


Making the Business Case for B2B Digital Transformation

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HELLO

First

A confession: I started my professional life as a management accountant, so I've been trained to count beans. And as a successful internet entrepreneur I've had to write my fair share of business cases, both for my own ventures and on behalf of clients.

Now

A passionate advocate of the transformative potential of digital marketing in B2B companies, I'm conscious that it is our responsibility as marketers not only to develop and deliver digital marketing strategies, but also to write the business case for their ROI in the first place.

Tips & Stats

This short white paper will focus on a few key areas of digital marketing that can offer solid return on investment for B2B companies and offers some practical tips and useful statistics for getting the budget you need to execute them.

Strategies

It also covers strategies for marketers in B2B companies who have previously engaged in similar activities and found they did not yield results that justified their costs.

Questions?

For more advice or if you have any questions, get in touch with me [@b2b_dm](https://twitter.com/b2b_dm) or rs@sharphahead.com.

1. PAID SEARCH

Shock and Awe can work well in this situation.

Chances are your company dabbled in paid search, probably Google AdWords, at some point in the past few years. Maybe with an agency or using some bright, young internal talent. Then it didn't work out and now every time you mention paid search, the MD/FD/SD roll their eyes and ask when the next mailer is going out.

Shock:

Shock them into showing what the competition is doing. If your competition is out there generating leads from key words related to your products and services, or even worse, from your own brand keywords, a few screenshots of Google searches showing the competition's ads at the top of the page is often enough to shock the budget holders into at least listening to your plans.

Use Google to test keywords for your products, services, your own brand and your competitors

(Alt + Print screen or a snippet tool are great ways to drop these screenshots straight into PowerPoint).



PAID SEARCH

Shock and Awe can work well in this situation.

Awe

Awe them with your detailed knowledge of what went wrong last time—and how you're going to do things differently this time.

Some common mistakes to look for:

- 1 Used keywords that were too broad? Probably resulted in loads of traffic but very few conversions. This time, focus your campaigns by using long-tail and more targeted keywords.
- 2 Forgot your geography? Without using geographic controls, it's likely your messages were reaching the wrong people, or the wrong messages were reaching the right people.
- 3 Poor copy. Writing copy for paid search is an art and a science, it requires exquisite attention to detail, to what your competitors are doing, to who your brand is, and loads of testing. Plus, it requires constant attention and adaptation.
- 4 Wrong destination. Were specially designed landing pages used as the destination for your ads or did they just point potential customers to your homepage?
- 5 A failure of analytics: without sophisticated analytics and tracking it might even have been the case that paid search was working and no one knew it! For example, were the campaigns tracking whether inbound telephone calls resulted from search queries?

Finally, propose a pilot, then expand with success. Choose a specific product, service or geography to test your paid search strategy. As the leads come in you'll find getting budget for additional activity becomes easier and easier.

2. REMARKETING

Remarketing is a powerful way to ensure that you remain front of mind when potential customers are making purchasing decisions. It works even better when used as part of a wider marketing strategy that includes paid search.

If you need a good explanation of remarketing so the audience for your business case understand what you're proposing, check out my blog post [How Remarketing Works in B2B](#) for a quick tutorial.

Here are some key remarketing facts for your business case:

- 1 The Google Display Network reaches 90% of Internet users worldwide, 65% of whom they reach every single day. More than a trillion impressions are served to over 1 billion users every month (source: Google). Meanwhile, Facebook has more than 1.4 billion users, over a billion of whom logged in yesterday (source: Facebook)." (Source: [Article](#) by Larry Kim)
- 2 On average only 2% of website visitors convert, site visitors who are retargeted with display ads are 70% more likely to convert on your site. (Source: [CMO.com article](#))
- 3 26% of customers will return to a site through retargeting (Source: Econsultancy [blog post](#))

And even better, remarketing is generally the most cost-effective (FD's love that word) form of paid digital marketing out there. With lower average Cost Per Click and higher Conversion Rate, remarketing has an overall lower Cost Per Conversion in comparison to paid search campaigns.

(Tip: if you're using an agency to pitch for budget, ask them for some specific case studies or examples from their own clients to pave the way for the pilot.)

3. CONTENT MARKETING



Everyone in marketing has been talking about ‘content marketing’ for years now. For B2B companies this is often synonymous with white papers, press releases, and product specifications.

But if you want investment to create some truly engaging content, you need to show how it will drive sales, engagement and retention for both prospects and customers.

The first place to start is metrics. Know what you want to measure and what success looks like, and then you make a case for investment by deriving potential leads and sales from the increase in site visits, onsite engagement, content downloads and social media interactions.

Some key metrics to consider:

- 1 Reach**—start with Unique Users, how many people visit a piece of content, and also look at page views to determine how far your content is reaching into your target audience (geography for some B2B companies is also a consideration, depending on your products, services and campaign goals).
- 2 Engagement**—how long they spend, or don’t spend. Average time spent and bounce rates are equally important for understanding how engaged your users are.
- 3 Social proof**—do people comment, share, like or otherwise demonstrate they like what you’re saying?

And when you’ve got those, consider weighting the interactions. For example, someone from your target demographic downloading a whitepaper is more valuable than me following you on Twitter.

4. MARKETING AUTOMATION

Before you can convince the Executive Suite to open their chequebooks, it's a good idea to make sure they know exactly what you mean.

If you've chosen a product, organise an appropriately targeted demo. Most suppliers will be happy to organise this as part of the sales process, and many of them have demos available online, check out [Act-On](#) for example.

Marketing Automation will manage and optimise the entire customer experience, throughout that customer's lifetime with your brand.

If you haven't yet chosen a product, the place to start is for the Executive Suite to understand that this is a way to measure marketing activities (lead generation) through to revenue (sales). Therefore, it will make marketing even more accountable for spend. Then, slip in some of these statistics that will get everyone's attention. Companies that use Marketing Automation see:

- 107% better lead conversion
- 40% greater average deal size
- 20% higher team attainment of quota
- 17% better forecast accuracy

(Source: Aberdeen Group, 2012)

Act-On have a longer whitepaper on how to make the business case for marketing automation which you can download from the [Resources section](#) of their website.

Finally, most marketing automation systems include functions that you are probably paying other providers for already, for example email marketing. Be sure to include any savings you'll make from consolidating systems!

5. ANALYTICS

Data is likely to be an easier sell to your MD or FD, after all it's likely that they have already seen the benefits of using data for sales, product development, customer management or all of the above, but equally they may assume that free tools, such as Google Analytics, are sufficient for marketing's needs.



The argument that what's the point of spending any money on marketing if you can't measure its ROI might work with some of the Executive Suite, or could backfire spectacularly. So if you're worried about opening with that, here are some good stats compiled by US digital analytics outfit [MaassMedia](#):

- Analytics-driven organizations are 2.2 times more likely to outperform industry peers than those that do not use advanced analytics. (MIT Sloan Management Review, 2011)
- Analytics pays back \$10.66 for every dollar spent. (Nucleus Research, 2011)
- Companies that put data at the centre of marketing and sales decisions can improve their marketing ROI by 15% – 20% without increasing their budgets. (McKinsey & Company, 2012)

Most importantly, be clear on what you want to measure and what actions you can and will take as a result of the analysis.

Your organisation may have invested in analytics in the past but if no one took ownership of implementing change as a result, they'll be loath to do so again.

Have some examples ready of what you would do with specific data outcomes—and their tangible benefits to the bottom line.

6. OUTSOURCING

The reality for many B2B companies is that having in-house specialists just isn't cost effective.

If your organisation has traditionally balked at the perceived expense of using a third party agency, you may need a compelling business case to convince them.

For some companies, outsourcing is a natural choice and for others it's viewed suspiciously as a waste of money.

Two heads are better than one

A clear argument for outsourcing is that by using a third party agency you have direct access to multiple resources, all with different and relevant experience. The agency will not only have successfully implemented digital strategies in the past, but will be constantly evolving and learning through its work with other clients—all of which will benefit you.

Focus

Internal marketing resource will no doubt have multiple priorities all vying for his or her attention. A specialist agency will have a single goal: deliver your digital marketing strategy.

Cost

Hiring an experienced Head of Digital who can truly transform your business doesn't come cheap. And they are unlikely to expect to get their hands dirty actually executing that strategy on a daily basis.

In many cases for the same cost as having a Head of Digital and a Marketing Executive, you can have an agency on retainer, offering the same level of strategic thinking whilst actually delivering that strategy.

NEXT STEPS

Plan

Take some time to plan what you need. Where possible pilot and test smaller scale implementations of the wider strategy.

Choose Your Battles

If you think implementing a new system for marketing automation is one step too far, start with generating some good content and implement a paid search campaign for your next big event, product launch or geographical market focus.

With a few successes under your belt, each business case becomes easier, and your digital transformation closer to realisation.

Get In Touch Broken

For more information, or help with your digital transformation, [get in touch!](#)

We analysed the “digital footprint” of over 500 B2B organisations in the Thames Valley & Solent areas. We then put all of our findings, plus a few tricks of the trade, into our “Broken” report.

Click the link below to download your free copy.

[Download the Report](#)

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