

Technology dominates every part of our lives and it is impossible to imagine our society without it. This means that it is imperative for professionals in the finance industry to fully grasp this digital mindset in order to garner complete use of the many services and tools available.

Now, you may have mastered the mindset, but there are three questions I need to ask you: Do you know how to create a digital marketing plan? Do you know how to drive traffic to your website? Are you happy with the business you are generating?

Before getting started on planning a campaign, you will need to have established the overall intended marketing goals.

1 THINK SMART

Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely - or SMART - goals are a great way to ensure your objectives are focused and achievable. These goals can be based on increasing sales, profits or recommendations through customer satisfaction.

2 ESTABLISH BUDGETS

There is no point in starting to plan a campaign without deciding on a budget beforehand. Once you know what you have to work with, you can begin researching the best ways to get the most out of it.

3 CONDUCT YOUR OWN MARKET RESEARCH

Knowing your own product or service is vital for completing useful market research. You should get to grips with all the key features and benefits in detail, including price, service, distribution and placement. Additionally, you will need to research the current market to get a gauge of your competitors and industry benchmarks in order to ensure you are not only meeting those standards, but that you are beating the competition.

In order to do this, it is vital that you have a clearly defined unique selling proposition (USP) that will make you stand out in comparison to what is already on the market.

Having a clear understanding of who your target market is will help determine your USP.

4 KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Determining basic demographics such as age, gender, earnings, hobbies, likes, dislikes, purchasing patterns and buying objectives is a great place to start when it comes to targeting the right audience.

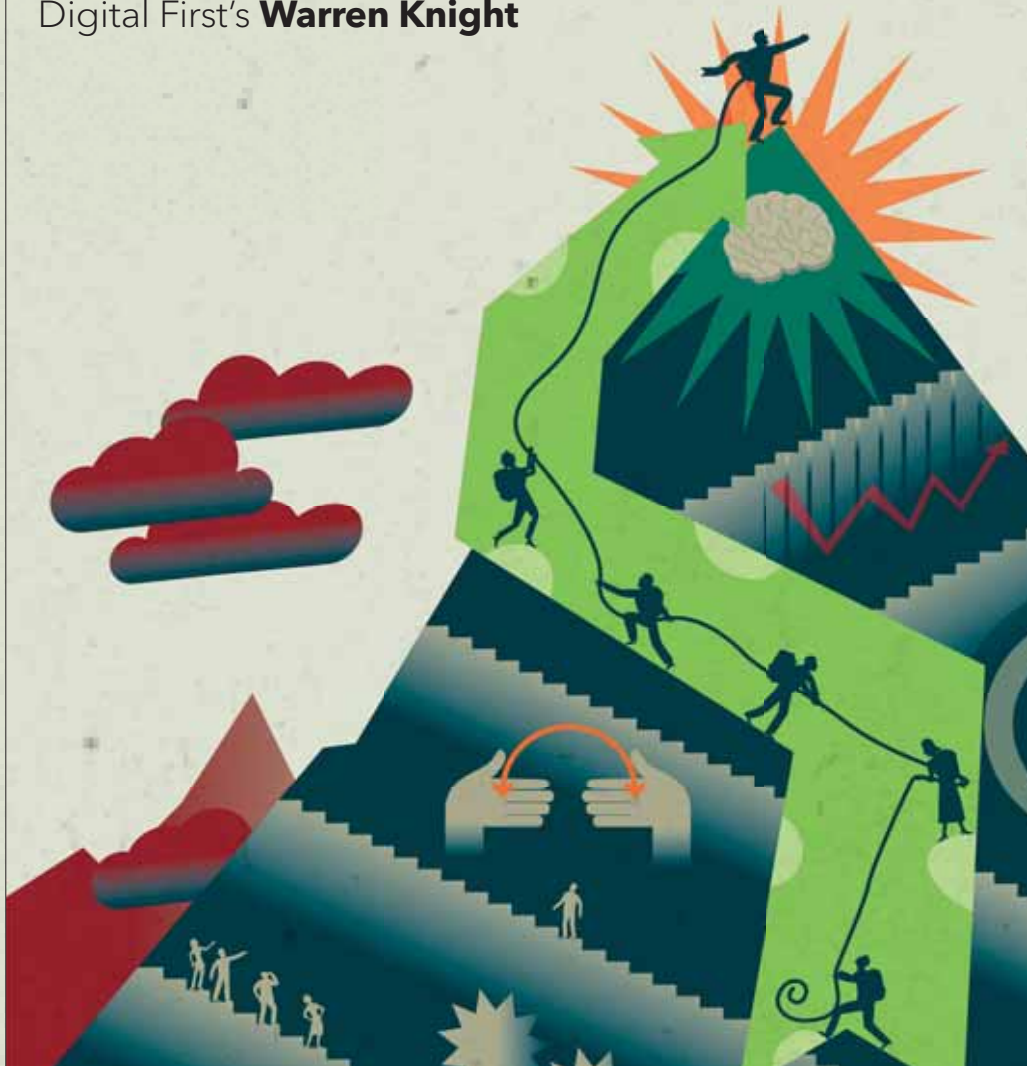
You should test these assumptions in real life with focus groups and surveys, making full use of social media quizzes and polls while also using the platforms to research what content people are

sharing and posting. You may be surprised by some of the outcomes as your target audience is not always exactly who you think they are.

Here are a few questions to consider once you have determined just who it is you are marketing your product or service to: Who are they as people? What are their motivations? How do they like being communicated with? What publications do they read and which websites do they regularly visit? What social media platforms do they use the most? What topics are they talking about?

THE WINNING STRATEGY

An astounding 76% of business owners don't have a strategy for online marketing. Make sure you're in the 24% that do with this handy guide from Think Digital First's **Warren Knight**



5 PLAN SPECIFIC CAMPAIGN GOALS

Next, you need to outline what you want the campaign to achieve. The overarching objective will help to identify how you will connect with, and therefore convince, your audience.

You need to be specific. Saying that you want to increase sales is not precise enough. It needs to be a goal that you can clearly analyse and measure. Make sure you are accountable for the goals you set by tying them to measurable key performance indicators.

Aligning these with monetary value will help you quickly identify whether you have achieved your goals for a successful return on investment.

You also need to decide what kind of content you want to use during your campaign. To help you decide, refresh your memory on the market research you completed in the previous step. How does your target audience like being communicated with?

To make the most out of your content, think about the ways in which it can be

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adapted and repurposed for social media, perhaps using infographics, for maximum reach.

It may also be useful to set up a calendar for your campaign, detailing when you will initiate each stage. You may want to include email marketing, social media, search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC), podcasts, lead magnets via a landing page, events, analytics, and demos and evaluations.

6 CREATE QUALITY CONTENT

If writing and designing is not your forte, don't worry. There are many different options you can consider when creating content. For example, with stock image websites like Getty, you can have professional images at your fingertips.

Alternatively, outsourcing to an agency or freelancer may be a more effective way to manage your time so you can concentrate on strategy. The same goes for copywriting. Many companies use external resources to ensure quality content.

7 PROMOTE YOUR MESSAGE

Once you have created your content and are happy with the result, you need to shout about it. Promoting your content is key to ensuring a high reach and to generate those conversions.

Social media offers a great way to do this, not just because it's free, but because it gives you the opportunity to engage with consumers in a way that truly communicates your brand and tone of voice.

Regular and relevant promotion of content and services can help establish you and your brand as industry leaders and help build trust with your customers. Once that relationship has been formed and reinforced, they will become loyal customers.

There are other ways to promote and execute content. Some involve investment, such as PPC or sponsored ads, but public relations and email mailouts are a good way to keep costs down. Having strong SEO is another great way to ensure your content is being seen.

THE NEXT STEP

So, you have successfully created and promoted your content, and your campaign has run through its budget. Now what? Analysis. In order to be completely sure you are spending your money on the tactics that work best, you need to analyse your campaign data.

There are many ways that you can do this. Software such as Google Analytics, for example, allows you to track whether you have achieved your campaign goals and what you need to work on next time.

If you have used social media, make sure you utilise the analytics available to you on the platforms. Facebook Business Manager allows you to see the statistics on engagement and which posts perform the best, giving you a comprehensive idea of what your followers want.

I hope this guide has helped you feel more confident in mastering your digital marketing campaigns. It can feel hard to keep up in such a fast-paced industry, but it is important to refresh and update your knowledge regularly to stay current and ahead of the curve.

Warren Knight will host a 20-minute lunch webinar on 19 June 2019 at 12:30. You can book your place at tinyurl.com/BAM-KnightWebinar ●

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