

WHAT WILL DIGITAL MARKETING LOOK LIKE IN 2021?

It's been a challenging year for businesses across all sectors and, as we head into the New Year, there's still a lot of uncertainty around strategy, planning and budgets. We've surveyed over 250 decision makers to find out what digital marketing will look like in 2021: what the main business tactics will be, which digital channels will be a focus, and the marketing trends that'll be key for the year.



THE COVID EFFECT

Over half of people surveyed said their digital marketing budgets and strategies were negatively impacted by COVID-19

Industries most negatively impacted by COVID-19

-  Entertainment & Leisure
-  Retail
-  Travel & Tourism

45%

expect their digital marketing budgets to be less in 2021

30%

of those in the Health & Pharmaceuticals industry said their budget and strategy was positively impacted by COVID-19, but almost half still expect their budgets to be less in 2021

KEY TACTICS FOR 2021

Top three tactics for digital marketing spend in 2021


- 1** Growth tactics
- 2** In-house resources
- 3** Media spend

“ In a year where forecasts have been slashed in many businesses, it's not a huge surprise that 'growth tactics' is the core focus for 2021. It'll be interesting to see how this plays out, and what everyone considers as 'tactics'. Does this imply short term planning and execution, opportunistic marketing, restrained cap ex, and a need for near immediate ROI and ROAS? Does this mean that acquisitional marketing will be boosted at the expense of long-term brand building, product development and innovation?”

Andreas Pouro
CEO, Greenlight Digital

DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS






Top Channel

-  Social media will be the top digital marketing channel for 2021, with **61%** saying it's where they'll be spending the bulk of their budget as it provides the best ROI

33%

of those with larger marketing budgets will be looking to invest in data science and analytics in 2021 and say AI will be a key trend

Other key channels

-  SEO
-  Paid search
-  Email
-  Display
-  Content marketing
This will be a key channel for the Nonprofit and Technology industries

64%

of marketers actively invest time in SEO, **24%** use paid advertising to impact direct sales and **80%** have reported an increase in email engagement over the past 12 months*

“ Social media has proven itself to be a solid acquisition channel, particularly with Facebook Attribution now proving incremental value. Social media has also enabled a deeper connection between brands and customers over 2020, with them wanting more connectivity and content. For many brands TikTok has been an experimental and brave choice, with many adopting the platform earlier than expected. But, with TikTok being more of a video destination than a social network, brands are seeing the platform as an opportunity to tap into younger, different audiences.”

Hannah Kimuyu
Director of Paid Media & Data Insights, Greenlight Digital

TOP TRENDS

Top five marketing trends for 2021

- 1** Video marketing
- 2** Interactive content
- 3** Personalisation
- 4** Visual search
- 5** Partnership marketing

83%





of video marketers say video has helped them to generate leads and **92%** feel the level of noise and competition has increased in the last year*

“ It's interesting to see the importance the survey respondents have given interactive content in 2021. Particularly so, when what we've seen over the last couple of years is an accelerating trend towards simpler generally being better, certainly when it comes to getting tangible and profitable growth from content marketing. However, it's also fair to say that a well planned and executed interactive can do a much better job of entertaining, holding people's interest and conveying information on a complex topic. Perhaps the appearance of interactive content in the top five reflects a growing desire among marketers for content to do triple duty – growth, engagement and retention.”

Adam Bunn
Director of SEO, Content & Digital PR, Greenlight Digital

MARTECH

Top MarTech investments for 2021

-  Analytics tools
-  Marketing automation
-  Content marketing platforms (CMP)
-  Data management platforms (DMP)



Almost half of those with smaller marketing budgets won't be looking to invest in MarTech at all in 2021



Did you know?
There are now **8000** possible MarTech solutions spanning advertising and promotion, content and experience, social and relationships, commerce and sales, data, and management. This is up **24.5%** on 2019. In 2011, when the first MarTech stack graphic was created, there were 150.

References

- [https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics*](https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics)
- <https://chiefmartec.com/2020/04/marketing-technology-landscape-2020-martech-5000/>