Introduction to Advertising

Advertising Practices

MKTG 3809

Advertising Practices

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These materials have been adapted from the following OER resources:

Launch! Advertising and Promotion in Real Time by Solomon et al. 2009: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/launch-advertising-and-promotion-in-real-time>

Principles of Marketing by Lumen Learning <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/waymakerintromarketingxmasterfall2016/>

Introduction to Marketing by USG Ecore <https://go.view.usg.edu/d2l/home/2366486>

# MODULE 5 - Media Mix continued

## Digital Marketing: Inform, Entice, Engage

Digital marketing is an umbrella term for using digital tools to promote and market products, services, organizations and brands. As consumers and businesses become more reliant on digital communications, the power and importance of digital marketing have increased. The direct marketing section of this module already discussed two digital tools: email and mobile marketing, which fit into both categories. This section will discuss other essential tools in the digital marketing tool kit: websites, content marketing and search-engine optimization (SEO), and social media marketing.

### What Makes Digital Marketing Tools Unique

In part, digital marketing is critically important because people use digital technologies frequently, and marketing needs to happen where people are. But digital marketing tools also have other unique capabilities that set them apart from traditional (predigital) marketing communication tools. These capabilities make them uniquely suited to the goals of marketing. Digital marketing tools are:

* **Interactive:** A primary focus of many digital marketing tools and efforts is to interact with target audiences, so they become actively engaged in the process, ideally at multiple points along the way. This may happen by navigating a website, playing a game, responding to a survey, sharing a link, submitting an email address, publishing a review, or even “liking” a post. Asking consumers to passively view an advertisement is no longer enough: now marketers look for ways to interact.
* **Mobile and portable:** Today’s digital technologies are more mobile and portable than ever before. This means digital marketing tools are also mobile and portable: consumers can access them–and they can access consumers–virtually anytime and anywhere through digital devices. Digital marketing can reach people in places and ways that simply were not possible in the past. A tired mother stuck in traffic might encourage her child to play a game on her smart phone, exposing both child and mother to marketing messages in the process. A text message sent to a remote location can remind an adventurer to renew a subscription or confirm an order. Many physical limitations fall away in the digital world.
* **Highly measurable and data driven.** Digital technologies produce mountains of data about who is doing what, when, how, and with whom. Likewise, digital marketing tools enable marketers to determine very precisely whom they want to reach, how to reach them, and what happens when people begin the process of becoming a customer. By tracking and analyzing these data, marketers can also identify which channels are most productive for bringing people into the site and what types of interactions are most efficient at turning them into customers.
* **Sharable:** Because digital marketing tools are digital, it is easy to share them at low or no cost–a benefit for marketers and for consumers who find content they want to share virally. People routinely share videos, games, websites, articles, images, and brands—any number of overt or covert marketing artifacts. In fact, the degree to which something is shared has become a key metric to confirm how successful it is as a marketing vehicle. Sharing has always been a primary means of spreading ideas. Digital marketing tools now facilitate extremely rapid, efficient, global sharing.
* **Synergistic with other marketing activities:** Digital marketing tools offer quick, easy, and inexpensive ways to repurpose marketing messages and content from other marketing communication methods. They help amplify and reinforce the messages targeting consumers through other media. For example, uploading a TV ad to YouTube creates a piece of digital marketing content that can be posted to Facebook, tweeted on Twitter, embedded in a website page, and shared via an email from a sales representative engaged in personal selling to a target customer.

### Example: ALWAYS #LIKEAGIRL

Let’s take a look at this commercial from Always. What did they do to take advantage of digital marketing tools?

[Video: https://youtu.be/joRjb5WOmbM](Video:%20https://youtu.be/joRjb5WOmbM)

You can [view the transcript for “Always #LikeAGirl” here (opens in new window)](https://oerfiles.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/WM+Marketing/Transcriptions/Always%23LikeAGirl_transcription.txt).

Not only did Always produce a video on a relevant topic, but they invited people to join the conversation. At the end of the commercial, they invited viewers to share the message, to tweet using #likeagirl, and to visit their website.

### The Imperative to Use Digital Marketing

For virtually every organization that wants to do business in the world today, having some level of digital marketing presence is a requirement. A website is quite literally an organization’s digital address and calling card. People of all ages routinely use Web searches for information that shapes their purchasing decisions; using the Web helps them decide where to look, what to buy, where to find it, and how much to pay. Marketers must develop useful Web content and engage in search engine optimization (SEO) strategies in order to make sure their websites will be found when people come looking.

Social media marketing helps organizations tap into the power of word-of-mouth sharing, so that people hear about a company, product, or brand from trusted sources. Social media allow marketers to foster communities and listen in on timely conversations about their brands and products, providing insight into what’s working or not working with their marketing or the customer experiences they provide. Email and mobile marketing reflect the dominant communication patterns in the developed world as well as in many developing countries. Communicating with prospects and customers effectively requires marketers to use these common, everyday tools.

Digital marketing tools are an integral part of most IMC campaigns, as they provide digital communication support to target and reinforce campaign messages and activities in other media. Examples of digital marketing tools supporting broader IMC activity include the following:

* Media companies host and monitor forums for fans to live-tweet during broadcast and cable TV programs, such as *The Walking Dead* and *Empire*, including commentary on the programming, advertising, the entertainment “brand,” and nature of the fan community.
* Companies routinely upload television ads to YouTube and then work to create “buzz” by promoting this content through their websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms.
* Well-designed Web content such as research reports, articles, and e-books are used as informational giveaways to generate interest and cultivate leads during trade shows, conferences, and personal selling activities.

### Website Marketing

Websites represent an all-in-one storefront, a display counter, and a megaphone for organizations to communicate in the digital world. For digital and bricks-and-mortar businesses, Websites are a primary channel for communicating with current and prospective customers as well as other audiences. A good website provides evidence that an organization is real, credible, and legitimate.

The variety of online website-building services now available make setting up a basic website relatively simple and inexpensive. Once the website is established, it can continue to be fairly easy and inexpensive to maintain if the organization uses cost-effective and user-friendly tools. On the other hand, sophisticated websites can be massively expensive to build and maintain, and populating them with fresh, compelling content can devour time and money. But organizations can adjust the scope, scale, and resources required for their websites in proportion to their business objectives and the value they want their websites to deliver.

#### Websites as Marketing Tools

Websites are very flexible, allowing organizations to build the kinds of features and capabilities they need to conduct business effectively. Common marketing objectives and website functions include the following:

* **Providing general information** about an organization such as the value proposition, products and services, and contact information
* **Expressing the brand** of an organization through design, look and feel, personality, and voice
* **Demonstrating products, services, and expertise**, including the customer experience, features, benefits, and value they provide
* **Proof points** about the value a company offers, using evidence in the form of case studies, product reviews, testimonials, return on investment data, etc.
* **Lead generation,** capturing information about website visitors to use in ongoing sales and marketing activity
* **Communities and forums** for target audiences to share information and ask/answer questions
* **Publishing value-adding content** and tools for informational or entertainment purposes to bring people in and draw them back to the website
* **Communication** about company news, views, culture, developments, and vision through an electronic newsroom or a company blog, for example
* **Shopping,** providing tools for customers to research, find, and select products or services in the digital environment
* **Recommendations** that direct customers to information, products, services, and companies that meet their interests and needs
* **Sales**, the ability to conduct sales and transact business online
* **Capturing customer feedback** about the organization, its products, services, content, and the website experience itself.

Before starting to build a website, the marketing manager should meet with other company leaders to lay out a common vision for what the Website should accomplish and the business functions it should provide. For example, if a business does not plan to handle sales online, there is no need to build a “shopping cart” function or an e-commerce engine. If cultivating lively dialogue with an active customer community is an important business objective, this capability should be incorporated into the website strategy and design decisions from the outset. The website strategy must be effective at achieving the organization’s goals to inform, engage, entertain, explore, support, etc.

#### Top Tips for Effective Websites

Many factors go into building an effective website. The following table serves as a checklist for key considerations.

Table 5.1.4.2. Website Elements Tips and Recommendations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Website Element | Tips and Recommendations |
| Domain name | The domain name is your digital address. Secure a name that is memorable and functional for your business. |
| Look and feel | A site’s look and feel conveys a lot about a company. Make sure your site makes positive impressions about credibility, product quality, the customer experience, etc. |
| Messaging | Messaging and how it is presented can draw people in or turn them off immediately. Find concise, compelling ways to tell your story. |
| Design | Website design is about usability as well as aesthetics. Make conscious choices about how design expresses your brand personality as well as its role in making the user experience intuitive and effective. |
| Structure | Structure the website and organize information so that it is easy for visitors to navigate the site and find what they want. |
| Content quality | To a large degree, the quality of content is what brings traffic into a website (more on this soon). Produce content and organize it so it can drive traffic, move customers through the sales cycle, and generate business. |
| Content variety | Use a mix of professional-quality text, images, video, and other visual content to make your website interesting and readable. |
| Language | Typos and grammatical errors are an immediate website turnoff. Proofread everything with fresh eyes before you publish. |
| Accessibility | Follow basic principles of website accessibility to ensure that people can use your site effectively regardless of device or disability. |
| Call to action | Provide cues for your website visitors about what to do next. Give each page a clear call to action and a path that invites people to keep exploring and moving closer to a purchasing decision. |
| Analytics | Track website traffic and usage patterns using a tool like Google Analytics. Monitor which website pages get attention and which ones flop. Use what you learn to improve how well your website meets your objectives. |

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of Website Marketing

Websites have so many advantages that there is almost no excuse for a business not to have one. Effective website marketing declares to the world that an organization exists, what value it offers, and how to do business. Websites can be an engine for generating customer data and new business leads. An electronic storefront is often dramatically less expensive than a physical storefront, and it can serve customers virtually anywhere in the world with internet access. Websites are very flexible and easy to alter. Organizations can try out new strategies, content and tactics at relatively low cost to see what works and where the changes pay off.

At the same time, websites carry costs and risks. They do require some investment of time and money to set up and maintain. For many organizations, especially small organizations without a dedicated website team, keeping website content fresh and up-to-date is a continual challenge. Organizations should make wise, well-researched decisions about information infrastructure and website hosting, to ensure their sites remain operational with good performance and uptime. Companies that capture and maintain customer data through their websites must be vigilant about information security to prevent hackers from stealing sensitive customer data. Some company websites suffer from other types of information security challenges, such as electronic vandalism, trolling (offensive or provocative online posts), and denial-of-service attacks mounted by hackers to take websites out of commission.

### Search-Engine Optimization and Content Marketing

Search-engine optimization (SEO) is the process of using Internet search engines, such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo, to gain notice, visibility, and traffic from people conducting searches using these tools. SEO works in lockstep with content marketing, which takes a strategic approach to developing and distributing valuable content targeted to the interests of a defined audience, with the goal of driving sales or another profitable customer action. In other words, content marketers create worthwhile Internet content aimed at their target audiences. Then organizations use SEO tactics to get this content noticed and to generate new traffic and sales leads.

Together, SEO and content marketing can help boost awareness and brand perceptions about the value a company provides. Content marketing can help an organization gain visibility as an expert or leader in its competitive set. Together these marketing communications tools help organizations get noticed and stay top of mind among individuals seeking the types of products or services they offer.

#### How SEO Works

The basic premise behind search-engine optimization is this: People conduct Internet searches. The search terms they use bring up a given set of results. When someone is searching for the types of things your organization offers, as a marketer you want your results to be at the top. You can boost your search rankings by identifying and applying SEO and content marketing strategies to the search terms people use when they are looking for products or services like yours. It may even be worth paying to get their attention, because people searching for the things you offer are likely to be better-qualified prospective customers.

Because the supply of Internet content on any given topic is continually expanding, and because search-engine companies regularly fine-tune their search algorithms to deliver ever more helpful results, SEO is not a one-time task. It’s an ongoing process that companies should incorporate into their entire approach to digital marketing.

In the world of SEO, there are two types of search results: 1) organic (or unpaid) search results, and 2) inorganic (or paid) search results.

#### Organic search results

**Organic search results** are the unpaid listings that appear solely because of their relevance to the search terms entered when you conduct an Internet search. These are unpaid listings, and they earn their place because the search engine determines they are most relevant and valuable based on a variety of factors including the content itself and the popularity of that content with other Internet users.

#### Inorganic search results

**Inorganic, or paid search results**, appear because companies have paid the search engine for a high-ranking placement based on the search terms used. Organizations bid for this placement and typically pay per click when someone clicks through to a website. Most search engines mark the paid results as ads, so that Internet users can distinguish between organic and paid search results. In Figure, below, the results preceded by the word *Ad* in yellow indicate paid search results from a Google search of “cats for sale.”

Figure 5.1.5.3. Google Search results for the search “cats for sale”

**[Screenshot of a Google search for the phrase "cats for sale." The Google results include various cat adoption websites and a selection of adorable cat pictures.
](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/courses-images-archive-read-only/wp-content/uploads/sites/903/2016/02/23230459/cats_for_sale_-_Google_Search.jpg)**

The following short video explains what makes Google AdWords so powerful.

[Video:](https://youtu.be/NIL2POjhvI8) <https://youtu.be/NIL2POjhvI8>

You can view the [transcript for “Google AdWords” here (opens in new window).](https://oerfiles.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/WM+Marketing/Transcriptions/GoogleAdWords_transcription.txt)

Marketers use key-word research to guide their efforts to improve their rankings for both organic and inorganic searches. Key-word research helps marketers identify the search terms people are most likely to use when looking for the types of products, services, or information their website offers. Tools such as freely available Google AdWords Keyword Planner and Google Trends help marketers identify and compare popular search terms. Armed with optimal search key words, they can buy high-ranking placement in inorganic, paid search results for their search terms of choice. They can improve their organic (unpaid) search rankings by applying content marketing strategies.

#### How Content Marketing Works

There is a popular saying among digital marketers: “Content is king.” Good content attracts eyeballs, while poor content does not. Content marketing is based on the premise that marketers can use web content as a strategic asset to attract attention and drive traffic of target audiences. As a marketer, part of your job is to help the organization publish substantive web content–articles, videos, e-books, podcasts, images, infographics, case studies, games, calculators, etc.–that will be interesting for your target segments. When you do this, you should incorporate your optimal search terms into the content, so that it’s more likely to show up in organic search results. You should also look for ways to link to that content from other webpages, so that search-engine “bots” (or computer programs) responsible for cataloguing websites will think your content is popular and well regarded by the Internet-user community. As your content appears in search results, it will rank higher as more and more people click through to your content and link to it from other locations on the Internet.

#### Top Tips for SEO and Content Marketing

You can use the following simple recommendations to realize the benefits of SEO and content marketing. When the two work together, they can support your organization’s success raising its profile, improving search rankings, and generating traffic and new business.

Table 5.1.5.5. SEO/Content Element Tips and Recommendations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SEO/Content Element | Tips and Recommendations |
| Content quality | Make website content substantive, and showcase your expertise. Create material that makes people want to stay on your site to keep reading, interacting, and exploring. |
| Key-word research | Conduct key-word research to learn what actual search terms people are using that relate to your goods, products, services, and brand. |
| Incorporate key words | Make sure your content matches the search terms you want to be associated with. Be sure to use actual, real-world search terms in order to get the bump to higher rankings. |
| Content freshness | Search-engine algorithms like new content, as well as content where there is a flurry of activity. Create and promote fresh new content regularly to get the “freshness boost” in search results. |
| Evergreen content | Be sure to develop some Web content that won’t age and become outdated quickly, such as news releases. Persistently useful, interesting content generates more visits, more external links from other sites, and higher search rankings. |
| Internal links | Create internal links between content pages on your website. This points users to additional material that may interest them. It also helps search engines crawl through your site to reach and discover all of your content. And more sites that link to a page help boost that page’s search rankings. |
| Headlines | Create great headlines for your Web content that grab attention while also helpfully indicating what the content will provide. Also, make sure your content delivers on the headline. |
| Call to action | Include a clear call to action on each Web page or content element, whether that involves sharing information, registering for a webinar, downloading an e-book, or linking to another Web page. Use content and calls to action to move people through the AIDA model toward purchasing decisions. |
| Promoting content | Once content is published, use other marketing communication tools to promote it. Write posts about it on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, or other social networks of choice. Send email messages to active sales opportunities. Link to it from the Website home page. Create a flurry to help give it an SEO boost. |

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of SEO and Content Marketing

Internet search is a fact of life in the modern world. It is a critical tool for customer decision making in B2B and B2C markets. Practicing the basic tenets of SEO helps an organization get into the search-engine fray. When marketers do it skillfully, they can easily track the results, see what works, and adjust course to improve outcomes. When organizations generate high-quality content, it can be relatively inexpensive to achieve great SEO results, particularly as search engines themselves increasingly reward the “real deal”: good information and true substance targeted to a specific audience.

While SEO and content marketing are powerful tools, they are also rather like puppies that need ongoing feeding and care. Both require regular monitoring to check whether they are effective and need refreshing. The Internet is a crowded and competitive place, where organizations from around the globe can compete with one another for attention and customer loyalty. It takes persistence and hard work to get on top of the Internet content world and stay there.

### Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is the use of online applications, networks, blogs, wikis, and other collaborative media for communicating brand messaging, conducting marketing, public relations, and lead generation. Social media are distinctive for their networking capabilities: they allow people to reach and interact with one another through interconnected networks. This “social” phenomenon changes the power dynamic in marketing: no longer is the marketer the central gatekeeper for all communication about a product, service, brand, or organization. Social media allows for organic dialogue and activity to happen directly between individuals, unmediated by a company. Companies can (and should) listen, learn, and find ways to participate authentically.

Social media marketing focuses on three primary objectives:

1. **Creating buzz:** Developing and publishing messages (in a variety of formats–e.g., text, video, and images) that is disseminated via user-to-user contact
2. **Fostering community:** Building ways for fans to engage with one another about a shared interest in a brand, product, or service
3. **Facilitating two-way communication:** Online conversations are not controlled by the organizations. Instead, social media promotes and encourages user participation, feedback, and dialogue

#### How Social Media Marketing Works

Organizations have opportunities to engage in social media for marketing purposes in several ways: paid, earned, and owned social media activity.

* **Paid:** Paid social media activity includes advertisements on social media (placed in various locations), sponsored posts or content, and retargeting advertisements that target ads based on a consumer’s previous actions. This type of social media activity is best suited for sales, lead generation, event participation, and incorporation into IMC campaigns.
* **Earned:** Earned social media activity involves news organizations, thought leaders, or other individuals who create content about an organization. It is particularly suited to supporting public relations efforts.
* **Owned:** Owned social media activity happens through social media accounts that an organization owns (e.g., Facebook page, Twitter handle, Instagram name, etc.). This activity is ideal for brand awareness, lead generation, and goals around engaging target audiences.

Figure 5.1.6.1. Paid, owned, earned media

Paid Owned Earned Media:
Paid: print advertising, partnerships, television, banners, radio, sponsorships, media, deals, paid search
Owned: websites, SEO, email, widgets/apps, social network pages communities, content, service extensions - retail
Earned: SEO, Facebook, Digg, YouTube, comments Twitter, Flickr, Google+, blogs, forums, email


Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/gavinjllewellyn/6216553493

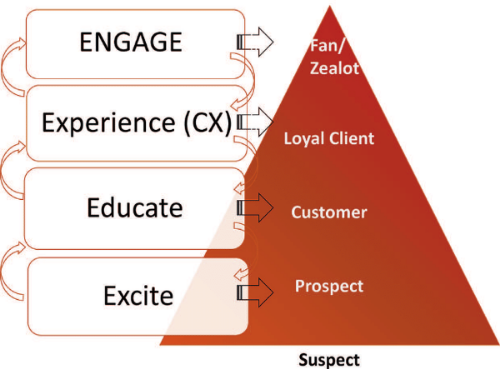
Effective use of social media to reach your target audience requires more effort by an organization than the traditional marketing methods. Not only must an organization create unique content and messaging, but it must be prepared to engage in two-way communication regarding the content that it produces and shares on social media. To be effective at using social media to reach target audiences, an organization must:

* **Create unique content, often.** Social media, unlike traditional methods, cannot rely on static content. An organization must regularly publish new, unique content to stay relevant on any social media platform.
* **Ask questions.** To foster engagement, an organization must solicit feedback from users, customers, and prospects. This is critical to creating conversation, insight, and discussion on social media platforms.
* **Create short-form media.** Most social media platforms have character limits per post. Users on social media expect to be able to scan their feed. Long posts (even within character limits) tend to underperform. The more succinct an organization can be, the better.
* **Try different formats.** Most social media platforms provide users with the option to add images and video to text. Social media is becoming an increasingly visual medium, where content that performs the best usually includes an image or video. Try to convert messages into images and video when possible for maximum reach.
* **Use a clear, immediate call to action.** Social media works best for achieving marketing goals with a clear call to action that a user can do immediately from their computer or mobile device. Examples include 1) Web traffic (click-through), 2) downloads of content (e.g., white papers, articles, etc.), 3) online purchases, and 4) engagement (comment, like, share, view, read).

#### The 4E Framework for Social Media

Marketers apply the 4Es framework - excite, educate, experience, engage - when executing their communication objectives with the help of social media.

Figure 5.1.6.2. 4Es Framework



<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338438680_International_Market_Segmentation_across_Consumption_and_Communication_Categories_Identity_Demographics_and_Consumer_Decisions_and_Online_Habits>

##### Excite

To **excite** a prospective buyer, a company should offer something that is relevant and enticing to the person. Companies post on their owned social media accounts - for example on Facebook or Instagram - and invite their followers to comment or repost for a chance to win a prize. Or companies may post about special pricing that should be inviting consumers to visit the company’s website or the physical location.  For the offer to be perceived as exciting it must be relevant to the target market, meaning that the followers who are seeing the company’s posts should be representing the target market. One way to make the offer relevant is to personalize it. With the help of online analytic tools, consumers’ information can be available to marketers and help companies create personalized offers that could appear in consumers’ social media feeds. For example, here is a tweet posted by **Outback Steakhouse** and by **Disney**, informing consumers about specially priced items.

Figure 5.1.6.2.1.: A tweet by Outback

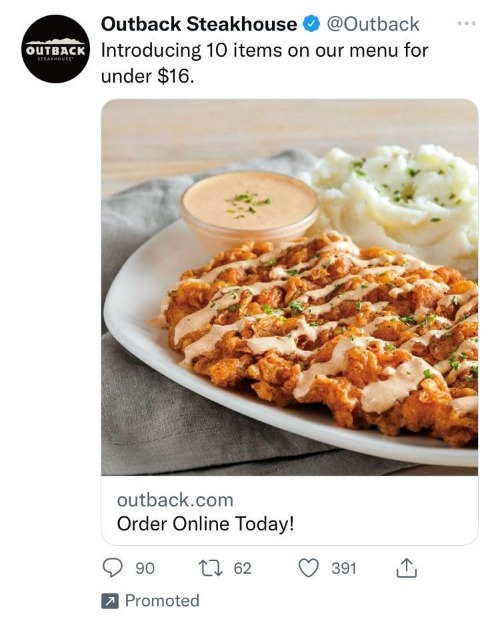
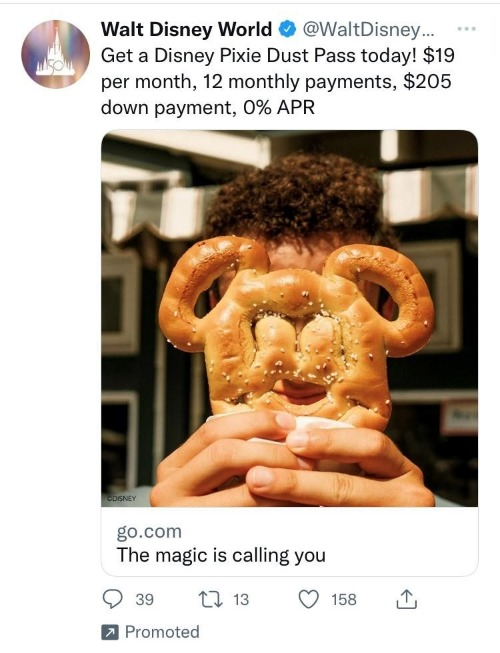


Figure 5.1.2.1 A tweet by Disney



##### Educate

Marketers use social media to **educate** consumers. When consumers become followers of the company’s social media accounts, they offer their attention to communication from these companies. This is a unique opportunity for companies to communicate valuable product information about features and benefits. It is not necessary for the company to be communicating brand new information. Oftentimes, social media is used to remind consumers about what they may already know regarding the benefits of the products.

Figure 5.1.6.2.2. A tweet by Ford



##### Experience

When a company has attracted people to become repeat consumers of its products or services, marketers will use social media to simulate the **experience** of using a product or a service. Companies will use online platforms like YouTube or the company’s website to present tutorials about how to use new products or services. One example is in the beauty products category. It may be difficult for a woman to picture how a new lipstick would look on her before buying it. Companies that market lipstick will use videos to show how the lipstick is applied and how it looks on various women with the goal to help consumers in their decision-making. If consumers are able to experience the product or service before buying it, they are more likely to buy it and use it.  Here is a YouTube tutorial posted by **Sephora**.

[Video: Glowy Makeup Tutorial by Sephora](https://youtu.be/eqy6o0d4Bhk)

Another example is from specialty TV channels that offer an experience, such as **National Geographic**.

Figure 5.1.6.2.3 A tweet by National Geographic

A Tweet by National Geographic
Rock climbing is a wonderful way to travel, immerse yourself in nature, and explore a place and its culture says photographer Irene Yee. To me it is about experience all the textures of a place, both big and small. Paid content for @HydroFlask

##### Engage

The first three Es build up the effect to reach the last one, to **engage** consumers who have become fans of the company’s products or services. At this stage, companies aim to create long-term relationships with consumers who become committed to buying the same brand of a product or service, thus, showing their brand loyalty. Consumers who are engaged with a brand will follow it on social media and share about it to their friends and family. Social media engagement is the measurement of comments, likes, and shares. The greatest measure of social media success is an engaged audience, not just a big one, and this engagement is often expressed through earned media. Companies measure social media engagement by a range of metrics that could include the following:

* Shares or retweets
* Comments
* Likes
* Number of followers on social media accounts
* Audience growth - how many new followers is a social media account gaining per time period
* Click-throughs - how many consumers click on a company ad or promotional link that was posted on social media
* Mentions (either tagged or untagged) - when consumers mention the company’s brands
* Using branded hashtags

Basically, social media engagement is growing anytime a consumer interacts with a company’s social media accounts.

Here are some examples from Ford and its engaged consumers. Ford’s Twitter account has 1.3 million followers.

Ford Twitter Account
Helping to build a better world where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams.Figure 5.1.6.2.4 Ford Twitter Account

And here are some posts created by consumers who are reacting to the Ford Mustang electric vehicle, Ford Mustang Mach-E, using the branded hashtag #MustangMachE.

Figure 5.1.6.2.4. A tweet by a Ford Mustang consumer



Figure 5.1.6.2.4. A tweet by a Ford Mustang consumer

Marketers use social media as a way to connect and communicate with the company’s target consumers. Companies will maintain a website, blog, and social media accounts that represent their owned media. As part of their integrated marketing communications, companies will pay for content to be advertised on social media, this is also known as paid media. All company actions on social media aim to get consumers through one of the following stages: to excite them, to educate them, to get them to experience the products, or to engage them with the brand. Social media engagement is displayed by loyal consumers who share about a company’s products or services to their social networks.

#### Common Social Media Marketing Tools

What’s hot in social media is a moving target, but the following table provides a listing and description of primary social media platforms.

Table 5.1.6.3. Social Media Marketing Tools

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tool | Description |
| Blogs | Long- or short-form medium for communicating with audiences |
| YouTube | Video-hosting social media site |
| Twitter | Short-form (280 character) “microblogging” medium that is intended for text and image sharing |
| Facebook | Long-form (up to 2,000 characters per post) medium for sharing text, images, videos, and other multimedia content |
| Instagram | Image-based social network that is intended as a visual medium. Does not have capabilities to drive click-through rate (CTR) because posts offer no link option |
| Google+ | Long-form medium for sharing text, images, videos, and other multimedia content |
| Pinterest | Medium for sharing photos and visual content categorized by theme |
| LinkedIn | Long- or short-form medium for sharing text, images, videos, and other multimedia content targeted to the business community |

#### Top Tips for Social Media Marketing

The following tips help break down the process of mounting a successful social media marketing strategy.

Table 5.1.6.4. Top tips for social media marketing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Tips and Recommendations |
| Start with SWOT | Start by conducting a SWOT analysis of your social media activity. Evaluate how your organization is currently using social media, as well as the competition (platforms, messaging, tactics, and campaigns). |
| Establish a baseline | Establish a baseline. Take measurements for current reach and engagement before starting to use social media for marketing. This will help you gauge the impact and improve as you pursue a social media strategy. |
| Set goals | Set specific goals for your social media campaign. Make them S.M.A.R.T. goals that align with your broader marketing strategy. |
| Target audience | Understand how your target audience is using social media (and what platforms). |
| Platforms | Identify which social media platforms you will use and what you want to accomplish in each. |
| Ownership | Identify who within the organization will “own” and share responsibility for social media participation. Work out plans for how to coordinate activity and messaging if there are multiple owners. |
| Testing | A/B test your content using the targeting features of the social media platform. Figure out which types of posts, messages, content, and topics generate better response. |
| Measurement | Regularly take measurements for how much engagement your efforts are producing. Compare them to the benchmark and assess progress toward goals. |
| Monitor | Monitor social media activity regularly and be sure to respond to customers, prospects, and other users. |

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

The advantages and benefits of social media marketing focus heavily on the two-way and even multidirectional communication between customers, prospects, and advocates for your company or brand. By listening and engaging in social media, organizations are better equipped to understand and respond to market sentiment. Social media helps organizations identify and cultivate advocates for its products, services, and brand, including the emergence of customers who can become highly credible, trusted voices to help you sell. Unlike many other forms of marketing, social media are very measurable, allowing marketers to track online customer behavior and how target audiences respond to content created by the organization. Social media offers a virtually unlimited audience for communicating and sharing key messages in the market. It also offers marketers the ability to relatively easily target and test the effectiveness of content using the various targeting capabilities of social media for location, interests, income, title, industry, and other sociographic differentiators.

Social media also carry a number of inherent challenges. Social media are dynamic environments that requires significant effort to monitor and stay current on. It is also difficult to continually create “share-worthy” content. The variety of social media tools makes it a challenge to understand which platforms to use for which target audiences and calls to action. Crisis communications can be difficult, too, particularly in the public environment of social media, in which it is difficult to contain or control communication. This means it can be difficult to mitigate the impact of a crisis on the brand.

One of the biggest challenges facing organizations is determining who in the organization should “own” the social media platforms for the organization. Too few hands to help means the burden of content creation is high on a single individual. However, too many people often results in duplication of efforts or conflicting content.

## Guerilla Marketing: Thinking outside the box

Guerrilla marketing is a relatively new marketing strategy that relies on unconventional, often low-cost tactics to create awareness of and goodwill toward a brand, product, service, or even a company. The term “guerrilla marketing” itself comes from Jay Conrad Levinson, who coined the term in his 1984 book *Guerrilla Advertising*. Though “guerrilla” has military connotations (the word means “little war), guerrilla promotion strategies often combine elements of wit, humor, and spectacle to capture people’s attention and engage them in the marketing act. Guerrilla marketing is memorable. And, like the renegade militias it was presumably named for, unexpected.

Practitioners of guerrilla marketing today have used other words to describe it: *disruptive, anti-establishment, newsworthy*, and *a state of mind.*By its nature, guerrilla marketing defies precise description, so it may be worthwhile to view an example before going further.

### Telltale Signs of Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing campaigns can be very diverse in their approach and tactics. So what do they have in common? Guerrilla marketing often has the following characteristics:

* It’s imaginative and surprising, but in a very hip or antiestablishment way
* Doesn’t resemble a traditional marketing initiative, such as a straightforward print or TV advertising campaign
* Uses combinations of different marketing communications tactics, in creative ways
* Is experiential, drawing in the target audience to participate
* Takes risks in what it aspires to accomplish, even if it might ruffle some feathers
* Is not 100 percent approved by the establishment (i.e. the city, the event planners, the powers that be)

### When to Use Guerrilla Marketing

This edgy marketing approach focuses on two goals: 1) get media attention, and 2) make a positive and memorable connection with your target audience. Many noteworthy guerrilla campaigns, like Nike Livestrong, focus on creating an experience that embodies the spirit of the brand. Often these projects invite people who encounter the campaign to become co-conspirators in achieving the campaign’s vision and reach.

Guerrilla marketing experts assert that this technique can work for virtually any brand or organization, so long as the organization doesn’t mind taking some risks, and so long as the project is true to who you are and what you represent. The right concept for the guerrilla marketing effort should capture your organization’s authentic voice and express what is unique about your brand identity. At some point you may be asked to stand up for your actions if you’re called onto the carpet, so you need to believe in what you are doing. Guerrilla marketing is particularly suited to small, imaginative organizations that may not have much money but have a burning desire to do something memorable—to make an entrance or a splash. Severe budget constraints can encourage creative teams to be very inventive and original.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Because it is inherently spectacle, guerrilla marketing tactics work very well for building brands and generating awareness and interest in an organization, product, service, or idea. They aim to put a company on the map–the mind-share map. It’s interesting that guerrilla marketing often calls on the audience to engage or take action, but turning participants into a paying customers may not be the goal. However, successful guerrilla marketing can make audiences undergo a kind of “conversion” experience: if the impact is powerful enough, it can move consumers further along the path towards brand loyalty.

### Example: Volkswagen: Take the slide!

Take a look at the following guerrilla marketing spectacle organized by Volkswagen. Notice how the event capitalizes on a unique combination of emotional appeal and surprise. (Note: there is no narration to the video; just background music.)

[Video](https://youtu.be/W4o0ZVeixYU): <https://youtu.be/W4o0ZVeixYU>

You can access the [text alternative for Speed Up Your Life, Take the Slide (opens in new window).](https://oerfiles.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/WM+Marketing/Transcriptions/SpeedUpYourLifeTakeTheSlideVolkswagen_alternative.txt)

### Guerrilla Marketing Tactics: The Usual Suspects

All kinds of spaces and urban environments present opportunities for the guerrilla marketer. In fact, guerrilla marketing initiatives can be executed offline or online. Some companies feel that an edgy, unexpected online campaign with creative guerrilla elements is a little safer than executing a project in the bricks-and-mortar world.

It goes against the very notion of guerrilla marketing to establish a set of tactics or practices that are “conventional” or “typical.” However, the following list describes some examples of guerrilla marketing tactics from noteworthy campaigns, which will give you an idea of what’s been used in the past.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Table 5.2.4. Guerrilla Tactics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Guerrilla Tactic | Description |
| Graffiti | Graffiti marketing, a subset of guerrilla marketing, turns walls, alleys, and streets into larger-than-life canvases for marketing activity. |
| Stencil graffiti | Use of stencils to create repeated works of graffiti, with the stencils enabling the project team to rapidly recreate the same work in multiple locations. Stencils tend to be smaller-scale and simpler than classic graffiti art. |
| Undercover, or stealth marketing | Use of marketers or paid actors to go “undercover” among peers to engage unsuspecting people in a marketing activity of some sort. For example, attractive actors are paid to strike up conversations, rave about a new mobile device, and then ask people to take a photo using the device, so that they get hands-on experience with the product in question. |
| Stickers | Inventive use of stickers as a temporary medium for creating an image, posing an illusion, or conveying a message |
| Flash mobs | A group of people organized to perform an action at a predetermined place and time; usually they blend in with bystanders initially and then join the “mob” activity at a designated moment. |
| Publicity stunts | Extraordinary feats to attract the attention of the general public, as well as media |
| Treasure hunts | Placing a series of online and offline “treasure hunt” clues in an urban environment and inviting target audiences to participate in the hunt to win prizes and glory |
| Sham events | Staging an activity or event that appears real, but in fact is a fake, for the purposes of drawing attention and making a statement |

Despite the irreverent, anti-establishment spirit of guerrilla marketing, marketers should use good judgment about seeking permission from building owners, city managers, event planners, or others in a position of authority, to avoid unpleasant or unnecessary complications. Some coordination, or even a heads-up that something is happening, can go far toward earning goodwill and a cooperative spirit in the face of an unexpected spectacle.

### How NOT to Guerrilla Market

When three guerrilla marketing veterans spoke with *Entrepreneur*about their work, they gave their top advice about what NOT to do with these projects:[[3]](#footnote-3)

* Adam Salacuse of ALT TERRAIN: “Never aim to upset, scare, or provoke people in a negative way. The goal should be to implement something that people will embrace, enjoy, and share with friends.”
* Brett Zaccardi of Street Attack: “Don’t be contrived or too bland. Don’t try to be something you’re not.”
* Drew Neisser of Renegade Marketing: “Try not to annoy your target. [It] is generally not a good idea to do something that will cause someone on the team to go to jail.”

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing has several notable advantages. It can be inexpensive to execute—it’s often much cheaper than traditional advertising when you consider the number of impressions and amount of attention generated. It encourages creativity and inventiveness, since the goal is to create something novel and original. Guerrilla marketing is about buzz: it is designed for viral sharing, and it taps into powerful word-of-mouth marketing as people share their memorable guerrilla-inspired impressions and experiences with friends and acquaintances. A guerrilla marketing phenomenon can take on a life of its own and live in the memories of the people it affected long after the actual event is over. Finally, when executed effectively, guerrilla tactics are designed with media and publicity in mind. Media attention can snowball and generate a larger-than-expected “bounce” as local or even national outlets choose to cover these events.

As suggested above, guerrilla marketing also carries some disadvantages and risks. When an (apparently) spontaneous activity springs up in a public space, property owners, the police, and other authorities may object and try to interfere or stop the event. Unexpected obstacles can arise, which even the best-laid plans may have missed: weather, traffic, current events, timing, etc. Some audiences or bystanders may misinterpret what is happening, or even take offense at provocative actions or messages. When guerrilla projects are cloaked in secrecy or mystery, people may become uncomfortable or fearful, or the aura of mystery may cause them to interpret the message and goals incorrectly. Similarly, if people feel they have been duped by a guerrilla marketing activity, they may come away with negative impressions. If some people disapprove of a given guerrilla marketing activity or campaign, there’s a risk of backlash, anger, and frustration.

Compared to traditional marketing, guerrilla tactics are definitely riskier. Then again, the rewards can be brilliant, when things go as planned.

1. http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/206202 ↵ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2014/09/22/guerrilla-marketing-examples [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/206202 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)