Getting found in 2012

By Lana Hindmarch

27 Jan 2012

In 2011, further innovations in the online space meant that consumers became even more savvy about blocking out traditional forms of advertising. Buyers also showed that they have the capability to evaluate the products and services they need on their own.

In 2012, businesses will take a more aggressive approach to transforming their marketing efforts and reducing their cost per lead, by focusing more on permission-based, inbound marketing programmes that allow customers to find them.

Here's how they'll do this:

1. **Brands will fight to become top dog online**

   According to eMarketer's 2012 Digital Usage Report, more than three-quarters of the US population will be online by the end of 2012. That's an audience of 239 million people who are searching in blogs, search engines and in social media for the products and services companies are selling.

This brings huge opportunities for companies to be found online - but to be found first they will need to be extremely clever.

2. **Content will drive everything**

This is how the clever brands will succeed. Content will continue to sit at the heart of the industry. The difference this year is that budgets for content marketing will go up, and spending on traditional push marketing tactics will drop.

According to the report B2B Content Marketing: 2012 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends (2.09MB pdf), 60% of B2B marketers plan to increase their content marketing budgets this year

3. **Blogging will soar**

Marketing has become personal. Rather than viewing a corporate profile, consumers want to know what companies are thinking. They also want valuable advice that's going to make a positive impact on their lives.

4. **Brands will use social media to know their customers better**

The focus this year will be on the lifetime value of a customer. To do this, brands need to be ever-present in social media. My hope is that they use this research to provide the right content in the right channel, at the right time, to the right customer.

5. **Social media gets the second slice of the budget pie**

In terms of getting found online, companies will realise that social media without a content strategy is futile, and this will shift budgets slightly.

6. **Newsjacking becomes a marketing tactic**

Smart marketers will realise that real-time content creation is a great way to get found. They will piggyback off newsworthy information to create buzz for themselves. David Meerman Scott (@dmscott) calls this newsjacking.

7. **Relevance or bust**

Until now, it was sufficient to frequently produce large volumes of content to draw customers in. This year, true marketers that put their audience's needs before their boss's will push the boundaries of 'awesomeness' to produce content that is more relevant than ever, content that ticks all the social sharing boxes.

8. **The smaller social channels come out to play**

2012 is going to be another massive year for Facebook as the company goes public. While Facebook is printing money, consumers will start paying some attention to more non-traditional social channels such as SlideShare, Instagram, Yahoo and Google+.

9. **SEO will no longer be seen as a marketing tactic**

It will rather be part of a process that includes... content! So while it will still be important to ensure a website is optimised for search, it will be even more important to ensure that relevant, fresh content is created and then optimised for search. This will guarantee the likelihood of getting found in search rankings.

10. **Brands become mobile ready**

Mobile internet users will reach 113.9 million in 2012, up 17.1% from 97.3 million in 2011, according to an eMarketer report. And Gartner says that, by 2013, more people will use mobile phones than PCs to get online.

Those companies that haven't done so already will get their sites mobi-friendly in 2012 and companies will start producing more content in fresh, bite-sized chunks that are easily digestible for mobile consumption.

11. **This is the year for online video**

As companies realise the brand interactivity and user experience that online video offers, coupled with the local predictions for faster internet and cheaper bandwidth, online video as an advertising medium will grow exponentially in 2012. Maybe exponentially is too soft a word - an eMarketer report proposes that in the US, online video viewers will reach 169.3 million in 2012.

12. **Ecommerce companies are the largest adopters**

It is expected that 83.9% of internet researchers will make at least one purchase via the web during 2012. Recognising this, companies that sell their goods online will pull out all the stops to ensure they get found when buyers are looking for what they're selling.

When it comes to trends, it's always a challenge to keep predictions as non-self-serving as possible. In other words, to differentiate between what I hope will happen versus what I think will happen... and having the wisdom to know the difference. Only time will tell.

Here's to 2012, and hoping that we - and our customers - find what we're looking for. With the help of great content, it seems pretty certain we all will.

For more:

- Bizcommunity Special Section: Biz Trends 2012 - sponsored by Aegis Media

ABOUT LANA HINDMARCH

A facilitator and leadership development & wellbeing specialist, Lana founded BREATHE, a company on a mission to disrupt traditional wellness and make employee wellbeing a strategic imperative so that workplaces in South Africa can thrive and grow.

▪ Moving from burnout to renewal in agencies - 10 Feb 2022
▪ Video drives new business success - 13 May 2014
▪ [2012 trends] Getting found in 2012 - 27 Jan 2012
▪ Inbound marketing - the inside story - 23 Aug 2011
▪ [2011 trends] Exciting times in the visual communications industry - 24 Jan 2011

View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com