



# DIGITAL MARKETING

Cost-Effective Branding and Messaging for POS Solution Providers





Every business needs a marketing strategy. Without one, it's difficult to target your message to customers about how you can support their business needs and goals. The more you hone the message, the better customers understand the value you provide, which gives them an incentive to engage and transact with you.

POS solution providers need a business-to-business marketing plan that introduces their business and its capabilities to customers and keeps them aware of new developments and offerings on an ongoing basis. Marketing is especially important for technology-focused businesses because customers often have trouble understanding them. It's up to the provider to connect the dots between the technology and the benefits to the customer.

In the digital age, POS solution providers have a wealth of options at their disposal to design effective marketing plans. While the need for face-to-face contact will always remain, you also need a strong digital presence for branding and ongoing communications. Effective digital marketing tools include social media, video streams, website content, SEO, email automation, and chatbots.

A significant advantage of digital marketing is measurability. Thanks to analytics, you can track the metrics of marketing campaigns and make adjustments as needed, making it easier to see their impact on your bottom line.

## Marketing Challenges

Getting results from business-to-business digital marketing strategies requires serious work and planning. POS solution providers typically are technologists with limited, if any, experience in running marketing



## B2B vs. B2C Marketing

What's the difference between business-to-business and business-to-consumer strategies, anyway? It comes down to shaping the message to highlight the benefits to business as opposed to individual consumers. Businesses tend to be more methodical, basing their purchases on needs, pain points, strategic goals and budgetary realities, as opposed to consumers, who are more impulsive. The B2B customer journey often involves multiple people requiring marketing content to appeal to many different pain points of stakeholders involved in the decision process.

Despite the differences, remember that whether you're marketing to businesses or consumers, you're still dealing with people. Marketing is about building a community and relationships with people over all else. Rather than B2B vs. B2C it really becomes P2P (peer to peer) or person to person and passion to passion. So while the goals may differ, your ability to reach people in a meaningful way helps determine your success.

campaigns. So many shy away from it and decide to instead focus on what they do best – technology.

This is a natural response, but ignoring marketing can hurt revenue growth. And, yes, marketing requires investment – another reason budget-constricted providers forgo marketing. The old adage “you’ve got to spend money to make money” applies: Even small investments, with proper execution, can yield substantial results.

The good news is you needn’t spend a lot to create compelling marketing content, especially when leveraging existing resources such as your website, social media and email, which typically require more of an investment in time than money. A rethinking of how to use your digital resources may be in order.

Perhaps you’ve never considered posting blogs, white papers or product updates on your website – or using social media to engage customers. These are ways to create excitement and turn customers into brand advocates. One of those customers could deliver your next account by referring your company to a prospect based on thought leadership you’ve curated.



## Why Digital Marketing

Why is digital marketing so important in a business-to-business context? Think about where you turn to when looking for information on a new technology or a company, or just to catch up on the news – the internet. Chances are your first thought is to Google it.

Buyers are using the digital tools at their disposal. The practice isn’t exclusive to consumers; businesses do the bulk of their research online before deciding to invest in cloud services or new computing equipment, including POS systems. In fact, 60% of purchase decisions are

made prior to ever speaking to an educated sales person. If customers rely so much on digital tools, shouldn’t you leverage those tools to reach them? If you don’t, your competitors will – and get the business.

## Digital Marketing Benefits

Digital marketing can change how you engage customers. The benefits of digital marketing are multifold:

### 1 Affordability

Smaller businesses, including most POS solution providers, are at a marketing disadvantage against large competitors with deep pockets – until you factor in digital resources such as SEO, online content and social media. According to LyfeMarketing, “A small business can expose over 1,000 people to its products and services for less than \$3 using social media. While that same exposure through direct mail costs about \$57 and through television ads costs about \$28.”

### 2 Market Reach

Digital marketing opens new paths to customers a business otherwise would not reach – at least not without substantial investments in traditional media campaigns, trade shows, direct mail and advertising. Digital marketing lets you substantially broaden your reach with small investments.

### 3 Personalization

Print and TV ads and billboards may or may not reach your target audience, but digital marketing targets customers precisely, to the point of personalization. You can send different targeted messages to different customers. Based on data and segmented lists, marketers can nurture prospects based on their interests from the awareness, consideration and decision stage. Think about your target audience and talk to them like they want to be talked to. Use terminology that resonates with your target audience by pain points, job function, vertical, in-country language and benefits by vertical. Some might need a POS software or hardware refresh, while others are prospects you want to convert. Personalization in all digital marketing can help accelerate a buyer to conversion.

### 4 Mobile Users

Mobile shopping accounts for more than 50% of online purchases. There are now more mobile devices than there are humans on earth. While customers aren’t buying POS solutions by phone, you can bet they take their mobile phones everywhere. Use a mobile app or portal to give customers access to information and value-add

services, such as analytics reports on metrics generated by their POS systems. Mobile responsive sites are imperative to capturing users on the go and even ranking within Google's algorithm. This is an effective use of digital tools for branding and customer experience.

## 5 Measurability

As noted, traditional marketing campaigns are hard to measure. With software analytics, any digital activity can be measured, which means you can define metrics for each core theme and activity. All marketing initiatives should be tied to business objectives and reviewed quarterly and yearly, using the metrics to determine which work and which should be discontinued.



## A Rich Menu

Digital marketing offers a rich menu of options to build and disseminate your message. You don't have to necessarily consume the full menu; it makes sense to focus on two or three channels, especially in the initial stages. You can always expand later by, for instance, adding video or developing an SEO strategy. Common digital marketing channels and methods include:

### Website Content

Through your website, you can provide customers with a near-infinite number of details about your company and services. However, resist the temptation to overwhelm customers with information or technical jargon. Use language they understand to explain how you can support their businesses. Good sites

Your website is the face of your business; make it informative, easy to navigate and aesthetically pleasing

usually have "news and events" sections with blogs and announcements, sections on services, and contact information. **Your website is the face of your business; make it informative, easy to navigate and aesthetically pleasing.**

### Video Content

The use of video is an effective way to educate your audience, provide value and strengthen the trust. It is a fact that users process video faster and retain knowledge delivered by video longer. Short videos about services and new developments can be very effective. Some users, especially millennials and

Generation Z users, prefer watching a 30- or 60-second clip to reading a text-heavy page. Take advantage of services such as YouTube, which gets nearly 5 billion video views every single day. Marketing through video is the best way to reach people today. An average user spends 88% more time on a website with video and viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video compared to 10% in text.

### Content Management

Content management refers to the lifecycle of providing information, from ideation to creation to dissemination. Brands can also choose to syndicate their content across multiple platforms to regulate their digital footprint. Content can be presented in various forms - blogs, white papers, technical documents, audio, video, infographics and animations. A combination of formats is probably best. Great marketers think ahead of the consumer by developing content that solves problems before the customer knows they exist. Take one pillar piece of content and disaggregate it into multiple formats. Track which formats draw the most eyeballs so you can refine your marketing investments.

### Email Marketing + Automation

Thanks to spam, phishing and other threats, one may think that email's effectiveness as a marketing tool has been compromised. In fact, email marketing is up to 40 times more effective than social media and remains a powerful communication channel.



online, successful social media strategies can help turn customers into brand advocates—which can be even more powerful than brands themselves.



### CRM Platforms

Customer relationship management applications, as the name suggests, help businesses manage customer interactions by tracking and organizing data about each customer. Used for tracking leads, calls, emails, conversions, opportunities, feedback and campaigns by source the data can play a significant role in tracking ROI of customer retention and improved sales.



### SEO Practices

Not everyone understands “SEO” (search engine optimization), even if the term gets tossed around a lot. Google and other search engines evaluate websites and determine what to index based on page speed, mobile responsiveness, content relevancy, posting cadence, meta data and backlinks. It’s important to select keywords relevant to your business, such as “Point of Sale,” “managed services” or “retail platforms,” and peppering them strategically on your website and other content to make your business easy to find by prospects and customers. Incorporating a SEO strategy into your content development plan is vital as being easy to find on Google leads to new business. Be mindful that search engine algorithms change every year and conducting an audit of how these changes impact your site’s performance and ranking is essential.

Through marketing automation, emails triggered by conditional logic can be dripped with marketing messages based on personas and point points. If you strategically use email to pitch solutions, services and events based on relevant engagement or interest, the open rate and click through rates are bound to increase. Most email platforms provide analytic tools to track an email marketing campaign’s effectiveness. Email A/B testing will allow you to fine tune the content and layout based on alternate headlines, call to actions and imagery.

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### Social Media

Used properly, social media can yield positive results through a dialogue with customers. Keep them interested with a “question of the week,” quarterly contest or by actively soliciting feedback on new offerings. Promote your thought leadership content, videos, events, and company culture on social. Brands who define their demographic and develop social strategies to educate and delight their customers can achieve trusted advisor status. It’s also important to track user engagement and identify your goals for each platform. Monitor social media closely so you can address complaints immediately instead of letting them fester. By forming a community and building relationships



### Chatbots

Chatbots, or AI automated conversations, are becoming popular. Often found in website chat windows and social messaging services, they save web and mobile users the trouble of having to click through multiple screens and options simply by telling the bot what they’re looking for. Responses are autogenerated based on certain keywords which adapt based on user responses to a situation. When customers require a quicker response than a brand can guarantee, chatbots provide afterhours support regardless of the time of day. Chatbots are still new and need improvement, but eventually will handle a multitude of tasks, from providing information to guiding users through sales transactions. From a marketing perspective, they could deliver substantial value by enhancing the customer experience.

## Tips for Getting Help

Since solution providers tend to be technicians, they need help with marketing. Here are some suggestions:

### Repurpose What You can

Do an audit of your current content and think about any larger pieces you've created and the ways this can be repurposed. Through content disaggregation, a white paper or eBook can be adapted, dissected and distributed into multiple forms through various channels. One white paper cut into smaller, bite sized chunks can be pushed out as a blog, social campaign, eblast, video, infographic or webinar. All of these pieces should push your audience back to the main piece of content with a clear call to action.

### Hire Experts

Create a marketing position on your staff. Focus on recruiting a candidate with expertise in areas such as digital marketing, social media, SEO, design, content development and website experience.

### Work with marketing agencies

Use a marketing agency if budget constraints prevent you from hiring in-house talent or you need to augment in-house skills. Use the criteria above to find the right fit.

### Leverage online tools

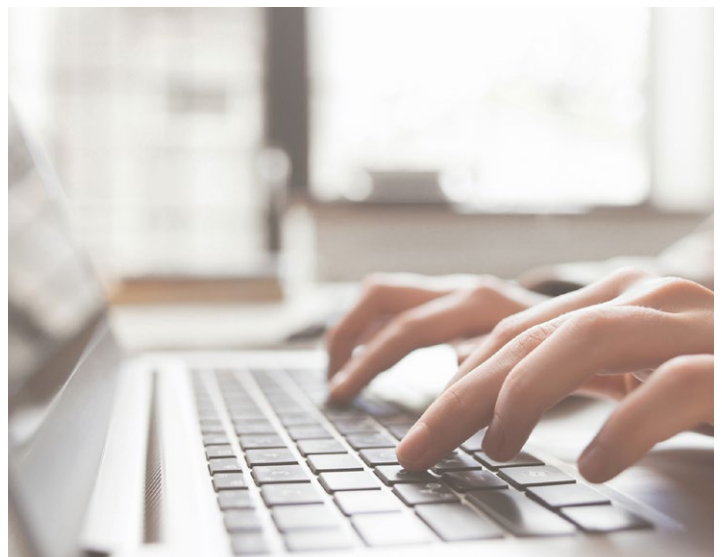
Many online marketing tools are available at a low or no cost for email campaigns, SEO practices, analytics and social media, among other functions. Free marketing trainings, white papers and digital assessments are also available. Learn to leverage them.

### Network with peers

Making connections through industry conferences, marketing associations and web-based events helps generate marketing ideas. Learning from others can save you a lot of time and effort.

## Conclusion

POS solution providers are busy people. Keeping customers happy and making the next sale are top priorities. But there's only so much you can do without a marketing strategy. Ignore marketing, and you could be hindering your growth. Thanks to digital marketing, there are plenty of effective, low-cost ways to promote your business. Put a marketing plan together, get the help you need, and implement it as soon as possible.





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