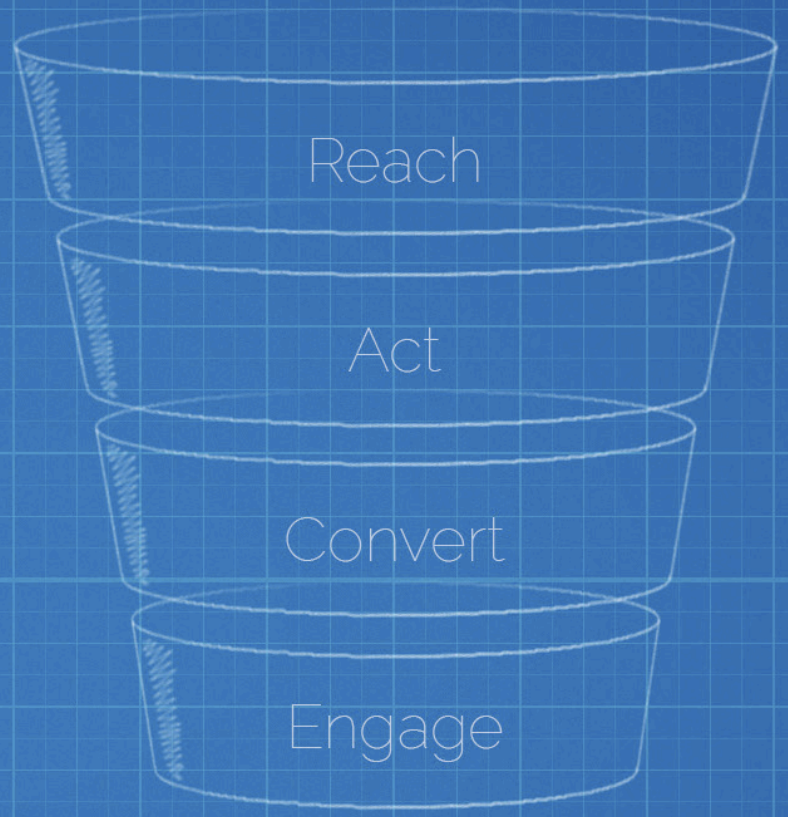
Smart Insights

actionable marketing advice

DIGITAL MARKETING PLANNING TEMPLATE



RACE Planning: Your companion to creating or updating your online marketing strategy

Edited by Dr. Dave Chaffey

INTRODUCTION

How to use this RACE Planning Template

WELCOME

Thanks for downloading this Smart Insights template and congratulations on taking steps to improve your digital strategy! We hope you find it useful when creating or refining your plans to make better use of the fantastic opportunities available from digital marketing. It's a short sample of our in-depth actionable advice for marketers including 7 Steps guides; marketing templates and online training courses.

Our recent research showed[1] that shockingly, many organisations are doing digital marketing, but they don't have a strategy. The reality is that digital channels are still relatively new and fast-changing, so many businesses haven't responded adequately and their business is at risk.

All businesses need an agile approach to improve. Our unique RACE planning framework, shown on the next page, is divided into 25 key optimisation activities explained in our member resources.

We believe that businesses need to first define a separate digital plan to quantify the case for investment in digital marketing and change your approach to managing digital marketing. Then move to a better integrated approach where it's part of your marketing strategy.

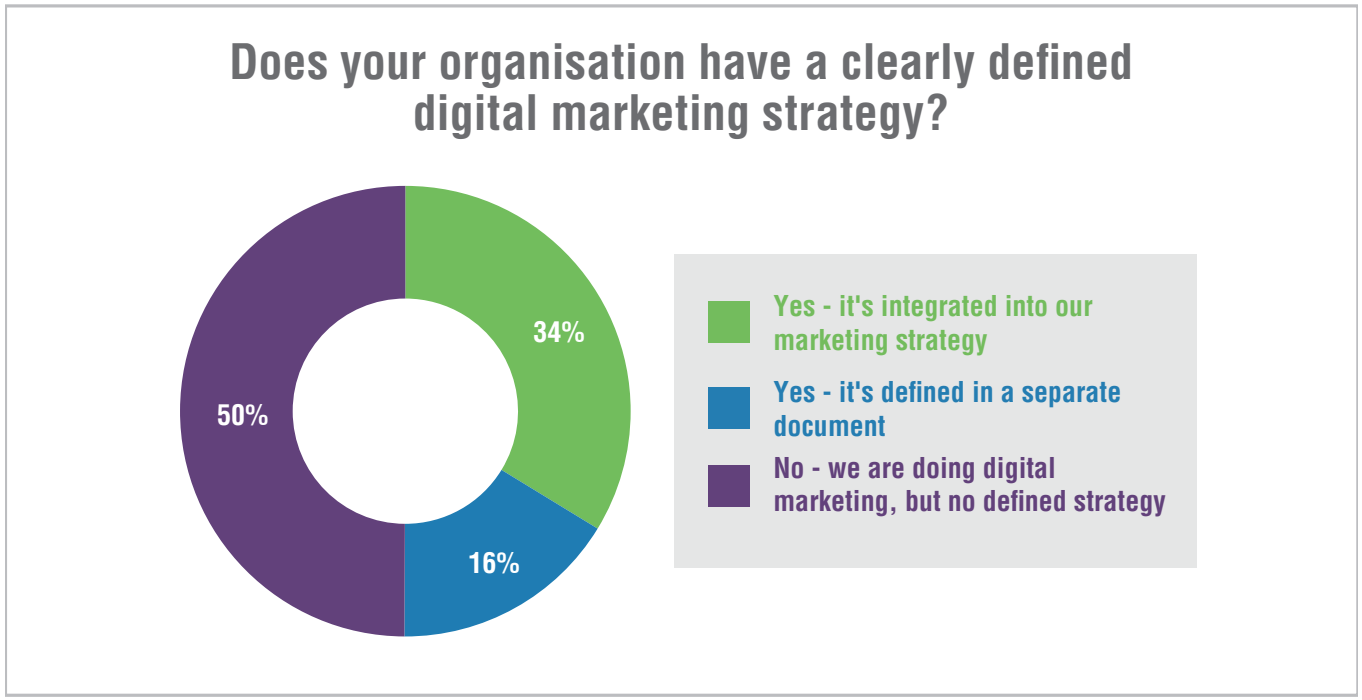
RECOMMENDATION

CREATE A SPECIFIC DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN

Create a detailed digital marketing plan defining the digital channel strategy for each major market/proposition to provide focus and direction for the future.

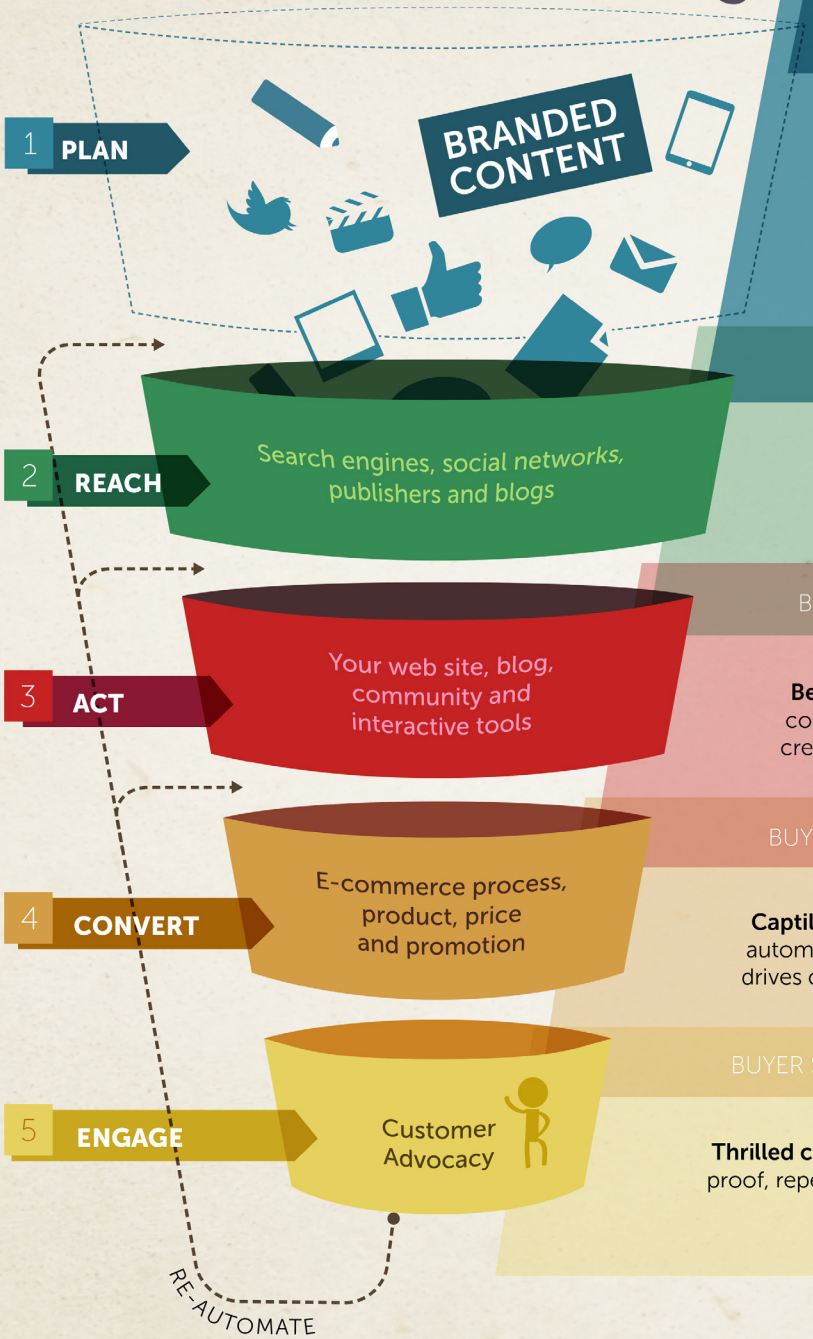
Make sure your digital plan is well integrated with all marketing communications and aligns with your business objectives.

[1] *Smart Insights Managing Digital Marketing research report* ▶ (available to all members)



The Smart Insights RACE Planning System for Digital Marketing

BROUGHT TO YOU BY First 10 & Smart Insights



Build an agile, strategic approach to digital marketing

Competition is fierce online. To win you need to Plan, Manage and Optimize digital channels against defined targets, SMART KPIs and a focused investment in content marketing, digital media and experiences. We believe an integrated digital strategy is essential to define new Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning for your online value propositions.

BUYER STAGE: EXPLORATION

Publish and promote your content, allow sharing to other outposts, networks and influencers. Draw people to your content hub...

Key Measures:
- Unique visitors
- Value per visit
- Fans/Followers

BUYER STAGE: DECISION MAKING

Be worth finding via clear customer journeys and a content hub that is relevant, inspirational, useful and creates leads

Key Measures:
- Leads/Lead conversion rate
- Time on site
- Shares/comments/likes

BUYER STAGE: PURCHASE

Captilalise on marketing investment using CRO, marketing automation and remarketing to ensure contextual relevance drives conversion

Key Measures:
- Sales (on and offline-influence)
- Revenue/Profit
- Average Order Value

BUYER STAGE: ADVOCACY

Thrilled customers are key to social media marketing, social proof, repeat sales and referral. Start your marketing here!

Key Measures:
- Repeat Purchase (Lifetime Value)
- Satisfaction and Loyalty
- Advocacy

1 PLAN
Create a digital marketing strategy

OPPORTUNITY
Review marketplace and set objectives

Start with these key activities to define your digital opportunity through marketplace analysis:

- ☐ 1. Review **digital marketing capabilities**
- ☐ 2. Analyse performance using **KPI dashboards** after **customising analytics** for your business
- ☐ 3. Summarize customer insight in **customer personas** and **customer journey maps**
- ☐ 4. Audit brand and **benchmark** competitors
- ☐ 5. Review **influencer outreach**, **co-marketing** and **intermediaries**
- ☐ 6. Define **SMART objectives** with conversion spreadsheet models to quantify opportunity

STRATEGY
Create digital strategy

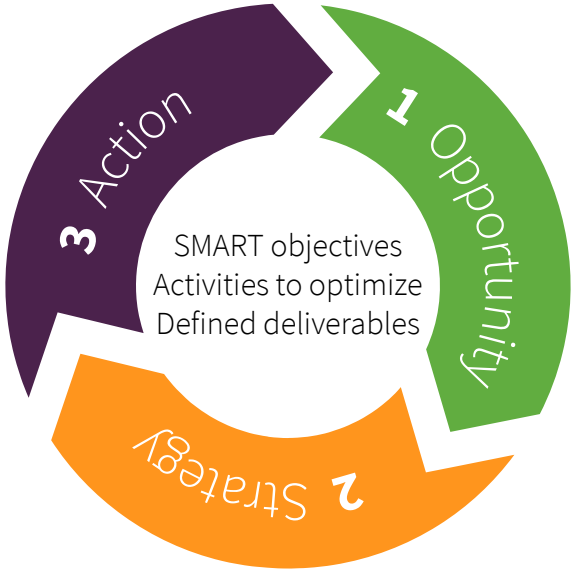
Review your digital proposition and communicate it using digital targeting techniques:

- ☐ Select target market segments and personas. Define digital targeting approaches
- ☐ Define your online value proposition (**OVP**) including review of business and revenue model, brand positioning and integration with traditional channels
- ☐ Review marketing mix for online options for the **4Ps** - Product, Price, Promotion and Place

ACTION
Implement and manage digital marketing communications

Make smart budget investments and optimise your digital communications across 25 key customer touchpoint interactions covered by:

- ☐ **Reach:** Build your audience by integrating paid, owned and earned media
- ☐ **Act:** Using content marketing and persuasion to prompt brand interaction and leads
- ☐ **Convert:** Use conversion rate optimization to boost online and offline sales
- ☐ **Engage:** Develop customer loyalty and repeat sales



RECOMMENDATION

STRUCTURE YOUR PLANS TO DEFINE THE OPPORTUNITY, STRATEGY AND ACTION

Your Digital Plan will be more believable if you have SMART objectives for each part of the RACE customer lifecyle.

Use summary tables to clearly link your strategies, KPIs and actions as shown in our *Example Digital Marketing Plan - download* ▶

2 REACH
Grow your audience online

Search engines, social networks, publishers and blogs

BUYER STAGE: **EXPLORATION**

Publish and promote your content, allow sharing to other outposts, networks and influencers. Draw people to your content hub...

Key Measures:
- Unique visitors
- Value per visit
- Fans/Followers

GROWING REACH

Reach involves building awareness of your brand, products and services on other websites and in offline media to build traffic to different web presences like your main site, microsites or social media pages. It involves maximising reach using continuous inbound communications and planned campaigns to create multiple interactions using different paid, owned and earned media touchpoints.

OPPORTUNITY
Define your online audience potential

Set realistic targets for building traffic, awareness and social media followers

- ☐ Define *KPI dashboards* to review effectiveness of current digital media in analytics
- ☐ Review current use of digital media and opportunities to improve
- ☐ Set VQVC (volume, quality, value, cost) objectives using conversion budget models

STRATEGY
Select the best communications options

Your online customer acquisition strategy should:

- ☐ Define key brand messages to grow audience awareness, familiarity and purchase intent
- ☐ Select relevant media and targeting
- ☐ Link to your content marketing strategy (Act)
- ☐ Prioritise channel media spend, summarized in a conversion-based media plan and budget

ACTION
Optimise your digital communications

Work on optimising content marketing to support key digital communications for your business:

- ☐ PR, influencer outreach and SEO
- ☐ Optimize Google AdWords (paid search)
- ☐ Review opportunities from Display Advertising
- ☐ Review relevance of affiliate and partner marketing
- ☐ Social media marketing optimization

RECOMMENDATION

INVEST IN CONTINUOUS INBOUND MARKETING

Ensure you harness customer purchase intent as they seek information about products through 'always-on' communications to reach your audience through Search and Social media marketing fuelled by content marketing.

Deliverable: *Online Customer Acquisition Plan* ▶ (Available to Business-level Expert members)

3 ACT
Encourage brand interactions and leads

BUYER STAGE: **DECISION MAKING**

Be worth finding via clear customer journeys and a content hub that is relevant, inspirational, useful and creates leads.

Key Measures:
- Leads/Lead conversion rate
- Time on site
- Shares/comments/likes

INCREASING INTERACTIONS

Act is short for **Interact**. It's a separate stage from conversion since encouraging interactions on websites and in social media to generate leads is a big challenge for online marketers. It's about persuading site visitors or prospects to take the next step, the next Action on their journey when they reach your site or social network presence.

OPPORTUNITY

Identify best options to increase lead conversion

- ☐ Review customer journeys for desktop-mobile visits using analytics and feedback tools
- ☐ Review social media and mobile marketing platform engagement
- ☐ Define goals, events and dashboards for measuring customer interactions

STRATEGY

Prioritise content marketing and customer journeys

- ☐ Define customer personas
- ☐ Define content marketing plan
- ☐ Create website and martech improvement plan including lead profiling

ACTION

Manage content marketing and lead generation

- ☐ Create campaign plan, editorial calendar and outreach plan
- ☐ Create content assets including video marketing
- ☐ Improve landing pages and site page templates. Personalised onboarding.

RECOMMENDATION

DEVELOP A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

A content marketing strategy will integrate your online communications to fuel lead generation and power inbound marketing to grow your reach

Deliverables: *Content Marketing Strategy* ▶
Available for Expert members of Smart Insights

4 CONVERT
Increase sales through CRO

BUYER STAGE: **PURCHASE**

Captilalise on marketing investment using CRO, marketing automation and remarketing to ensure contextual relevance drives conversion.

Key Measures:
- Sales (on and offline-influence)
- Revenue/Profit
- Average Order Value

INCREASING CONVERSION

This is the conversion from lead to sale. It involves getting your audience to take that vital next step which turns them into paying customers whether the payment is taken through online Ecommerce transactions, or offline channels.

OPPORTUNITY

Review focus to increase conversion to sale

- ☐ Create and review site conversion funnels and paths to purchase (online and offline) and quantify targets for incremental revenue
- ☐ Review multichannel (omni-channel) interactions to increase revenue per visit
- ☐ Review analytics and customer feedback

STRATEGY

Create an approach for conversion rate optimisation

- ☐ Define online conversion rate optimisation (CRO) approach
- ☐ Define how key online communications (search, email, social, mobile) drive sales
- ☐ Define offline integration paths to purchase

ACTION

Manage continuous improvement of conversion

- ☐ Implement CRO through test plan for AB and multivariate site tests and experiments
- ☐ Implement lead retargeting programme using site personalization, display retargeting and behavioural email programme
- ☐ Optimise ROPO behaviour (Research Online-Purchase Offline)

RECOMMENDATION

Set up a CRO (Conversion Rate Optimisation) programme. Many businesses still don't invest in structured tests to optimise their websites to maximize online sales or referrals to other channels. Don't leak customers.

Deliverables: *CRO Plan - see member guide* ▶
Available in Business-level Expert membership.

5 ENGAGE
Build customer loyalty and advocacy

BUYER STAGE: **ADVOCACY**

Thrilled customers are key to social media marketing, social proof, repeat sales and referral. Start your marketing here!

Key Measures:
- Repeat Purchase *(Lifetime Value)*
- Satisfaction and Loyalty
- Advocacy

IMPROVING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

This is long-term engagement that is, developing a relationship with first-time buyers to build customer loyalty as repeat purchases using communications on your site, social presence, email and direct interaction. We're also looking to build advocacy or recommendations through 'word-of-mouth'.

OPPORTUNITY
Review potential to increase customer activity levels

- ☐ Review customer loyalty using RFM analysis for interactions and sales. Quantify incremental revenue potential
- ☐ Review customer satisfaction drivers
- ☐ Review effectiveness of customer communications

STRATEGY
Define plan to improve customer retention and engagement

- ☐ Create customer engagement plan
- ☐ Create online personalisation and merchandising plan for incremental revenue
- ☐ Create customer contact plan (email marketing and social media marketing)

ACTION
Implement online customer communications plan

- ☐ Implement or refine personalization rules on desktop and mobile sites
- ☐ Customer onboarding including event-triggered personalized emails and enewsletters
- ☐ Manage social media and email campaigns for customer engagement and advocacy

RECOMMENDATION

Create a Customer Lifecycle Communications Plan

Map all customer touchpoints to create a plan to use Marketing Automation to deliver personalised relevant messages by Email, Social Media and Web.

Deliverable: *Customer Retention Plan* ▶
Available in Business-level Expert membership.

WHAT NEXT

How to take your digital marketing to the next level?

RECOMMENDATION

Review your Digital Marketing Capability and your Personal Digital Skills.

See how you stack up against others with our simple 5 minute assessments for each part of RACE planning system.

View our free Digital Healthcheck ▶
Available to all members in our Digital Marketing Strategy Toolkit (when signed-in)

All the best for your journey to make the most of digital marketing!

Creating or refining a plan is just the beginning of the journey to making the most of digital and social media. We hope our template has helped you on your way?

Please let us know any questions you may have through our customer support desk at *support@smartinsights.com.*

Now create your plans using our Expert member templates, guides and courses

The Expert member resources in the Smart Insights Digital Marketing Library include DIY templates, spreadsheets and guides for all of the activities recommended in this template.

UPGRADE TO EXPERT MEMBERSHIP!
View your membership options ▶

Benchmark your digital capabilities compared to your competitors

We're big fans of scoring the current digital marketing capabilities of a company, so you can show your colleagues how your digital marketing activities rate now and how they need to be improved in future. This is a core technique for arguing for additional investment in digital marketing and for reporting on progress.

EXPERT MEMBERS START HERE

DIGITAL MARKETING BENCHMARK

Where we recommend new Expert members start - use a detailed spreadsheet to quickly assess a business across the RACE customer lifecycle.

BENCHMARK YOUR APPROACH ▶
http://bit.ly/smartbenchmark

DIGITAL STRATEGY TOOLKIT

Expert members can download examples and editable templates including Powerpoint, Word and Excel templates to help build your marketing plan and explain to colleagues or clients.

VIEW TOOLKIT ▶
http://bit.ly/smart-toolkit

RACE PLANNING WORKBOOK

Rapidly create a Digital Marketing Plan using our Word template for Expert members. Get detailed advice on how to complete it with our companion online course on RACE Planning.

VIEW WORKBOOK ▶
http://bit.ly/smartworkbook