



Make 2020 Your Best Year Yet

THE MANAGER'S GUIDE TO BUILDING
A SMART MARKETING STRATEGY



Do you have a 2020 marketing strategy ready to roll out January 1st?

If you did, you probably wouldn't have downloaded this ebook, right? It's ok if it's still in draft form or even if you haven't started yet. At the end of the year, we're all just trying to tie bows and tighten loose ends; only overachievers have time to plan out the next year, anyway. If you're ready now to get focused on what lies ahead for the new year for your business, you've come to the right place.

This guide has what you need to put together a smart marketing strategy, and if you've already started one, feel free to browse and fill in holes as you see fit. For those of you who haven't started, no need to be overwhelmed; we know there's a ton of information out there and so many places to start. This guide is not-so-much a template as it is elements to consider plugging into your own strategy. We know each business is different, so use only what's applicable to your business, and most importantly, make it your own.



First Things First, Refine Your Goals

Don't start 2020 without a plan. Many times businesses want to focus on a specific tactic or deliverable like, "Let's do more video!" Kudos for being eager in doing more or in trying new things, but it'll save you time and heartache to have a strategy and goals. This way, your approach can be more pointed, and your efforts are measurable.

We've all heard of SMART goals. But that's not exactly what we're talking about here. Before you start spouting out numbers and deadlines, you have to helicopter up and think about what your business needs. Do you want consumers to get to know your business? Do you want more leads? Do you need a way to communicate with old clients?



Here's what we mean:

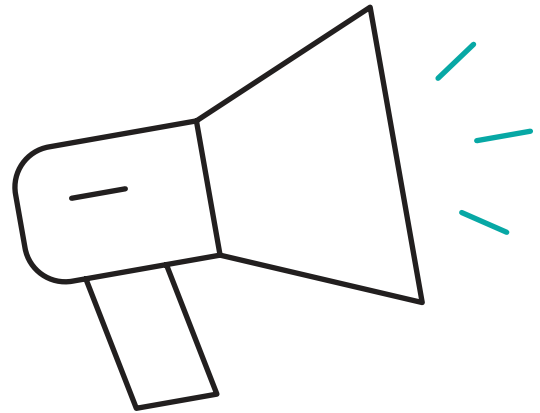
If you want to be seen as a resource or expert, then you need more THOUGHT LEADERSHIP. It establishes your expertise in the field. Share statistics, industry information, trends, and add commentary/your position on relevant news. Ebooks, articles, webinars, and research & statistics, can help broadcast thought leadership and show you're an expert in your industry.

If you want people to know who you are, then you need BRAND AWARENESS. This informs consumers of your brand and helps build your social presence. This strategy doesn't just work for brands in their infancy. Even the most established businesses use brand awareness, e.g. a brokerage wants to expand to a global market, a retail business is opening a new store, a recruiting firm is adding a new service to their offerings. Start off small by posting frequently and boosting some posts to help build a following and increase engagement.

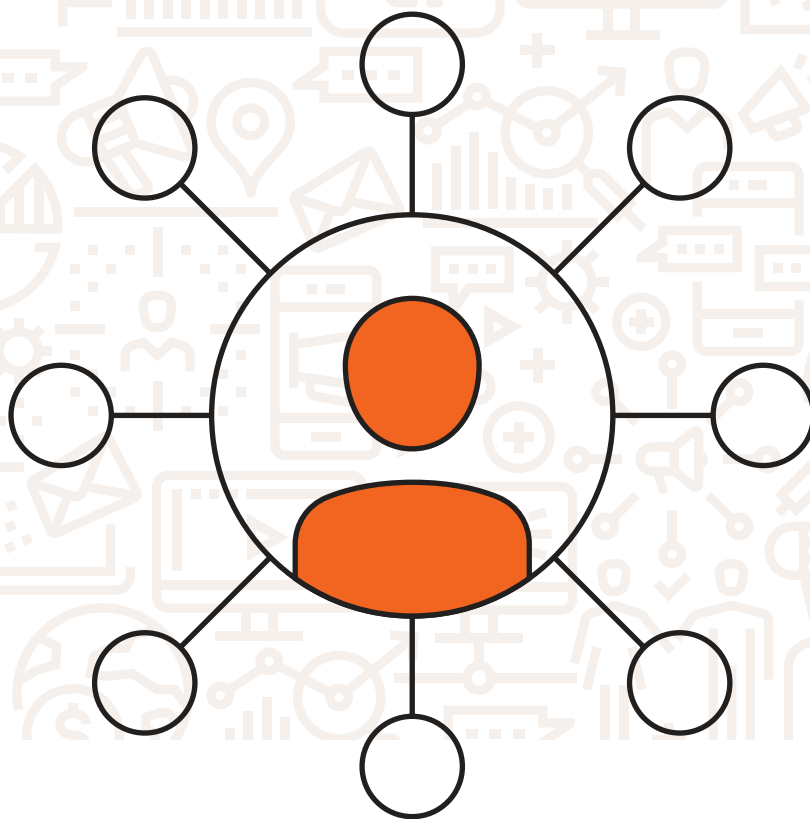
If you want your leads to turn into customers, then you need LEAD GENERATION. It motivates and influences customers to make a purchasing decision. How do you drive that conversion? First off, ensure your customers can easily contact you. Your contact us page, your social media channels, any piece of content you publish, there needs to be a clear call to action and an easy way for them to take that action. Do you need event registrations? Make sure it's easy to sign up for an event. Do you have e-commerce? Make it a seamless shopping experience.

If you want to have repeat customers and possibly referrals, then you need to focus on CLIENT RETENTION. To keep clients, your brand needs to stay top of mind; having a robust marketing automation tool in place will help with that. You can implement something as simple as a drip campaign to get your customers coming back to your site to shop your products, register for your events, or take a survey. Social media is also a great channel for keeping your business top of mind for you clients. Frequent posting is one way for your followers to stay engaged in your brand.

So back to the example of wanting more video next year. Always ask the question of “what goal are you trying to fulfill?” If you map out a goal first, it’ll help guide what types of content to have on video. “More video” is quite vague and as the marketer it’s on you to map out what that request would look like, what’s the content, who are the stakeholders, etc.




Please note: Strategies don't have to operate in a silo. You can very well have more than one strategy in place at the same time. Just understand that a strategy like lead generation may not deliver on your expectations if no one knows your brand exists.



Use Personas to Redefine Your Audience

Do you have a few personas that represent your target customers? If you don't, now's the time to define some. Even if you do have some identified, it's good to do an audit every year. You never know, your audience may have changed or you may have discovered a new persona to add to the mix.



Here's a great guide to build personas (taken from our ebook on Creating Personas)

Give your persona a name. Giving the persona a name – a descriptive name – will help to utilize the persona during discussions. A name like David is generic, but Director David gives more context.

Add an image to your persona to give it an extra level of context. Choose an image that reflects the descriptions used in the persona and consider using an image that shows the individual in a space where the persona would be seen.

Include a quote if possible. Many personas help capture an objective or pain point – include a quote for your persona that helps to bring that objective to life. This is the perfect place to use quotes or comments from real life customers or clients.

List demographics. Based on trends from your actual audience, include demographics as a quick insight into

the persona's background, lifestyle and behaviors. Use data such as geographic location, age, gender, marital status, devices used and favorite social media channels.

Identify personality traits. Think of your audience. What are their key personality traits? This will help you identify what motivates your audience and what types of content would appeal to them.

Define their goals. Try to describe what the persona is trying to accomplish. Is your product helping them with an aspect of their job? Is it relieving a certain pain point? Try to capture what the end goal is for this persona.

And their challenges. When it comes to focusing your product offering, this is the most important component. What is preventing the persona from accomplishing their goals? Are there current solutions that are either incomplete or inaccessible? Try to include aspects of your product that stand out from alternatives.



Make Content Marketing Part of the Strategy (if you haven't already)

Content marketing is a powerful and effective way to reach your customers no matter your strategy, no matter which part of the customer journey. So first take stock of your existing content, and divide that into three categories: **owned**, **earned**, and **paid**.

Owned media

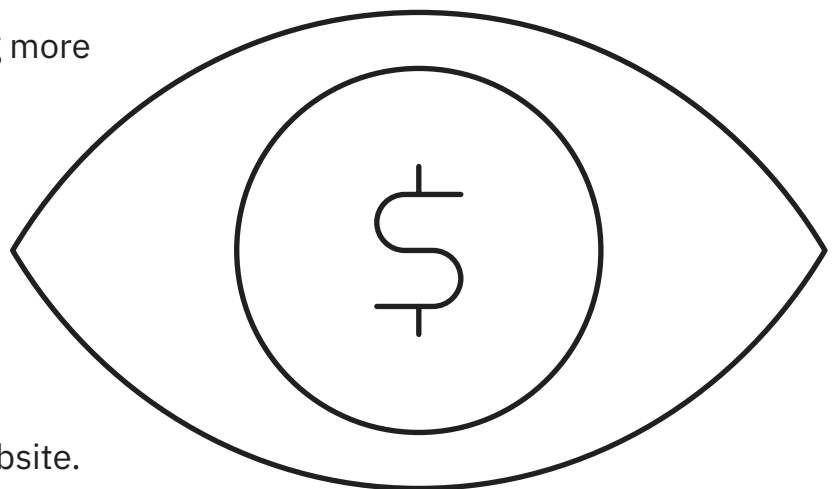
Owned media is your blog, your website, and social media channels. The primary goal of this content is to continue providing value to leads and customers alike. At Seventh Scout, we put a lot of stock in owned media. It's the heart of your brand and provides fuel for the other pieces of media. Plus – if you want to improve SEO and your ranking on search engines, owned media is going to help get you there.

Earned media

Hubspot defines earned media as media exposure you've earned through word-of-mouth. You can earn media by getting press mentions, positive reviews, reposts, recommendations, etc. It helps further build trust and expertise in the digital realm by getting unsolicited recognition.

Paid media

Paid media is just that, digital advertising whether it's Google Ads or Social Media ads. Paid media helps reach and expanded audience, so you have a bigger pool in which to promote your brand. We're finding more and more that organic posts alone won't help convert consumers to customers especially if you're a newer brand with only a few followers. Paid media helps get more followers, connections, and eyes on your website.





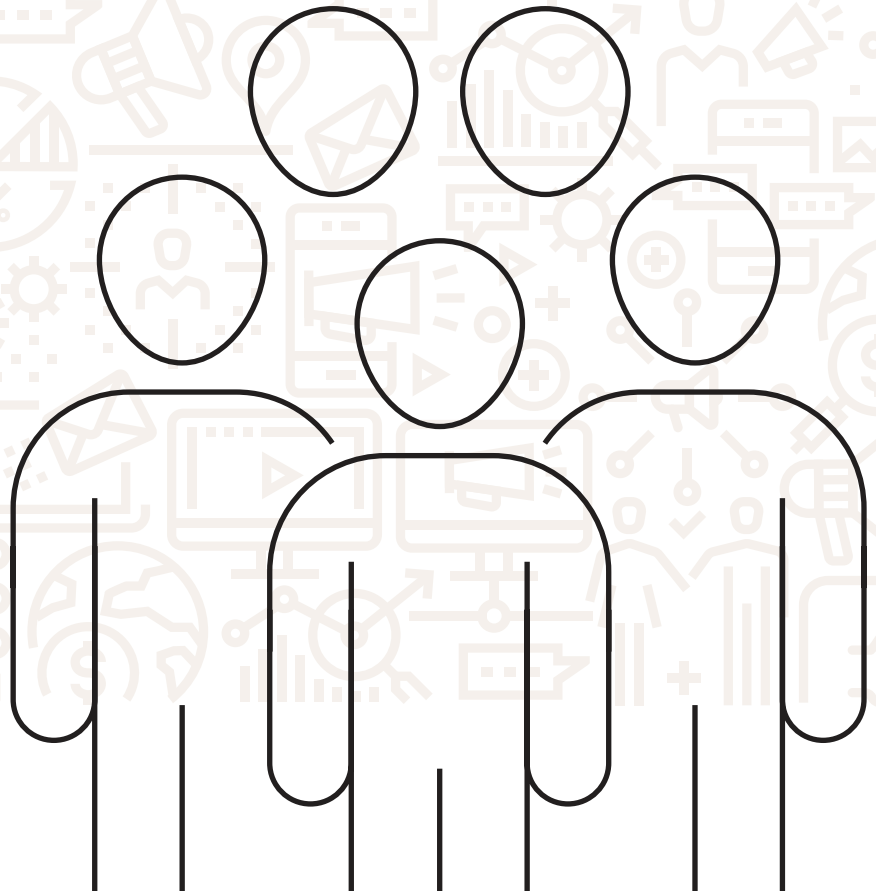
Content types to add to your arsenal

The days of posting plain text are over. Your audience is looking for visuals, value, and that clear call to action.

- **Multimedia** – Use high-resolution images and video to accompany your posts. Social Media Strategist Jeff Bullas reports that Facebook posts with photos receive an average 37% increase in engagement. You can also use video for quick tutorials or product demos.
- **Longform Content** – We’re talking articles and ebooks. Studies show that longform content helps increase the time spent on pages and improves your search ranking.
- **Curation** – Not all posts have to be original content. After all, who has the time to be 100% original? Gather and share information from key influencers and credible resources. Remember to add in your own commentary to anything you share.
- **Client Success** – This not only includes happy client success stories, but also reviews and testimonials. This type of content helps give you credibility and builds trust with consumers.

Start Small

Content can be exciting! But many marketers get bogged down with formulas and overwhelmed by keeping the content engine going. Start small. Create a calendar and plug in some key dates, events, anniversaries, etc, then work from there. If there’s a month that doesn’t have anything time-bound, think of more content to share with events going on externally. Are there big events in town? Has spring sprung? Is it tax time? Know what your audience is interested in and take advantage of where they are already doing or buying.



Enlist the Right Team

Having the right team in place is critical no matter your what strategy or goals. Your team will help you achieve your goals as well as help grow the business. In researching what makes up a great marketing team, we've come up with a few key roles. Depending on the size of your business, one person may wear many hats or you might have an entire team devoted to one function.



The Leader - This person must know how to both manage a team and their workload AND be able to ideate, think big picture, and plan long-term.

The Writer - The writer is ideally versed in content management, is able to write to different audiences, and cater to any medium whether it's promoting a campaign via email or social media.

The Social Media Manager - The Social Media Manager is committed to a brand's social presence and is responsible for reporting, paid advertising, and making recommendations.

The Designer - This role is responsible for visualizing the brand strategy, is also highly conceptual and creative, and is able to work with all types of stakeholders to properly execute on visions.

The Developer - This person knows the ins and outs of website development including UI, UX, performance optimization (so your site performs across mobile and desktop interfaces).

The Analyst - This person, by their very nature, helps keep the whole department armed with data to drive decision-making, track progress, and set goals and forecasts.

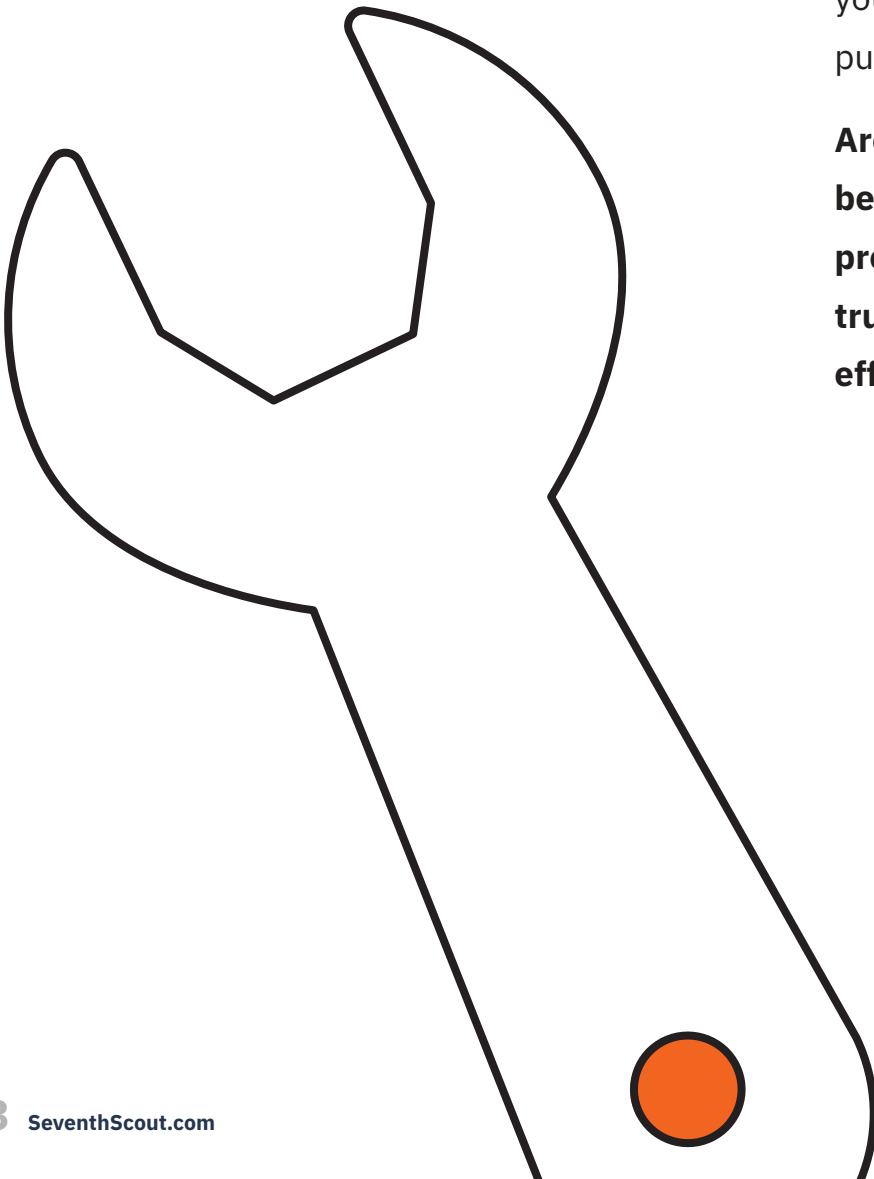
Extra Help – Of course, the smaller your business, the more you'll need overlapping of experience across these roles. But it's always an option to hire interns, freelancers, and external agencies to help offload a lot of the work you can't fulfill with your internal team.



Choose Marketing Tools Wisely

It's easy to start shopping for the next new, shiny object in 2020, especially once you start seeing a dozen offers hit your inbox. A new project management tool? Social media management tool? Marketing automation? You might have budgeted already for it and have your wishlist going, but before you push the buy button, think twice.

Are you purchasing a new tool because of an offer, because it promised a lot, or because it's truly going to bring value and efficiency to your team?





If you said yes to the latter, no problem, we won't belabor the point, but if you're on the fence now, here are few questions to ask yourself before settling on a new tool.

What brought on the need for this new tool?

What will my team gain by investing in this tool?

What qualifies this tool over others?

How many tools did I initially research?

What did I narrow my decision down to?

What qualities put this tool over the top?

Does this tool fit my budget?

Is there a demo or trial period that we could do to see if the tool works?

Have I asked my team's input on the tool?

Are there enough resources available for training?

Doing your research goes without saying and you may rely on Google and excellent demo videos to drive your decision, but remember to dig deeper and look for product reviews and consumer reports. You don't want to empty your pockets for a shoddy tool or be caught in a rigid contract should this tool not work out.



Use Analytics to Inform your Strategy

The beauty of digital marketing is its ability to be measured. As such, the foundations of successful digital campaigns includes tools in place to measure, dissect, and analyse their results. Proper metrics will give you insight into the returns on your investments and help you make decisions about what to keep – and what to lose. Luckily, channels such as search engines and social media platforms make it easy to set up small, low-risk experiments with immediate results.

However, analytics can also be overwhelming, and quite frankly intimidating. What do the numbers means? So, what's more important to measure?

Here are a few basic metrics that matter:

The cost of website traffic: You need to track what you've spent on traffic. Most advertising platforms will provide you with this analytics information, however, if they don't, you can simply take your total digital marketing and promotional costs and divide them by the numbers of visitors/traffic to your site. This will provide you with the average amount you're spending to attract a single website visitor, and that can help an awful lot with the next couple of key metrics we identified.



Conversion rate: Conversion rate is quite possibly the most important metric in all digital marketing analytics. Simply put, it is the overall amount of traffic divided by the number of people who buy a product, subscribe, or perform another important function on your website once they arrive. This rate identifies the percentage of people who arrive at your website and actually engage with it how you want them to – how many of them have “converted” into potential customers. Conversion rates should not be mistaken with your rate of traffic or cost of traffic.

Average conversion value: Average conversion value, sometimes known as average order value, refers to the average value that your converted leads bring to your company. For example, you could have a decent conversion rate according to your analytics, but if your average converted website visitor isn’t buying much, then your website’s contribution to your overall finances will be low despite your stellar conversion rates.

As for social media...each platform offers their own analytics and insights so you can see what topics are getting people engaged. If you use a social media management tool, chances are you have an excellent reporting mechanism that shows you in detail, your followers, impressions, content engagement, etc. Your social media manager/admin should be looking at analytics at least once a week and be able to draw conclusions and have recommendations for optimizing your channels at least once a month.



Bringing it all together

The start to a new year is always an exciting time for any business because it's a chance to reset. Staff are coming back from the holidays refreshed and look forward to actively contributing to the business' success. This could very well be an overwhelming time for a marketing manager tasked with getting everything in place to be able to lead the team. However, we hope the information in this guide gives you a better jumping off point to have your best year yet. Use what's useful and add to it to make it yours. **And if you have any questions or need further guidance on putting a strategy in place, give us a call.**



Let's make things happen

We welcome the opportunity to work with your business. Contact us to get started.

Phone: (800) 531-0784

Email: hello@seventhscout.com

**801 Barton Springs Rd.,
9th Floor
Austin, TX 78704**