2019 DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Survey Summary Report

Research Series Conducted in Partnership with Leading Marketing Technology Companies, Marketing Media and Digital Marketing Agencies.
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Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them with a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a verified list of marketing research subscribers.
2019 DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Prospects and customers are almost always online. And an effective digital marketing strategy provides the plan of action required to engage them.

Sounds simple, but what will an effective digital marketing strategy look like in 2019?

To help you answer this question, Ascend2 and our Research Partners fielded the 2019 Digital Marketing Strategies Survey. We thank the 190 marketing influencers who responded to this survey during the week of October 1, 2018.

This Survey Summary Report, titled *2019 Digital Marketing Strategies*, represents the opinions of all the market segments responding to the survey. Specific market segments from the survey are reported on separately and exclusively by our participating Research Partners.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.
TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Increasing sales prospects or leads, and acquiring more customers, will be top priorities for marketing influencers (64% and 55% respectively) in 2019. This emphasizes the importance of marketing’s support of and alignment with the sales process.

What are the TOP PRIORITIES for a digital marketing strategy to achieve?

- Increasing sales prospects/leads: 64%
- Increasing customer acquisition: 55%
- Increasing customer engagement: 49%
- Improving brand awareness: 39%
- Improving result measurability: 30%
- Increasing website traffic: 25%
- Improving web user experience: 19%
SUCCESS OF STRATEGY

Nearly half (47%) of marketing influencers describe the success of a digital marketing strategy as very successful (or best-in-class when compared to competitors) at achieving top priorities, while approximately the same number (49%) consider it somewhat successful.

Which best describes the SUCCESS of a digital marketing strategy at achieving top priorities?

- Very successful (best-in-class), 47%
- Somewhat successful, 49%
- Not successful, 4%
CHALLENGING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Engaging customers online and measuring digital marketing results are challenging barriers to success for 49% and 47% of marketing influencers respectively. The sales-related goal of increasing customer acquisition is also a barrier to success for marketers.

What are the most CHALLENGING BARRIERS to the success of a digital marketing strategy?

- Increasing customer engagement: 49%
- Improving result measurability: 47%
- Increasing customer acquisition: 46%
- Increasing sales prospects/leads: 40%
- Improving web user experience: 27%
- Increasing website traffic: 22%
- Improving brand awareness: 22%

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HOW BUDGET IS CHANGING

With a total of 88% of marketing influencers planning to increase the digital marketing budget to some extent in 2019, the message is clear – companies are standing behind digital marketing.

![Bar chart showing the extent of digital marketing budget changes in 2019.]

- 24% of the budget will increase significantly.
- 64% of the budget will increase marginally.
- 10% of the budget will decrease marginally.
- 2% of the budget will decrease significantly.

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PRIORITIES VERSUS BARRIERS

Analyzing the importance of top strategic priorities in comparison to the most challenging barriers to success provides a valuable perspective for developing a balanced and successful strategy for digital marketing in 2019.

Comparing top priorities and challenging barriers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Strategic Priorities</th>
<th>Success Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing sales prospects/leads</td>
<td>64%</td>
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| Improving web user experience           | 19%                  | 27%             

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Content marketing is a most effective tactic for a 58% majority of marketing influencers, while search engine optimization and email marketing follow with 50% and 47% respectively.
The effectiveness of online tactics is increasing for an impressive total of 89% of marketing influencers, with 1% of those influencers describing the increase in effectiveness as significant.

To what extent is the effectiveness of online tactics CHANGING?

- Effectiveness is increasing significantly: 31%
- Effectiveness is increasing marginally: 58%
- Effectiveness is decreasing marginally: 10%
- Effectiveness is decreasing significantly: 1%

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MOST DIFFICULT TACTICS

Difficulty, which may be defined as the cost, effort and skill required to execute a tactic, often determines if a tactic will be included in a strategic plan-of-action. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of marketing influencers consider data-driven personalization a most difficult tactic to execute.

What are the most DIFFICULT online tactics to execute in a digital marketing strategy?

- Data-driven personalization: 63%
- Content marketing: 49%
- Marketing technology usage: 41%
- Search engine optimization: 40%
- Social media marketing: 24%
- Search and social ads: 18%
- Email marketing: 14%

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RESOURCES USED

The more difficult tactics are to execute, the more likely companies are to outsource them. In 2019, a total of 82% of marketing influencers plan to outsource tactical execution to some extent, with 13% saying they plan to outsource their tactics only to specialists.

Which best describes the RESOURCES used to execute online tactics most effectively?

- In-house resources only, 18%
- Outsourced to a specialist, 13%
- Combination of outsourced and in-house resources, 69%
EFFECTIVENESS VERSUS DIFFICULTY

A tactic that is far more effective than difficult to use (email marketing, for example), is more likely to be included in a digital marketing strategy than a tactic that is much more difficult than it is effective (data-driven personalization, for example).

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Comparing tactical effectiveness and difficulty.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Effective Tactics</th>
<th>Difficult Tactics</th>
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Marketing technology providers and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to supplement their marketing content, generate leads and engage prospects to drive demand through the middle of the funnel. Learn more about the research-based marketing innovations from Ascend2.com.

Below are just a few of the leading marketing solution providers that partner with us on research-based marketing programs.

As a marketing technology company, marketing media or agency, your prospective customers are marketing influencers with an interest in the facts about improving marketing performance. Research-Based Marketing is a process we developed to generate leads using factual content of interest to your target audience, and nurture prospects to the middle of the funnel in the name of your brand.
Research Partner Programs

Research Partner Programs rapidly deliver content of interest to marketers, and a guaranteed number of leads and prospects to marketing solution providers, in these two simple steps:

1. Choose **marketing topics** of interest to your audience.
   - Or create a survey topic of your own

2. Choose an exclusive segment for the topics you choose.
   - Success Benchmarks
   - Leadership Benchmarks
   - B2B Benchmarks
   - B2C Benchmarks
   - Enterprise Benchmarks
   - SMB Benchmarks
   - Agency Benchmarks
   - And more!

Learn more about Ascend2 Research-Based Marketing by calling 800-762-1595 extension 703 or visit [Ascend2.com](http://ascend2.com).