategy that better targets influencers and rallies an audience around a considered hashtag strategy

Lead Gen

activities can be extended to nurture qualified leads through the buying cycle and convert them into customers

Digital

marketing can incorporate paid media and web content together, helping you reuse assets and distribute them to a wider audience

What do I need to build my strategy?

While this all may sound great, you might be wondering exactly what you need to start planning your marketing more strategically.

In theory, all you need is a good head on your shoulders and oversight of your marketing activities. But beyond that, there are a few documents you'll want to have on hand to make sure your marketing ducks are in a row.



You'll want access to:

- A clear value proposition for your key products and service areas
- Customer profiles and audience personas
- A competitor landscape analysis
- Share of voice reports
- A macro analysis of your industry

Sustainability is key

Strategy is all about the long term – so it's essential that your marketing approach is sustainable.

That means building feedback loops into your marketing as you go. After all, if something simply isn't working, you won't be able to sustain it financially – and you certainly won't be able to sustain your audience's interest.

So, make sure you have the reporting and analytics in place to get hard numbers on your marketing performance. Social listening tools, A/B testing, heatmaps for your blogs; anything that generates data can help you see what works and what doesn't.

Once you know something isn't working, you can tweak it until it does, or wrap up the campaign early to save resources for other marketing activities.

Strategy also extends to your partners

Hopefully, you've already got some ideas of how to bring a more strategic approach to your marketing. But, of course, sometimes the challenge isn't in what to do, but how to find the resources to do it.

For those that are time-stretched, outsourcing marketing strategy to a partner may seem like the best way to take a strategic approach without having to invest internal resources.

While this is true to a point, you'll need to strategically select your partner to ensure you get the results you expect.

For example, you'll likely have a list of preferred suppliers to navigate as you bring a strategy to life. This is especially true for those in larger enterprises. When selecting a partner to help with your strategy, you'll want to be sure that they can play nice with any incumbent suppliers you have to work with.

This becomes crucial when working with full-service marketing agencies. Many full-service agencies have the breadth of skills to help you develop and execute a winning strategy. However, these may be the same types of organisation that want to do it all – and won't want to share the pie with your organisation's preferred suppliers.

The moral of the story is simple: when selecting partners, it pays to think about the long-term implications of working with different marketing agencies.

TBT Marketing: *the strategic partner* for you

We've helped a whole host of industry leaders create, develop and execute effective marketing strategies. More importantly, we've worked with all kinds of partner organisations to help make it happen – and even co-ordinated preferred suppliers to help our clients get the best results.

From expanding individual campaigns, to providing detailed audience and market reports, we've helped organisations like yours get more from their marketing with some additional strategic thinking.

We'd love to help you do the same.

**To learn more about TBT marketing
and how we can help you further
develop your marketing strategy
[get in touch with our strategy
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