




HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR MARKETING

With clear goals and a commitment to measuring progress, you can get the results you want without breaking your budget.




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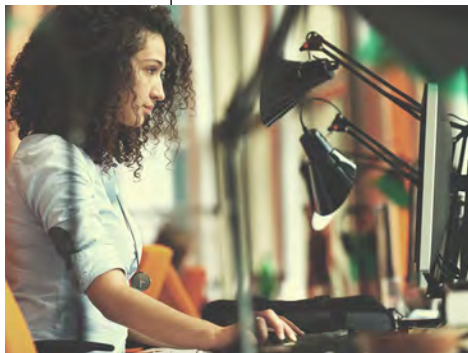
“ A marketing plan that has a long tail, builds a brand, and delivers results over time requires a commitment. It’s about creating customer awareness as a step toward generating interest. Interest drives desire, which then drives action. ”

—JEFF SUTTON, VICE PRESIDENT, AUDIENCE TARGETING,
PROGRAMMATIC & DATA STRATEGIES, ADVANCE LOCAL

INTRODUCTION

In an age when consumers' attention is pulled 100 directions at once, knowing how and where to deploy precious marketing dollars is one of your company's biggest challenges. Amid the din, how can you be sure potential customers will see or hear your messages, let alone respond?

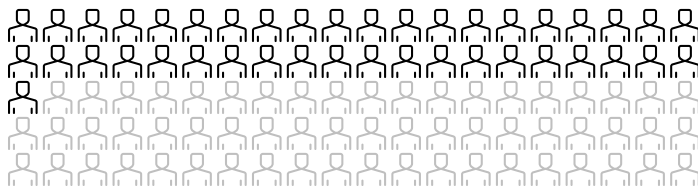
Fortunately, the very technologies that have disrupted and reshaped today's media also offer the opportunity to target and assess the effectiveness of your marketing with greater precision than ever before. That's the essence of an OPTIMIZED marketing strategy.



Section 01

SET (AND TRACK) YOUR GOALS

You wouldn't bake a cake without measuring your ingredients, or set out on a long journey without a GPS to stay on course and check your progress. Don't entrust your precious business to "build it and they'll come." Think carefully about what you want your marketing to achieve, and how you'll follow up to determine whether it's working.

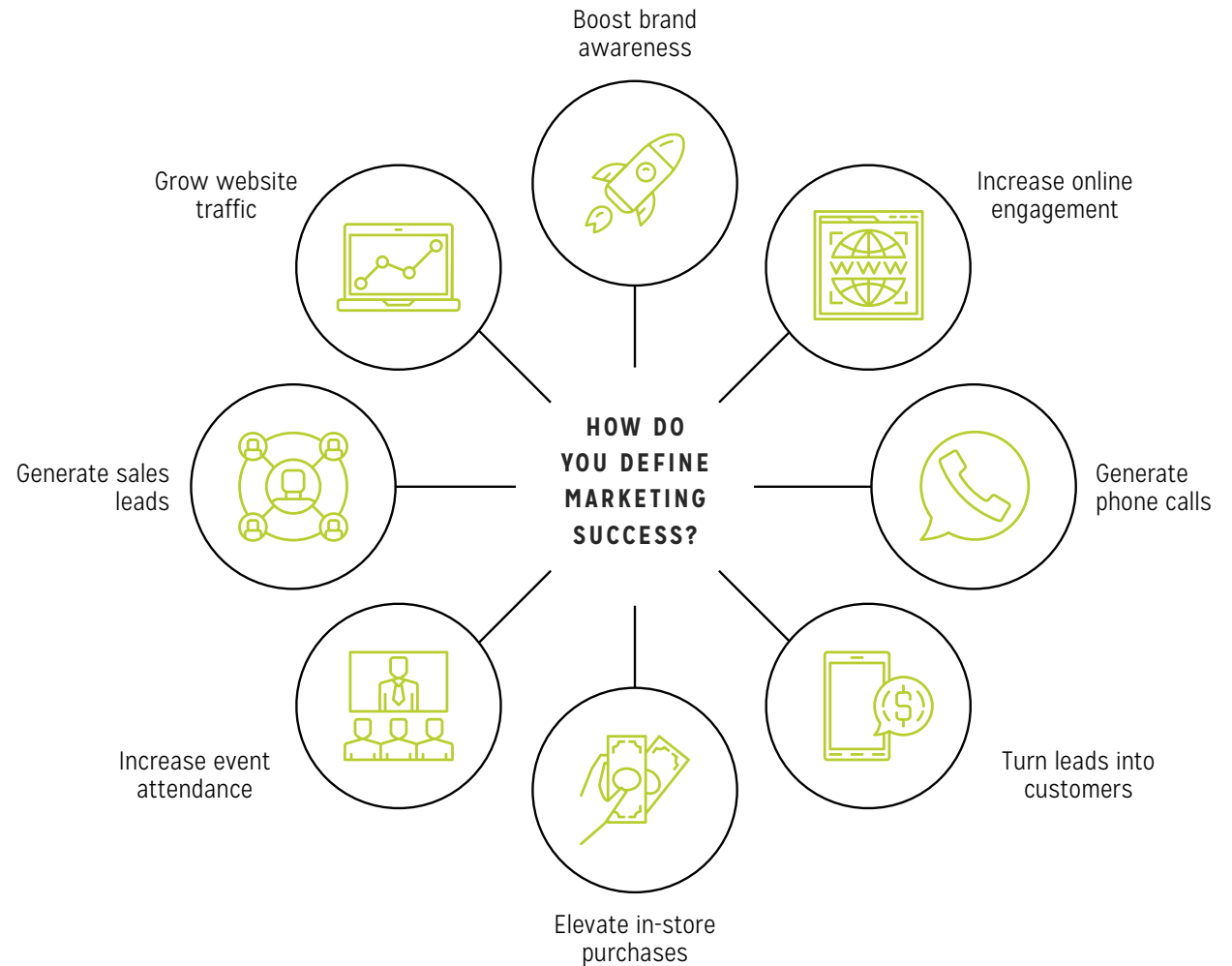


41%

B2B MARKETERS WITH A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT
A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING PROGRAM MEANS,
ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE¹

DIG DEEP ON YOUR OBJECTIVES

If your current marketing goals are so broad that they'd apply to any business ("sell more stuff"), dig a little deeper. Create a short list of specific, measurable goals, suggests Arnie Kuenn, author of *Content Marketing Works* and CEO of Vertical Measures. "That's how you can start moving the marketing, which will ultimately end up moving the business forward."



A TALE OF TWO COMPANIES

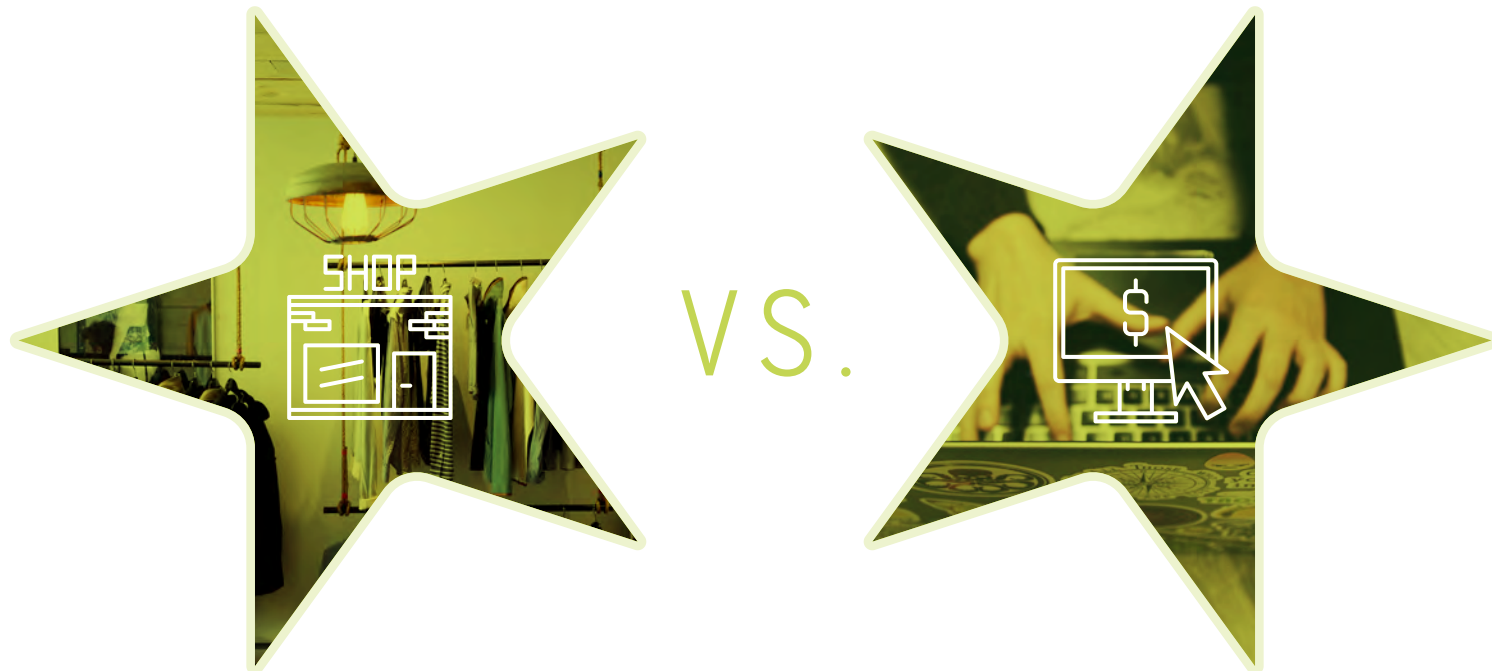
To understand how goals differ from company to company, consider an online retailer and a brick-and-mortar store.

The e-commerce company values online engagement. “Its leaders want to see that the people they’re attracting are reading their content and going deeper and deeper into the website,” says Jeff

Sutton. They’ll track which ads and content prompt customers to look further and stay longer.

The brick-and-mortar company wants to convert web surfers into foot traffic at the store. It will track what’s best at getting people to click on “store hours,” view a map of its location, or call for an appointment.

“Those are all really powerful steps along the conversion path,” Sutton says. “And they’re more achievable than just saying, ‘I’m going to buy some advertising and hope to sell 300 widgets.’”



TRACKING YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS WILL HELP YOU:



UNDERSTAND

how effectively you're using marketing channels

PINPOINT

areas of over- or under-spending



IDENTIFY

new opportunities

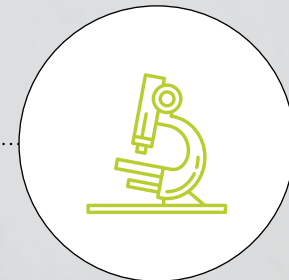
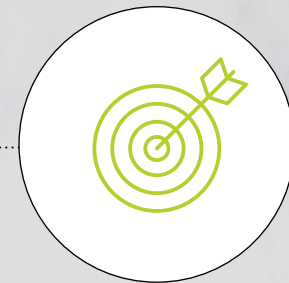
FOCUS

on the most effective marketing channels



DETERMINE

whether your strategies are paying off



KEEP YOUR EYES ON KPIs

Each online keystroke or thumb swipe leaves electronic clues about someone's needs, wants, and likes. Compiled and organized in a logical manner, the data can tell you in astonishing detail what people think of your company and whether your marketing actually creates customers. Welcome to the world of key performance indicators (KPIs).

KPIs ARE...

**Quantifiable measurements
that help you evaluate progress
toward specific goals.**

SAMPLE KPIs:

- Cost per lead
- Traffic to Facebook
- Impressions
- Viewability
- Traffic-to-lead ratio
- Keyword searches
- Lead-to-customer ratio
- Click-through rate
- Bounce rate
- Average time on site
- Conversion rate
- Mobile traffic
- Social media reach and engagement

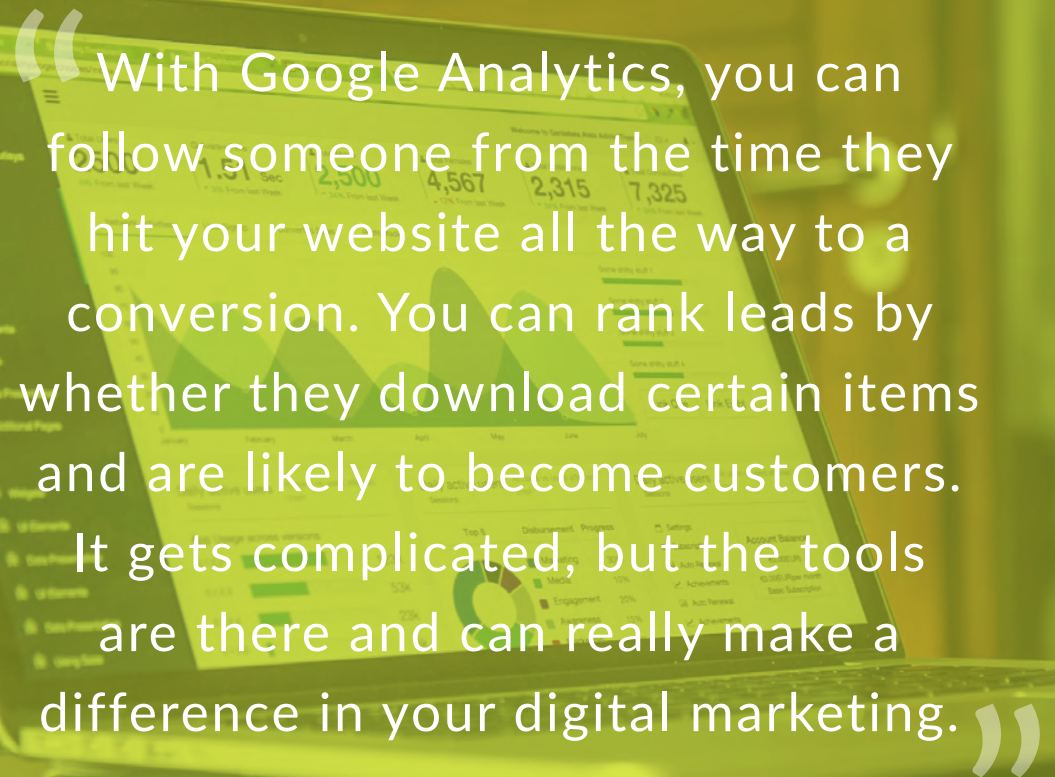


3 STEPS TO USING KPIs: STEP 1, DETERMINE YOUR BASELINE

Say your primary goals involve website traffic, sales leads, and in-store sales. First, create a baseline showing your current figures on each. Now consider which KPIs can tell you the most about these goals, and which of the many tools, from Google Analytics on, will offer the most illuminating numbers.

Some KPI Measuring Tools

- [Google Analytics](#)—Tracks and reports the details of your website traffic
- [ClickMeter](#)—For a deep dive into the social media interactions you're getting
- [Open Site Explorer](#)—A search engine optimization (SEO) tool that offers statistics about page authority and backlinks
- [Hootsuite](#)—A platform for managing social media and gauging audience response



“With Google Analytics, you can follow someone from the time they hit your website all the way to a conversion. You can rank leads by whether they download certain items and are likely to become customers. It gets complicated, but the tools are there and can really make a difference in your digital marketing.”

—ARNIE KUENN, AUTHOR OF
CONTENT MARKETING WORKS

3 STEPS TO USING KPIs: STEP 2, GET S.M.A.R.T.

A time-honored benchmark for business objectives applies to the KPIs you choose to assess your marketing. They should be:



Specific.

Know how a given KPI applies to the goals you've set.



Measurable.

With tons of numbers out there, will this KPI yield usable data?



Attainable.

Are KPIs trained on improvements you might actually achieve?



Relevant.

Do your KPIs reflect current business and market realities?



Timely.

KPIs need time to yield solid data, but do set deadlines for progress.

3 STEPS TO USING KPIs: STEP 3, INVOLVE YOUR TEAM

Don't let this valuable information languish! Help everyone on your marketing team understand the meaning behind each of your KPIs, why you chose them, and who is responsible for monitoring and tracking. Most important, be clear about the actions you plan to take based on the data your KPIs reveal.

Tell the Boss

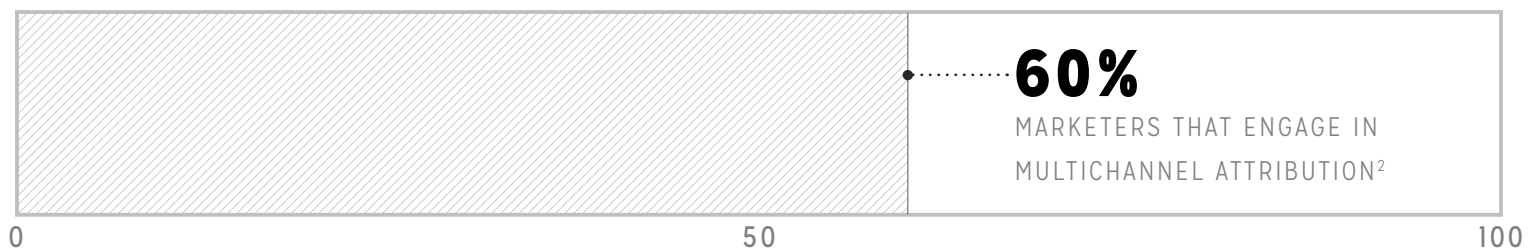
Your company leaders must understand why analytics are essential. Keep presentations simple, digestible, and goal-oriented, suggests Arnie Kuenn. "CEOs aren't going to read a 20-page report. They want to see the KPIs and whether they're moving in the right direction."



Section 03

MAKE ATTRIBUTION YOUR SECRET TO SUCCESS

Thanks to KPIs, you have great numbers to work with. Now, take your strategy to the next level with a process known as attribution—crunching that data to determine which among your many marketing approaches are or aren't wowing audiences. "At a granular level, attribution enables you to get really close to the idea of what works and what doesn't," says Jeff Sutton.





WHAT ATTRIBUTION DOES

It's about giving appropriate "credit" to each of your marketing approaches, and adjusting your mix accordingly. In a nutshell, attribution...

EXAMINES

the full customer journey

IDENTIFIES

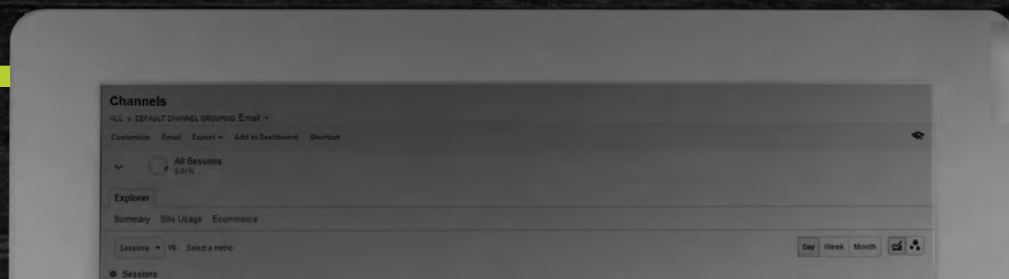
trends across all of your marketing channels

CONNECTS

performance to specific items and actions

COMBINES

with analytics for a more complete view of what's driving success



AVOID THE 'LAST CLICK' PITFALL

The simplest and easiest form of attribution—“last click”—assesses only the final action customers take before making a purchase. But that’s like assuming that the last player to cross home plate is automatically your MVP. Sales result from a complex array of messaging and responses all along the path to purchase. Be sure your attribution model is sophisticated enough to capture and measure these crucial moments:

1 AWARENESS

- Display ads
- Targeted emails
- Social media

2 CONSIDERATION

- Search engine optimization
- Search engine marketing

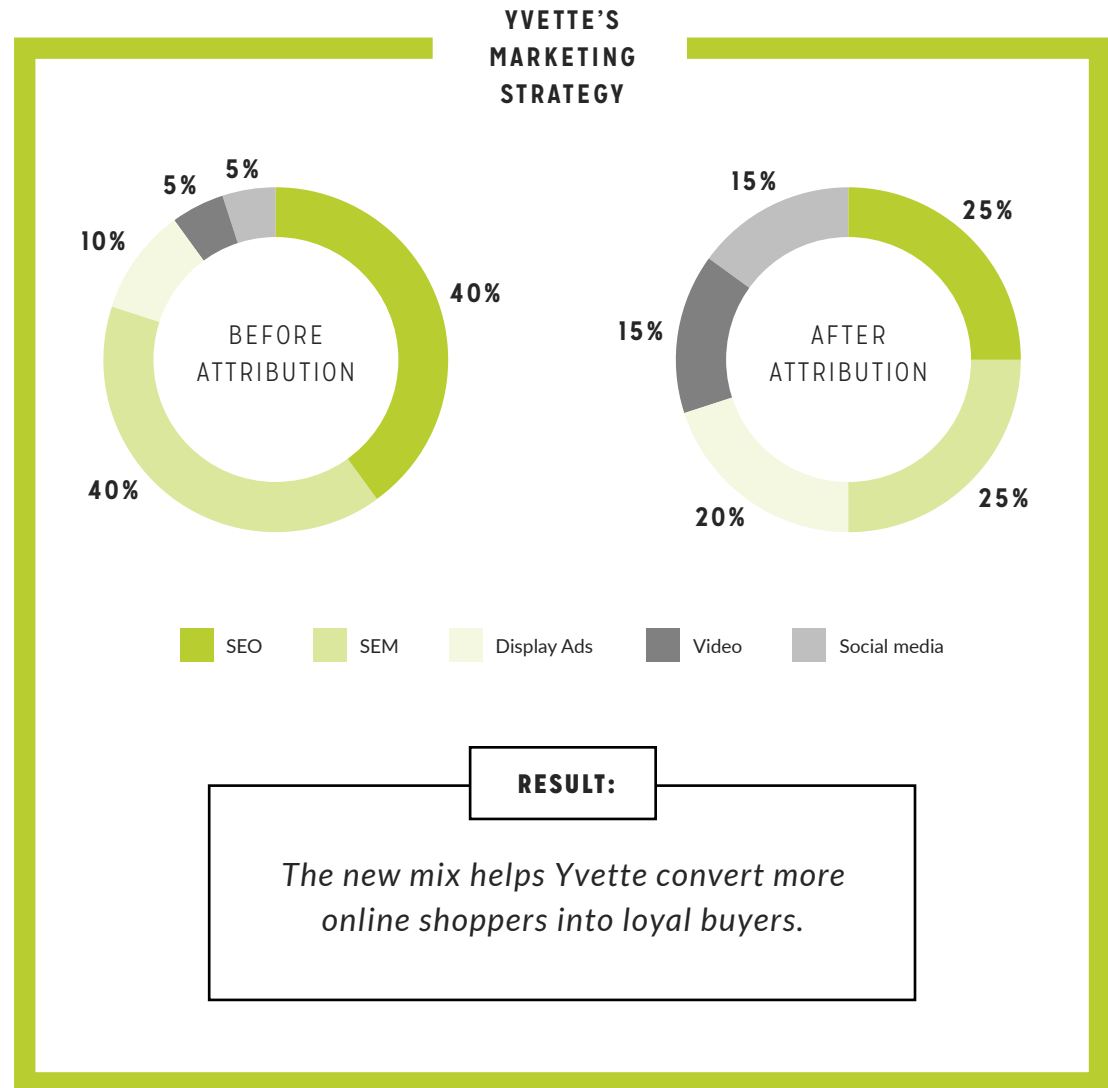
3 CONVERSION

- Website



ATTRIBUTION CASE STUDY

Yvette's custom toy shop has evolved from a neighborhood boutique into an e-commerce engine. But is her digital marketing strategy working as hard as she is? She turns to a respected premium publisher with the tools and know-how to find out. Attribution analysis shows that while Yvette spends most of her budget on search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM), her relatively modest investment in display ads creates outsized "lift" among the publisher's loyal readers. Meanwhile, her handful of videos and social media posts reach audiences likely to become steady customers. The findings help her adjust.



FIND THE RIGHT CHANNELS AND PLATFORMS

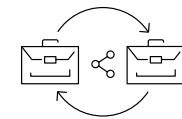
Like any business endeavor, marketing entails some risk, says Blake Killian, vice president of strategy for Headline Studio at Advance Local. “But it’s much less risky when you’ve discovered something new about yourself or your customers that you didn’t know before.”

With the knowledge you’ve gained about goals, KPIs, and attribution, you can be much more tactical and strategic in concentrating your marketing spend in the channels and platforms likely to deliver the best results.



3.5

CONNECTED
DEVICES PER
PERSON IN
2017, UP FROM
2.3 IN 2012.³



94%

B2B CONTENT
MARKETERS
USING SOCIAL
MEDIA POSTS.⁴

ARE CHANNELS AND PLATFORMS THE SAME THING?

Channels are broad categories of marketing. Platforms are the choices within each channel. As an analogy, think of aviation as the transportation “channel” you’d choose as the fastest way to cross the country. Individual airlines are “platforms” you select based on price and service. In marketing, strategically using multiple channels and platforms increases your chance of reaching potential customers wherever they are. The choices are many, but they don’t have to overwhelm. A partner with deep experience across a variety of channels and platforms can help. (See “Your Premium Publisher Advantage,” Section 5, pg. 22)

MARKETING CHANNELS



Social media



Print



Email



Television



Display advertising



Organic search



Paid search

PLATFORMS

Within the social media channel, here are the top five platforms:



Facebook—1.4 billion active daily users⁵



YouTube—1 billion-plus users⁶



Instagram—800 million monthly users⁷



LinkedIn—500 million global users⁸



Twitter—328 million active monthly users⁹

CROSS-CHANNEL, CROSS-PLATFORM COMPARISON

Hold your marketing choices to the same tough standards you set for your business. Are those print ads driving in-store sales? Is that e-newsletter creating website traffic? Are your Tweets actively creating customers, or falling flat? Here's how to find out:

- Establish measurable goals for each of your channels and platforms.
- Choose channel- and platform-specific metrics to evaluate success.
- Based on KPIs and attribution, learn what works best and adjust accordingly.

PLATFORM CASE STUDY

Looking to increase online bookings for his day spa and fitness center, Bob has been posting articles, videos, and other messages on a variety of social media sites. But he's not sure which platform or type of post is best at driving audiences to his site. A detailed analysis shows most of his social media visitors arriving to his site from Facebook—particularly when his posts include special offers. Bob responds by doubling his focus on Facebook and creating a weekly special offer redeemable at his site.

RESULT:

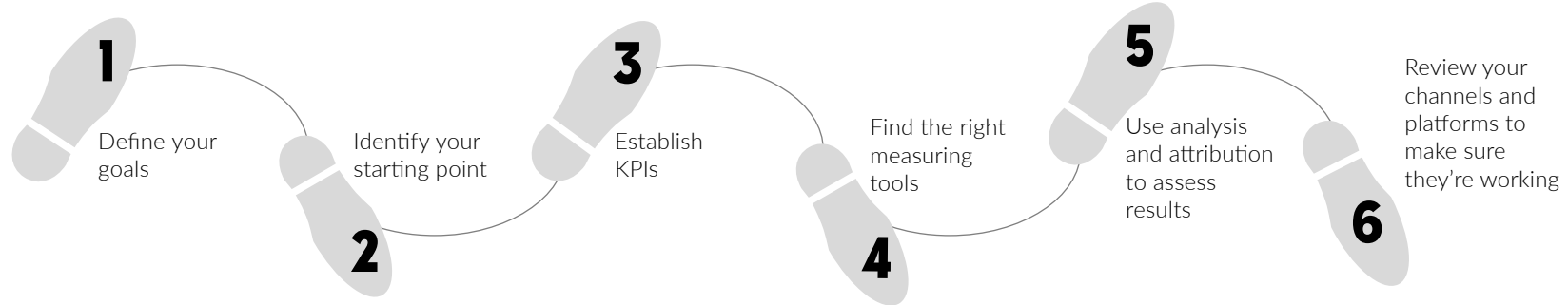


Online bookings become a key part of the day spa's revenue

DEVELOP YOUR PLAN OF ACTION

In a hypercompetitive marketplace, don't just assume that consumers will find you. "When companies fail, often it's because they haven't put together a solid marketing plan and executed it," says Arnie Kuenn. Use the information in this e-book to establish a strategy designed to produce measurable results. And keep in mind that you don't have to go it alone.

SIX STEPS TO MARKETING SUCCESS



YOUR PREMIUM PUBLISHER ADVANTAGE

A premium publisher is a trusted, high-quality news organization with the technology and sophistication to serve today's audiences. It has earned the respect and loyalty of its readers and viewers over generations.

Relevance—Whether through digital, mobile, or print channels, premium publishers have deep connections with your core customers. And they have the expertise and sophisticated technology to help you find new ones.

Reliability—They live where your customers live, share their joys and struggles, and are their most trusted source of information. Aligning with them enhances your brand.

Reach—Timely, relevant coverage makes premium publishers “must-reads” across all media platforms. That penetration gives them data to help you target audiences.

“There’s a perception that to do something meaningful in advertising you have to spend a lot of money. We take a different view. We believe that small steps can turn into big gains when you find exactly what’s working.”

—BLAKE KILLIAN, ADVANCE LOCAL



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NJ Advance Media is a data-driven marketing agency and the #1 provider of local news in New Jersey. We drive daily conversations and engage more than 6 million people monthly through quality journalism on *NJ.com*, *lehighvalleylive.com*, social channels and in newsletters and print publications, including *The Star-Ledger* and other daily and weekly newspapers.

Thanks to our position and experience as a modern publisher, we can use our deep connections with

consumers to help you engage your audiences and grow your business. The relationship that we already have with your potential customers can be extended to you. When your brand appears alongside ours, the trust readers have in us can extend to your business, across channels.

Learn more about how to measure and assess your digital marketing strategy. Contact an NJ Advance Media Marketing Consultant at (800) 501-2100 or email marketing@njadvancemedia.com.

ABOUT US

As part of Advance Local, we have the knowledge, experience, and resources to create innovative and effective cross-channel marketing solutions, including search, social, content marketing, video, mobile, display and more. We have first-party data collected from more than 170 million devices owned by consumers of our 12 affiliated websites across the United States. And we partner with some of the world's largest data providers. Taken together, that wealth of information can give you the edge you need to better understand your customers, anticipate and respond to changing markets, and target new audiences, who will be your customers of tomorrow.



ENDNOTES

1. http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2017_B2B_Research_FINAL.pdf
2. <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/study-use-of-multichannel-attribution-expands-to-60-of-marketers/506429/>
3. <https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending/?countryCode=UK&category=TRN-NOFILTER-ALL>
4. <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/press/>
6. <https://investor.fb.com/home/default.aspx>
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