

# Jumpstart Your B2B Marketing

**A COLLECTION OF INSIGHTS  
TO HELP WITH YOUR STRATEGY**



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## INTRODUCTION

Well, it's about that time of year where you need to start thinking about a plan for *next* year. And in case you've been sleeping, we're talking about 2012. Since we're currently in planning mode for a number of our clients, it only seemed fitting to share some of our approaches and factors to consider, in the hopes that it will help provide some food for thought. As you read through our very first e-book (which we are extremely excited about!), you might pick up on a recurring theme talked about in a lot of entries — customer insight. At Godfrey, we truly believe customer insight is at the heart of effective marketing programs.

You also may notice us throwing around the term *unification* a lot. That's because, as we move toward 2012, we're putting a lot of emphasis on the importance of having a unified strategy. Tactics are easy to implement, but it's the strategy that will really inform the messaging and how and where we're reaching people.

So take a look through our e-book. We've got contributions from our experts in a variety of areas. We hope their insight will spark some fresh, exciting and *relevant* ideas for your 2012 planning.





STRATEGY



# 1

## Get Unified: Integrating Your B2B Marketing Communications

CHUCK MANNERS / JOE WEINLICK

Make customer insight the foundation of your program.

If you are like many of our clients, as well as many agencies, you've struggled with how to fully integrate digital and traditional marketing communications. More than a year ago, Godfrey embarked on an initiative to better integrate these disciplines. What we learned is that integration *per se* is fairly straightforward and, by and large, we were already there. The real issue is not *integration* but unification, and unified marketing goes well beyond astute combinations of digital and traditional program elements.

The way we've come to see it, unified marketing is centered on the B2B customer, with fresh, relevant insight that drives strategy. It's less about the current campaign and more about customer relationships and the lifecycle of those relationships. It's about creating and delivering customer-driven solutions with testing, measurement and analysis built into a continuous, closed-loop process. At bottom, it's about creating a competitive advantage through marketing to drive sales and growth.

Our suggestion? Before you finalize planning and tactics for the next year, take some time to evaluate your brand, talk to your customers and fine-tune your plans so that they become more unified.

## A Decade of Transformation

In many ways, unification isn't something new. It is a return to what agencies have always done. The last decade has been one of rapid transformation for our industry — and the world. Those of you older than 40: Remember the days when you had to turn to the Yellow Pages if you wanted to find a company? When taking money out of the bank involved waiting in line when it was convenient for *the bank* to be open? Today, we take it for granted that anything we want is immediately available, at our fingertips. Need to replace a window? Figure out how to get to Tacoma? Hire an electrician? Figure out who that actor was in the movie you watched last night? Share a photo of the kids with the family? All are easily done on the Internet. And, with smartphones and tablets, we can do these things ANYWHERE.

Of course, if we can do these things, then so can our customers. Over the last decade, Godfrey rapidly developed expertise in an evolving set of new technologies, channels and techniques so that we could reach people as they adopted these new technologies. Engineers are going online to search specs? We are there. Developers are chatting on social media sites? Hey, we can do that too! Sales people want to demo products on an iPad? Cool! And wow — we can even track all of this activity? Sign me up.

And sign up we did. Over the past decade, Godfrey cultivated expertise in web and application development, user experience, online advertising, social media, web analytics, search engine marketing, online publishing ...

## But What Is Unification, Anyway?

The challenge was that each new area of expertise required new team members who needed to be part of the process. If every campaign requires a web presence, then we'd better make sure that user experience architects, developers and digital designers are involved from the get-go. Cross-functional teams developed very successful integrated campaigns, but over time it became easier to focus on planning and integration than ideas.

Which leads us to unification. Consider a facilities manager or an architect. They aren't thinking, "Well, it's about 10:00 a.m. Time to do some social media." Magazines, online newspapers, blogs, Facebook, direct mail, phone conversations, email exchanges. These are just part of life. Their world is unified. Customers are plugged in all the time and they expect the



companies they work with to act in a similar manner. To take a cue from B2C, the mom who visits Pottery Barn expects to continue her experience online. And, Pottery Barn obliges. In fact, a sales person might pull up the Internet to help her order online if the store doesn't have the merchandise. We need to deliver to our customers the experiences and interaction they want, when they want it and to create a seamless experience across all media. That is unification.

*“Go back to what good marketing and advertising has always been about — understanding the audience.”*

## **I Get It. But How Do We Unify?**

Unification is common sense, right? But, with the complexities of the sales cycle, busy customers with other things on their minds and the many moving parts of a company, an industry and the world, how do we become unified? Our recommendation is to go back to what good marketing and advertising has always been about — understanding the audience. And developing a sound strategy and big creative idea based on that understanding. It isn't enough to simply communicate across all mediums. We need to give people a reason to care. A reason to believe. This starts with insight. If we don't know what our customers care about, how can

we give them a reason to care? We need to understand them rationally AND emotionally so that we can engage and inspire them. Because they are no longer comparing their experiences to other B2B companies and the competition. They are comparing it to Apple, Nike, Target and other brands that are getting it right.

So at Godfrey, 2012 is a year to focus on deeper understanding of our audience and cultivating insight. From insight, we'll develop big ideas. And then — and only then — will we figure out the best media and channels to consistently bring those ideas alive.

We call this unification. It's the same thing we've always done. Only better. We hope you'll join us.

## **RELATED ARTICLES**

→ [Anatomy of B2B Marketing](#)

# 2

## Unified Marketing Is All About the Big Idea

**JIM EVERHART**

When you strategically differentiate yourself,  
your program can take on a life of its own.

In the past, we and many others in the world of B2B marketing waxed poetic about integrated marketing communications. And, of course, it is important that different tactics have the same look and feel. And the same messaging.

But as we're discovering in this new world, that's probably not enough. Programs can be integrated but not really unified. And tactics that are integrated can still be largely tactical.

Marketing tactics that are only loosely integrated can still be "separate-but-equal," following strict identity guidelines but not really working well as a strategic, unified program. And that phenomenon has only gotten worse with the proliferation of media and the tendency to create specialties around email, search, social media and untold other niches yet to be defined.

So, as we indicated in the introduction, our approach will be to embrace unified marketing and work hard to come up with the "big idea," as the agency business did in its not-very-distant past.

Easy to say ... but what might that mean?

## What Is a Big Idea?

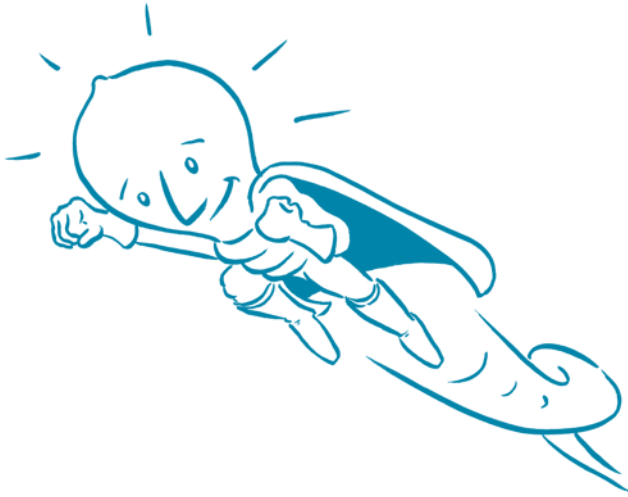
To us at Godfrey, there are a few traits that distinguish the kind of big idea we'll be presenting to our clients:

- **A big idea draws from the research and captures the key insight or insights that will energize the audience.** It is thus firmly anchored in realities of the audience, the marketplace and the business.
- **A big idea helps drive differentiation.** Fed Ex, UPS and the U.S. Postal Service, for instance, all are essentially delivery services. But their distinctive approaches to the market and their creative advertising efforts have helped them define separate niches within the marketplace.
- **A big idea drives the marketing communications program.** And perhaps even the sales program as well. Done right, a big idea gets the whole company involved. It can be everything from ads and fliers to direct mail and posters throughout the building. Because marketing makes the promise, but someone else hand-delivers the package that “absolutely, positively needs to be there overnight.”
- **A big idea suggests all kinds of obvious spinoffs, applications or approaches.** You know you have a big idea when people immediately start thinking of new ways to make the big idea work: “We can do this” and “We can do that” ...
- **A big idea is not easily imitated.** It will be most successful if it expresses something no competitor could do, or at least not as well. Could SAP ever compete for the simple, low-cost position? Probably not.

*“In short, a big idea gives people, both internally and externally, a reason to believe.”*

In short, a big idea gives people, both internally and externally, a reason to believe. To believe in the company and its ability to deliver on its differentiation in a way that is faithful to its values.

Where integration could often allow us to get the tactical cart in front of the strategic horse, a big idea gets the strategy and tactics in proper alignment. The strategic big idea comes first ... the tactics fall out of it.



## A Big Idea Is Transformative

We talked about the transformation this requires for the agency — the daunting task of coming up with big ideas and executing them across all the media opportunities sampled in this document. The challenges are significant indeed.

But rest assured that Godfrey will be presenting our clients with unified marketing programs driven by big ideas. And tapping into all the technologies and resources at our disposal to implement those programs efficiently and effectively.

And while our organization must learn to think differently to reach our goal, successful unified marketing campaigns could very well lead to another level of transformation: at our clients' companies. Big ideas have a way of crystalizing a vision, galvanizing support and creating a whole new energy. They can, in short, take on a life of their own.

We may thus be able to empower our client marketers to become change agents for their companies. Helping their companies better articulate their values, their unique contributions to their markets. And express them as never before.

### RELATED ARTICLES

→ [Do More Than Think About Thought Leadership](#)



# 3

## A B2B Strategy that Embraces Your Customers

**RUSS GREEN / JIM CASTANZO**

Your advertising strategy should deliver the experiences and interaction your customers want.

For some people, the term “advertising” used to mean everything the rest of us call marketing communications. Maybe it’s time to go back to that. Because B2B advertising today means so much more than placing ads in trade magazines. Or putting banner ads on the same publications’ websites.

Effective B2B marketers have to consider every channel and vehicle when developing an advertising strategy, whether they think of it as “advertising” or not. As we said in the introduction, our B2B audiences — engineers, chemists, contractors — aren’t thinking about what channel they are using; it’s all part of their work life ... or non-work life. It’s all unified. Magazines, online newspapers, blogs, social media, email, phone, text. Our clients’ customers are connected all the time. And many more of them are connected via mobile device, even when they are using the Web.

## Explore New Media Channels

We need to deliver to our customers the information and interaction they want, when they want it and to create a seamless experience across all mediums. There is a full spectrum of choices available to B2B marketers, such as:

- Online advertising “beyond the banner ad,” including behavioral and contextual targeting, sponsorships and pay-per-click (PPC) advertisements, like on social media sites such as LinkedIn.
- Search engine marketing and optimization (SEM and SEO).
- Social media, like blogs, Wikis, discussion boards and social networking sites, that thrive on two-way interaction and dialogue.
- Podcasts that allow short messages to be distributed for mobile use.
- Webinars that allow you to connect directly to your target audience and build your brand as a leader in the industry.
- Permission-based communications, like email, e-newsletters, RSS and Web feeds.

These new media choices are richer, fuller, participative and measurable, presenting many new communications channels to carry on a dialogue with prospects and customers. This is a total departure from the “advertising” mindset of old, which was one-way, broadcast and interruptive by definition. But as marketers more fully embrace their expanded contribution to generating interest and cultivating sales-ready leads, the new platforms and techniques must be considered as part of a strategic advertising and media mix. Because different media channels perform better at different parts of the buying cycle. For instance, paid search can be a valuable tool when prospects are actively searching for a product or technology. Twitter can help keep interested prospects informed. A content-rich email program can engage and cultivate highly-qualified prospects as well as existing customers. So the choice of media no longer revolves around rates and reach, but is a more integral part of marketing strategy.



## Gain Insight, Become More Strategic

If you haven't yet given yourself a "media lobotomy," make this the year. Throw out the old habits and assumptions about advertising and take a totally "agnostic" approach to reaching your target audience. When we undertake "media channel discovery" for our B2B clients, we not only consider all "advertising" vehicles; we broaden the perspective even more to encompass and unify the channels for paid media (advertising), earned media (PR) and owned media (social and content).

*"The nature of what we deliver depends on the audience, the medium and the stage of the buying process."*

What about the ads themselves ... or the content? The nature of what we deliver depends on the audience, the medium and the stage of the buying process. And that applies to the content and the creative. What we say and how we say it also depends on the audience, the medium and the stage of the buying process. We apply rich customer insight to drive a solid strategy and use that strategy to craft a compelling idea, the "big" idea that echoes across all media, builds brand and demonstrates you have a solution

that resonates with every customer. The “big idea” is media neutral — it is just as powerful and compelling no matter what media are used. It grabs attention. It drives further interaction and compels engagement to drive sales and growth. Then we test, measure and analyze in order to refine the message for each discrete customer. We then begin the engagement process all over again. Now that’s “unification.”

Taking a bigger-picture view of advertising also helps address the need for meaningful metrics and ROI. The right metrics need to be established for measuring performance at all levels of a communications program. To us, marketing ROI is more than a single view of investment versus sales or demand generation. We believe it is important to show and measure how each step leads to the next in the sales and marketing process. This includes important steps that come before a lead is generated.

## **Remember: The Sales Process Is Linear**

Buyers move from awareness to interest/desire to action before a sale takes place. For some B2B products and services, this buying cycle can be quite long, while for others it can be as short as the time it takes to go from a PPC ad to an e-commerce site. Our approach to measurement and metrics provides ROI information in a way that helps management understand the need for a balanced program that facilitates moving prospects through the sales and marketing process.

Just as the many possible advertising vehicles have their respective strengths, from brand awareness to demand generation, they lend themselves differently to measurement. Once we identify business and marketing goals and objectives, we determine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each part of a program — based on what each tactic can reasonably contribute to the process.

### **RELATED ARTICLES**

→ [What Does Customer Intimacy Mean for Your Business?](#)



BRANDING



# 4

## Sustaining Your Brand through Effective Messaging

JOSH KOVALIK / KEN JONES

Every message about your company is a brand message and every experience with your company is a brand-building experience.

The desktop computer. The newspaper. The postage stamp.

At one point, these items were conventional, fundamental components of our daily lives, but now they seem to be slipping into a state of obsolescence. Unable to keep up with the demands and rigors of our fast-moving, technologically-equipped society, those things which appear to lack the ability to provide dynamic and instantaneous results are now seen as being simply archaic. Unfortunately, some think that *branding* is heading in the same direction.

Arguably, the principles which embody the notion of “branding” are timeless. Phrases such as “brand awareness,” “brand perception” and “brand equity” have been spoken in corporate circles far longer than trendy terms such as “tweeting,” “SEO” and “analytics.” However, the reality for marketers today is that they are pressured to pursue tactics that will achieve “quick-turn demand generation” and that will eventually

demonstrate a fruitful ROI. This is the issue that has always haunted branding initiatives. After all, how can a logo tweak positively affect your bottom line? And even if it did, how could you prove it?

## Branding Is an Experience

In order to start answering that question, it is important to first make a distinction: branding includes more than just logos and graphical standards. At Godfrey, when we talk about branding with our clients, we are really referring to an *experience* — specifically, the total experience customers and prospects have with your company. And with new technologies, the ways in which people are experiencing your brand are only growing.

It would not be very earth-shattering to say that a lot has changed in our world in the last five years or so. The way we communicate, buy, sell, etc., has all completely shifted thanks to our collective reliance on the Internet, mobile technology and social media (among other things). Instead of easily managed communications channels — trade ads, tradeshow appearances, press releases and sales collateral — that use a classic “push the message out” model, the B2B marketer is confronted with:

- **Vastly multiplied channels** — industry websites, blogs, social media channels such as Twitter and YouTube, podcasts — that generate, share, forward, comment on, cut-and-paste and otherwise manipulate your messages ... sometimes to the benefit of your brand, and sometimes not.
- **Extremely compressed message cycle** — from days and weeks down to hours and minutes — demanding constant attention and the ability to respond.
- **Interactive/multi-directional messaging** — both inside and outside your enterprise means that your messages are no longer strictly yours and your brand is no longer strictly yours.

This last difference is the most critical. While it was always true that your brand is based on perceptions that exist in the minds of your customers, with the Web, user-driven messages can have just as much impact on your brand as all your marketing communications investments. So it's important that you embrace that truth and make it work for your brand.



[View our animated B2B Strategy video online.](#) ►

## Your Message Reinforces Your Brand

As you begin planning for 2012, we challenge you to ponder this thought: *Every message about your company is a brand message and every experience with your company is a brand-building experience.* The reality is that, in our increasingly connected society, customers and prospects will encounter your brand via a variety of media types, and courtesy of a variety of messengers (many of which may not be on your company payroll). As a result, marketers have more responsibility for the brand than ever before — and more opportunity to make the customer experience a rewarding one.

*“This new era of communication is not just a passing fad reserved for consumer brands.”*

In 2011, we saw increasing numbers of marketers incorporating new media channels into their company’s marketing strategy. Understandably, many companies — especially those in the B2B arena — have hesitated to make the jump, presuming that channels such as social media and mobile were largely for consumer outreach. As 2012 dawns, however, take note that this new era of communication is not just a passing fad reserved for consumer brands, but rather is a bona fide transformation that must be accounted for. The way in which business is done is changing (if it hasn’t

changed already!). Choosing to embrace this notion will allow you to successfully maneuver your brand through the new media and technology landscape.

Transitioning from theory to practice, what are some things that you can do to ensure that your company's brand is equipped for 2012? Here are three recommendations for your consideration:

- **Exercise discipline.** Make sure every message and every encounter, at every level, reinforces your company's brand. Executing a B2B branding program in a web-centric world requires focus and discipline, using both existing and emerging channels effectively to shape the brand experience, and how your business adds value to its customers and markets.
- **Accept complexity.** Otherwise known as “we can't go back”: Communications channels will continue to multiply, many audiences will actively participate in your brand's evolution and the message cycle will only get shorter. Treat this as an opportunity to leverage the reach and sophistication of online resources such as social media to bolster your brand, refine its impact and value and cultivate new audiences, markets and customers to help grow your business.
- **Prepare for the unknown.** Responsiveness is key, backed by constant vigilance. Through ongoing monitoring of your brand's reputation — using tools such as SEO, keyword analysis and social media audits — you can identify where you have weak points, poor integration or wasted resources and help bring your approach to branding more fully in line with the demands of today's audience.

Building, monitoring and sustaining your brand messages across paid, earned and owned media will pay dividends in improved customer relationships, stronger and more effective use of social media and a clear brand that differentiates your business and contributes to your competitive advantage. By recognizing the opportunities — and potential pitfalls — that the new media landscape provides your brand, you will be better equipped to face 2012.

## RELATED ARTICLES

→ [5 Tips to Stay True to Your Brand](#)



# CONTENT STRATEGY



# 5

## Do You Have a B2B Content Strategy? You Should

JENN VITELLO

Planning your content ensures your message is consistent across all media channels.

You're launching a new product that's going to revolutionize the way your customers work. Or perhaps it's time to refresh your brand. And that website? It could use an overhaul, too. Maybe it's just time to start thinking about next year's planning. I'm sure none of these scenarios are new to you. But has content played a major role in how successful your efforts will be? Because I'm here to tell you that it's more important than ever to have a content strategy in place before rolling out any new initiatives or tactics.

Given the current array of channels available to get your message out — your website, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+ — having a plan for how, why, where and to whom your content is going is crucial. You want your message to be consistent across all platforms. But first, you need to make sure you're implementing the right message. And before that, you need to know that message is even going to the right audience.

The way to get there begins with customer insight. Because once you understand your audience and their challenges, then you start talking to them about how you can help. The steps we take in creating an effective

content strategy for clients fall seamlessly into our unification process. Developing that strategy aligns with every area of expertise — user experience, PR, advertising, search, social media, analytics.



## Steps to a Successful Content Strategy

Developing a successful content strategy takes time. And research. And planning. The following is a high-level overview of the initial steps that should be taken to get your content strategy program off the ground.

- Conduct audience research.
- Perform a content audit.
- Prepare a strategic foundation document that summarizes your findings.
- Get stakeholder buy-in.
- Develop a project plan that encompasses the [content strategy quad](#): substance, structure, workflow and governance.
- Create a content marketing plan identifying all the tactics necessary to bolster your strategy.
- Implement all of your hard work.
- Create a content maintenance plan that includes analytics and key performance indicators (KPIs).

There are many deliverables associated with the above-mentioned content strategy quad, some of which include message maps; qualitative audits; page tables; editorial calendars; content style guides and workflow documentation.

Done right, a content strategy will engage your customers, educate them, give them what they need, make them buyers and ultimately, advocates for your company and its products. Now who doesn't want that?

Content is crucial to an overall program's success. After all, what the audience reads will ultimately prompt them to act, or not.

## **RELATED ARTICLES**

- [B2B Content: 10 Mistakes Marketers Make](#)
- [Google Moves Us Toward B2B Content Strategy](#)





**DIRECT MARKETING**



# 6

## The Evolution of B2B Direct Marketing

**JIM EVERHART / LYNNE MARIE DEMERS-HUNT**

Direct marketing changes its face again. And it looks a lot like relationship marketing.

To many people, direct marketing conjures up images of sleazy people in back rooms, filling our mailboxes with junk mail, interrupting dinner with phone calls or jamming our inboxes with spam email. Those things still happen, unfortunately. But they're totally removed from today's professional B2B direct marketing. And marketers who dismiss direct because of these sordid associations do themselves and their companies a great disservice.

Today's B2B direct has transformed into a dynamic new marketing activity aimed at initiating relevant, personal conversations with customers and prospects. And it's not just email but Web-based, social media, tablet-based, you name it.

Direct has come of age as the logical expression of the one-to-one (as opposed to one-to-many), narrow-casted (as opposed to broadcasted) and intimate (as opposed to mass media or "Dear Occupant") communications that have been the promise of the new media. And it is the most obvious

approach to developing the engagement or cultivation portion of the B2B marketing demand generation/lead generation process.

It's tied intimately to advanced Customer Relationship Management (CRM), the enterprise-wide technology that ties front-end and back-end systems, often in conjunction with an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Think systems like SAP, Oracle and Salesforce.

The new face of direct allows customers to instantly access your internal systems, doing everything from paying bills and checking inventory to monitoring shipments and placing new orders. It's a cost-effective way to marry old and new, high-tech and high-touch, using your "owned" distribution list and your "owned" content (your knowledge of your technology and your industry) to create "owned" media you can use



throughout the selling cycle. To tell prospects and customers about a new product or service. To allow existing customers to get access to your proprietary tools or engage in discussions with your top people. Or to disseminate thought leadership content, keeping your name in front of all your audiences.

From a marketing standpoint, this new level of capability boosts our ability to have relevant, anticipated and personal interactions with customers and prospects. As a result, we call this new approach relationship marketing.

## Benefits of Doing Relationship Marketing Tied to CRM

- **Close the loop.** Now we can know which inquiries turn into sales. And, as a result, which marketing programs are having the most impact on the bottom line.
- **Connect the sales and marketing funnels/pipelines.** Sales organizations for years have been classifying prospects according to established criteria. The sooner marketing understands that process and applies it to our activities, the better.
- **Put marketing on the same footing as sales.** Some have implied that marketing activities don't lend themselves to classifications and ordering as well as sales activities do. That, of course, is complete baloney.
- **Connect marketing to the metrics that matter to the C-suite.** If we can connect marketing activities to the sales pipeline, and begin to predict the revenue impact of marketing, we begin to speak a language the C-suite understands. And stand a chance of turning marketing from an expense into a revenue generator.

## So What's Stopping Us?

One of the major obstacles to embracing relationship marketing in any B2B organization is the silo factor — the gap between marketing and sales. It involves everything from turf issues and bragging rights to who, ultimately, gets credit for the sale. And, it's holding marketers back.

The good news: there's an obvious place to start. Wouldn't it be great if marketing could begin the lead qualification dialogue to start off the year?

What's that mean? Marketing asks sales to help clarify what, exactly, is a qualified lead? What are the specific criteria your sales department uses to determine if a lead is someone your company wants to do business with?

Having that information not only initiates the gap-closing dialogue between marketing and sales, but also gives you an idea of what your target is. And suggests a whole new way for marketing to serve your organization and advance its best interests.

### RELATED ARTICLES

→ [Direct Next](#)





**PUBLIC RELATIONS**



# 7

## Strengthening Relationships through B2B PR

**STEVE GRAHAM**

The “Power of Relationships” is a foundation of PR.

Historically, public relations has been about the relationships that we (PR professionals, B2B companies, agencies, etc.) have developed with the media, i.e., editors, reporters and journalists who cover the products, technologies, trends and developments that are important to our markets, customers and prospects.

But in the last few years, PR has taken on a whole new dimension. While editorial relationships are still important, we now have innovative ways — like social media — to reach our customers and prospects directly. This means we don't necessarily have to work through editorial “filters” to communicate our key messages. However, because our media friends still exert quite a bit of influence on customers and prospects — remember third-party credibility? — we should give them the respect and attention they deserve. By working closely and purposefully with our media friends, we can generate the type of “earned media” space that our products and technologies require.

Social media, meanwhile, has spawned a new breed of editorial reporting — that of the citizen journalist. This person may not have the

education, training or experience of a traditional journalist, but can have a dramatic influence on how brands are perceived in the marketplace. The citizen journalist may be on the scene of a “breaking news” event (at a trade show, for example) and can immediately blog or tweet about it, take photos and videos, participate in chat rooms and online forums, post content on Facebook, etc. In essence, the citizen journalist becomes an influencer — for better or worse — on those audiences who are learning about the event.



## Real-Time News and Relationships

The other big change in PR has to do with *immediacy*. In the not-so-distant past, we distributed a press release to a target media list and waited for it to be picked up the next day, week or month. Now we have a 24-hour news cycle, and competition (among our media friends as well as competing companies) is fierce. Your big news could be published online immediately ... and subsequently disseminated via a variety of social media channels, e.g., blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and still others. The possibilities are endless!

Which brings us back to the Power of Relationships — another way to spell out PR. Relationships will always be important in the B2B world. It's just that we now have so many ways to cultivate and grow those relationships, whether it's a face-to-face meeting, a trade show, a phone conversation, an e-mail, a Facebook post, a tweet, a text ... you get the idea.

Whatever methods or techniques you use, it's important to keep them centered on the customer. That's why understanding your customers and their wants, needs and aspirations is the best place to start. It's also where

Godfrey can help. We'll gather insight about your customers, develop the big ideas and determine the best mediums and channels to reach them.

The PR function can have an immediate impact on the process of gathering customer insight. Traditionally, PR has been on the front lines, talking with customers and end users about products, technologies and applications. While that information is eventually crafted into a case history or success story, the insight gleaned from that customer interaction can be used in other ways. For example, the PR professional may learn about a customer's dissatisfaction with a particular product feature, a delivery delay or a lack of responsiveness from the manufacturer. The PR professional can instantly share this insight with the manufacturer, which can then take steps to remedy the situation.

## **Making PR Part of a Unified Approach**

Depending on your business goals and objectives, PR may be one of several mediums to reach your customers and prospects. PR can help you build brand awareness, launch a new product or service, influence the influencers (both online and offline) and generally provide solid support to your unified marketing communications program.

Like other tactical elements of a unified program, PR must be strategic to be truly effective. Ask yourself: What are the goals and objectives of my marketing communications program? At the end of the day (or fiscal year), what am I really trying to achieve? Then ask your agency partner what role PR should play in meeting those goals and objectives. PR is different and unique because it allows you to take advantage of earned media, influence the influencers (from traditional to citizen journalists) and ultimately build credibility for your brands.

What's more, PR is different because it has a solid foundation in content development. PR content may take a variety of forms — text, photos, video and audio, to name a few. PR content can be used in a variety of ways, too. For example, a customer case history, initially developed as editorial for a leading trade media outlet, can be repurposed as a customer testimonial on your website, in collateral material and/or in a trade show display.

But more important than content development is the strategy behind it. Your marketing communications program must have an overall content strategy to set the tactical elements in motion. PR-driven content must support and be unified with the content strategy. By doing so, you'll ensure

that your unified program is delivering the right messages to the right audiences at the right time — maximizing your return on investment.

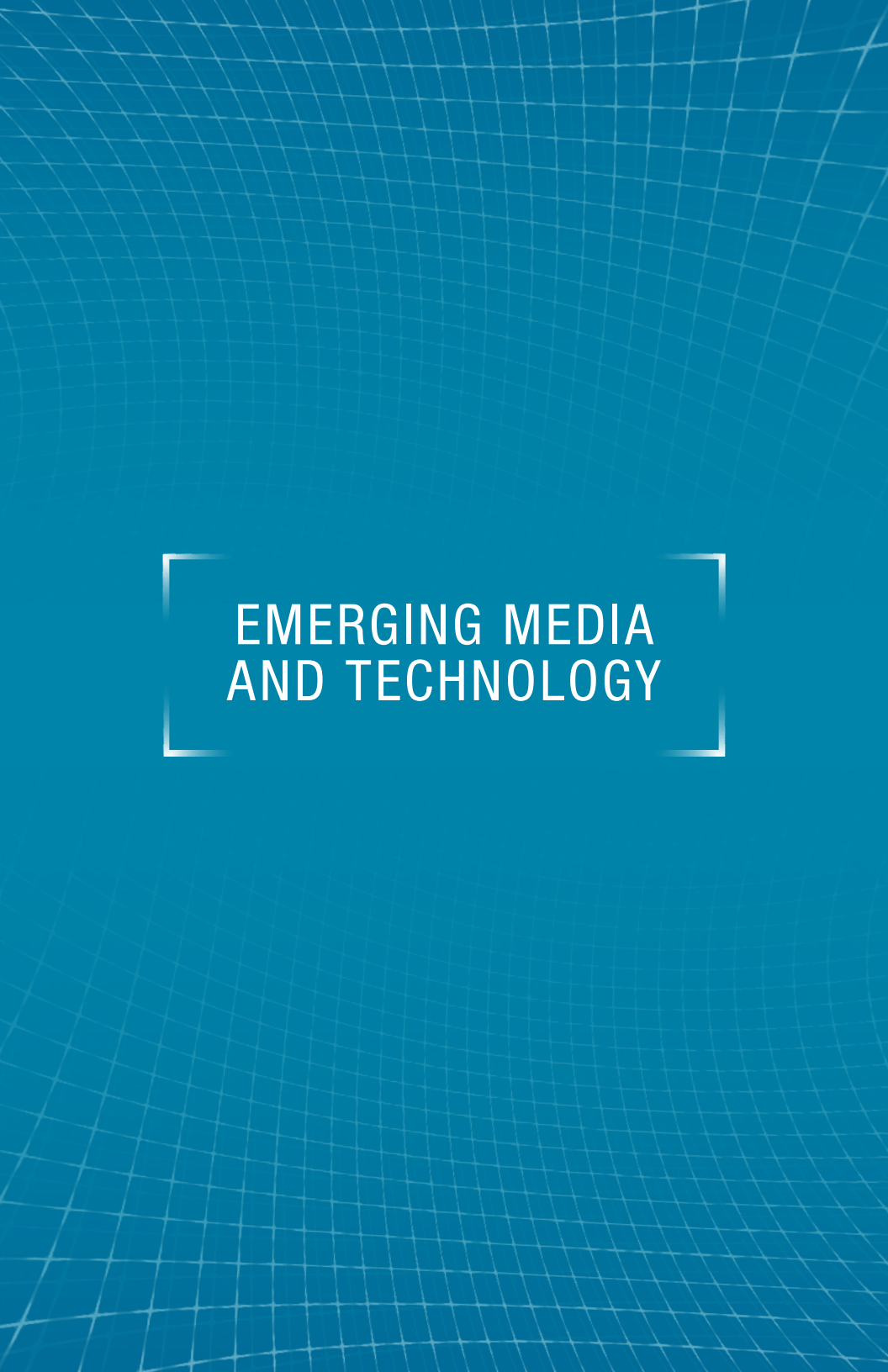
In summary, PR can and should play a key role in your unified marketing communications program. And Godfrey can develop a PR strategy and supporting tactics that will help you accomplish your goals and objectives. Because relationships matter to us, too.

## Five PR Questions to Consider in the Age of Direct Communications and Immediacy

1. How do you define your relationships with trade media, bloggers and other influencers? Strong? Merely adequate? Non-existent?
2. Are you providing your customers and prospects with the timely, relevant information they need to make intelligent business decisions? If not, perhaps you should revisit your strategy for content development and distribution.
3. Are you planning to launch a new product or service, make an acquisition, expand your manufacturing capacity or enter into a new partnership? If so, PR can help communicate your news to customers, prospects, the media and other stakeholders.
4. Do you have a crisis communication plan for your business? For example, if a natural disaster strikes your business, you need to recall a legacy product or your CEO is mired in scandal, do you have a plan to communicate effectively — and immediately — with your customers, suppliers, employees and the media? (And, remember, today “immediately” really does mean immediately!)
5. If PR is part of your marketing communications mix, how are you measuring its impact? Do you have a mechanism in place to track who’s picking up your news, whether the coverage is positive, negative or neutral, or whether you’re reaching your target audiences with the right messages?

### RELATED ARTICLES

- [“Old” Can Still Mean Current: Applying Classic Pitching Rules to New Media](#)
- [How Do You Define PR?](#)



**EMERGING MEDIA  
AND TECHNOLOGY**



# 8

## B2B Media Channels Worth Considering

**MELINDA BAUER**

When you know your audience, choosing the right media mix is easy.

One of the greatest challenges that marketing communications professionals face today is staying current on the vast array of ever-evolving media channels and platforms. There seems to be new and improved ways to connect with your audience emerging daily.

We hear this question from our clients all the time: “How can I get the most for my media budget with all the options that are available?”

We like to start at the beginning and get answers to the four fundamental questions that were covered in Godfrey’s [Media Channel Planning white paper](#).

- What are you trying to do?
- Who is your audience?
- Where do they go for information at various parts of the buying process?
- What do they want or need?

Answering these questions will help determine the most appropriate media channels to utilize and deliver your desired results. Some of the newer online media channels that we have been recommending for clients have not been as prevalent in B2B as they have been in the consumer world, so we wanted to touch on a few that are worth taking a look at for 2012:

- Online Ad Networks and Targeting
- Rich Media
- Online Video
- Social Media Advertising

## Online Ad Networks and Targeting

Ad networks have been a standard in the consumer world for many years, but only recently have they become a more viable option for B2B. An ad network is basically a one-stop shop where advertisers can place ads that will run on multiple websites. An ad network aggregates ad space from multiple publishers and allows for enhanced targeting. Here is a summary of the types of targeting:

- **Contextual targeting** — will reach people as they are actively engaged with information that is related to specific topics. An example would be showing a recycling ad on a website related to sustainability.
- **Behavioral or audience targeting** — reaches people based on their online activities and is independent of the content of the website. An example would be showing a recycling ad on CNN's home page to someone who visited the sustainability section of your website.

Utilizing these types of targeting can really improve the overall performance of your online ad campaign.

## Rich Media

Rich media display advertising has come a long way from the static and rotating frame banner ads traditionally used in B2B advertising. Rich media ads enable greater interaction and response to the ad, meaning it is no longer just about the “click.” Rich media ads can now deliver everything a landing page does. Picture an ad that can bring your product to life, showing how it operates, or an ad where someone can sign up to download

your whitepaper right within the ad. These are the types of things that are possible with rich media. Studies have shown that not only does rich media increase response rates, but they also have a positive impact on brand awareness.

## Online Video

A recent study by Google and Forbes Insight reported that 83% of B2B executives are watching more video today than a year ago. And 75% reported watching work-related videos on business-related websites on a weekly or more frequent basis. In addition to creating your own videos and YouTube channel, there are plenty of online video advertising opportunities. The three main types that can be included in a campaign are:

- **In video ads** — appear in the bottom 20% of the video viewing area.
- **In-stream video** — also known as pre-roll, mid-roll and post-roll, these ads appear within the video itself, either before, during or after the video plays.
- **Click-to-play** — these are ads that run on websites and are only activated when an interested user clicks to play the ad.
- **Around a video** — ads that run on video-oriented sites (such as YouTube) and are targeted based on the content of the videos.

## Social Media Advertising

Social media networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook offer advertising opportunities and are more capable of being able to narrowly target an audience, making it a viable option for B2B advertisers.

The targeting is based on what the audience has identified as their profile or as something that is important or of interest to them. Some examples of the types of audience targeting on social networks include:

- Employment factors like job title, employer and industry.
- Trade organizations or groups with which the users are affiliated.
- Demographic factors like gender, age and geography.
- Educational factors, including degree and major.
- Likes and interests (hobbies, etc.).

Advertising on social media networks is very similar to PPC advertising with Google; the cost is usually based on a click, so you only pay when someone clicks on your ad, making it a good way to promote new products, relevant offers and drive traffic to your website.

The rapidly expanding and shifting media landscape can seem overwhelming. But as long as you start with your customer, and have the fundamental media questions answered, picking the right media mix will be that much easier — no matter what hot digital trend comes along.

#### **RELATED ARTICLES**

- [B2B Online Advertising — Moving Beyond the Click](#)
- [A Call for Integrated B2B Media Audits](#)

# 9

## The Most Important Digital Language Is Your Customer's

**MIKE WILT**

Your customer's digital needs could involve any number of technologies, platforms, devices or languages. Most importantly, it must speak your customer's language.

Digital work is fun. It's flashy. I would imagine it provides the same kind of spark to its creators as ad-folk felt decades ago looking at their first billboard on display for commuters in various cities. B2B digital work is beyond fun and flashy. Just like all B2B marketing, we have the luxury of leveraging a more intimate sales relationship as opposed to most of B2C's broadcasted bullhorn. Where else in business can you connect nearly every communication, every message, every interaction and draw a straight line to a sale, lead or conversion?

If you have read this far in our e-book, it is safe to assume you are noticing the trend. Technology in its own right is not the solution to any problem. The solution, complicated and technical or artful in its simplicity, must be the solution to your user's problem, not your own. This means addressing your customer's digital needs could involve any number of technologies, platforms, devices or languages. Most importantly, it must speak your customer's language. Thinking about your digital presence

should be devoid of any acronyms (ePUB, SEO, PEO, NFC, RFID, QR, UTM, URL, SEM, CSS, CRM, CMS, CPA, CPC, HTML5, iOS5) platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Google Places, Ad Networks, crowd sourcing media) or “one-size-fits-all” solutions. The only language is your customer’s; the only platform is your content.

*“Let’s be frank. There is no possible way you or any one person can be a certified expert in all things digital.”*

## Clear Messaging Helps Drive Tech Strategy

The efficiency of digital work is deceiving. Few other mediums provide the opportunity to interact, educate and inform an audience on the scale that a carefully crafted and integrated digital strategy can provide. Just being there, having a Facebook page, taking a customer who clicks on an ad to any old generic page on your website, it’s not enough. By focusing on the message you want to deliver, not where you want to deliver it, you inherently provide the customer with more value. Communicating the correct, valuable message on the right digital medium is akin to a non-intrusive, welcomed conversation directly with your audience.

Let’s be frank. There is no possible way you or any one person can be a certified expert in all things digital. But all of the acronyms and terminology rattled off above could very well be applicable to your business (notice I said business, not just marketing). Which are best to carry your message? Which will reach and resonate with your customer? Which will drive a sale? Do you know? Your customer does.

### RELATED ARTICLES

→ [Why LinkedIn’s Share Button is a Must-Have for B2B Websites](#)

# 10

## Don't Let Your Strategies Be Driven by Technology-Enamored Decisions

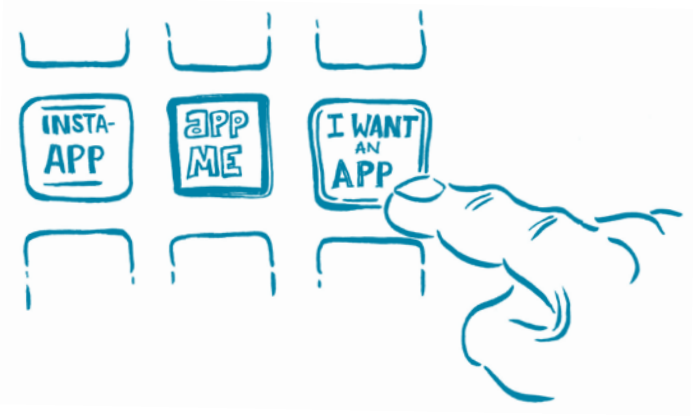
ANDY HUNT

As B2B media options increase, make sure they're relevant to your customer's needs.

Arguably, we've never had so many options to reach and communicate with our audiences. As these options mix and multiply, we're going to see some interesting communication opportunities. And while specific prediction is usually an iffy prospect at best (Second Life anyone?), sound approaches to technology usage in support of your programs is not. Continue to make sure your communications decisions are based on customer-driven needs. Don't let your strategies be driven by technology-enamored decisions. "I want an app" is a marketing strategy that has yet to work for anyone.

*"I want an app" is a marketing strategy that has yet to work for anyone.*

The "appification" of all things is going to continue to grow, but it's going to take on a familiar form. Through the use of HTML5 and its related technologies, we're seeing an alternate construction and publication



platform that brings it all back to the Web. It's a little funny thinking of the Web as an alternate, but that's really where we find ourselves.

### **Bridging the App Gap**

Up until now app development has meant learning a new language and putting distribution into the hands of a third-party app store host. Moving back to the Web utilizes skills your development team is familiar with and keeps you in control of what you say in your message and how it gets out. Amazon, the *Financial Times* and Walmart have all shown how the Web serves as a viable option in terms of the app space.

If apps are moving to the Web, does that mean the native app market will shrink? Probably not, but it'll be interesting to see what the response from app store vendors will be. If app makers move to the Web and away from the closed infrastructure that is native code + app store, will they create a new model? Ironically, it was Apple that dropped Flash support in iOS because the future was HTML5 and now finds that publishers have an increasingly viable non-Apple platform in which to build and distribute their services.

Is there a middle ground? We've seen how e-books provide a bridge to apps. The nature of an e-book is to re-flow the content into the format of the reading device giving a more natural involvement. Some eReaders, like

the iPad, support interactive elements like sound and video. The result is a more integrated experience for the user beyond the normal expectations of what traditional digital publication via PDF might provide.

Ultimately, your decision whether to get in the app game and how has to come from a variety of factors, first and foremost your customers. The right insight will always make your approach that much easier.

#### **RELATED ARTICLES**

- [Native Mobile App or Web App: Old Debate, New Simple Answer](#)
- [The Cost to Build a Mobile App: Is the Price Right?](#)





RESEARCH



# 11

## B2B Research that Pays Off

STACY WHISEL

Research isn't too expensive. And, insight into customer behavior is more important than ever in B2B marketing.

Before totally flipping past this chapter with the following popular pre-conceived notions:

- “Research is too expensive.”
- “We don't have time to do any customer outreach.”
- “We know who are customers are.”

Please consider the following counter arguments.

### **Misconception #1: Research is Too Expensive**

The term “research” can conjure up images of 100-page reports with tabulated data, conjoint analysis and margins of error. This type of research, although valuable in many cases, can be expensive — especially when the cost of research needs to come out of the marketing budget. It does not make a lot of sense to spend \$50,000 or more on a quantitative research study when your total budget is only \$100,000. A scenario like

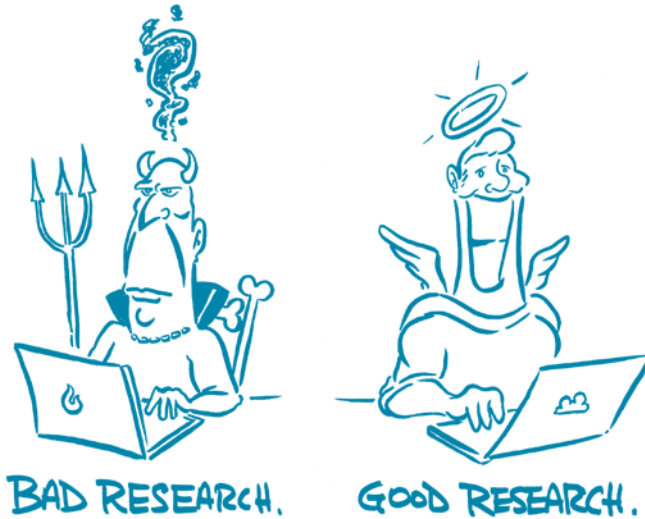
that leaves very little left over to implement anything you learned from the research. This is one of the reasons Godfrey does not use the word research anymore. We prefer “customer insight” or “knowledge driven.” We use terms like “insight” because we believe you don’t always need a comprehensive research study to get relevant information.

By partnering with our clients, Godfrey works to fit discovery and insight into the beginning stages of a unified program that won’t break your budget. The following are a few examples of lower cost methodologies for gaining valuable insight:

- In-depth telephone interviews with key customers and prospects to understand their issues and needs.
- Ride-alongs with the sales force to understand the sales dynamic and the types of marketing support materials that will help them and are useful to the customer.
- In-field distributor visits, to see first-hand how customers buy the product.
- Phone interviews with editors at relevant publications to get a big picture of the marketplace.
- Competitive audits to discern the messaging your competitors are using.
- Social media monitoring to see the hot topics garnering conversation online.

## **Misconception #2: We Don’t Have Time to Do Any Research**

There is a perception that research takes a long time. The B2B market can be a complicated world, and research is no different. Timing comes into play when looking to do research about a very targeted market or audience. It can take time to recruit a specialized audience. If you are looking to conduct a brand awareness study among design engineers who specify transmission systems for wind turbines, it’s going to take some time to find that audience. It can be done, but not overnight — which is why planning ahead is critical to a successful research project.



**BAD Research Goal:** Try and figure out what is going on in the wind power market.

**GOOD Research Goal:** Learn the design issues engineers have in formulating innovative applications in the development of wind turbines.

If you have a new campaign that will launch in 2012, start the insight phase now. The actual time it takes do most research is a few weeks at the most, if you have a plan in place. In most cases, a research plan that has a defined goal can be accomplished in relatively short time — as long as you incorporate the time needed for proper recruiting, field implementation and distillation of results. The key is having a defined goal, and not a nebulous scope.

### **Misconception #3: We Know Who Our Customers Are**

We hear this a lot. And for the most part, we believe it. You know your business better than anyone. But making assumptions about your customers is not always a safe bet. As referenced in many other chapters of this book, there are so many media channels, platforms and technologies today, and they are constantly evolving. Being able to truly understand how your audience wants to receive information throughout the buying process and the types of information they need is critical.

## It Pays to Know Your Audience

A scenario of making an assumption about your customers could play out like this. A company wants to position themselves as innovative and a resource to their customers, so they decide to build a customized iPad app. The marketing team spends a quarter of their budget to build it, another quarter of the budget to promote it, and through analytics, discover that their customers are not downloading the app and those that have are not using it. This would be a terrible waste of time and money. This type of scenario could easily be avoided by doing some upfront research. If this company would have learned about its customers at the very beginning, they might have learned that their customers preferred a mobile-optimized website with constantly updated product specification sheets. Again, this type of research does not need to be expensive, or take a lot of time. Godfrey regularly does this type of work in our insight phase of campaign planning.

We find tremendous value in the information we get from doing qualitative interviews with internal stakeholders at companies as well as key customers and prospects. It is at the core of a unified B2B marketing program — relevant insight that drives the strategy.

### RELATED ARTICLES

- [“We Know Who Our Customers Are.” Really?](#)
- [Tips for Conducting Secondary Research Online](#)
- [6 Tips for Designing the Perfect B2B Survey](#)



MOBILE



# 12

## Designing for Mobile: What You Should Do for Your Audience

**JENNIFER LEIGH BROWN**

Having a B2B mobile strategy starts with defining your goals.

If you are a B2B marketer, odds are you experienced one of these scenarios this year:

- Your CEO got an iPad and wants you to build an app as part of your 2012 marketing efforts. (But only 10% of your target audience is using iOS.)
- Your best customers insist if you had a mobile-optimized site for ordering online, they would do more business with you. (But none of them use the desktop extranet you built.)
- Every time a new tablet comes out, the sales force instantly wants a new presentation for it; meanwhile you don't know if the distributor network (some of which only have feature phones and desktop computers) even used the CD-based tools you created.

As a part of 2012 planning, defining your mobile strategy and determining where to invest your budget is difficult when you have so many stakeholders to please. What the CEO, sales force or your best

customers want might not align with what your broader target audience needs. While there are plenty of opinions on what marketing should do, these groups usually have no understanding of what your budget actually *can* do.

*“Whatever you do, don’t start with the technology. Start with people.”*

## How Can (and Should) You Address Mobile in 2012?

Whether you are struggling with the budgetary decision to build a native app, optimize your website for mobile or redo your desktop site using responsive web design, you need to start at the same place: define the goals. What are the business and marketing objectives and how will you measure your success?

Whatever you do, don’t start with the technology. Start with people. Beginning with, “We need an iPad app!” without knowing what your target users need may end with a high investment and little return. Starting with, “How can we help Bob the distributor explain this product to the end user so we can increase sales by 30%?” can help guide your solution and determine how to best allocate funds. Answer this first, then begin envisioning the mobile experience you can create to help reach your goals. (And it would help to actually talk to Bob!)

## Designing a Mobile Experience

Identifying goals and understanding your target audience is the first phase of defining a B2B mobile strategy. Remembering that you are building an experience for a person, and not technology for a device, needs to be a part of every phase that follows. These tips will help you get started and keep the user at the center of your approach.

1. **Know and involve your users.** You can’t design an effective mobile experience without involving the people you expect to be a part of it. Do your research. Find out what users want, how they think and work, and what you can create to help them.

2. **Start with needs, not the tactical solution.** What can you offer that adds value? Identify how mobile can be used to make something better, faster or easier for users.
3. **Don't let technology lead.** iPad and iPhone apps are hot — but what's popular isn't always what's really used. What percentage of your target audiences uses these devices? Can you design something right for the device that is valuable to them?
4. **Focus on what you can do well and streamline it.** Don't try to do everything. Mobile design requires streamlining. Reduce tasks down to the key things users want to do or access pertaining to your services or content. Cut things out and simplify.
5. **Know the competition but understand the value.** It's good to know what competitors are doing. It's better to know what competitors aren't doing and you should be. Figure out what unique value you can provide with your mobile solution.
6. **Design for an uncontrolled environment.** Be sensitive to where information will be accessed. Usage behavior may be filled with interruptions, distractions and movement. Consider low bandwidth, short interactions and partial attention spans. Information needs may be urgent, repetitive or a result of boredom. Variable situations mean your interface has to be intuitive and agile.
7. **Test! Test! Test!** You aren't the user. Test your solution with your target audience with their devices.
8. **Have a goal at the beginning, but realize there's no end.** Establish a strategy and metrics at the start of the project, but remember improving the experience is never finished. Supporting, promoting and improving your mobile solution is never done.

Your business can be accessed everywhere — so how can you use mobile to make your offering stronger in 2012?

## RELATED ARTICLES

- [Your Mobile Design Isn't Working. Here's How I Know](#)
- [5 Assumptions Ruining Your Mobile Design Approach](#)





# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



# 13

## B2B SEO Like You Mean It: Think Beyond Obligatory

CLIFF LEWIS

Understanding the core practices of SEO and why they matter to you.

At this point, there's no question about it: any digital marketing campaign should include SEO. Let's give ourselves a hand. We've all admitted its importance — and that's the first step to creating a powerful search campaign! But it's also the first step to creating a half-hearted, useless search campaign. Whenever you acknowledge an emerging priority, you have to choose between obligatory participation and passionate engagement.

So how do we engage a search program like we really *mean* it? A good place to start is understanding the core practices of SEO and why they should matter to you. So let's walk through a few of the basics.

**Keyword research collects a list of a words and phrases that promise actual customer interaction and search volume.** This is where every SEO campaign should begin, and it teaches us a lesson that reaches well beyond the realm of search: it's not about Google or Bing or Yahoo or any other digital machine. It's not about you, either. Your SEO campaign — and all of your marketing, for that matter — should begin with the needs of your audience.

The process of keyword research forces you to ask a couple questions that can inform all of your marketing efforts. How does your audience talk about what they need and what you do? What are the actual words they will type when they are looking for precisely what you provide? Gaining and applying such knowledge can yield valuable content that not only ranks well in search, but also powerfully engages your audience. (More on that later.)

**Competitive analysis gathers valuable “intel” on what your competitors are doing to boost their search position.** You can never think of SEO in a vacuum. “Moving up” always means moving above the other results. An effective competitive analysis will assess targeted keywords, site structure, content and SEO strategy to find points of strength and weakness among competing sites, helping you determine exactly where you can get a leg up.

## **On-Page Optimization Strategy Considerations**

- Site structure
- URL naming and structuring
- Page title
- Meta data
- Head tag utilization
- Page content (includes text, video, pictures and other elements)
- Social media sharing features

**Content strategy requires you to translate your search goals, your messaging priorities and your ongoing editorial process into a cohesive, actionable plan for content production and maintenance.** Here’s a helpful no-brainer: search engines tend to value important content. Web content that is well organized, consistently maintained and useful to its targeted audience gains powerful equity with Google and the rest. Why? Because that’s the content their users are looking for. Good search results catch the attention of a good search engine.

Here are a few core elements of your site that should be strongly influenced by a functioning content strategy:

- Content organization
- Content layout
- Depth of content (grouping like content together)
- Content pathways (arranging content to lead down a specific path)

As a Web writer, I'm frequently struck by the natural overlap of [good SEO and good content](#).

When you establish a healthy, keyword-informed content strategy, the result will be a site full of relevant, findable, valuable content that brings more visitors and builds more leads.

## SEO Trends in 2012

Semantic tagging is on the rise, since Google has recently embraced this coding feature as a big part of the future of search. Already, semantic tagging could improve your click-through rates, since the content of these tags will appear in your visible search results, providing more valuable information for the user. To learn more about semantic tagging, check out [Mean What You Say with Semantics](#) or [www.schema.org](http://www.schema.org)

As social media and content sharing are increasingly impacting the ranking algorithms of major search providers, web content strategy provides an invaluable means of boosting your content's inherent value and "share-worthiness."

Sharing mechanisms like the +1, Facebook and Twitter share buttons continue to grow in importance. These simple add-ons communicate value to search engines every time they are used to share your content.

### RELATED ARTICLES

→ [Let Your Right Brain in on the Meta Description](#)

→ [B2B Marketing SEO Tips for YouTube](#)





**SOCIAL MEDIA**



# 14

## Experiment with B2B Social Media to See What Works

**ANDY DEBRUNNER**

Innovate or deteriorate: Stay in front of the social media wave by taking small, yet significant measured risks.

For marketers, growing pains have been a way of life since the advent of the corporate website, and it really began to hurt right around the year 2000. While thousands of IT professionals were worried about Y2K crashing the world's computers, thousands of marketers were just as worried about what to do if they didn't crash.

Early on, the struggle was to determine just how a company's website actually fit in to a larger marketing campaign. The popularity of the Internet, particularly how Google changed the landscape, forced marketers to start asking some pretty challenging questions that they didn't know how to answer. Should I buy ads to promote the site? If so, should I focus on paid search or display? And what in the world is SEO? Pay someone to write website content that nobody can actually see? Absurd!

Of course, now all of those tactics are generally considered essential pieces to any digital marketing campaign. But just when marketers (and agencies, too) started getting comfortable setting up and managing display,



paid search and SEO campaigns, social media came along and knocked everyone back to 1999. And so around 2006, the ad industry began the growth process anew.

But don't fret. It's not that bad. We've gone through this sort of thing before. We know your budget is tight and you don't have time to manage a social media campaign. That's totally fine. The key to real success in social media is in planning and research (noticing a theme yet?). Actually, getting started with social media might be easier than you think.

## **Why You Should Give Social Media a Fighting Chance**

Some are still wondering if social media is right for their company or waiting to see if it sticks around. But if there is one theme that has carried through since the beginning of the Internet age, it's that the only constant is change. In academia, the mantra is "publish or perish." In marketing, the phrase is more like "innovate or deteriorate." Because businesses that aren't staying on the front side of the digital wave and taking small, yet significant measured risks will be left behind to think about what happened to their market share. The trick is deciding what technologies and marketing strategies to pursue.

In *The Lean Startup*, author Eric Ries extols the virtues of the entrepreneurial spirit in old companies and startups alike. The book outlines concepts that help businesses cut development costs and get products to market quickly. The basic concept is simple — Build, Measure, Learn. This really applies to all aspects of business, and marketing is no exception. Establish metrics for a new tactic or strategy, try it, measure it, optimize or abandon it, repeat. So pursue as many options as possible and only keep using the ones that work. This keeps companies nimble and moving forward and will leave staid, stagnant competitors in the dust.

*“Establish metrics for a new tactic or strategy, try it, measure it, optimize or abandon it, repeat.”*

In fact, this very e-book is a perfect embodiment of that notion. This is the first e-book that we’ve done for ourselves. We don’t know if it will be a resounding success or a total failure. What we do know, however, is that no matter what the result is, we will know whether we should keep doing them or move on to something else. And, in this context, that’s all that matters.

After all, you can never know which side of the coin will land face up, so why not bet on both?

## **RELATED ARTICLES**

- [Removing the Social Media Red Tape: Five Steps for Highly Regulated Companies](#)
- [Skate to Where the Puck will be, not to Where its Been](#)
- [Five Ways to Get the Most Out of LinkedIn for Your Company](#)





ANALYTICS



# 15

## Making B2B Analytics Actionable and Sustainable

JIM EVERHART / LEANNE TERPAK

B2B metrics can improve your marketing accountability.

We can all agree that it's a good thing to measure and communicate the value B2B marketing brings to our organizations.

In the past, it was difficult to track marketing effectiveness without sifting through a mountain of data. But now there's good news. We're beginning to find new ways to track and measure marketing activity without breaking the bank or, alternately, burying your management with a barrage of meaningless (to them) statistics.

We are definitely coming to a point where B2B marketing metrics are necessary. And here's why a growing number of businesses are seeing tremendous opportunities in improving marketing accountability:

**Continuous improvement.** If you're in an industrial setting, as most B2B marketers are, your management understands the concept of continuous improvement: the essence of the manufacturing quality systems of the past few decades. Most likely, they would respond positively to the idea of putting a continuous feedback loop in place to allow you to optimize your marketing communications. So tying marketing to such a

well-established concept could be the key to justifying the expense and effort required to get the appropriate tools in place.

**Marketing's contribution.** What better way to justify the marketing budget than to show how and where marketing contributes to corporate objectives and the bottom line? That level of accountability will help boost the role of marketing, especially as we can begin to project market trends and forecast the amount of traffic entering the sales pipeline.

**Competitive advantage.** Retail magnate John Wanamaker once observed that, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half." According to a recent study, companies that have invested in marketing automation, hoping to answer that question, are among the most profitable in their business sectors. They are turning marketing from an expense into an investment.

As a result, more and more B2B marketers are finding there's no better time than the present to start implementing analytics. It's time to start thinking about marketing metrics and accountability by paying greater attention to web and program analytics.

*Is your system working properly?*

*Does it weigh all aspects of the program: web and print, offline and online?*

*Does it tie marketing outcomes to business objectives?*

If not, it may be time to consider an upgrade in your analytics program.

## Getting Started

Godfrey believes marketing analytics must be firmly grounded in business realities. We have two simple rules we use to drive our efforts.

- First, focus on business objectives and then Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). What is the outcome the business needs from its marketing efforts? Brand awareness? Leads? Whatever it is, your success in achieving those objectives needs to come out of the analysis loud and clear.
- Second, make it easy to understand. Always begin with the top-level dynamics. How successful were you in raising awareness, producing leads or moving the sales needle? And how, specifically, did marketing achieve those objectives?

You might show how specific elements of the program helped further the cause. For Godfrey, that usually involves the client's website, and an analysis of its success in moving users through the site and gauging specific areas of interest.

Only when you need to illustrate a specific point should you delve into specifics. And only then if it's actionable — where you're asking for a decision. And rather than shovel layers upon layers of data into their lap, give them the top-line only and see if they ask for or need anything else. They'll thank you for making it easier.

## Talking Strategies, Rather Than Tactics

Providing program analysis rather than tactical data creates an important new opportunity for marketers to have strategic, rather than tactical discussions with their management. Rather than talking about whether or not you come up No. 1 in search, you're discussing positioning issues and market trends. And instead of budget cuts, you're relating marketing expenditures to sales growth. That's the clear promise of improving marketing accountability.

### RELATED ARTICLES

- [B2B Marketing Analytics: What's Stopping Us?](#)
- [The Top 5 Reasons for Developing an Analytics Strategy](#)



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