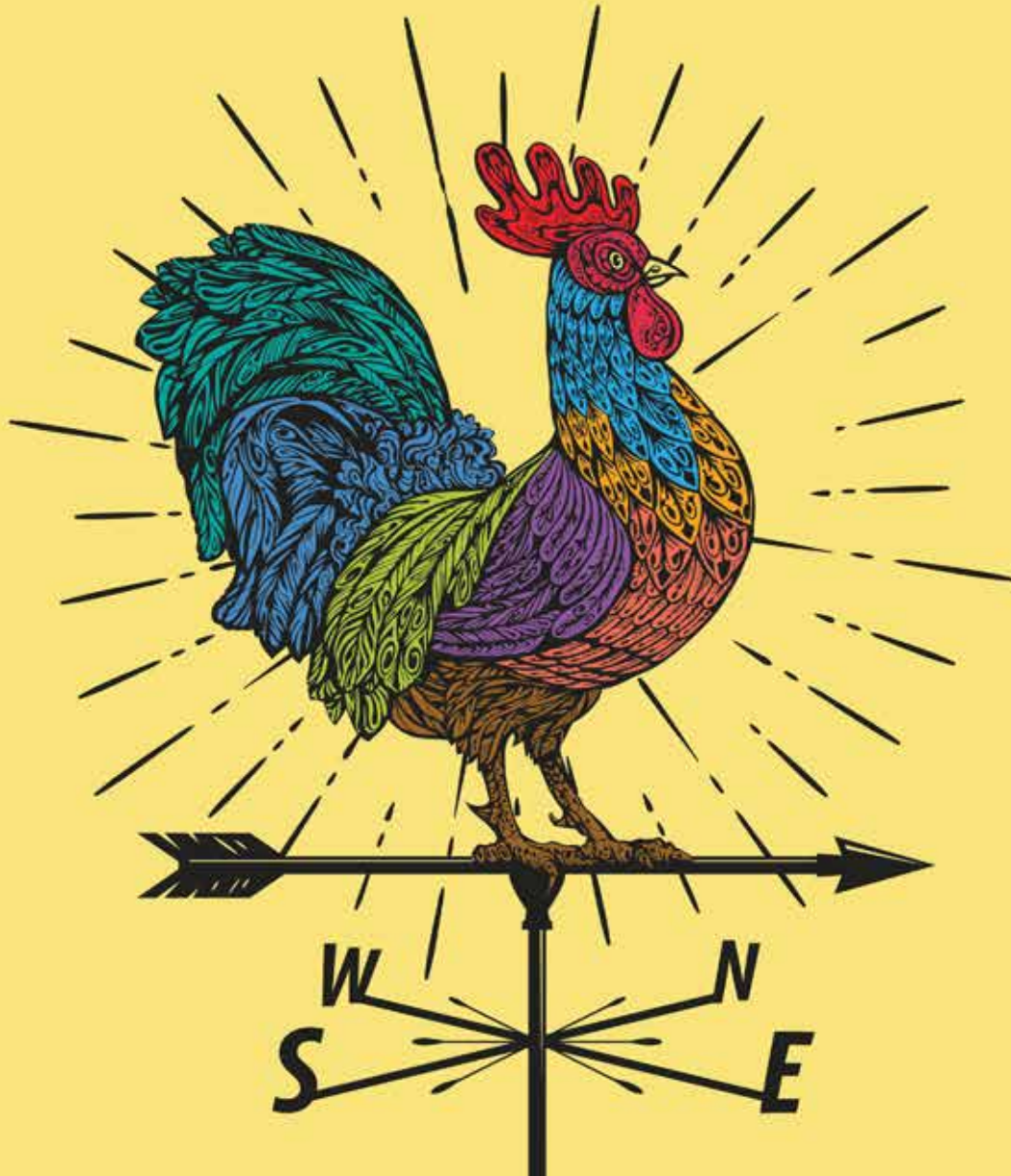


marketing sider

ISSUE 01 | 2021

NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR
TODAY'S MARKETER



NEW DIRECTIONS

2021 MARKETING TRENDS
TRANSFORMED BY 2020

Dear Fellow Marketer:

For most industries, it is fair to say the marketing landscape has been shaken to the core as a result of COVID-19. While it's hard to accurately predict when we can say we've entered a post-pandemic environment, adopting a forward-thinking mindset is the first step.

In what new directions will your marketing promotions go in 2021? Before running headlong down the wrong path, take some time to audit your current marketing materials and the channels you are in. Is everyone in your organization adhering to your brand standards, and are there consistencies across messaging and channels? If not, there is more at risk than you might think. See **page 2** for a few critical dos and don'ts.

While you're busy reviewing the tactical elements of your marketing plan, don't lose sight of the bigger picture. On **page 6**, marketing strategist Yosi Heber outlines some of the top marketing trends that are outcomes of the past year. By far, the pandemic accelerated the migration to digital technologies in many aspects of our lives, Heber points out. Who hasn't lost count of the Zoom meetings they have attended?

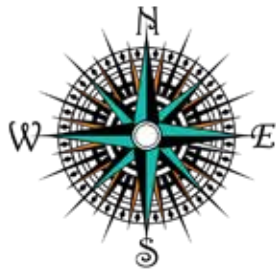
Digital platforms, unfamiliar to many event marketers previously, were suddenly put in the mix. On **page 5**, you will see how one enthusiasts' club rose to the challenge and quickly transformed their live event into a virtual one, without missing opportunities to engage and interact with attendees. They discovered that having the right partner for support made it possible.

We are here for you, too. Whether you're playing catch-up or trying to do more with fewer resources or people, we can help. Let's talk and see where we might be able to lend a hand. A fresh perspective may point you in directions you might not have considered before!

Happy marketing,
Your friends at Allegra



C o n t e n t s



06 SPOTLIGHT

New Directions: 2021 Marketing Trends Transformed by 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

02 Dos and Don'ts for Auditing Your Brand Communications

Learn how you can avoid branding inconsistencies that can confuse your audiences and interrupt the sales cycle.

04 Promotional Products: High-impact and Cost-effective Advertising

Branded masks and much more! Check out the numbers when you consider the role logoed items can play in your marketing mix

05 Case Study: A Car Club's Shift to a Virtual Event Adds Unexpected Horsepower to the Experience

See how one organization met the moment by reimagining their live event, maximizing virtual engagements and interaction

10 Infographics and Case Studies Help Steer the Decision to Buy

Capitalize on two powerful content marketing tactics by knowing how to deliver information visually and through storytelling

12 How to Effectively Communicate with Your Team

Discover how to improve efficiencies and bring sanity to your team with tips from bestselling author Stacy Tuschl.

CONSISTENCY

✓ Dos and Don'ts for Auditing Your Brand Communications ✗

COUNTS



At minimum, it's a best practice to cast a critical eye to your identity materials, marketing and sales collateral, and online presence (website, digital ads and social media) annually to ensure they are aligned with your current branding.

Going through this process, called a communications or brand audit, allows you to see where older graphics and outdated messaging are still making their way into the world. What's the harm in that, you ask?

Marketers and brand managers understand that branding inconsistencies can result in market confusion, damage an organization's credibility and make it harder to compete. Other potential fallout: Inconsistency can jeopardize trademark status, hinder your ability to generate leads and interrupt the sales cycle.

It's natural for a business to evolve over time. Even young companies that start with the basics later transition into more regular customer communications, lead generation promotions and brand awareness activities.

Following are some dos and don'ts to keep you focused on your review. Set aside time to gather everything in one place; at a desk, on a table or in a conference room and get started. You should end up with three piles: keep, revise and throw away or delete.

DO know your standards.

Most companies have an identity standards manual that outlines proper logo usage, preferred fonts and stylistic requirements. Those that don't should create an audit checklist to evaluate trademark usage, graphic design and content standards, even a current cost guide if your sales materials include pricing.

DO read for tone and messaging.

Have your services changed? Target markets grown? Is some of your messaging too narrow or too broad as a result? Once you do a first pass based on the look and feel, do a second-round review to drill down into the finer points of your messages, both online and off.

DO prioritize.

Whether your "fix list" is short or robust, prioritize your revisions. Quick changes should be done first as well as updates to pieces that are most broadly circulated. Give



yourself a month to update the content. Over the course of the next year, schedule the development of new pieces to replace the ones that don't make the cut.

DO embrace technology.

Maintaining brand standards can be even more challenging for multi-location companies, those with hundreds of documents or materials that require frequent updates. Centralizing control with an online ordering system prevents satellite offices from going "rogue" with unapproved materials, ensures proper branding, and saves time and money. *(Talk to us to learn more about a web-to-print solution and if it's right for you.)*

DON'T assume someone else is watching.

If you find a lot of variations in branding, it might be time to recirculate your standards guide and get tougher with enforcement. Assign the responsibility of managing brand standards to key staff members and remind everyone of your internal approval process.

DON'T overlook channel integration.

Avoid market confusion by striving for a seamless brand experience across your online and offline touchpoints. The most successful campaigns integrate print and digital. Driving prospects to an outdated website via a new mailer with an updated logo and fresh graphics can be a credibility buster.

The final word: DON'T go it alone.

Contact us for support with presenting your brand in ways that build trust with your key audiences. ■



HIGH-IMPACT and COST-EFFECTIVE Advertising

Percent of consumers more likely to do business with the advertiser who gave them a **branded mask**



57% of consumers who own **promo products** report that they have **kept some for more than**



Promo drinkware that costs **\$7** will have a cost-per-impression of under

1/2 of a cent



3,000



Number of **impressions promotional writing instruments** generate throughout their lifetime

85%

of ad specialty recipients **worldwide** remember the advertiser



of Canadian

&



of American

consumers have a more **positive opinion of an advertiser** if the item they receive is **environmentally friendly**



Car Club's Shift to a Virtual Event Adds Unexpected Horsepower to the Experience

Challenge

Organizations – large and small – that depend on in-person sales conferences, trade shows, annual meetings and fundraising events to support their goals were forced to reimagine their approaches as the fallout from COVID-19 impacted “what we always do” unlike ever before.

Enter: virtual events. Those who had never considered online meetings in the past knew they would have to adapt or cancel their plans.

A chapter of a car enthusiasts' club feared they might have to pull the plug on their annual car show unless they could think differently about how to deliver a seamless experience online rather than in person.

Solution

Two of the biggest challenges virtual environments present are audience engagement and interaction, both much more suited to live shows

We recommended that the club make the move to a virtual event, convinced they could still offer a great experience for participants. However, there were some obstacles to overcome:

- The audience – Most of the club's members are older and unfamiliar with the technology necessary to make this kind of event a success. We offered to do background research, review other virtual events, and took what we knew about their traditional show to create an integrated process where we could leverage all our combined strengths.
- Timing – We had to work fast! The club approved the proposal just one month prior to the event launch.

The quick turnaround needed for promotion and event preparation was aided by the initial research conducted for the proposal. Promotional elements included email campaigns, digital flyers and an online registration page. All outgoing messages and presentation materials were branded with the club's logo and information.



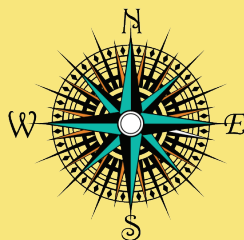
Once registered, participants received an automated email with information on how they could participate in the show by submitting a short description of their car and up to five images.

All uploaded images were then placed in the car club's Dropbox where club officers segmented them into 35 categories for the competition. All entries were featured in a 285-page flipbook that was released to registrants to vote for their favorite vehicles.

When voting closed, PowerPoint presentations branded with the car club logo showcasing the winners were prepared for the event's virtual award night. Following the award ceremony, registrants received a link to a recording of it as well as a “keepsake” digital flipbook. These choreographed steps delivered on the goals of enhancing audience engagement and interaction.

The club also uncovered a couple of unexpected “wins.” The virtual environment meant enthusiasts from a much wider geography could participate. It also required fewer people from the club to manage the event. In prior years, the in-person event had upwards of 15 volunteers. Working together, half the number of people created and hosted the virtual counterpart. ■





NEW DIRECTIONS

2021 MARKETING TRENDS TRANSFORMED BY 2020

By Yosi Heber

As business owners and marketers begin to imagine their post-pandemic “new normal,” most have been forced to re-evaluate nearly everything: budget allocations, mix of marketing channels, and rebalancing their retention and acquisition strategies for growth.

Marketing Insider tapped marketing strategist Yosi Heber for his take on

how the pandemic altered marketing in 2020 and ways you can integrate the disruption into your 2021 thinking and planning.

Heber says, “Companies that are proactive and ready to leverage these trends and opportunities will recover faster and potentially be much stronger in the long term.”



THE TRENDS

1 DIGITAL EXPERIENCES HISTORIC ACCELERATION.

Since the pandemic began, there has been major transformation in the ways we interact with our families, get our work done, talk to our doctors, travel, spend leisure time and conduct virtually all our “way of life” tasks.

According to McKinsey, these changes have accelerated the migration to digital technologies at a stunning scale and speed, across every sector. As one CEO remarked, “We are witnessing what will certainly be remembered as a historic deployment of remote work and digital access to services across literally every domain.” Through the COVID-19 recovery and well beyond, digital will play a defining role or even the defining role.

Hence, it becomes critical to quickly accelerate your digital efforts. Ask yourself: Do I leverage and monetize my website and other digital channels as well as I could? We’re now in a new world. As customers continue to interact with digital more than ever, companies need to quickly rethink their customer journey and accelerate the development of digital solutions, whether that’s their website, e-commerce, email, blogging and content, video, social media or paid search.



2 SHOPPING IS MIGRATING TO DIGITAL.

According to McKinsey, consumers vaulted five years in the adoption of digital in just eight weeks. Across the world, people are turning to digital and reduced-contact ways of accessing products and services. This digital trend is magnified for Gen Z, millennials and higher-income consumers in general. Social commerce is on the rise as well: 34 percent of people say they have shopped on Instagram, based on an influencer recommendation.

This shift is likely to stick to a large extent simply because e-commerce is often more efficient, less expensive and safer for customers than shopping in physical stores. Moreover, as social distancing and protective measures linger, shopping from our couches will seem even more convenient by comparison. For marketers, this means rethinking how to connect with consumers. Clearly a stronger emphasis on e-commerce and digital channels is crucial, including consideration of the role of direct-to-consumer (D2C) e-commerce channels.

3 THE HOME AS THE COMMAND CENTER.

The pandemic has made the home a multifunctional hub, a place where people live, work, learn, shop and play. This will be especially true as a growing number of companies and employees attempt to sustain some of the advantages of working remotely that they have now experienced. Interesting, that other than groceries and household supplies, at-home entertainment is the only other category where spending has remained resilient during the crisis, says McKinsey.



For marketers, the implication may be that they need to redesign shopper journeys for consumers who may be in a different state of mind. At home, shoppers are comfortable; they want to see loungewear options in their recommended products and to spend time browsing through add-ons. They're in no rush; they can "add to cart," then go back for more. They may be shopping at different hours during breaks from their remote-work schedule. They may be shopping for their whole family across multiple product categories.

4 LINKEDIN IS SEEING NEW LIFE.

LinkedIn has become a potent sales lead generation, marketing and networking tool. Almost all of us have a profile on LinkedIn and we use it to link up and socialize with business colleagues and associates. But LinkedIn has added major new lead generation and selling power to its platforms.

Especially if you're a B2B company, you can now very effectively micro target potential leads by geography, job title, seniority, closeness to your inner circle and much more. In addition, it's becoming popular for people to post videos to their LinkedIn feed as a way to spice up their participation and social optimization. If you're looking to drive powerful new sales lead generation avenues for your business, you should certainly look into these features for your sales team going forward.

5 ZOOM RULES!

Before the pandemic, I used to have three meetings per quarter via Zoom. That changed to three meetings per day! Zoom will likely affect how and where we conduct business going forward. Who needs to fly out to Los Angeles for a meeting when one can accomplish the same thing via Zoom? The travel industry will likely suffer for some time as business travel will decline even after the pandemic recedes



Yosi Heber spent 17 years at Kraft, Dannon and Barry Diller's IAC in the United States and Europe. He has been engaged by more than 60 B2C and B2B clients including Procter & Gamble, Novartis, Hyundai, Pitney Bowes and Nestle as well as over two dozen small to medium-sized companies, start-ups and family businesses. Learn more about Yosi at oxfordhillpartners.com.

PRINT IN THE MIX



Many marketers in what was deemed essential businesses rediscovered the power of direct mail during the pandemic. Stay-at-home orders and social distancing led to consumers longing for something tangible and touchable – already proven, positive attributes of print.

As restrictions were lifted and more businesses reopened, many needed to announce new public safety measures and procedures for their customers and employees. Postcards and other mailers, signage, graphics and banners at the point-of-sale guided a lot of careful back-to-business activity.

According to direct mail archiving service *Who's Mailing What!*, the top five categories of mail volume in June 2020 were the same in September: retail, finance, nonprofit, internet/telecom and healthcare.

Targeted and measurable, print's host of unique qualities make it a strong partner for your digital marketing strategies in 2021.

– Marketing Insider

6 PURPOSE IS IMPORTANT.

Especially in a time where people are scared, and many are facing financial hardships, brands should think about what they can do from a charitable and social responsibility perspective. Adding a "purpose" component message to your advertising and social media can leave a positive and even lasting impression on your customers and clients. And this is especially powerful when targeting Millennials who typically hold brands to a much higher standard. ■



INFOGRAPHICS AND CASE STUDIES

Help Steer the Decision to Buy

In today's information-accessible age, potential customers are doing their own research throughout the buyer's journey, from awareness to consideration to purchase. Often, the more complex or costly the product or service, the more proof they need to justify spending the money.



Here are two persuasive types of content that can help your target audience with decision making:

INFOGRAPHICS

Accelerate comprehension. Improve retention and recall. Increase engagement. Infographics can explain the unexplainable and help complex data tables, numbers and locations to come alive.

When done right, infographics can connect with an audience that may be unreachable via text formats, providing information that might not otherwise be consumed. Be clear on the following before you get started:



GOAL – What is the purpose of your infographic?



AUDIENCE – What is relevant to them?



STORY – What simple message will resonate with your audience?



CONTENT – What five key visual points will support your goal?



HOOK – What will leave your audience wanting more?



VISUALS – What are compelling ways to visualize your key points?



DESIGN – How should the information be packaged for clarity and impact?

CASE STUDIES

Your goal is to provide information about your offering that offers powerful “third-party” endorsement. To build a stronger case, consider content that is more about the user experience and less promotional “puff.”

Case studies can tell compelling stories about your customers’ positive experiences and give prospects the critical confidence they need to feel good about doing business with you.

In a recent poll we conducted with an independent research firm, small and mid-sized business marketer

indicate case studies and articles are the most effective types of content and among the easiest to produce. Here are your steps:

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH.** See how your competitors are – or are not – using case studies. Find good examples in other industries that you can model.
- **SET YOUR GOALS.** Just like with infographics, you will want to define your audience, key messages and the desired action, once they’ve read your study.
- **HAVE AN ENGAGING, OBJECTIVE STORY TO TELL.** Is your customer’s story relatable and realistic? Do you have facts and figures? Will readers be able to relate to the story you are telling?
- **SECURE CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION.** Make sure the case study subject (and their legal department if it is a business rather than an individual) is OK with sharing data.
- **FOLLOW A PROVEN STRUCTURE.** There are three key components to a case study: the customer’s challenge, their experience with the solution and reason for choosing it, and the results.
- **START SMALL.** A case study can be as short and simple as a few paragraphs. Ask a satisfied customer a few quick questions, write their story and get approval to publish it.
- **SHARE AND RESHARE.** Whether written or turned into video snippets, post your case studies on your website and social channels, and feature them in your blog, email marketing efforts and printed newsletters.

Done well, case studies can differentiate you from other options your potential customers are considering, whether it be choosing a competitor, doing the work themselves or even doing nothing at all. ■

We can help you gather information, write, design and distribute your customer stories. Let us know when you are ready to get started.

To view a sample infographic, refer to page 4. For an example of a case study, see page 5.

How to Effectively Communicate with Your Team

By Stacy Tuschl

Does your team know exactly how to communicate with you? As someone who has 50-plus employees in both of my businesses, imagine if people didn't know how to communicate with me or what was expected.

If I went to lunch with you, my phone would probably be in my purse and you would never see me look at it. Why? Because no one needs me that badly during that hour; there is nothing that urgent.

Here are some ways I effectively communicate with my team:

Pick the right platform. Texts, emails or phone calls are not as efficient as a project management tool. Texting can be slow. Phone tag is usually inevitable. Email occupies 23% of the average employee's workday and that average employee checks his or her email 36 times an hour. It's a distraction.

I highly recommend project management software to help you stay out of your email inbox or off your phone and stay productive. We've been using Monday.com for a few years and haven't found anything that comes close. It even has a keyword search that enables me to easily find what I'm looking for.

Establish urgency boundaries. You get what you tolerate. If you respond to every non-urgent matter, it will keep happening. Make sure you go into your project management tool consistently and that your team knows when that will happen. I check mine once at 11:45 a.m. and a second time at 3 p.m. I have a Google calendar reminder for myself to do it. It's rare that something couldn't wait three hours.

Share goals. I am so embarrassed to admit this, but I used to just hand out tasks and keep the goals to myself.



It never dawned on me to share the big picture! If you aren't careful, you create task "rabbits" who don't know the real big picture.

Now, the leadership team and I created our annual and 90-day goals together and from there we create 30-day projects. When everyone can see what they are aiming for they will realize what is important and what isn't. We need to equip our team with the ability to prioritize and shoot for the same goals.

Set Weekly Tasks. Prior to our weekly team meeting, we have everyone fill out their week's tasks on one collective board. By the end of the week, they will either check it "done" or "not done" and any unfinished tasks will be renewed and put on the next week.

The tasks on this weekly board are not recurring tasks. For example, our social media manager does not have a post on Instagram because it's something specific to this week. She might say, "Start workshop promotions" as one of her weekly tasks.

Besides our weekly board, we have boards for each of our programs. Inside these boards is where we work to make the program better including every positive or negative comment. And we hold a monthly team meeting for each of these programs. ■



Stacy Tuschl is a bestselling author and founder of the Foot Traffic Formula, helping small businesses around the world get more customers in the door, more profit in their pocket and more happiness in their homes.

HOW DID THE PANDEMIC IMPACT YOUR COMPANY'S CONTENT?

Content Marketing Changes that B2B Organizations Made in Response to the Pandemic



70%



Changed targeting/
messaging strategy

64%



Adjusted editorial
calendar

53%



Changed content
distribution/
promotion strategy



40%



Changed website

40%



Put more resources
toward social media/
online communities

31%



Reexamined
customer journey

30%



Increased time
spent talking with
customers

26%



Changed
products/services

25%



Revisited customer/
buyer personas

20%



Adjusted key
performance
indicators (KPIs)

14%



Changed content
marketing metrics
(e.g., Set up new
analytics/dashboards)



Allegra businesses are independently owned and operated.



Personalized mail
increases the
response rate
of direct mail
campaigns by up to

500%*

Reach potential clients and loyal customers at their doorsteps with Allegra's direct mail printing and mailing services. See us for:

- Brochures
- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Product samples
- Postcards
- Inserts and enclosures
- Coupons
- Magazines
- Promotional materials
- Letters
- Envelopes
- Self-mailers

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