

# marketing

sider

NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR  
TODAY'S MARKETER



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**The 5 Obsessions of Innovators:  
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**The Lowdown on What's Up  
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**Simplify Web Marketing  
One Task at a Time**

# marketing<sub>sider</sub>

Dear Fellow Marketer:

If not number one, time is surely among the most sought-after “luxuries” in today’s business environment. We often tell ourselves one of the solutions for maximizing time is by multi-tasking, but we might be fooling ourselves. University of Michigan researchers found productivity dropped as much as 40 percent when subjects tried to do two or more things at once.

The takeaway? Let’s not kid ourselves that we can really do it all! Rather, how about making small everyday changes that get full focus for a brief time? Consider that taking just five minutes a day, five days a week to tweak a process or fine-tune a marketing or sales activity would create more than 1,200 little improvements over the next five years.

In this issue, we are offering manageable ways to make day-to-day improvements that all contribute to better results. Whether it’s how your organization is represented online by your website or social media presence, or in the real world with your print communications or signage, all channels that promote your brand can benefit from small doses of your attention.

We also asked best-selling author and professional “disrupter” Josh Linkner to share his advice about how anyone can be an everyday innovator, harness your organization’s creativity and enhance the performance of your marketing. You’ll find Josh’s story beginning on page 6.

If you’d like to talk about ways you can save time and money – or improve results – with your upcoming campaigns, we hope you’ll let us know.

Sincerely,



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MARKETING



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PROMO

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## Oh, What a Tangled Web?

# Simplify Your Web Marketing One Task at a Time

**E**nsuring your organization has a strong presence in a digital world is not a “set it and forget it” proposition, but rather an ongoing commitment that can pay off big.

According to a 2016 report from Forbes Insights, almost half of retailers say their customers do research online and then buy in stores.<sup>1</sup> Business-to-business (B2B) marketers should also take note: 94 percent of business buyers do some form of online research – visiting websites and social profiles, organically searching or reading user reviews – prior to purchasing.<sup>2</sup>

If you're like most who face limited time and resources, here are a few ways you can tackle your primary web marketing one task at a time to bring a big job down to size:

## Website



Nothing falls out of favor faster to search engines and searchers than a neglected website. Content written for the end-user, not for search engines, wins big with both, potentially resulting in higher search rankings and a "stickier" site that equals longer views and more return visits.

Case studies, customer profiles, images that are optimized with a relevant image title and alt-tag, videos and infographics all can be perceived as quality content. Even better is if it's shareable and builds backlinks from other sites. Remember: Most of your material that is presently on paper can be repurposed for your website.

If you can commit to no more than a couple hours a week to content creation, consider adding a blog to your site as an effective way to keep it fresh. Enlist a variety of contributors in your organization who can rotate content development from different points of view. Keep it conversational and relevant to your target audience. Chances are, you'll be rewarded with reader comments which also register as new content.

## Local Listings



Being easily found online when local buyers are ready to connect is essential. One way you can influence your online visibility is having accurate and consistent business information across major sites and local directories.

Most importantly, claim your listing on Google My Business at [www.google/business/](http://www.google/business/) because it helps with organic search, being visible in Google Maps and Google+.

Set aside a few minutes to visit [www.moz.com/local](http://www.moz.com/local) to confirm you've "claimed" all available local listings.

Monitor your local listings on a quarterly basis to ensure accuracy and that there are no duplicate listings in the same directories. For further optimization, add images that represent your business and product/service offerings.

## Social Media



According to Social Media Examiner, there's a direct relationship between how long marketers have been using social media and their weekly time commitment. For people with less than one year's experience, 54 percent spend five or fewer hours per week. However, of those who have been active for two years or longer, 64 percent spend six hours or more per week on social media activities.<sup>3</sup>

It takes time to build a following on one or multiple channels. So, start small. Choose one platform and spend an hour or two each week learning more about it. B2B marketers rated LinkedIn as most effective; business-to-consumer (B2C) marketers like Facebook best, according to the Content Marketing Institute.<sup>4</sup>

You'll find any number of free resources to guide you through Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Apply best practices and work to build your following by investing one hour a day.

If you're more seasoned with social, look for ways to elevate your game. Include images, videos and sign-ups to printed or e-newsletters on your social channels. Offer advice and comments to build your reputation as a thought leader in your industry. ■

**Need an extra set of hands with updating your website, pay-per-click advertising or online strategy? Let us know; we can help.**

<sup>1</sup>Forbes Insights, *A Split Screen*, 2016

<sup>2</sup>Acquity Group, *2014 State of B2B Procurement*

<sup>3</sup>Social Media Examiner, *2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report*

<sup>4</sup>Content Marketing Institute, *2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends – North America*





## Top Spots for Your Offers

One of the most frequent direct mail mistakes is failing to make a specific offer or confusing recipients with too many offers in one mailer. Very few, if any, will take the time to sort out what you want them to do, and your mail piece will quickly find its way into the recycle bin.

A small but important change you can test is the placement of your offer. Here are some of the top spots where readers are most likely to see it, take action and boost response rates, opening the door to greater engagement and sales:

- **What you see first.** For letter packages, use the outer envelope. A strong offer can be made in just a few words on a #10 business size envelope, for example. The mailing panel on a self-mailer also offers great space; however, be careful not to interfere with the addressing.
- **Get inside.** With a letter, repeat your offer in your opening paragraph. In other formats, use your headlines and subheads to make your pitch.
- **At the close.** Once you've clearly set the need, close with a repeat of your offer.
- **In your P.S.** This is valuable real estate for those who skim and skip to the bottom of the page.
- **Lift note or insert.** Typically, this is a small flyer inserted with the letter that can further engage the reader and simplify your offer in one clear statement.

## Get More Mileage from Your Content

According to 2017 research from the Content Marketing Institute, content creation challenges were cited by nearly half of business-to-business marketers who saw no improvement or poorer results from their efforts over the previous year.

The mistaken notion that every piece of content needs to be new and unique may be a stumbling block. Instead, think of ways to repurpose your best material. Use statistics from an infographic in a slide deck, blog or series of social posts. A how-to video produced for your website can be showcased in an email, and the same step-by-step script can be repurposed as a printed tip sheet or featured in a newsletter.



## Kickstart Your Campaign with Templates

When some of your best marketing intentions fail to get out of the gate, one course of action is to simplify. Even daunting multi-touch campaigns can be spurred using templates.

Here's how: If your goal is to mail a series of postcards on a schedule, start the process with one design formula that can be duplicated with small tweaks in images, messaging or offers throughout the year. That way, you avoid having to start from scratch for each mailing.

You can create the same type of cohesive campaign for email outreach or other printed marketing and sales materials that help you build brand recognition through a consistent look and feel.

# 10 Ultimate Headline FORMULAS

## for Tweets, Posts, Articles and Emails

By Kevan Lee

A headline can serve either as an apple pie on the windowsill of your content or as its bouncer. It's all in the way you phrase things.

On average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. This oft-cited quote from advertising guru David Ogilvy might be putting it mildly. Take a popular tweet from my timeline. Over 3,800 people saw the tweet. Fifty people clicked. That's 76 times more people seeing the headline as reading the story.

Outside the realm of social, Copyblogger has found that the ratio for headline-reading to article-reading falls closer in line with Ogilvy's famous statement: Eight out of 10 people will read your headline. Two out of 10 will read the rest of what you wrote.

Here are some of the best headline formulas I've found to inspire a deeper read:

### 1 [Do Something] Like [World-class Example]

Gatorade's "Be Like Mike" campaign is one of the best examples of tying a desired result with a desirable entity. If you don't have a Michael Jordan to attach to your headline, you can go generic, too.

Ex. Blog Like an All-star

### 2 [Do Something Desirable] Like [An Expert] Without [Something Expected & Undesirable]

Here's an updated version of "Be Like Mike."

Ex. Blog Like an All-Star – Without Bankrupting Your Free Time

### 3 [Amazing Headline]: Subhead

Long ones like these can really pack a punch with specificity and the right words. Start with a great opener, place a colon, add a complementary headline.

Ex. The Fine Art of the Apostrophe: How to Master the Most Difficult Punctuation Problems

### 4 Who Else Wants \_\_\_\_\_?

Here's a classic social proof formula, implying that many folks have already expressed a desire for [blank].

Ex. Who Else Wants an Easier Way to Share Social Media?

### 5 The Secret of \_\_\_\_\_

This one can work in a couple fun ways: sharing insider knowledge on a topic or sharing transparently from your own war chest of secrets.

Ex. The Secret of Writing Killer Blog Content on a Near-Daily Basis

### 6 Little Known Ways to \_\_\_\_\_

The cousin of "The Secret of" headline, this one takes a bit of a different, intriguing angle and, if viewed in the right light, could even offer a challenge to readers. "Little known ways? Ha! I bet I know them!"

Ex. Little Known Ways to Get More Traffic from Social

### 7 [Number] Lessons I Learned From \_\_\_\_\_

This one grabs attention because it's reassuring; it gives people an example to follow and comfort knowing someone has tried, experimented and learned from an experience already.

Ex. 17 Lessons I Learned from Writing a New Blog Post Every Day for a Month

### 8 How to Survive Your First \_\_\_\_\_

People love having a roadmap to follow.

Ex. How to Survive Your First 40 Days of Work on a Distributed Team

### 9 Headline + Headline

If there are two headlines we like a lot (and they're different enough from each other), we'll use both. In the same headline.

Ex. 14 Advanced Twitter Tips: 14 Strategies to Get the Most Out of Twitter

### 10 Number or Trigger Word + Interesting Adjective + Keyword + Promise

Short, sweet, numbered and interesting.

Ex. 13 Far-fetched Headlines You Must Investigate ■

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*Kevan Lee is the Marketing Director at Buffer, a streamlined social media management tool designed to drive meaningful engagement and results.*



**5**

# Obsessions of Innovators:

**Creative Ways to  
Shape Change**





By Josh Linkner



In our turbulent business climate, we all seek new pathways to growth and success. Yes, winning can be elusive in these times of dizzying speed and ruthless competition. Companies like Tesla, Amazon, Netflix and JetBlue soar while their respective counterparts – Oldsmobile, Borders Books, Blockbuster and Pan Am – are merely tombstones in the business graveyard.

Too often, once great companies become intoxicated by their own success. They fail to adapt, fail to innovate and then simply fail.

To avoid this trap in times of massive upheaval and change, we must exploit our most powerful weapon: human creativity. It is the one thing that can't be outsourced or automated and has become the currency of success.

Cultivating creativity and innovation is leadership job #1, if we want to enjoy sustainable growth and progress. But how do innovators think and act? How can we build a culture that fosters innovation rather than restricts it? . . . . .▶



Too often, we overestimate the risk of trying something new but underestimate the risk of standing still.

As human beings, we are hard-wired to be creative, but many of us have lost our imagination over the years. The good news is that we can all tap into a giant reservoir of creativity which can fuel our businesses and lives. Luckily, you don't have to be a mad scientist in a lab coat or an eccentric billionaire to embrace them. You just need an open mind and an open heart; a willingness to inject fresh approaches into everyday situations.

Having studied hundreds of the most innovative people in history, I've discovered five core beliefs that transcend industry, geography and upbringing. These patterns are easy to understand and can be implemented directly into your daily work to drive growth and success:

## 1 GET CURIOUS

It turns out that curiosity is very much the building block of creativity. The more curious you are, the more creative you'll become. The best way to tap into your natural curious state is to ask a lot more questions instead of making fast decisions.

Too often, we make decisions (big and small) based on what worked or what didn't work in the past. If we lived in a static world, that would be great. But today we live in a rate of change like none other in history. As a result, your instincts based on previous results can be misleading.

Instead, pause whenever possible and ask more questions about the problem at hand or your proposed solution. Try questions that begin with "why," "what if," or "why not"? When you ask these questions, it forces you to imagine the possibilities and explore fresh approaches.

**TO DO:** When approaching any task or problem, proceed as if everything is up for debate – no information is set in stone, no system is infallible, no problem is ever permanently solved. This mindset favors simplicity; the easiest, laziest solutions can be the most elegant.

## 2 CRAVE WHAT'S NEXT

It's easy to think success is a permanent condition, yet that has been the downfall for far too many organizations. Instead, we must lean into change, embracing new approaches rather than clinging to old ones. Too often, we overestimate the risk of trying something new but underestimate the risk of standing still.

Innovators have an insatiable appetite for new tech, products, trends, concepts, etc. They want to be first, on the bleeding edge of change. They also embrace a willingness to let go of what was, in favor of what *can be*.

**TO DO:** Maintain a constant thirst for knowledge and self-improvement. Embrace (don't fear) change. From systems to solutions, nothing lasts forever, so relish learning, growing and exploring new possibilities.



### 3 DEFY TRADITION

Family traditions can be wonderful, but traditions in our professional lives can be deadly. Blindly doing things in a traditional way has been the downfall of far too many companies and careers.

Instead, when you find yourself approaching your work in a traditional way, examine the tradition carefully, and see if you can flip it upside down. What would the opposite move look like? Don't change just for the sake of it, but at least put your traditions under a microscope to explore if they are still relevant and optimized. Or, perhaps there's an oppositional approach that could yield a better outcome. This is the point where breakthroughs occur.

**TO DO: Choose a compass over a map mentality. With a general idea of where you want to go rather than presupposing a destination, it allows you to adjust course based on the lay of the land.**

### 4 GET SCRAPPY

We often believe our ability to innovate is tied to external resources such as money, headcount or raw materials. The truth is, the real DNA of innovation has nothing to do with outside resources and everything do to with grit. Determination. Tenacity. Resilience. *Internal* resources fuel creative approaches, which is why startups can upend industry giants.

Getting scrappy is about doing more with less; finding elegant and more creative ways to solve everyday problems. Instead of blindly throwing money at a problem, try throwing your imagination at it instead. You may enjoy a far better result.



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**TO DO: Take risks on people based on what they do, not who they are on paper or what they say they can do. Expertise may be found in the unlikelyst of places. Balk authority, get scrappy and get results.**

### 5 ADAPT FAST

It's easy to believe that innovation occurs as a single lightning bolt of an inspiration, followed by mindless execution. In fact, initial ideas are usually flawed. Only through a series of setbacks and mistakes, failures and pivots, tweaks and micro-innovations, does an idea gain any real merit.

Take the weight of the world off your shoulders; you don't have to invent some game-changing concept. Instead, apply your creative energy to small, fast, creative bursts. Rapid-fire creativity, practiced as a daily habit, can be far more important than the potency of an initial ideal. Experiment, learn, adapt. Rinse and repeat.

**TO DO: Two heads are better than one. Let go of the fantasy of the midnight stroke of brilliance for the hard work of rapid experimentation. Pool knowledge, resources and ideas, and be as open and excited about the ideas of others as about your own.**

While many adults don't feel creative, the research shows otherwise. Creativity, in fact, is 85 percent learned behavior. In other words, it is a skill; a muscle that each of us can build and use to drive our companies and careers to the next level. Embrace the five obsessions of innovators, and you'll be well on your way to unprecedented achievement. Push the boundaries, shake it up and explore what's possible. Inject innovative approaches into your everyday work, and the results will be stunning. ■





# Vital Signs

The lowdown on what's up with large graphics and signs



**A**ttracting new customers. Retaining current ones. Enhancing your brand. Improving the customer experience. Reducing costs.

Two powerful advertising tactics that address these key business goals are signage and oversized graphics. Other benefits? Signs differentiate your business from the competition, all year long and with minimum upkeep. And they can impact the bottom line.

According to a University of Cincinnati study, roughly 60 percent of businesses reported that changing the design or enhancing the visibility of their signage had a positive impact on sales, number of transactions and profits, with an average increase of about 10 percent.

Following are a few time-saving and budget-friendly tips to make the most of your signage:

- ▶ **Take an honest inventory.** Appraise your office or facility – inside and out – with the fresh eyes of a new client or customer. Over the course of time and with familiarity, you may not notice what’s become worn or is out-of-date. You can also be overlooking an opportunity to illuminate an existing sign or freshen what can be the first visual impression of your company.
- ▶ **Make the most of your space with custom graphics.** Put every square foot of informational, promotional or decorative real estate in your office, store, facility or grounds to work with the latest solutions in graphics. No longer limited to walls, windows and doors, you can now select from printed ceiling tiles as well as graphics for floor surfaces of almost every type, including carpet, concrete, tile and wood.
- ▶ **Attract new shoppers with easy-on car magnets.** While some businesses are large enough to have a vehicle or even a fleet for product deliveries or service calls, others can benefit from car-top or door-side magnets. Magnetic signs are easily removed and replaced, if your car or van is doing double-duty for workday and personal use.
- ▶ **Improve your décor with wall-mounted posters.** Framing art and photography as well as promotional graphics, inspirational quotations or historical documents is a great way to improve the aesthetic appeal of your office or store and underscore the material’s importance. Of course, the same benefits apply to items you frame and mount in employee areas, such as safety rules, schedules or human resources notifications.
- ▶ **See your way through perforated window graphics.** A smart twist on an old standby, perforated graphics present a promotional message when viewed from one side, such as the outside, of your store, and a clear view when seen from the other. One-way vinyl graphics replicating frosted glass or displaying a design or scene also add an attractive element of privacy to office or conference room windows.
- ▶ **Capture attention with big, bright and bold banners.** It’s hard to beat the impact of custom banners and fabric signs or to surpass their versatility. Use them indoors or out, and for one-time use, recurring postings such as at trade shows or annual events, or longer-term applications. Today’s oversized printing lets you go big, while materials including fabric, paper and vinyl help you match your banner to your budget.
- ▶ **Protect and preserve through lamination.** Lamination is a smart way to help frequently-used documents stand up to daily use. Restaurant menus are an obvious choice, and so are instructions, schedules, name badges and even larger-sized posters. Preserve them with water-resistant lamination to improve their appearance and reduce the cost of reprinting. ■

**From custom design to installation, talk to our signage professionals about how you can make a greater impact in your market.**



# How to **AMPLIFY** Your Event Promotions

*"If you build it, they will come."* If only event marketers had it that easy!

With typical event goals (e.g., build brand awareness, gain new leads or deepen customer relationships) being married to participation, engaged attendees – and lots of them – are a key driver of success.

Activating multiple marketing and communications channels before, during and after your event improves your odds of bringing in more bodies and adding "legs" to your efforts. The great news is you don't have to do all the work yourself.

According to the 2016 EventTrack benchmarking report by Event Marketing Institute (EMI) and Mosaic:

- 98% of consumers create digital or social content at live events, and 100% of those who capture content share it across their social media networks.
- Photos are the primary type of content created and shared, followed by social posts then video taken with mobile devices.

## Get 'em there

Start with the understanding that you can't do everything or be everywhere with your pre-event promotions. Use your organization's target market to help you choose your marketing channels and eliminate those that miss your target.

For online promotion, feature the event details on your website, or create a splash page for the event. Notify everyone on your mailing and email lists. Postcards are an inexpensive way to reach prospects, as are e-cards for your house list.

If you're taking part in a larger event, like a trade show, invite participants to visit your booth and incentivize them with a special offer or giveaway available on-site.

In both print and digital communications, encourage people to follow you on social media for exclusive event information. Post fun or thoughtful questions that encourage ongoing engagement and build interest leading up to your event.

## Be sharable

Education and networking are the top two drivers of attendance for conventions and exhibitions.<sup>1</sup> Feed the need for information with insightful handouts, product demonstrations and samples. Or sponsor a space where networking can happen.

In a crowded venue, the competition for attention can get fierce. A top-notch booth, signage or other large graphics are important and can serve as a visual backdrop for social sharing.

Encourage attendees to snap pictures with your team to post on social media. Product demos are great for quick videos that can be shared. And think beyond the business, too. Games or friendly competitions create fun opportunities for posts and photos.

## Stay connected

Is it all worth it? Consider that 74% say engaging with branded event marketing experiences makes them more likely to buy the products being promoted, according to EMI. Your outcomes, though, will hinge heavily upon what you do once the event is over.

For those customers or prospects who expressed interest, implement an aggressive plan for sales follow-up. Be sure to assign responsibility, establish a timeline and closely monitor your results.

Here's where preparation pays off. Your follow-up strategies can be outlined and ready to roll prior to your event. Much of your content for post-event mailings or emails can be pre-drafted. Remind them of your key sales messages, and re-state your offer or a new incentive.

**Be sure to let us know if you need help with the communications, promotional products or signage that can make any event more special.**

<sup>1</sup>The Experience Institute, *Decision to Attend Study*, 2015











# What Makes a Satisfied Customer?

MarketingSherpa asked consumers to think about the marketing of companies that they felt good about . . . and those they didn't like. Here are the top three differentiators for each:

## SATISFIED

-  **56%** "I consistently have good experiences."
-  **43%** "It is easy to conduct business with the company (online, in person or on the phone)."
-  **35%** "It doesn't always try to sell me but tries to provide value."

## DISSATISFIED

-  **35%** "The company does not put my needs and wants above its own business goals."
-  **34%** "The company doesn't make me feel like I have a relationship with them."
-  **27%** "The company always tries to sell to me instead of providing value."



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# *Free Live Webinar*

## **The Ripple Effect: How To Be An Everyday Innovator**

.....  
**Wednesday, August 30, 1 p.m. (ET)**

**Featuring: Josh Linkner**  
*New York Times* best-selling author and  
five-time entrepreneur

.....

When it comes to business innovation, size simply doesn't matter. Even the smallest organizations can make changes to everyday thinking and activities that have a profound impact on the bottom line.

Please join us Aug. 30 at 1 p.m. (ET) for **The Ripple Effect: How To Be An Everyday Innovator**. During this free, one-hour live webinar, you'll learn:

- The small changes that can make a big impact in your business
- How to avoid the five biggest creativity killers to harness your most powerful ideas
- About practical tools that can be used immediately to increase creative input and deliver bottom-line results



**Go to [AllegraInnovate.com](http://AllegraInnovate.com) to reserve your spot!**