

7 questions to ask yourself when developing a digital strategy



Parachute Digital

Guiding you through the digital landscape

Creating a digital marketing strategy is **more** than just formulating a communications plan that covers as many digital channels as possible. Of course we want to be able to distribute our product, service or brand to as many people in our target market as possible, but not every channel is always relevant to your brand and not every digital channel should be deployed simultaneously.

7 Questions you need to answer

To create a viable digital marketing strategy we need to ask ourselves some very specific questions. Some businesses may already be active in the digital space but have been operating without a strategy. Other businesses have a long history in the physical retail or service space and are looking to add digital platforms and communications to their existing business. Some businesses may be start-ups looking to go digital from Day One.

I recommend you start with the following questions no-matter what business you have, because your business model that is working in the physical retail space may not translate directly online – you’ll have different margins, a different fulfilment model, different competitors, and significantly different customer expectations and behaviours.

1. What are your business objectives?

- Increase sales by X%?
- Become a clear #2 in the [insert country] marketplace?
- Streamline systems and fulfilment process to reduce costs?
- Become more efficient, convert more leads? Build engagement with our target audience?

2. Who is your primary audience?

Is your traditional target audience the same people who will buy from you online? There has been a lot of research into Social Media communities that suggests that the people who follow your business online are quite a different audience to the people who are buying from you offline.

What is the pain that your product/ service/ brand solves for the customer? People are far more motivated to buy something that will solve a problem for them or cure what is causing them pain.

Who is competing for this audience’s attention/ Are there natural partners for your business so as to better market to this audience? Does the customer need or just want your product or service?

3. What is your businesses’ brand or point of difference?

- Does your brand compete on price point?
- Does your business add value to the user?
- Are you a service or a product?
- Does your business offer the best customer service in your industry?
- Are you a luxury brand who focuses on quality?

4. What is the current business model?

People’s behaviour online is different. They think and feel the same, but they behave differently. Just think about how out of control cyber bullying has become – this is because people behave differently when they feel anonymous.

Just because you have a successful business model offline, doesn’t mean it will translate into online success. You need to get your business “digital ready”.

Is your business based on selling products online? Are you a retail business with bricks and mortar stores? Do you require customers to subscribe to your business to receive a service? Are you a media or content-based business with an advertising revenue model? Does your business aggregate content or products like a directory or comparison site? Are you affiliated with a not-for-profit business that you accept donations for?

5. Are you a product or a service based business?

If you’re a product-based business, do you want your digital strategy to provide a sales and distribution channel or a profile-building platform? What is the role of online for your business? For some its about diversifying and finding new customers, for others its about reducing overheads and savings costs.

If you’re a service-based business, do you focus on the solution you offer customers to solve their pains and frustrations or do you promote the benefits that your service offers?

6. What is the timeframe you have to achieve the above objectives?

If your business needs to achieve their objectives in a short space of time, your digital marketing strategy may need to focus on traffic generation and lead conversion and will require a larger budget in the short term. If the business has a 5–10 year vision then your digital marketing strategy may be afforded the opportunity to build value and trust with the audience organically over time, so as to create a community of advocates who promote your business and products for you.

7. What is the budget/ investment the business will make to deliver your digital marketing strategy?

Budget (and time) can have a big impact on the digital marketing strategy proposed. Some digital channels provide excellent long-term value, such as search engine optimisation (SEO) but take more time and resources to achieve them. Other channels, such as email marketing, are able to be turned around quickly at a low cost and deliver immediate results.

What is your budget? For production, for media and promotion, for content? What is the timeframe that you are working to? Is the timeframe based on launching your online marketing campaign or delivering on targets?

Budget can determine how many digital marketing channels your business can utilise but most often the budget will affect the media you can buy and the creative and platform development options you have.

Of course, you must also factor in if there are talented resources available, but no budget. In this case the approach your digital marketing strategy takes will have to vary.

Be prolific, not perfect – don't wait to start marketing

Many people want to get their digital platform right before they start marketing it and I used to think like this too. Our natural desire as marketers is to give the customer a great first impression, this means holding off on marketing until we have the platform just right. But I now reject this. So what if your platform doesn't look great – you've got a great product or service don't you? Think of eBay and Amazon. They have great products that the public want, but arguably a horrible design. Many charities have terrible websites and antiquated online payment systems where their payment is processed days later and tax invoices are mailed out. But we as consumers are motivated by their purpose and their brand, so we donate to them because of the feeling we get and the outcome they deliver, rather than because they offer us a good user experience.

Of course if your business already creates excellent content and is able to deliver a great user experience, we can expect that your website will convert visitors to customers faster and reap higher revenues because of it. But if you wait until your website can deliver this superior experience, on all devices, then you need to calculate the opportunity you're missing while you're in planning and development – which could be huge.

Another reason to keep marketing while you're planning a future digital marketing strategy is because this is an excellent opportunity to test and optimise to understand your customers better and deliver to their needs. You may discover some incredible insights during this time of testing marketing messages and optimising your website, that you would not have come to from the strategy process itself.

While you're developing a new digital marketing strategy or digital channel/platform strategy, you can be building out your content. Providing value to your users/ customers/ subscribers is an integral part of your retention model and of course this content can then be distributed via your digital marketing channels. Content marketing feeds your email marketing strategy, your search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy, your social media strategy as well as your website. So don't disregard or accept sub-standard web content. Content equals credibility.

As you can see, there is much to think about when developing your digital marketing strategy. Follow the above guidelines or give us a call and let Parachute Digital guide you through the digital landscape.

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Is your business 'digital ready'?

Follow these seven steps to create a successful online marketing strategy that will drive more people to your business and deliver higher sales.

Let Shanelle Newton Clapham from Parachute Digital show you how to implement digital marketing that works.

Learn to put your customers needs first online and how to integrate digital into your overall business strategy. If you do, you'll be rewarded with better quality and a greater number of prospects. Shanelle has the evidence and experience to help you increase your online acquisitions, gain a higher average sale and see the possibility of a 5:1 return on your digital investment.

- Discover the seven questions you need to ask for digital marketing success
- Consider how online fits into your business model
- Get it right the first time & stay ahead of your competitors
- Understand that online audiences behave differently
- Set realistic budgets and timeframes for your digital projects.



"I'm so excited that other businesses can harness Shanelle's knowledge to leverage online channels and engage more effectively with their customers. The results speak for themselves."

David Butcher, Director
ARCHFASHION.com.au



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