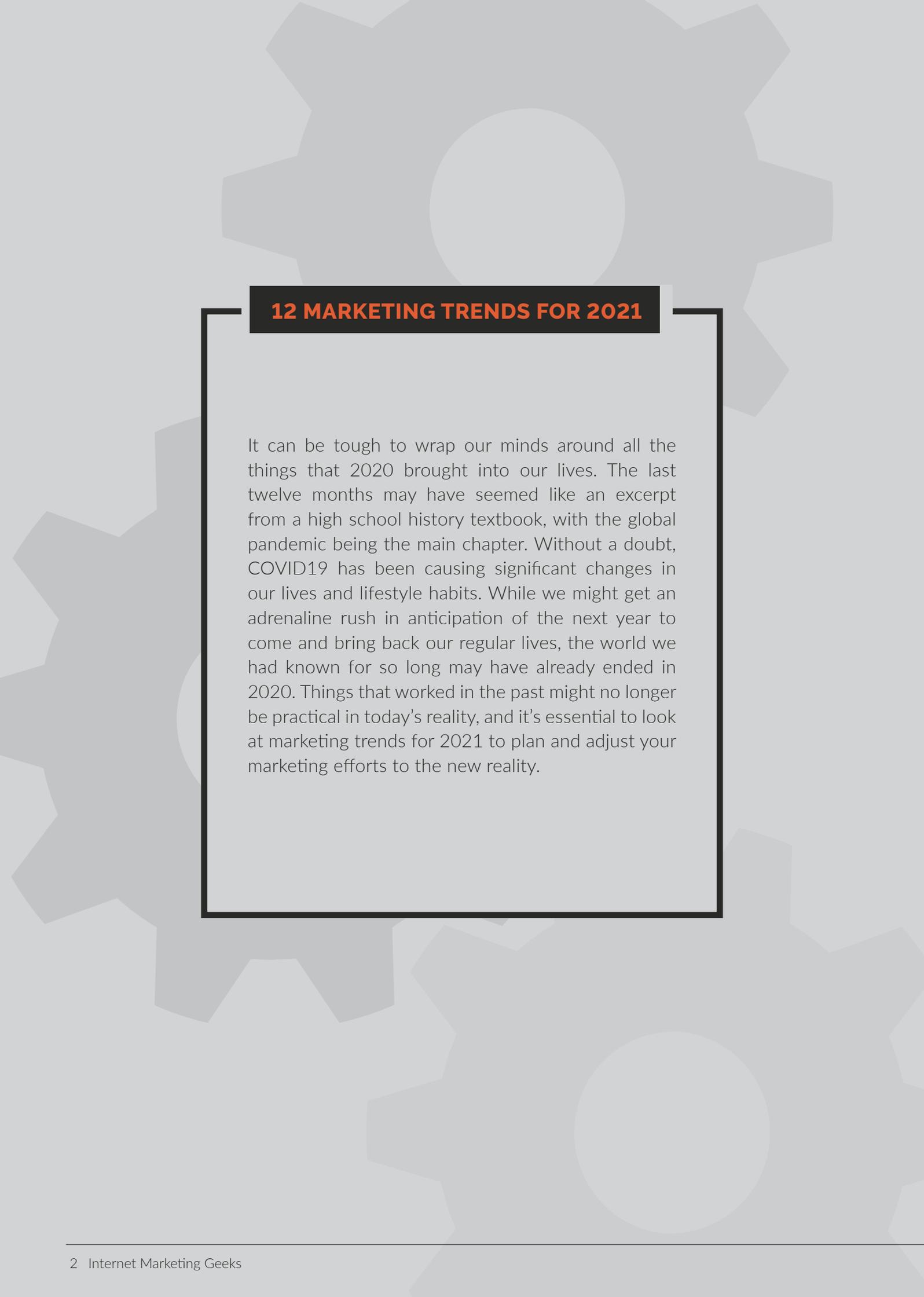


INTERNET MARKETING GEEKS

TRENDS REPORT 2021



12 MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2021

It can be tough to wrap our minds around all the things that 2020 brought into our lives. The last twelve months may have seemed like an excerpt from a high school history textbook, with the global pandemic being the main chapter. Without a doubt, COVID19 has been causing significant changes in our lives and lifestyle habits. While we might get an adrenaline rush in anticipation of the next year to come and bring back our regular lives, the world we had known for so long may have already ended in 2020. Things that worked in the past might no longer be practical in today's reality, and it's essential to look at marketing trends for 2021 to plan and adjust your marketing efforts to the new reality.

MEET THE GEEKS

OUR MARKETING EXPERTS



Lisa Carter
President

Starting her career in design and coding before moving to all things marketing, Lisa enjoys providing creative and effective digital marketing solutions.



Kirsteen McQuade-Crangle
Client Success Director

Kirsteen works with the team to ensure success for clients. She brings a wide breadth of knowledge to enhance the client journey.



Naida Bastedo
Chief Financial Officer

After a career in finance and technology spanning various industries, Naida brings her wealth of experience to Internet Marketing Geeks.



Lucia Brus
Director of Strategy

Lucia lives and breathes strategy and is always looking for the next "big thing". She enjoys working with clients on plans to help them achieve their goals.



Thom Roberts
Technology Director

A self-proclaimed perfectionist, Thom strives to ensure all requests from clients are met exactly as described, and as quickly as possible.



Joseph Trinh
Marketing Strategist

With years of experience in marketing and ad copy, Joe is always eager to work with clients to convey their intent through the right words, strategy, and media.



Deecotda Finlayson
Marketing Assistant

From web development to marketing, Deecotda is always happy to jump in and help out. He carries out tasks with the utmost importance and care.



Douglas Hammond
Developer

Douglas is most at home when in front of a developer's console. With a career that has spanned decades, he will strive to produce websites and tools that will help clients achieve their vision.

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YOU MUST BUILD A STRONG ONLINE PRESENCE

UNSURPRISINGLY,
WHEN THERE IS
A DEADLY VIRUS
SPREADING
FROM PERSON TO
PERSON IN REAL
LIFE, THE DIGITAL
WORLD IS OUR
ESCAPE.

As of October 2020, **the number of internet users is 4.66 billion**, up from 4.16 billion from the last year. Now 59% of the world's population achieves most of the daily tasks **online**, and shopping is no exception. While **45%** of organizations don't yet have a clearly defined digital marketing strategy, it's the perfect time for you to create one so you can stand out from the competition in 2021.

Your online presence has been crucial in acquiring more customers and increasing your company's revenue for many years, even long before the pandemic. If some good reasons, such as the perfect location or the reputation you have built over a few decades (but there is no good excuse for not having a website), put your online presence in the shade, now's the time to build one.

There is no ready made recipe for it, but you'll undoubtedly need:

- A website
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- A blog
- Social media accounts

YOUR WEBSITE IS WHERE IT BEGINS

Per Google, **97% of consumers** use the internet to find local businesses. Without an online presence, you will lose potential customers, regardless of your business's size or the industry. Without a doubt, **if you want to generate revenue in 2021, you need a website.**

Even when you don't sell things online, your potential customers will want to learn about your company using the internet. Like you'd check a restaurant's menu before inviting your crush on a date, your prospects want to know about your store before visiting it. That's why, if you don't yet have a website, it's the best time to invest in one so that you can convert more internet users to your customers.

A BLOG INCREASES YOUR BRAND'S TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ALLOWS YOU TO APPEAR IN MORE SEARCH QUERIES

Blog content creation is a top priority for **55%** of marketers, and if you haven't yet given it a try, 2021 is the time to do so.

While optimizing your site for search engines helps you improve your online rankings, a blog is a crucial part of your SEO strategy and allows you to appear in more search queries.

When a user searches for **'how to comb curly hair,'** for instance, Google will have no reason to provide a hairbrush product page as the best result in a query because it's not the answer to the question **'how to.'** Instead, it will provide a user with helpful content in-detail explaining the process of brushing curly hair without selling a product to the user.

Your blog aims to help your prospective clients and share beneficial information so that you can increase trust towards your company in the eyes of your potential customers and Google. Blog articles keep your site fresh and signal to search engines that your pages are up to date, which may impact your online rankings.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION IS WHERE USERS DISCOVER YOUR WEBSITE

While having a website is a must, it's only a starting point in digital marketing. **Most of your prospects don't know about your business until they use the internet to find you.**

Google is how users navigate the internet and find information. Your prospective customers don't know your website address, and to find what you are selling, they will visit a search engine like Google.

Once they type queries, Google provides a list of relevant pages to a user. Although it sounds straightforward, **no matter how relevant a page is, it may not appear at the top of the search results if you don't optimize it for search engines.**

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTS YOU TO MORE POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

Social media is a crucial part of your online presence and allows you to build relationships with your prospects. It's a place where users can engage with your content and ask direct questions. Most, or even all your potential clients, scroll social media daily, and having accounts on different channels will allow you to reach them.

Social media is an excellent place to post pictures, videos, news, tips, questions, and updates about the business. Some of the platforms you can include in your digital marketing strategy are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and so forth.

LOCAL SEO

Local SEO will remain crucial even in 2021 after one of the worst pandemics in history (which hopefully will reach its finale this year), diverting our lives towards the internet. Even if you operate solely online, you need to invest in local SEO to appear in search queries containing location indicators, such as "near me," "nearby," "close to," "in **+the name of the city,**"

Local results are very competitive. Google provides users with the three most relevant businesses in a query in the form of a list called Local 3-Pack, and if you don't aim to appear in it, you may lose potential customers. Google sorts companies based on location, relevance, and prominence. While you cannot manipulate your store's or a searcher's location, you can help Google better understand your business's relevance by investing in local SEO.

BE UNIQUE TO STAND OUT FROM THE FIERCE COMPETITION BY BEING DIFFERENT

TO HAVE A CLEARER IDEA OF YOUR BRAND IMAGE, THINK OF YOUR BUSINESS AS A PERSON AND ITS PERSONALITY.

YOU DO **WHAT YOU DO** BECAUSE YOU ARE **WHO YOU ARE**.

In 2021 people will want to learn about your business and how you offer a unique product or service, so it's essential to build a brand image that stands out – show how your company differs from the competition. Show how your company offers something new and exciting to your customers.

To have a clearer idea of what makes your company unique, think of your business as a person and that person having a personality. **What kind of impression do you want others to have on your brand?** Or what do you want your customers to **feel** when purchasing your products?

Regardless of what you sell, hundreds or even thousands of others could sell the same products, so what makes you different is:

- How your products are perceived
- Why you sell it
- How you communicate your unique value to your customers.

The two foundational steps of making your unique values relevant are:

- Learning who your audience is
- Learning about the difference between you and your competitors

To build a unique brand image, first, you'll need to determine who your audience is. Moreover, you will need to discover how your business is different from others to help you stand out.



WHEN COUNTLESS COMPANIES OFFER THE SAME PRODUCTS AS YOU SELL, YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS A PURPOSE TO EXIST OR A PERSPECTIVE VALUE FOR YOUR CHOSEN AUDIENCE.

WHY DO PEOPLE NEED YOUR BRAND AND YOUR PRODUCTS?

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR YOUR EXISTENCE?

For instance, do you sell vintage clothes? Then perhaps you want to bring attention to the process of how you choose and treat vintage pieces to breathe new life into them. Or, you may want to impress your audience that you uncover forgotten relics of history through your sales of vintage clothing. Thus, your customers become part of living history, connecting the present with

the past. Find what message your customers deem as essential and make that the unique message you wish to convey.

Moreover, humans are emotional creatures; we all know that, especially after such an overwhelming year, so it's essential to determine what emotions you want to inspire in people.

WHAT EMOTIONS DO YOU WANT TO INSPIRE IN PEOPLE?

EXCITEMENT
CURIOSITY
SADNESS
ANGER
JOY
COMFORT



Connecting with your audience on an emotional level is a great way to build strong relationships with customers. In the case of a vintage store, you may want to inspire emotions of **sadness or anger** by telling a story of the fast fashion industry's environmental impact or child labor in the fashion supply. Make sure when you inspire negative emotions such as **sadness or anger**, that you provide solutions to the problem, such as alternative methods of clothing or a call to action to fight the issue. Or perhaps all you want to inspire is the **excitement** of owning one-of-a-kind clothes nobody else will have. While you may inspire different emotions in different circumstances, and they can

vary from **joy to anger**, it's essential to determine the primary emotion your brand will inspire in customers to build your brand image.

And with all that in mind, it's essential to **create comprehensive design elements that will translate your brand's unique image and set you apart from the competition**. Your company's visual design will be the first impression to your audience and potential customers. Choose a visual style that will rise above the noise and be striking to all who see it. Brand identity also helps build trust in your company.

A logo is crucial in building brand identity and conveying your unique perspective value; a logo and a color palette alone aren't enough. Your brand identity requires a comprehensive visual language you can apply to every element of your company online and offline, including:

- Logo
- Colors
- Fonts
- Graphics
- Imagery
- Business cards
- Packaging
- Advertisements
- Tone of voice
- Messaging



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) CAN INFLUENCE HOW YOU STAND OUT.

Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) in marketing allows you to attract those consumers who want to make a positive difference with their purchases. Your CSR strategy should reflect the company you're trying to build and choose a cause representing your unique brand and image. Find organizations that share the same ideals and qualities that your company has and associate yourself with them. The good that you do in your community should reflect your overall mission as a company.

A report shows that **66%** of consumers are willing to pay more for goods from brands that demonstrate social commitment.

When a community can identify your brand through the work you accomplish, it adds to your company's unique image. Social responsibility marketing strategies can include recyclable packaging, eco-friendly transportation for delivery services, efforts to spread awareness of social issues, or even donating part of profits from sales to charity or directing it towards solving social problems. It all goes back to your company's purpose, which can help define your company as a unique entity and give your brand a recognizable personality.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT IS A MUST



We have all the information at our fingertips, and internet users search everything from **'how to cut onions without crying'** to **'how to sleep better at night.'** Google receives at least **1 trillion** searches per year, and most of them are answers to informational queries without the users' intention to purchase products but to solve problems at home.

Your educational content is there to attract more prospects and help convert them to your customers. It enables you to gain trust from users who search for answers online and find solutions within your content.

Educational content inspires, helps, and educates your prospects, so they are confident when deciding to become your customers.

There are many ways to educate users and different forms of content you can create, such as blogs, videos, audio, email, social media posts, etc.

YOUR
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THERE TO
ATTRACT MORE
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VIDEO IS GAINING MORE ATTENTION

VIDEO IS ONE
OF THE MOST
EFFECTIVE
WAYS TO
SHOW
VIEWERS
WHAT YOUR
BUSINESS IS
ALL ABOUT.

Humans love visuals, and, unsurprisingly, video is gaining more and more attention online, with Google, including YouTube videos as the best results in plenty of queries. If you search for 'how to brush hair,' for instance, you'll see a YouTube video is the first result in a question.

So, not only are videos more entertaining for some of your prospects, but they also may get you at the top of search results. YouTube **is the second largest search engine** globally, and many of your potential customers may start looking for relevant information there. **81%** of businesses now use video marketing – up from 63% last year for some good reasons:

WHY VIDEO?

- Internet users love watching videos (the world reportedly watches **1 billion hours** of YouTube social video per day)
- Videos bring a high return on investment (ROI)
- Videos can work wonders for your SEO
- It helps educate people.

Video is not only fun; it's one of the most effective ways to show viewers what your business is all about. While creating videos, you must think beyond selling your product and demonstrate something about your philosophy, share helpful information, news, or update about an exciting event in the industry.

INTERACTIVE CONTENT IS GROWING IN POPULARITY

Content remains to be the king, but in 2021 interactive content is taking over. **93%** of marketers now rate interactive content as highly effective at educating prospective customers.

There are many benefits to interactive content, from engaging customers to providing marketers with valuable data, which they can later use in their content marketing efforts.

There are different types of interactive content, such as:

- Interactive infographics
- Interactive video
- Polls and surveys
- Calculators
- Assessments
- Interactive e-books and white papers
- Interactive emails
- Product recommendations
- Data visualizations
- Diagnostic tools
- Contests
- Augmented reality

Such content allows room for engagement, instead of users passively reading, listening, or watching. It also enables users to see what *they* want to see instead of what you want *them* to see. As a result, your marketing efforts come across as less obtrusive, and you can gain your prospects' trust.

INTERACTIVE
CONTENT ALLOWS
ROOM FOR
ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGING CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA WILL HELP YOU BUILD TRUST

WITH STORIES,
YOUR AUDIENCE
WILL GET TO
KNOW YOUR
BRAND BETTER.

GO LIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2021 one of the most effective ways to educate your customers while engaging them is by using the Live Function on different social media channels. Tools such as Facebook and Instagram Live help build brand awareness. Live videos are easy to create – all you'll need is a smartphone or a laptop, a quiet setting, and the online audience.

Live videos may increase trust towards your brand, as they aren't pre-recorded and edited, and allow direct communication with potential customers who can ask questions during the session. The best thing about live videos is that users can co-create them, as each question they ask will shape the content you produce. The topics you address in Live videos can be about your products, FAQ, industry trends, related issues, etc.

ADD TO STORIES

At least **50%** of the brands active on Instagram have already posted at least one story. Have you?

Stories across social media channels may seem like an unimportant function you wouldn't need to use for your marketing efforts and something you can leave out of your strategy. However, they allow you to effortlessly keep your customers updated about your operations, discounts, inventory, and updates. With Stories, your audience will know you continuously deliver the best products and experiences and get to know your brand better. Some of the stories you share can be from the events you attend, packages you ship, new products you add to the inventory or even your office pets.

EACH WEEK, MORE AMERICANS LISTEN TO PODCASTS THAN GO TO CHURCH



Some users like to read, and others want to watch and listen, but some are looking for even more effortless ways to consume information while performing such tasks as cycling, walking, jogging, or commuting to places. Podcasts are becoming increasingly popular. According to **statistics**, in 2020, more Americans listened to podcasts weekly than attended church or religious services for the first time. Moreover, Google has already launched a web version of Google Podcasts for iOS, Android, and Windows, allowing users to play podcasts directly in the browser.

Google podcasts increase your brand's exposure and provide detailed listening information and graphs for your episodes, so you know who is listening and how the audience is interacting with the content.

When creating your company's marketing plan for 2021, don't forget about podcasts; **millions** of Americans prefer consuming information through their headphones, and that's how you can speak to them (literally).

PODCASTS
INCREASE
YOUR BRAND'S
EXPOSURE
AND PROVIDE
DETAILED
LISTENING
INFORMATION.

PARTNER UP AND GROW TOGETHER

PARTNERING UP WITH
OTHER COMPANIES
TO PROMOTE
TOGETHER WILL
HELP YOUR BUSINESS
GROW

Strategic partnerships can work wonders for your small business and help your brand grow.

Partnering up with like-minded larger businesses that aren't your direct competitors will allow you to benefit from an existing customer base and other useful resources for your brand. Larger companies can also greatly benefit from the partnership, which can position them as an early adopter and add value to their company.

However, larger companies aren't the only way to create strategic partnerships. If you are a startup business, look for other startup companies to partner up with to promote your brands together.

While it requires investing your time and energy into finding the right fit for your strategic partnership, it will be worth it and help your business grow.



EMAIL MARKETING REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MARKETING TOOLS

Email marketing may have been around for a long time, but it's far from being outdated. It's one of the most potent marketing channels you can use for promoting your products in 2021. **For every \$1 you spend on email marketing, you can expect a return of \$38**, which is an impressive 3,800% **ROI**, making it one of the most effective marketing channels.

Emails allow direct communication with your customers, and most importantly, enable you to send personalized messages.

The most challenging step in email marketing remains to acquire information from users. No one wants to share their email address with a business they don't know. However, email opt-in forms on your site and incentives like a lead magnet – a free downloadable piece of content and discounts in exchange for email addresses will help you in the process.

Grouping users based on a shared location or any specific factor that may impact their buying decisions will help you send relevant and useful emails that your potential buyers will be more likely to read. You can use emails to send welcome emails, abandoned cart emails, emails about seasonal discounts, new arrivals, or even offer special promotions to loyal customers.

For your email marketing campaigns, you can use **email marketing software** applications to design a template and personalize the subject line. Personalization is a crucial aspect of email marketing as **emails** with **personalized** subject lines generate **50%** higher **open rates**.

THE MOST CHALLENGING STEP IN EMAIL MARKETING REMAINS TO ACQUIRE INFORMATION FROM USERS.

INFLUENCER MARKETING WILL HELP YOU REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IN 2021

SOCIAL MEDIA
CHANNELS
HAVE ALLOWED
US TO CREATE
VIRTUAL
INFLUENCERS
THAT PEOPLE
LOVE, FEEL
CONNECTED
TO, TRUST, AND
FOLLOW.



In today's virtual reality, you may feel like every channel you go to, influencers are right there, and it's true; influencers are now everywhere. Social media channels have allowed us to create virtual influencers that people love, feel connected to, trust, and follow. When you search for the most effective way to reach your target audience and deliver your message, influencer marketing is a cost-effective solution.

INFLUENCERS CAN:

- Help increase your brand awareness.
- Promote your products to larger audiences
- Increase your revenue
- Increase the number of your followers across different channels

Virtual influencers are becoming focal points of different marketing strategies and a subject of many discussions around you. You may have already overheard your friends trying skin-care products because of the influencer they follow or see others acquiring items after being inspired by their influencers. If you don't yet have influencer marketing in your marketing strategy, perhaps 2021 will be the perfect time to do so.

ONLINE EXPERIENCES ARE ON-DEMAND

The outbreak of the deadly virus and lockdown restrictions globally has unsurprisingly caused many event cancellations throughout the year. When many airlines suspended flights and governments had to implement travel restrictions, the internet became the venue of many gatherings.

As the number of internet users keeps growing and may hit **6 billion** in 2022, the demand for online experiences keeps rising. People want to find convenient ways to keep themselves entertained and informed in the digital reality, where they achieve most of their daily tasks.

Your marketing plan for 2021 should include online events that will engage your customers and allow them to be part of a compelling digital experience. Such experiences will enable customer interaction and will be a solid foundation for long-lasting relationships.

Events you create can vary from an online cooking class to a group workout session. Such online experiences will help you promote your brand online and reach more consumers across the country or worldwide.

Platforms such as Eventbrite or Facebook events can help you plan and create online events for your brand.

EVENTS YOU
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DISPLAY ADVERTISING ALLOWS TO REACH THE TARGETED AUDIENCE

YOUR AD
NEEDS TO
APPEAR IN THE
RIGHT PLACE
AT THE RIGHT
TIME.

As a marketer, you have countless choices to promote your brand; put up a billboard next to your favorite diner, invest in TV commercials, or advertise your business in a local newspaper – all great ideas. However, the internet is now where most of your prospects are, and display advertising may be a more effective targeted form of advertising you'll want to include in your marketing strategy for the year.

The benefits of display ads are many; While you may create a stunning ad, you need people to see it, and you need the right people, who are your prospective clients. In a nutshell, your ad needs to appear in the right place at the right time, and that's why you need display ads.

When you put up a billboard next to your favorite diner, you have no control over who's going to see it – these can be drivers on the highway, diner visitors, or those who fuel up at a nearby gas station.

Display ads allow you to target users based on specific interests and demographics, so you know those who see your advertisement are most likely to be interested in your products. It's worth the effort to promote your business to them.

There are different types of display ads, and if you recently were shopping online, you may have spotted ads for similar products from other websites.

Or perhaps you were scrolling through social media news feed and encountered posts labeled 'Sponsored.'

You may have come across display ads while viewing stories of your friends on Instagram. Sponsored stories appear almost like TV commercials between programs, popping up in-between stories from the accounts you follow.

One of the best places for creating display ads is Google Display Network, which reaches **90%** of internet users online. Display ads on Google can help you promote your business when people are browsing online, watching YouTube videos, checking Gmail, or using mobile devices and apps visiting different websites, news pages, or blogs.

And another excellent place for your ads is in social media, where you can seamlessly place your posts into the news feeds of those users who are most likely to interact with your content. Display ads on social media allow you to target users with specific interests and demographics, making them a cost-effective way of advertising. Moreover, you can set a specific budget for each ad and see how many users will see your ad.

While there's more to marketing than the above-mentioned strategies, we hope this report will help you keep up with the latest marketing trends, so you can plan for the year, stand out from the competition, and increase your company's revenue.





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