Limelight NETWORKS

Benchmarking Your Digital Marketing Strategy

In this whitepaper you'll learn:

- 10 key strategies that every high-tech marketer needs to know to have an awesome digital presence
- How a strong digital presence can counteract the "hidden" sales cycle
- How Web 2.0 tools, mobility, and social media can help high-tech marketers achieve greater sales success

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10 Key Strategies That Every High-Tech Marketer Needs to Know

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The question is whether that presence is significant or insignificant, positive or negative?

A new era of digital marketing is upon us, ushered in by the introduction of sophisticated Web 2.0 tools, pervasive mobile technologies, and ubiquitous social media platforms. This growing assortment of marketing channels, especially mobile, requires marketers to adopt new techniques and methods for reaching potential buyers. High-tech marketers face new challenges because today's buyers do not engage sales departments until much later in the sales cycle. This means that their opinions and attitudes about your products have been formed long before they contact you.

This "hidden" sales cycle, where initial product research is done largely without your company's involvement, is occurring in every B2B environment. Today's buyers will use a combination of channels to gather information such as product reviews, blog posts, articles, and anything else they can find to assess your products, your service, and your integrity. This is why it's crucial for your organization to evaluate, modify, and manage all digital touch points. These touch points are also known as your digital presence. Your digital presence can either set your visitor on a path to greater interaction and eventual purchase or it can catapult them into the hands of a competitor.

Customer engagement and sales success, for any marketing executive, hinges on the ability to ensure that web visitors have an awesome digital experience. This goes far beyond a functioning website - that's a given. An awesome digital experience is realized when the majority of your visitors can identify with and act upon your website with the least amount of friction. The more complete and compelling an organization's digital presence, the more successful they will be influencing perceptions, opinions, and sales decisions.

Every company has a digital presence to some degree. Digital presence refers to the sum of all activities carried out through online channels (website, social media, email, advertising, content, and other engagement) that reflect and affect your company's brand, revenue, reputation, and customer experience. It is quite simply the product of all of an organization's digital touch points, which today represents the digital storefront, personality, essence, and footprint of an organization.

The question is whether that presence is significant or insignificant, positive or negative? A restaurant, for example, may not even own a website, yet there are posts about its food and service on Yelp or similar sites. Whether the owner knows it or not, that restaurant has a digital presence. Their digital presence may not be actively managed, but comments about their food and service could dramatically impact their sales. Left unattended, their digital presence is at the mercy of any happy or disgruntled reviewer on Yelp!

For high-tech marketers, 2012 means addressing the following challenges around your digital presence:

- Loss of control over the hidden sales cycle
- Inability to reach and engage with prospects on mobile devices, a growing preferred channel
- Inability to coordinate content across web and social channels with email

The new rules of marketing insist that a successful digital presence must be cultivated and nurtured. Don't leave it to others to define your company's digital presence. You may not like the result. With this thought in mind, here are ten strategies that every high-tech marketer needs to understand to create an awesome digital presence and be successful in this new era of digital marketing.

1: Making it About the Pipeline

Marketing teams are no longer simply tasked with positioning and disseminating product information to the masses. The responsibility for creating pipeline falls squarely on the shoulders of marketing as well. Marketing 2.0 is all about building funnel and pipeline by converting leads and engaging prospects through a clear and systematic process. This requires new approaches to marketing that engage prospects at critical points in the sales cycle.

According to SiriusDecisions, 70% of the buyer's journey is complete before they even talk to a sales rep. The fact that buyers are now in control of the sales process to such a high degree strikes fear into the heart of every sales rep. Absorption Systems, a Limelight Networks customer, is an example of this trend. When the marketing team at Absorption Systems began looking for a Web Content Management System, they began by calling into vendors' client lists, even before doing product research or engaging the vendors themselves! They took control, gathering the information they wanted without any input from vendors.

2: Unifying Your Digital Presence

A unified digital presence is paramount to your marketing success. Your digital presence is the sum of all activities carried out through online channels (website, social media, email, advertising, shopping cart, and even big screen activity) that reflects and affects your brand, revenue, and customers' experience.

An effective digital presence must also be carefully managed. This includes, but is not limited to the design, creation, formatting, cataloging, distributing, measuring, and updating what is presented and controlling how it is delivered.

TIP:

Kipp Bodnar and Jeffrey L. Cohen, authors of The B2B Social Media Book: Become a Marketing Superstar by Generating Leads with Blogging, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Email, and More, recommend the 10-4-1 rule when publishing web content in social media. For every 15 social media updates, 10 should be pieces of other people's content, 4 should be your own blog articles, and 1 should be a landing page to your site (with a form).

Architecting an effective digital presence requires certain initiatives to be addressed such as the ability to easily update web content, ample storage for web assets (such as video), a comprehensive mobile strategy, and globalized sites with local content.

The first step to improvement of any of these areas is to get an assessment of the current state of your digital presence. Oftentimes a team skilled in performing digital assessments can point out areas of weakness that might otherwise go unnoticed. A digital assessment will give you a benchmark and help you identify key areas where improvements can be made. An assessment will also provide a blueprint for next steps.

3: Integrating Social Media

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are great places to expand your digital presence, publish content, or alert your audience to content updates. But it is not a silver bullet lead generation channel as Hubspot points out:

> *"Looking at data from 2011, we did a study of 3,000+ B2B businesses to understand how B2B companies are succeeding with social media. Shockingly (or maybe not), the data revealed that 63% of B2B businesses were not generating leads from social media. This means that, while these companies were generating traffic from social media channels, they were not converting that traffic into leads for their businesses.*

So why might this be? The biggest disconnect is between content and social media. It's important to routinely publish content in your social channels to send qualified traffic to your website…"

A web content management system that is integrated with social media tools is even better. Whenever content updates are made, your followers on social media can be quickly updated from alerts posted by the WCM. Alerts to social media can be scheduled with precision and help to automate some of the aspects of maintaining your digital presence.

TIP:

The more you can focus the right content to your buyer, the higher likelihood you will have to make a connection with that buyer and capture a qualified lead.

4: Keeping Content Dynamic

Your website may be beautifully designed and visually engaging, but is it fulfilling its business purpose of converting and qualifying leads? It's really only as good as its content, which must be continually refreshed and relevant. Web content has a certain shelf life before it must be renewed and updated. Your products and services will help you determine what that shelf life is for your particular content. Attracting visitors requires great content. Engaging visitors requires great content. Becoming thought leaders requires great content. There is no room for subpar content. Content can take many different forms such as buyer's guides, white papers, datasheets, videos, blog posts, and so on. Each content type should be mapped to a persona and to a stage in the buying cycle.

Although not all prospects experience the same buyer's journey, they will all encounter the main stages which are awareness, consideration and decision. The web plays a huge role in advancing the buyer's knowledge during the awareness and consideration stages. Therefore, you must be ready with the right content at every stage in the buying process so that you can influence the evaluators and the decision makers. Jeff Ernst of Forrester Research commented recently in his blog, "You need to recognize that the B2B buying process is not one big decision; it is a series of micro-decisions. And the company that wins the business is the company that is there to answer those questions and provide fresh insights that influence how the buyers think about the problem so that the buyers can confidently advance their journey."

5: Personalizing the Web Experience

This seismic shift in buying patterns necessitates a much more technologically sophisticated selling environment. Websites must be smart enough to ask the right questions and present visitors with meaningful content that is going to influence their ultimate decision. You must identify each visitor more fully than ever before to direct them to information that is suitable for their needs and for their stage in the buying cycle. Buyer personas should be clearly articulated on your site so that visitors see their specific persona and can easily identify and consume materials directed at them. Better yet, your web technology can identify your visitor even before they reach your site, and be ready to target content to them based on industry, company size, or other firmographic data.

Prior to the internet, the sales cycle was a traditional, sales-led, endeavor. The (sometimes unpleasant) process of buying a new car, for example, required you to go to a showroom early in the sales cycle as part of your initial research. You were immediately greeted by an eager sales associate who started by asking you a few questions such as your name, the type of car you were interested in and what options you desired. Alternately, you would ask the dealer questions about a car's price, gas mileage, interior options, and

1. http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/32025/63-of-B2B-Companies-Don-t-Generate-Leads-From-Social-Media-New-Data.aspx#ixzz23lyVQ900

2. http://blogs.forrester.com/jeff_ernst/12-07-26-b2b_marketers_have_a_blind_spot_the_buyer_journey

so forth. At the end of your visit, the salesperson would often present you with a color brochure of the cars you had looked at.

The internet has dramatically changed how people buy cars. Their initial research starts out on the web with the potential buyer reading up on all the specs, digesting customer reviews, and understanding pricing options. In other words, the car buyer is much further along in the sales process before they even step foot on a showroom floor. They have already formed an opinion of your cars as well. Once at the dealer, today's buyer is armed with all kinds of specs and pricing info. They are more prepared for the dealer room showdown because they are armed with more information.

6: Going Global, Staying Local

"It is no longer a question of whether to globalize your Web site, but how to improve the online experience for every prospect and customer."

Source: Lionbridge

For companies that sell in both their domestic market and abroad, having a regional digital strategy is imperative. Lionbridge Technologies stated in their white paper, "Building a Global Web Strategy—Things to Consider When Developing Your Online Brand,

> *"As you expand further and faster into global markets, you must adapt your Web presence to target key populations in their native languages. The shift to a truly global audience compels companies to adopt a Web globalization strategy that conveys information in the cultural, linguistic, and business context of the target audience.*
>
> *It is no longer a question of whether to globalize your Web site, but how to improve the online experience for every prospect and customer."*

The challenge for many companies has been the cost and complications around building multiple websites in geographically diverse environments. A US-based company, for example, may hire a team of web developers to build its core site in the United States. At some point the company decides to expand internationally and hires a web team in Europe to develop web sites for a few countries there.

The result can be the creation of sites that are off brand and off message. Lionbridge further states in its white paper,

> *"Translated corporate Web sites will seldom engage regional customers and prospects adequately. The distributed approach often leaves local offices struggling to manage the efforts in the absence of well-defined guidelines, often producing their own site versions with widely divergent form and content; sometimes, the only common element may be the company logo and the result is audience confusion and a weakened, runaway brand.*
>
> *The best approach to web globalization is a hybrid model that creates a centrally-managed program that brings together corporate and in-country representatives from the outset."*

7: Making Mobile Your Strategy

Mobile device usage is beginning to outstrip laptop and desktop usage. Consumers have high expectations for their mobile experiences, often expecting speed and navigation to be on par with that of their wired devices. Fierce Mobile predicts that by 2013 there will be 1.7 billion mobile internet users. Because so many employees bring their own devices to work, they have the expectation of moving without friction between their laptop and mobile devices. This includes accessing web sites and all associated web content with the same ease and speed as they would from their laptop connected to the corporate network.

3. http://www.fiercemobilecontent.com/story/forecast-1-7-billion-mobile-web-users-2013/2008-06-25

To ensure that your brand is expressed consistently across all online properties, your company must provide content that is adaptable to mobile devices of any size and any type. This is a challenge for many organizations as there are so many mobile devices that rendering unique pages for each device is not practical.

A mobile solution that is part of your larger content management system is the best approach because content can be optimized for every device regardless of screen size, bandwidth, or processing power. As you publish your web content, tweak your design, or add new functionality, all your visitors, whether on mobile or PC, have instant access to any updates. Spending time developing mobile specific content is not efficient and will slow your efforts to create and maintain a powerful digital presence.

By The Numbers:

In June of 2012 180 million U.S. Internet users (85 percent) watched 43.5 billion online videos for an average of 23 hours per viewer.

8: Capturing the Power of Video

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then video is worth ten thousand. The rush to add video is on for many companies as they recognize the benefits of video versus printed words. Videos can bring to life content that might otherwise be drab and unexciting for many visitors. But, like any marketing tool, video must be used in the right context and in the right way so that it can be an effective branding and selling tool.

During the London 2012 Summer Olympics, more than 4 billion TV viewers globally watched portions of the games. A quarter of those viewers were expected to view events and get updates from their PCs and their mobile devices according to a report from eMarketer. In June of 2012 180 million U.S. Internet users (85 percent) watched 43.5 billion online videos for an average of 23 hours per viewer according to the same report.

Online video is becoming one of the best ways to reach and engage your audience. The visual and dynamic format of video gives your audience another way to interact with your brand and products. With the right video platform you can store, publish, and manage videos in your libraries and on YouTube and other platforms. You can also deliver video content to any device which expands and improves your digital presence. Tech marketers can successfully use video in their campaigns, increase brand awareness and sales leads. And, search engines like Google tend to rank video assets at the top of their search results, giving an SEO boost to firms that employ video on their sites.

9: Embracing the Cloud

Cloud-based solutions are everywhere and span applications from email to HR to sales automation. Web content management, video management, and web acceleration are all examples of applications that have migrated to the cloud and can help you improve your digital presence. Cloud based tools that allow you to create, publish, manage, and measure content are bringing a new level of capability to high-tech marketing teams around the world. The evolution of the cloud is helping companies advance their digital presence in ways to were previously not possible by allowing Marketing to own the content creation workflow all the way to the publishing stage. Leveraging cloud computing to bypass the IT department, Marketing can make changes on the fly, launch new campaigns more quickly, and respond to changing market conditions sooner. This capability removes limitations to keeping your content fresh and exciting.

Web site updates, once the purview of the IT departments, can now be handled by the marketing team. Globalization of web sites is now possible through cloud-based content management systems that are not bound by hardware or geographic considerations. Authority can be delegated at a regional level to manage content, translate content, and deliver content to local audiences who are more likely to consume it. The cloud is leveling the playing field for many businesses who want to establish a global presence without enormous overhead that came with such an effort.

For more information visit www.limelight.com.

Or call: 866-544-4831

10: Bringing it All Together

Today's technology buyer is tech savvy and armed with leading edge devices and the means to bypass your Sales organization. High-tech marketers have a mandate to deliver content that is compelling, dynamic, and adaptable to any type of buyer. Because the buyer is engaging your company so much later in the sales cycle you must do everything you can to influence their perceptions along their buying journey.

The way to accomplish this goal is to create and maintain an awesome digital presence by taking advantage of all the tools and digital touch points available to you.

About Limelight Networks

Limelight Networks, Inc. (Nasdaq:LLNW) is a global leader in digital presence Management. Limelight's Orchestrate Digital Presence Management Platform is an integrated suite of cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) applications, which allows organizations to optimize all aspects of their online digital presence across web, mobile, social, and large screen channels. Orchestrate leverages Limelight's scalable, high-performance global network to offer advanced features for: web content management; website personalization; content targeting; online video publishing; mobile enablement and monetization; content delivery; transcoding; and cloud storage — combined with social media integration and powerful analytics. Limelight's team of digital presence experts help organizations streamline processes and optimize business results across all customer interaction channels to deliver exceptional multi-screen experiences, improve brand awareness, drive revenue, and enhance their customer relationships — all while reducing costs.

For more information on our web acceleration services, visit www.limelight.com or call us at 866-544-4831.

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