



Six Essential Digital Marketing Trends for 2018

2018 is here, and now is the time to take a plan out your digital marketing strategy for the year. The online world continues to change rapidly, and strategies that worked last year won't necessarily again work this year. Trinet recommends judicious use of Facebook digital advertising, leveraging influencers, using video over static images, live streaming, and user generated content. Read on to get the top 6 essential tips for your 2018 digital marketing planning, and learn how Trinet can help propel you to greater success and business growth in the New Year.

1. Facebook Digital Advertising

Current statistics show Facebook has more than **1.23 billion active users**, 62% of whom log in on a **daily basis**¹. In addition, the average U.S. consumer spends 35 minutes per day on Facebook², which simply means that you **need** to be marketing your brand on Facebook. Facebook offers one of the best advertising platforms available today. Facebook pages are a free tool that allows brands to post content and interact with consumers while also showing how much they care about consumer's opinions and complaints in front of an audience. Facebook advertisements allow for brands to target consumers based on a wide variety of filters such as: geography, age, education, and a huge selection of interests. Video advertisements do very well on Facebook, and can be targeted to seamlessly integrate with consumer feeds and play automatically. Need to expand your

¹ Bulygo, Zach. "Kissmetrics Blog." Facebook Marketing: A Comprehensive Guide for Beginners. Accessed December 22, 2017. <https://blog.kissmetrics.com/facebook-marketing/>.

² Cohen, David. "How Much Time Will the Average Person Spend on Social Media During Their Life? (Infographic)." Adweek. March 22, 2017. Accessed December 22, 2017. <http://www.adweek.com/digital/mediakix-time-spent-social-media-infographic/>.

reach to potential customers? You can do that on Facebook, too, by specifically targeting people who have the same demographics and interests as your current audience. Additionally, you can upload your current email list to find people who are similar to your existing customers.

Why it matters: Attention will always be the name of the game. Facebook has become an ideal advertising platform for brands to maximize return on investment. Well targeted advertisements on a platform with massive viewership and interaction is a goldmine for marketers and brands alike. The best way to utilize the platform is to use Facebook to find new prospects, get their email addresses and contact information, and then message them outside of Facebook with your own regular email campaigns. **But beware of the Facebook gotcha**, namely that supply and demand are seriously affecting cost per click on Facebook like never before. This means that on some days of the year, because of ad demand, your ad dollar could reach far fewer eyeballs than you had expected, resulting in much lower ROI. Trinet saw huge spikes in advertising costs between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 2017 with some ads bidding at up 6 times the bid rate at other times of the year. According to Facebook reps we spoke to, Q1 is the cheapest time to advertise on Facebook, Q2 and Q3 are in the middle and Q4 by far the most expensive time to advertise, as many companies, especially retailers, are saving their entire digital advertising budget for Q4. The result is that it's becoming too expensive for many businesses and organizations to advertise on Facebook on certain days or periods of the year, such as between Black Friday and Christmas. We emphasize our recommendation that Facebook is best used during less expensive times of the year to gather email addresses which can then be used in separate email campaigns to target and reach prospects much more cheaply during the expensive advertising periods on Facebook. Separately, Facebook is exceptionally useful for market research, to follow feedback from consumers to improve your service or product. Consumers today want to feel relevant and invested in brands that they care about, and Facebook is a great platform for that. Trinet has an award winning team with extensive Facebook advertising expertise, who have dramatically increased their clients reach and effectiveness on Facebook. Contact us today to see how we can help you reach new prospects with your Facebook strategy!

2. Using Influencers

Influencers have become an important asset to organizations, because of their social media prowess and large-scale audience engagement. The term influencer refers to people with large

social media followings who influence their followers about products and trends. From funny YouTube stars, to the pretty and popular on Instagram, influencers are available in all shapes and sizes and available to cover a huge variety of topics and trends. The cost for influencers is growing daily as more and more brands seek to buy audiences from influencers, so it is vital that you start partnering with brands as soon as possible. Current research shows that Instagram posts roughly cost about \$1,000 per 100,000 followers on that page, and YouTube influencers charge double that³. Your organization needs to be utilizing influencers to endorse your brand and products, because this level of attention and access is unparalleled.

Why it matters: Consumers today are largely deaf to the amount of advertising noise in the world today. Influencers are positioned perfectly because they already have their audiences' trust and attention, which elevates their endorsement beyond any traditional advertisement. People don't want to hear from a brand about how great their brand is. Instead, people want to hear from friends about their experiences and opinions, and influencers have become very close to the trust level of a friend to most people. The right post with the right influence will significantly boost your brand exposure overnight. Save yourself time, and engage with Trinet today to locate and build relationships with influencers to effortlessly grow your brand and business.

3. Video Continues to Grow and Dominate

Video is undoubtedly the most engaging form of digital content available today. In the same way that video calls through Skype and Facetime can communicate information and emotion more effectively than just a phone call or text message, video allows creators to produce a complete and compelling message. In business, digital video is now considered the best form of content distribution with the highest ROI today⁴. This year, eMarketer expects digital video ad spend to grow **24%** to more than **\$13B**⁵. In addition, 72% of the over 231B digital video viewers regularly watch video on their smartphones⁶. Quality video is more than just expensive advertisements though. Behind the scenes, how it's made, day in the life, and plenty of other vlog and documentation style video is easy to shoot and only requires a smartphone. Show your consumers

³ Chen, Yuyu. "What influencer marketing really costs." Digiday. June 05, 2017. Accessed December 22, 2017. <https://digiday.com/marketing/what-influencer-marketing-costs/>.

⁴ Mannick, Jayme. "4 Video Advertising Trends to Watch in 2017".

⁵ eMarketer, "US Digital Video Ad Spending, 2017-2021", Jan 2017

⁶ Mannick, Jayme. "4 Video Advertising Trends to Watch in 2017."

what makes your brand special, and be authentic to maximize your returns. Of course, when we are talking video, we are referring to **YouTube**, the second largest search engine in the world.

Why it matters: There has been a huge shift in the nature of advertising itself of the last 10 years. Previously, advertising was a forced experience that assaulted your attention while distracting or delaying you from what you were actually trying to do. Watching ads was a punishing, but necessary evil to watch your favorite show. Nowadays, brands strive to create content that viewers actually want to consume. Quality video content is more than just entertainment; it delivers real value to the consumer, which is more effective for marketers and consumers alike. If video is the best form of content delivery, then the next step is to develop a content strategy that captures the audiences' interest, and makes them want to consume more. Consider marketing your brand instead of your products and you will find loyal customers for life. YouTube is the place to do this, and the options for targeting pre-roll, and mid-roll ads are excellent. When people think of YouTube, they think of creating a channel and uploading videos. But most people don't think about YouTube as a powerful advertising platform, which you can use to selectively target and show pre-roll and mid-roll ads very cost effectively to a very specific audience. Contact the Trinet team to help you forge and implement a cost-effective YouTube advertising plan for 2018.

4. Live content

Live video content offers the transparency and ephemeral urgency that may be lacking in your current video content strategy. Rehearsed performances and staged backgrounds are great, but today's consumers want to be a part of the event or experience itself in real time, which is why live video has become so popular. According to research compiled by Twitter, **live video increases brand favorability by 63%**, and the company Livestream reports that **80% of people prefer live video from a brand to social posts**⁷. Audience interaction is a huge appeal for viewers who can communicate directly with their favorite brands in real time, whether that is Q&A or just expressing their support. We are of course referring to Facebook live, and the ease and impact that has had on advertising.

Why it matters: Every brand and business in the world trades on the attention of the end consumer. Live video is a simple tool to directly interact with your audience and also give them

⁷ Ismail, Kayla. "Is Live Video the Future of Content Marketing?"

inside access to your brand. Every brand should be live streaming their events, product unveils, demos, and provide backstage access to their organization to provide their viewers with a sense of exclusivity and reward for stopping their lives to watch the stream live. Capturing the sense of urgency behind ephemeral content is powerful. Remember scheduling your nights around television shows before TiVo. Now, you only need a smartphone, instead of a studio, to host your own show. Be warned though, authenticity will make or break your live video content. There are no second takes or do-overs, which can be frightening to a brand trying to convey a carefully crafted message. Take the leap, but first use the opportunity to examine your brand and message thoroughly and patch any holes. In the end, know that regardless of whether you have all the answers, the sense of connection with your audience will leave a much greater lasting impression. Call Trinet now to get help with your video content strategy, and to help create a digital live event calendar.

5. User Generated Content

User generated content is any form of content that is created by regular people that consume a particular brand or product and share about it on social media. Whether that's your Facebook friend who posts about the deal he just got on a car, a quick picture of your morning coffee, or a photo album of your parents vacation at an island resort, we love user content. It's the foundation of social media. From a brand standpoint, it is basically free advertisement or the digital equivalent of word of mouth. Current research from Adweek and Olapic found, "76% of individuals surveyed said they trusted content shared by "average" people more than by brands, and nearly 100% of consumers trust recommendations from others."⁸ If your brand can properly leverage your current consumer base for original and authentic user content, you won't struggle to create exciting new content all the time. By far the most compelling and most used user content is reviews. More and more retailers are implementing user reviews on their websites to capitalize on this phenomenon.

Why it matters: This is more than just word of mouth. This is a tangible partnership with your consumers. This is developing your brand and your follower's personal brands all at once, which is going to be a defining feature of the emerging Generation Z.⁹ Today, kids are growing up living on social media and they deeply understand its power. Help them grow their personal brands by

⁸ Bernazzani, Sophia. "The 10 Best User-Generated Campaigns on Instagram."

⁹ Patel, Deep. "10 Tips For Marketing to Gen Z on Social Media."

featuring their photos and content on your channels and campaigns, and they will bolster your brand's content to mutual success. Call Trinet today and we can craft your digital strategy and help you develop and implement your 2018 user generated content campaign!

6. Pay for Play

Gone are the days when your Facebook posts were seen by a large audience. Now the reach of your organic posts are capped by Facebook, and you must pay to boost them to reach a larger audience. But if you don't know how to boost effectively, you can spend a lot and get no results. Digital social media advertising is getting more and more sophisticated. Our own staff needs to constantly train to stay ahead of the curve. You don't want to jump into social media advertising without an experienced team behind you. Gone are the days when having great organic (free) search results on Google or Bing were enough. Today, even if you have great organic (free) search results on page one, many companies are paying to ensure that they also have a paid listing at the top of that page for Google and Bing search – in essence, two listings on the same search results page, therefore creating the perception that they are serious and that they own that search results page. The digital advertising market is getting tougher, requires a bigger investment, and requires a long term strategy for success.

Trinet's digital marketing experts are ready to help you with strategies will that drive your digital marketing success in 2018. With over 23 years of experience, over 1500 digital projects and more than 95 industry awards – **Trinet can take your digital marketing strategy to the next level. Call us today and get started: 949.442.8900.**