

LEARNING MADE EASY



Integrated Marketing

for
dummies
A Wiley Brand

A
Step-by-Step
Guide for
the Modern
Marketer



GETTING STARTED SERIES

DUMMIES CUSTOM SOLUTIONS

IN THIS GUIDE

- » Find your target audience
- » Determine goals and metrics for your campaign
- » Identify the appropriate channels for your campaign
- » Develop a content strategy
- » Build your integrated strategy
- » Measure and optimizing your campaign for better performance

Getting Started with Integrated Marketing

Any good investor knows that to be successful, you must diversify. The same goes for marketing. In order to create a truly successful marketing strategy, you must step back and look at your plan holistically, ensuring it uses a variety of marketing tactics, channels, and strategies to meet the needs of your customer.

No one part of your plan can be completely successful on its own. Instead, all aspects of the campaign must work together to form an integrated customer experience. By focusing on the customer and employing an integrated strategy — utilizing diversified marketing tactics across multiple channels with consistent messaging — you help ensure a unified brand experience that will build trust and loyalty for your business.



ADDITIONAL MARKETING RESOURCES

This guide will help you to build an integrated marketing strategy that combines many of the ideas learned in our Getting Started ebook series, including:

- Content Marketing
- Inbound Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Digital Marketing
- Account-Based Marketing
- Email Marketing

If you have not read these ebooks and are interested in taking a look, please visit ***dummies.biz*** where they are available for free download.

Building an Integrated Marketing Strategy

According to the *DMA*, Integrated Marketing is an approach to creating a unified and seamless experience for consumers to interact with the brand/enterprise; it attempts to meld all aspects of marketing communication such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and social media, through their respective mix of tactics, methods, channels, media, and activities, so that all work together as a unified force. It is a process designed to ensure that all messaging and communications strategies are consistent across all channels and are centered on the customer.

At its core, an integrated marketing strategy takes all of the best parts of other marketing theories and strategies and combines them into a holistic plan based around the customer. It utilizes a variety of marketing methods, channels, and activities to attract and nurture new prospects while continuing to engage with the existing customer base.

In this guide, we'll help you to build an integrated strategy by following the steps below:

- 1. Identify your target audience**
- 2. Determine your goals and metrics for measuring campaign success**
- 3. Find which channels have the highest potential for reaching your target audience**

- 4. Develop a content strategy that will reach your target audience**
- 5. Create a high-level plan for each channel you decide on, utilizing the marketing tactics best suited to that specific outreach**
- 6. Build and optimize a holistic, integrated strategy based off the recommendations provided in the channel strategies**
- 7. Measure your campaign based on the metrics identified, and optimize your strategy to meet the goals you set**

At the end of each section, we include an interactive template activity to help guide you step by step in building out your own integrated campaign.

Identify Your Target Audience

As with many types of marketing, when starting your integrated marketing strategy, it's important to first identify your target audience. One of the easiest ways to begin is to build a customer persona. A customer persona will help provide a better understanding of your customer's motivations and pain points and allow you to better communicate with them by ensuring you provide the right information at the right time. If you're not delivering the information your audience wants and needs, when they need it, they won't read or view your content nor will they share it.

To find out what your audience is looking for, you can start by listening. In fact, listening is one of the most important parts of any successful marketing strategy. You need to constantly be listening to the online conversation so that you can modify your strategy to accommodate your customer's needs and pain points.

Another good option for learning about your customer is by polling them. Ask your customers what kind of information they want and need. Publish a survey on your blog using a tool like Polldaddy or SurveyMonkey, or pose the question on a forum or group you belong to where your target audience spends time.

Additionally, pay attention to your own Web site and blog analytics to see what content is driving a lot of traffic, comments, and incoming links. Your focus should be on long-term growth and trends. It's up to you to find fluctuations that spell opportunities and weed out anomalies that won't drive business in the long run.

Activity 1: *Build a Customer Persona.*

Determine Your Goals and Metrics

As you develop your integrated marketing strategy, you must do so with goals and measurable metrics in mind. Without goals and metrics, there is no way to determine the success of your campaign. You may run an email campaign that gets a lot of engagement, but does not bring in a lot of sales. If your goal was engagement, then it's a success, but if your goal was to nurture prospects to conversion, it's not working and you need to optimize the experience.

When working to identify your goals, consider things like how much time you can devote to the planning and implementation of your strategy, the resources available to help you with your marketing efforts, and the results you want to attain from those efforts. Remember, integrated marketing success comes in the form of long-term sustainable growth through brand building and relationship development. You can supplement your long-term strategy with short-term tactics such as discount promotions, contests, and so on, but the real power of integrated marketing comes from the lasting customer relationships it creates.

When it comes to measuring the success of your campaign, developing metrics to measure your goals is just as important as setting the goals themselves. Use key performance indicators (KPIs) to provide a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively you're meeting your key goals. KPIs can be anything from increasing engagement by a certain percent to hitting a specific revenue goal, but they should always reflect the most important objectives of your campaign.

Activity 2: Determine the goals and metrics of your campaign.

Find Your Channels

Once you determine the customer(s) you plan to target and the goals of your campaign, it's time to decide which marketing channels you will utilize for distribution. During this process, it's important to consider all channels of outreach with the potential to reach your target audience, and that can help you achieve your goals. These can include email, social media, advertising, and your website, just to name a few.

The traditional way of taking this step is to segment your customers by focusing on similar demographic characteristics, such as age, income level, gender, and so on, and then to find similar people based on those demographics. However, this approach is not necessarily the most effective way to segment and target customers in the new world of big data. The Web can be a useful place when it comes to

analyzed user behaviors in addition to demographics. Use tools like Google Analytics to help find and analyze customer data as you make your decision.

Once you have an exhaustive list of potential channels, you can use additional parameters like budget, resources, ROI, etc. to narrow down the list and decide which channels best fit into your strategy.



REMEMBER

Choosing the right channels and remaining consistent across them is key to a successful integrated strategy. It's not enough to just maintain multiple channels, you must connect the experiences. With no overall strategy to link the customer exposures and ensure you're reaching the right prospects, your brand can seem disjointed and unorganized, leading to a bad customer experience.

Activity 3: Create a list of potential channels based off of your persona.

Develop a Content Strategy

Now that you know what channels you'll be utilizing in your campaign, it's important to develop a content strategy. Content marketing is a key driver of campaign success and ensuring you have the right content for your audience at the right time can mean the difference between a sale and an opt out.

When considering what content to use in your campaign, refer back to your customer persona and the channels you've identified to help decide what types of content your customer will most likely prefer and which types perform best on the channels you've selected. For example, if you find that your customer is most attracted to data heavy content and your planning to utilize social, web, and email channels in your campaign, you may want to choose an infographic, typically data heavy, to attract prospects via social platforms where visual content is preferred and then create a data-driven whitepaper as a more robust, gated asset that can live on your website or landing page and help drive prospects to sign up for your email campaign where you can continue to send them informative content along with information on your product.



TIP

When building a content strategy, it is okay to use the same piece of content across multiple channels, just try to make sure it won't be delivered directly to the same customer twice. For instance, going back to our example above, if you use the infographic early on to attract people via social and then move those interested prospects on to an email campaign, do not use that infographic in the email campaign since they will have already seen it. However, if you decided to add advertising to the mix, you could use the infographic there as it would be a second attraction channel used to funnel prospects into your email campaign.

Activity 4: Build a content strategy by aligning content to your buyer's journey.



NEED HELP CREATING QUALITY CONTENT? DUMMIES MAKES IT EASY.

From ebooks and videos to infographics and sponsorships, Dummies Custom Content Solutions help you connect with customers through content designed to engage while also driving sales. Visit ***dummies.biz*** to learn more.

Plan Your Initial Channel Strategies

Now that you have identified your target audience and goals, channels of distribution, and available content, it's time to get your hands dirty and start building the initial channel plans that will guide your integrated strategy.

Each channel has different methods and tactics they employ in developing their strategies. To help guide you through these, we created a series of ebooks to get you started with useful information on each of these marketing disciplines. As you work through this step, please access these guides to help you develop an individualized strategy for each channel that will be used to build your final integrated marketing campaign. You can access the guides ***here***.

Activity 5: Taking into consideration the content being developed, build a high-level strategy for each of the channels you identified.

Build Your Integrated Campaign

And now for the big finale, let's build your integrated campaign. You should now have a strategy that aligns to each channel you plan to use in your campaign. As you build out the assets that will bring these strategies to life including email copy, ads, social posts, and so on, it's your job as the integrated marketer to make sure that all aspects of the campaign work together and have consistent goals, messaging, and brand aesthetics.

Look at each channel strategy and follow the customer journey, determining where the paths intersect and interact to ensure a seamless customer experience. Test how different strategies work together. For example, both your email and advertising strategies may drive customers to your web site, so make sure your site makes sense to those coming in from each channel. Your inbound strategy may lead potential customers into your email strategy, so make sure that messaging stays consistent and addresses that journey.

There are endless possibilities for how each marketing channel can work together to form an integrated campaign, but as long as you keep your customers front of mind and ensure their experience is positive and makes sense, you're sure to create lasting relationships built on trust and brand loyalty.

Activity 6: Combine the channel strategies into a cohesive integrated strategy.

Measure and Optimize for Campaign Success

So now you've finalized your strategy, built your content, and launched your campaign. Time to breathe a sigh of relief, right? Well, sort of.

Getting an integrated campaign up and running is a large feat and you should be proud, but, as we discussed earlier, your job isn't quite over because measuring the success of your campaign once it begins is important. If a campaign finishes without data, is it really a campaign at all? Bypassing that existential crisis, it really does come down to the fact that if you can't prove the success or failure of your campaign, what's the point? You have no way to identify if you should keep doing what you've been doing or change up your tactics to be more effective.

Campaign metrics prove the success or failure of a campaign and give you insights on what's working and what should be fixed. While you can't work through this activity quite yet, it's important to come back to this once you've gathered data on your campaign and analyze the work you've done here. From there, optimize your strategy and continue to do so to help ensure the best possible experience for your customer.



TIP

Below are a few articles from some of our top data marketing titles that can help get you started as you look at deciphering and analyzing the data you receive and optimizing your campaign for future success.

ANALYZE WEB MARKETING DATA

DATA DRIVEN MARKETING FOR DUMMIES

WHAT'S IN A DATA DRIVEN MARKETING DATABASE?

Integrated Marketing in Action

Now that you've worked through the process of building an integrated strategy, we want to show you an example of one in action.

Below we detail a campaign developed using content created with the Dummies Custom Content Solutions team for long time Dummies customer, Cisco. This content was used to promote their most recent ebook, *Ransomware Defense For Dummies*.

Campaign Overview

In this example, we'll demonstrate a two-phase B2B marketing campaign aimed at IT professionals. It will include a short lead generation campaign in phase 1 and a nurture campaign for phase 2. The goal of this campaign is to promote Cisco's *Ransomware Defense For Dummies* ebook. The ebook will be used to generate leads for an engager list. That list will then be funneled into our nurture email campaign (phase 2) in hopes of building more brand awareness and trust and increasing the likelihood that the lead might purchase a Cisco product.

- » All aspects of phase 1 will drive to the Cisco Ransomware Defense *landing page*.
- » Phase 2 will interact with customers via email where they can engage with the content provided, visit the Cisco ransomware *site* to learn more, or ask to be contacted by a representative.

Customer

PHASE 1 & 2: Individuals running IT departments or with an interest in the cybersecurity of their business, including, but not limited to IT Managers/Directors, CIOs, business owners, etc.

See our customer persona *here*.

Goals & Metrics

PHASE 1: Our goal for phase 1 is to gather prospects who have shown interest in our product and can be nurtured into leads. We will provide prospects with the new ebook in order to increase brand awareness and engagement. We will measure this by how many copies of the ebook are requested digitally and in person at conferences. People will have to supply information to download, so they will be added to our list of engagers for further nurture and future promotions.

PHASE 2: Our goal for phase 2 is to nurture the prospects from phase 1 to improve the chances of conversion to a sale. A way to say this quantitatively could be to say we hope to increase conversion rates 20% by nurturing our leads. We will measure success with conversion rates.

Channels of Distribution

PHASE 1: Social, advertising, email, and trade shows

Why we chose this mix: For this campaign, we wanted to use a mixture of inbound and outbound marketing methods, and made our decisions with that in mind. This customer is not the most active on social, but by offering a solid piece of content, we hope to achieve success and start to build our community for later outreach. We included both advertising and email because they have been successful with this audience in the past when used appropriately. For example, advertising in trade publications where the customer is active and emailing a list of those who have previously engaged with Cisco has been shown to work. We expect the most success from trade shows as there will be a physical piece to offer attendees as well as the digital offer.

PHASE 2: Email

The second phase of this campaign will focus purely on nurturing the interested prospects gathered during phase 1 and keeping them “warm” for further promotions, so for this phase we will rely purely on email. All emails will also have a “hand raiser” option where customers can request to talk to a representative.

Content Strategy

PHASE 1: The content strategy for this campaign is to use two high level content assets, a graphic and a video, that are easily distributed on social and via email to promote the Ransomware Defense ebook and drive customers to download it. For advertising, we will promote the ebook directly with a link to download and, for conferences, we will offer the ebook in print form or a postcard with information on how to download it. Below is a list of the content needed for each channel and *here* you can see the content that was created.

Social & Email – video, checklist asset, social copy, email copy

Advertising – ad copy

Trade Show – postcard, ebook

PHASE 2: For phase 2, we would regularly send our email list thought-leader, industry centric content focusing on hot topics in IT and cybersecurity related to Cisco products. We want them to find this information helpful and think Cisco when they're looking for industry information and eventually when they're looking for a product to purchase.

Channel Strategy

PHASE 1:

Social – Promote the video, checklist, and the ebook in separate posts to help drive traffic to the ebook landing page.

Email – Short email promotion highlighting the video and checklist via two interest level emails to illicit engagement and following up with an email stressing ransomware defense and promoting the ebook.

Email 1a – provide video, promote ebook and drive to ebook landing page

Email 1b – provide checklist, promote ebook and drive to ebook landing page.
This email goes to anyone who did not click through to the ebook (Email 2) from Email 1a)

Email 2 – talk about Cisco Ransomware defense, promote ebook and drive to ebook landing page

Advertising – Advertise on trade organization sites that attract our customer. The ads will push directly to the ebook landing page.

Trade Show – Take print product to trade shows for distribution. People would need to provide information (example: a scanned badge) to receive book. Also, distribute postcards for download to those who would prefer a digital copy. Their information would be gathered at the time they download.

PHASE 2: Again, phase 2 would be purely email, so this strategy would be similar to a newsletter campaign where we're regularly engaging with our audience (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly — depending on resources) to keep Cisco top of mind and build trust with the goal of promoting future sales once the prospect is ready to make a purchase.

Integrated Strategy

Now it's time to take a look at all of the pieces that are a part of your campaign and integrate them in order to provide a cohesive customer experience. You'll want to look at each customer experience and determine where your strategies meet, ensuring a smooth transition when applicable. Below are a few things to consider.

INTEGRATED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND FLOW

PHASE 1: Build engager list through inbound and outbound marketing methods

The customer experience will be similar for all channels in this phase as we're using multiple distribution methods to achieve the same goal — getting people to our landing page. Customers from all channels will land on the ebook landing page where they will be asked to provide data in order to download the ebook. We need to ensure the landing page addresses all of these prospects and makes sense for anyone who lands on it from the various channels. Consistent messaging is key here and all assets should share a look and feel with the landing page so that when people are driven there, the experience is cohesive.

PHASE 2: Nurture engager list

Since the only channel for this phase is email, we just need to make sure that this outreach aligns to phase 1 in messaging, tone, and branding. Users will enter this after completing phase 1, so they will be expecting a similar experience and we need to keep things cohesive. Once we start to push further promotions to this group, we will need to make sure those promotions and messaging stay consistent as well.

COHESIVE MESSAGING

Messaging should be helpful, informative, and thought leader focused, but give a sense of urgency. Explain to the customer why it's important to be knowledgeable about ransomware defense, show that Cisco is a leader in cybersecurity, and that their products are here to help.

Content promo messaging examples:

ebook – Don't get caught off guard! Learn more on ransomware defense with this free ebook from Cisco.

Checklist – Are you staying safe from Ransomware? Find out now with our free best practices checklist.

Video – Defending against ransomware isn't easy. Cisco can help!

CONSISTENT LOOK AND FEEL

Follow Cisco branding overall to ensure all outreach stays consistent and people associate the brand with the content. For this specific piece, Dummies branding will be intermingled since the asset we're promoting is co-branded and we want to use the Dummies name to help instill trust in the content Cisco is providing.

Conclusion

No matter what product you're promoting, it's not often that you'll find a successful solution by optimizing just one channel of marketing, so having the skillset to build an effective integrated marketing campaign is key and will help ensure you're ready for whatever challenges that next campaign holds in store.

Looking for help with that next campaign?

Visit ***dummies.biz*** and see how Dummies can add value to your future marketing initiatives.

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Activities



PERSONA & BUYER'S JOURNEY TEMPLATES

Use the templates below to build your customer persona and buyer's journey.

Need help? For more instructions on filling in these templates, click [here](#) for our full guide.

<Name> | <Role>

PROFILE OVERVIEW:

100- to 200-word overview describing this person.

Who is this person?

What's it like to be around her?

What keeps her up at night?

What situations does she commonly encounter that cause angst?



RESPONSIBILITIES:

Brief description of this person's work responsibilities.

PAIN POINTS:

List of potential pain points that commonly affect this persona.

KEY DRIVERS/MOTIVATORS:

What drives this person?

Why do they go to work every day?

What motivates them to persevere even when the stakes are down?

CAREER GROWTH:

What inputs help this person make a decision?

Do they value product reviews? Analyst reports?

PROFILE ATTRIBUTES

AGE:

EXPERIENCE:

PERSONAL DETAILS:

COMMON TITLES (AKA):

-
-
-






VERTICALS:

-
-
-
-

COMPANY SIZE:

- Revenue range
- Employees
- Specific subsets

Buyer's Journey

	INTEREST	LEARN	JUSTIFY	PURCHASE	NURTURE
WHAT IS YOUR PERSONA'S MOTIVATION AT EACH STAGE?					
WHAT QUESTIONS IS YOUR PERSONA ASKING AT EACH STAGE?					
KEY MESSAGES AND VALUE PROPOSITIONS					
MOST LIKELY TO RESPOND TO ... (LIST OFFERS)					

DETERMINE YOUR GOALS & METRICS

Use the information below to help determine appropriate goals and metrics for your campaign.

Before you start a blog, open a Pinterest account, or start gathering email addresses, you need to choose the business goals for your marketing campaign.

Here are six common goals that your marketing strategy can affect:

- 1. INCREASING PROBLEM AND SOLUTION AWARENESS:** Marketing can help prospective customers become aware of something they need, an effect called *problem awareness*. Your marketing can also make prospective customers aware that your company provides a solution to a problem — called *solution awareness*. Your objective is to help people realize that you can take them from the “Before” state, in which they have a problem, to the desired “After” state, in which they have obtained a positive solution.
- 2. ACQUIRING NEW LEADS AND CUSTOMERS:** Gaining more leads and customers is a primary objective of most businesses. Without generating new leads and customers, your business will never grow beyond what it is now. You need to bring in new blood in order to scale your business.
- 3. ACTIVATING LEADS AND CUSTOMERS:** If you’ve been in business for more than a few months, you likely have leads and customers who have yet to buy or haven’t bought in a while. You can use your marketing campaigns to encourage people to buy from you for the first time, as well as to remind past customers who haven’t purchased from you lately of the value you bring and why they should buy from you again. Your marketing campaigns can activate these dormant leads and customers and help keep your business in mind.
- 4. MONETIZING EXISTING LEADS AND CUSTOMERS:** Acquiring new leads and customers is expensive and time consuming. Don’t forget to create campaigns intended to sell more products and services to those new leads and customers. Monetization campaigns make upsell, cross-sell, and other types of offers to sell more to your best leads and customers.
- 5. ONBOARDING NEW LEADS AND CUSTOMERS:** New leads and customers deserve special treatment simply because they are new. They need to be taught who you are and how to be successful with what they’ve purchased. To achieve this goal, create content such as welcome emails or welcome packets that tell people how to use your product or service, what they can expect, and where they can go if they need help with their purchase.
- 6. BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ADVOCACY:** To move prospects, leads, and customers beyond a shallow, transactional relationship, you need to build campaigns that create communities of advocates and brand promoters. One of the most effective ways to achieve this advocacy is through social media, such as through a Facebook group or a Twitter page. Here, people can reach out if they have praise for or questions about your product or service. By creating an outlet, you help to cultivate a sense of community for your customer base, which leads to increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Developing Key Performance Indicators

Once you've finalized the goals of your campaign, it's time to create your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are measurable values that align to each of your strategic goals and allow you to evaluate how well the campaign is performing against those goals. KPIs can measure anything from financial performance and operational processes to sales and marketing, customer satisfaction, and more.

The nature of KPIs is to provide answers. But answers to what? You don't want to waste time and energy sourcing answers to questions you didn't ask or couldn't care less about. To ensure that you don't, start your KPI development with Key Performance Questions (KPQs).

By identifying the KPQs you're trying to answer, you'll be better equipped to develop relevant, achievable KPIs. Below are ten steps to ensure helpful KPQs:

1. Identify one to three high-level KPQs for each strategic objective on your strategy map.
2. Make sure that your KPQs are performance related.
3. Engage your colleagues in the creation of the KPQs.
4. Make your KPQs clear, short and punchy.
5. Phrase your KPQs as open questions.
6. Make sure your KPQs focus on the present and future.
7. Seek to refine and improve your KPQs over time.
8. Use your KPQs to guide your KPIs so they deliver relevant and meaningful information that answers your KPQs.
9. Use your KPQs to challenge and where necessary refine your existing performance indicators.
10. Include your KPQs in the reports you communicate within the business to review performance.

Identifying your KPIs is an important step in campaign development because it allows you to focus and prioritize your efforts. When you know what you want to accomplish, you're better able to direct your energy into the right marketing campaigns and employ marketing tactics that move the needle on the right business metrics.

For more help developing your KPIs, check out our cheat sheet [here](#).

3

CHOOSING YOUR MARKETING CHANNELS

Use the information below to help guide you through building a list of potential channels for your integrated campaign.

If we break them all down to the nitty gritty, there are probably hundreds of potential channels for marketers to utilize, but for the sake of our own sanity, we'll keep things simple. Let's go with a Dummies favorite and focus on the top 10 (high-level) channels used most often by marketers today:

- Social Media
- Email
- Direct
- Advertising
- Mobile
- Partners
- PR
- Media
- Web
- Stores



TIP

When creating your own list, feel free to add additional channels or to organize these channels into more specific areas. For example, Social Media could be broken down into Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

To help identify which of these channels is best suited for your next marketing campaign, you'll need to first find your audience. Look for the places where your customers already engage and you will find where you can reach them most successfully.

To do this, step back and put your ear to the ground — or simply listen to your best customers. Find out more about your target customers' habits by asking yourself these questions about them:

- »» How old are my target customers?
- »» Where do they live?
- »» Which events do they attend?
- »» Which stores do they go to?
- »» What websites do they visit?

By creating a list of the places where your audience engages, you will have a useful starting point to identify where to focus your marketing efforts.



TIP

When finding where your customers live, you can also start to identify whom your audience listens to. Every industry has opinion leaders and influential channels. Finding these out can help you build a stronger channel strategy.

While listening to your customers is key in identifying where they live, information from past campaigns is also useful. If your goal is to find new prospects similar to your current customers, data showing which channels performed best with those existing customers should prove helpful. When analyzing this data, ask questions like:

- »» What channels had the highest success?
- »» Does this customer engage more with digital outreach or prefer more traditional marketing?
- »» When first introduced to the product, did customers respond more to social media or advertising?
- »» Did customers engage with our emails?
- »» Were our event promotions successful?

By asking yourself questions like the ones shown above you can narrow down the channels where your campaign will find the most success and help to ensure a higher ROI for your campaign.

4

BUILD YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

Follow the steps listed below to develop your content plan. You'll also find helpful information on aligning content to your buyer's journey.

1. Perform a content audit

A content audit helps you to identify any content you may already have available that could be used in your campaign. Look through your website, content used in previous campaigns, and so on to create a list of existing content. This list should include everything you can find as it's easier to narrow down a complete list later rather than have to search further at a later date.



TIP

Build your content list(s) in a spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel or Google Docs. This way you can list your content along with columns for additional information you may want to track including, but not limited to, content type, source, where the content has been used, which stages of the buyer's journey it aligns to, the year it was created, and so on.

2. Identify gaps in your available content

Now that you have a list of your existing content, you'll want to align each piece to a phase of the buyer's journey including awareness, evaluation, and purchase. After this is complete, check to see if any of the phases do not have content associated. If so, you will need to create content assets to fill these gaps.

3. Ideate a content list to fill the gaps

The goal of building out your content list is to have assets that align with each stage of the buyer's journey. In the last step, you identified your gaps. Now, you will want to decide on a list of new content to be created.

To get started, create a list of potential content assets. Again, start broad and then narrow down the list. You can narrow down your list by performing keyword research to identify which topics are most likely to be successful based on search history, researching which topics have the most information available, identifying which assets you can create within the timeline needed and budget available, and so on until you have a final list of content to be created. Once you decide on what content to create, you're ready to develop your content assets and complete your available content list.

4. Build your content strategy

Now that you have a final list of available content that aligns to your buyer's journey, you can start to build your content strategy. To build your content strategy, align available content to each channel by choosing what types of content and topics best suit your target audience in that place and at that stage of their journey. Some content assets may overlap and work for multiple channels, while some may only have one available distribution method. That's okay. The main goal here is to ensure the customer is getting the right content, at the right time, and in the right place.

Aligning Content to the Buyer's Journey

The buyer's journey represents the path a prospective buyer takes on their way to becoming your customer. That journey is often broken into four stages: awareness (not yet aware of having a need or desire for a product, just exploring); consideration (aware of a need, researching options); decision (choosing a solution, comparing options); and advocacy (loyal customer, sharing experience with others and open to repeat purchases for self).

When you're ready to map out, or align, your content, start by considering your prospective customer's intent at each stage of the buyer's journey.

- What is it that they want or need to accomplish?
- What are their goals?
- How does your product or service meet that goal, or help in achieving the goal?

Then, look at the best type of content that can not only address the buyer's intent at that particular stage in the shopping process, but also convince or entice the reader to move to the next stage.

As we discussed earlier, during your content audit you should create a spreadsheet to identify what content you have that aligns to each stage of the buyer's journey. When your existing content is mapped out in this way it helps to reveal gaps, or what type of content you need more of to ensure there's something available for everyone at every stage. The table below shows an example of how to map out your content framework, segments, and types to the buyer stage.

Align Your Content to Each Stage of the Buyer's Journey

Stage	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Advocacy
Goal	Exploration, entertainment (Not yet aware of need)	Researching, looking for a solution (Recognize a need)	Comparing solutions/products (Addressing need)	Sharing results (Committed to brand)
Content Framework	Entertaining Educational	Educational Persuasive Instructional	Instructional Persuasive Promotional	Persuasive Instructional
Content Segment	User generated Brand generated (unbranded)	Brand generated (branded) Third-party	Brand generated (branded) Third-party User generated	User generated Brand generated (both)
Content Type(s)*	Infographics Videos (fun) Trend articles E-books	White paper E-newsletter Webinars Online reviews	Free trial Demo Video (how-to) Testimonials Case studies	Video (testimonials) Video (product tips) Online reviews Social sharing

DEVELOP YOUR CHANNEL STRATEGIES

Use the information below to complete your channel strategies.

Campaigns come in all sizes from short product-centric promotional campaigns to a long-term customer engagement campaigns, but no matter the size, you will need to utilize one or more channels when trying to reach your customers. Earlier we discussed how to make the decision on which channels to use in your campaign. Now it's time to think through a high-level strategy for each of those you chose. We don't want to get too detailed at this point, so keep it simple. We'll narrow things down a bit more as we bring these channel strategies together into an integrated plan in activity 6.



TIP

Building out your channel strategies involves ensuring you have a strong understanding of the channels you'll be marketing to and the methods and tactics that are most effective for reaching those audiences. For more specific information on how to utilize many of the channels we discuss here, visit dummies.biz.

When developing your channel strategies, it's important to collect similar information about each of the channels you plan to use and then decide how you plan to get your message across to customers in each. To do this, it can help to create a spreadsheet that shows each channel and then answers the same questions for each. Below are a few questions that we suggest including:

- Channel
- Buyer's Journey Stage
- Goals
- Strategy
- Messaging
- Content
- Promotion Information
- Notes

These topics should help to get you started, but feel free to add additional information that you find helpful. Every campaign is different and thus different information will be needed for each.

Below is an example of how you might fill out your spreadsheet based on the sample campaign provided and using the questions listed above.

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN: For this example we will be planning a content-driven promotional campaign. Phase 1 will be to attract new customers using ungated content, opt them into our email campaign using gated content, and then use an email campaign to nurture the engaged prospects to purchase. Phase 2 will go into effect for all prospects who engaged with phase 1 but didn't purchase. We will continue to nurture these potential customers using thought leader content to help build brand awareness and trust, hoping to ensure they reach for our product when ready to purchase.

SAMPLE CHANNEL STRATEGIES

Channel	Buyer's Journey Stage(s)	Goal(s)	Strategy	Messaging	Content (if any)	Promotion Dates	Promotion Location (if applicable)	Notes
Social Media	Interest/Learn	To attract new prospects & engage with existing customers or those who follow our social channels to get them into the email campaign for further nurture	Promote ungated content via social media to attract prospects and drive them to LP to learn more about the product and sign up for email list to get gated asset.	Thought leader messaging helping a prospect to learn about an issue they may be having and helping educated them on it. Sounds helpful and shows your expertise.	Infographic; video; social post copy	Post dates: 9/19/2017 & Video 9/26/2017	Facebook; Twitter	
Advertising	Interest	To attract new leads and get them into the email campaign for further nurture	Promote gated content or product and drive directly from ads to LP where they can learn more on the product and sign up for email list to get gated asset.	Thought leader messaging helping a prospect to learn about an issue they may be having and helping educated them on it. Sounds helpful and shows your expertise.	Ad copy	Ad Run - 9/18/2017 to 9/30/2017	Banner ads on: [List sites]	
Direct	Interest/Learn	To attract new prospects & engage with existing customers or those who visit our booth to get them into the email campaign for further nurture	At conferences, talk to prospects about the product and use a postcard to promote gated content download from LP to bulk up email list for further nurture. Will scan badges at conference and add those individuals to the email list as well.	Thought leader messaging helping a prospect to learn about an issue they may be having and helping educated them on it. Sounds helpful and shows your expertise. Since you will be working with these people in person, also start to talk more about the product and how it can help solve the issue.	Flyer; Postcard	Conference Run 9/25/2017 to 9/28/2017	Conference	Ship postcards & flyers to conference by 9/18/2017
Email	Learn/Justify/Purchase/Nurture	To nurture new leads and further nurture those who don't convert	There will be three email campaigns: 1) Nurtures incoming leads to purchase. 2) Takes any prospects that don't purchase and continues to communicate with them until they are ready to buy.	The email campaign will be used to both nurture customers to purchase, but also to keep in contact with those who may not be ready to buy. You will want to talk about how the product can help solve their issue to push to conversion, but if prospects do not convert, you will want to revert back to thought leader content, allowing for them to build more trust, get a better understanding of the brand, and hopefully think of you when they are ready to make a purchase. Every email should have a "hand-raise" option where prospects can purchase.	Comparison chart; testimonials; email copy; further thought leader assets	Email Run 9/18/2017 to 12/1/2017		
Web	Learn/Justify/Purchase	To show prospects about the product and allow for purchase options	This will be a landing page that will house information on the product and the gated content available when a prospect opts in to the email campaign. There will also be a button to request to contact a sales rep directly.	Since the customer will come here from social or advertising, you now want to acknowledge that you know about the issue they're having and explain your product that can help them solve it.	Whitepaper; web copy	Site live date - 9/13/2017		

CREATE YOUR INTEGRATED STRATEGY

Use the tips below to help bring together your channel strategies and build a successful integrated campaign.

When it comes to the buyer's journey, your prospects are no longer confined to one particular medium. People aren't just looking through a newspaper, watching television, or listening to the radio. Instead, potential customers may potentially encounter dozens of touchpoints (points in the buying journey where the consumer can connect with a brand or engage with a brand's message) before making the decision to buy.

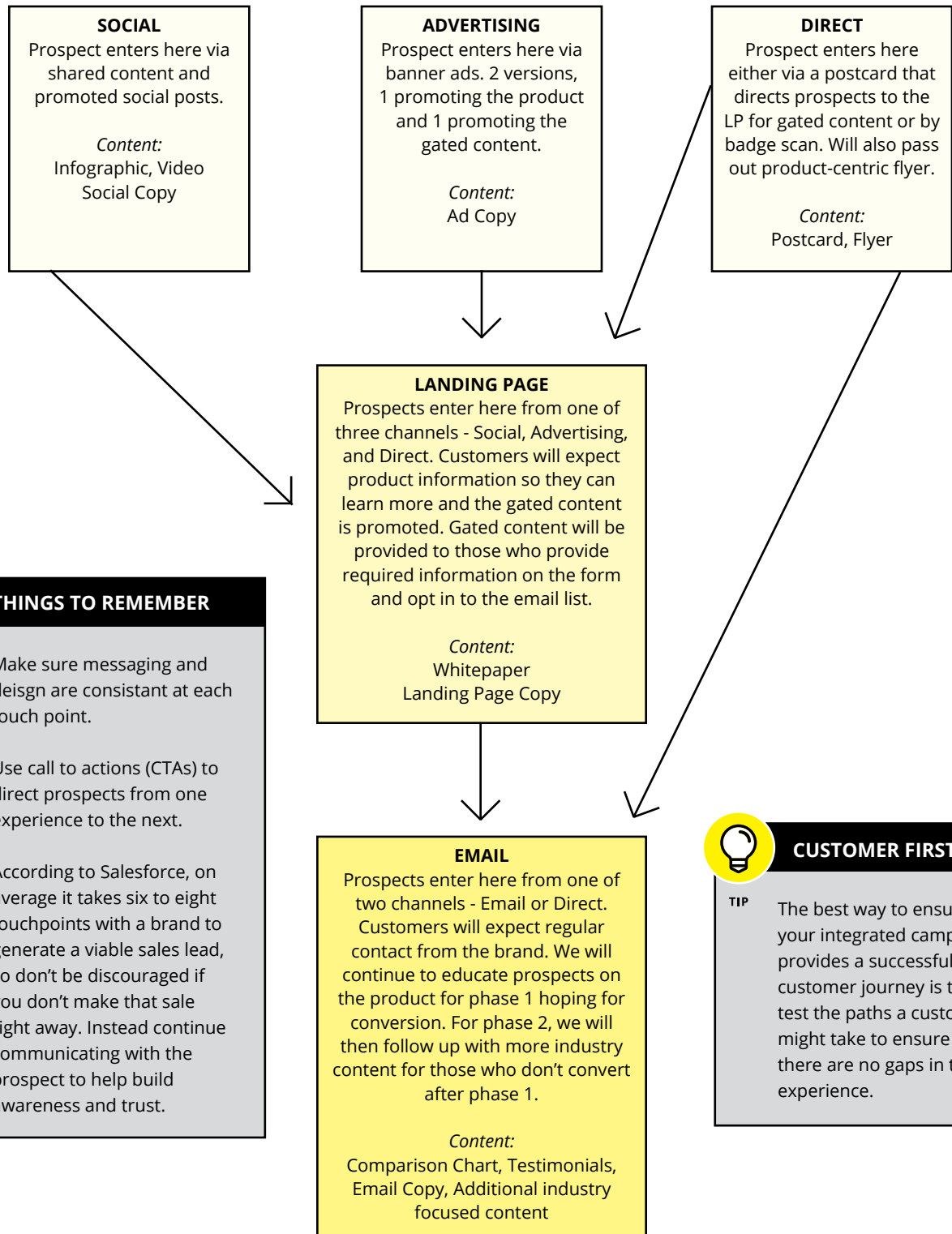
You need to strategize about how best to keep your brand top of mind and engage your prospects at each of those touchpoints. To accomplish this level of ongoing, valuable engagement with your prospects, keep in mind the following key points:

- » **TAILOR YOUR COMMUNICATIONS FOR EACH AUDIENCE SEGMENT.** Every audience segment will have its own unique personality and preferred form of communication. Familiarize yourself with the best ways to communicate with each segment. Then analyze the characteristics of these prospects before developing an engagement strategy.
- » **MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY IN YOUR MESSAGING, TONE, AND BRANDING.** To create an omnichannel marketing strategy that unites all your communications platforms together, you need consistency among your marketing assets. While the structure or medium of the message may change, your brand's tone and stylized elements, such as your logo or color scheme, should remain constant. Consistency will help your prospects identify your message and easily follow it across all channels.
- » **GUIDE YOUR PROSPECTS THROUGH THE JOURNEY.** In a campaign or program that leverages several media, you need to provide instructions or links that guide your prospects through one step of the process to another. Eventually, you'll want to steer them to an owned asset like a landing page or signup form. From there, you can push them toward the next critical step in the buying process. Using a call-to-action that explicitly tells a user what to do, such as "Click here to find out more," is an excellent way to accomplish this objective.

The relationship you build with your audience will vary based on where they're at in the buyer's journey and the interactions they have with your brand. For example, early prospects might be looking for educational information while existing customers will want to see something that enhances the current relationship. When creating an integrated campaign, it's important to identify your audience and create a targeted communications strategy that provides individuals with the unique omnichannel experience they're looking for.

When building your integrated strategy, it's helpful to create a flow chart of your customer's journey through the campaign, so you can identify where different touchpoints come together and how you can ensure the experiences stay connected. Here we provide a sample customer experience flow chart. Use this to help guide you as you build your own.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FLOW CHART



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