

WHAT WE LEARNED IN 2021 AND HOW TO WIN 2022



For many of us at New Times, it's that time of the year where we take stock of our wins and our losses --or "opportunities to learn". The pandemic had a significant role in shaping some new habits, and even when the disasters have passed, many new consumer habits will remain.

I'm sure many of you are planning your marketing strategies for the new year, and if there's one thing I'm certain about, it's that in marketing, change is an integral part of the job. We must keep looking ahead and aim to welcome new strategies, tools, and technologies to jump ahead of the competition.

So, we put our heads together and took a look at the challenges and the opportunities businesses experienced with marketing and advertising, and created a list of lessons learned **that will help gain an edge into the new year.**



Geofencing Marketing Needs To Be A Part Of Your Mix

If you're not using this technology, you're way behind your competitors. Geo-fencing allows real-time targeting based on a user's location. When someone steps into your targeted area, they get added to your advertising audience and receive an in-app ad, or search and display ads directly from you. You can target your competitors, neighborhoods, colleges, and more. Make sure that ad has a CTA that they can't resist.



Leverage Short-Form Video

Like it or not, we love watching videos. Recent data shows that 84% of people were convinced to buy a product or service based on the brand's video. Short-form videos are 2 min & 30 seconds or less. Ask yourself "What channels are your audiences using, and for what?" Understanding how users engage with a platform will help you determine the type of content to create: user-generated, behind-the-scenes, or explainer videos. Remember, it doesn't matter what's trending, engaging your audience is really all that matters.



Embrace Unique Partnerships

Strategic partnerships can create new ways for businesses to reach new audiences, drive engagement, and motivate actions among consumers. By working with partners that serve the same audiences as you, you can attract ideal prospects you haven't been able to reach before. Strategies such as shared social and educational content, and combined advertising are just a few ideas to reach your collective goals.



Support Social Responsibility

With over 32 million Millennials in the U.S. identifying as African American, Hispanic, or Asian, if a company isn't considering multicultural audiences, it doesn't have a growth strategy. By engaging in positive social change, brand's can gain customer trust and community support -things that help convince people who are on the fence to follow through with their purchase of your product or service. Before publishing a content piece or ad, ask yourself: Does this reflect society? Are we elevating diverse voices? Expanding your brand and reach while engaging in advocacy for your consumer's community is a win-win.



First-Party Cookies Are Better

Embrace the change. First party data has insights about your already interested prospects and customers that you can use to personalize your messaging and drive better results. In addition this information is exclusively yours and not your competitors. Encourage your audience to share their info and be certain to take good care of it. Invite customers into a loyalty program, allow visitors to checkbox usage preferences, surveys, interactive content, and you'll be on your way to building a stronger and more effective marketing ROI.



Use Content Marketing to Convert Leads

Any company that wants to stand out in their industry will need to align their visibility, credibility, and authority. Every content you create carries your brand reputation, so aim to write about customer-ready solutions, ideas, and value propositions rather than business-oriented items. By addressing questions from bottom-of-funnel topics, you will increase your lead conversion probability. And be consistent in creating and sharing content to capitalize your full potential.



Engage Your Customers Through Chatbots And AI

When consumers have a question, 82% want an “immediate” response. And nowadays, people don’t have the patience to scroll through FAQ pages looking for information. Create a chatbot to enhance your users’ experience and build a new channel for customers who prefer to shop on the go. Your AI can sell, inform, educate and even provide 24/7 customer service, all through your pre-written responses to commonly asked questions. When it comes to shopping, a little assistance can go a long way in turning prospects into buyers.



Maximize Mobile Commerce

We’re living in an ever more mobile-centric world, as people have now realized we can do everything from our smartphones. Make your website responsive. Use mobile payments. Make CTAs big enough to attract attention & tap with a finger. Store registration and payment data to reduce wait times. Remove any distractions from the checkout process so that customers near the “finish line” can easily cross it. Mobile devices now play an increased role in the consumer’s purchasing process, and if you stay innovative, creative, and up to date you’ll watch your revenue grow.



Voice Search Is Here

With over 12 billion voice searches each month, (Google 2020) if you haven’t already upgraded your digital marketing strategies, then now’s the time. Treat your search strategy as a conversation, people are born to talk not to type. Come up with catchy product descriptions that sound great when read aloud. Design content with long-tail keywords as a searchable conversation with the customer. [Click here to read and download our tips to get you started.](#)



Build A Strong Brand Image

We live in a world where the image is everything. Unfortunately, many business owners don't know how to do this, making them wonder if branding is even worth the effort. Investing in time and money to improve the value of your brand will not only create positive engagements that pull prospects closer to a purchase, but also strengthen your competitive position. Strategies like creating a Lifestyle around your product or service, sharing social proof on your channels, and providing long-term support through educational content, are just a few ways to build value for your company (as are most of the above lessons too).



After reading through these lessons, it becomes very apparent that the common denominator in planning for next year is “Personalization”. There are more marketing options for businesses than ever before, and that isn't going to change any time soon. Consumer habits are different now than before the pandemic. Also, the competition has changed. Become a better storyteller. Customers don't want to hear about how great you think your product or service is, they want to know how your “solution” will benefit them.

Take time today to consider your marketing strategy for next year, and how you will take on the changes in your industry, to enhance your business and your customers' quality of life. We think 2022 is going to have some interesting breakthroughs for companies in all industries. The best thing you can do now is put some of these tips into action so you can grow your revenue, engagement, and traffic next year.

One thing we are certain of, is that 2022 is going to be exciting!

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