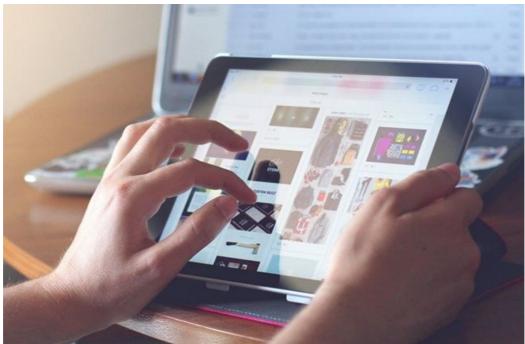# Digital marketing trends you need to consider in 2021

Covid-19 revolutionised how businesses operate and how consumers behave. Amidst the chaos, many companies had to evolve and adapt to fit the new normal.

Source: pixabay.com

With physical stores closed, we have seen several businesses move online and many investing a significant amount of their marketing budget towards digital marketing. The pandemic is rapidly changing consumer behaviour toward online channels and there is an influx of consumers shifting to e-commerce.

Are you effectively reaching these online consumers?

Now is the time to think about how your business will continue to succeed, particularly in the face of the ever-changing consumer needs and behaviours.

Here are some marketing trends that are taking shape which include ideas on how to implement them so that your marketing stays solid throughout 2021.

1. Featured snippets

Featured snippets are the search results that are displayed above Google's organic results and below paid ads. They are Google's way of answering a user's query in the quickest way possible, pulling relevant content from top-ranking pages, and eliminating the need to visit another website. Common types of featured snippets include paragraphs, tables, lists, and videos.

How to rank in the featured snippets area?

- 99% of featured snippets are acquired from page one of Google's search results therefore your Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) must be on point.

- Organise the structure of your pages with heading and paragraph tags. Identify keywords for your piece of content and target question-based queries such as who, what, when, where, and how. For keywords that are non-question-based, use a definition style approach and where applicable, include steps to solving a problem.

2. User-Generated Content

User-Generated Content (UGC) is any form of content that is created and shared by your users based on their experiences, ideas, or feedback. Digital platforms, particularly social media channels, are the centre of user-generated content. It consists of reviews, photos, customer feedback, videos, and more.

How to engage your users in creating UGC?

- Your users only probably visit one or two digital channels therefore you need to determine which ones they prefer and focus your marketing efforts on those specific channels. Create compelling content and distribute it on those platforms to engage with your audience.

- Hashtags have grown in popularity over the years so leverage this and make it easy for users to share branded content by creating a themed hashtag. To motivate your users, offer discounts, award prizes, feature them in newsletters, use their photos (with their permission), or find other ways to encourage them.

Digital communication trends that will boost your business in 2021
James Bayhack 30 Nov 2020

3. Voice Search

Smart devices with voice activation permeate many homes nowadays and voice search is rapidly becoming popular, with millions of users around the world submitting multiple speech-based queries each day. Voice search combines speech recognition technology with keyword-related queries so users can ask questions verbally rather than typing them.

How to optimise for voice search?

- During a desktop search, we may type "rainbow cake recipe" but over a voice search we may say, "Hey Siri, how do I make a rainbow cake at home?" We generally ask the entire question instead of using a few keywords when conversing with a smart device. Voice optimised content should be conversational and question-based.

- Google relies on featured snippets to answer voice queries. Use SEO best practices to rank your pages high in search engines because if it's not on Page 1, it's unlikely to be pulled in as the answer.

- Ensure your content is indexed and present on all relevant major data sources (Google Search, Google Maps, Apple Maps, Wikipedia, etc.).

4. Visual search

Visual search allows users to conduct internet searches using pictures, rather than keywords. Instead of typing a description into Google, users can upload an image and receive detailed information about that image.

How can your business leverage visual search?

Use high-quality images on your website so Google can accurately process them. Try not to use blurry or low-resolution images as these will make your website appear less professional.

- Create a detailed description to help your audience and Google understand your image. A generic file name such as "img123.png" won't help Google or your audience.

- Add alternative text, or an alt tag, to your image. An alt tag is a great place to enter brief information about your photo, and every image you upload should have one.

5. Marketing automation

Marketing automation involves the use of software platforms to help automate marketing activities effectively and to reduce repetitive tasks on several online channels. These software platforms help you to set up campaigns, schedule tasks, and set triggers in advance.

How marketing automation can make your business smarter?

- Many email marketing platforms, such as Mailchimp, feature a series of automated emails to welcome new subscribers, reach people who abandon their shopping carts and win back lapsed customers.

- From scheduling posts weeks in advance to creating automated responses, you can manage your social media channels without spending all day on it.

Every year always brings about new trends and strategies for marketers to implement. The key to success is keeping yourself informed, allowing your marketing strategy to be flexible, and staying ahead of your competitors.

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