

WHAT DOES A  
**DIGITAL  
MARKETER  
DO?**

Top 12 Digital Marketing  
Skills Explained

By Eric Schwartzman

**2021 Report**



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Physical restrictions imposed by the global pandemic are shaking the last of the digital laggards from the trees.

The digital transformation race has broadened. First-movers won. Now, the rest of the world is playing catch-up.

Despite **8% unemployment** in the US, demand for skilled digital marketing talent remains high, amid a recession economy.

Now that trade events are gone, companies have no choice. Digital is the last standing engagement channel. Nowadays, if you can't generate new business online, you can't generate new business at all.

The cancellation of conferences, conventions, and sales meetings has decimated travel, commercial real estate and hospitality. And cold calling gets less effective every day.

Consider the facts. Not only is **\$101B in spending driven by trade events** gone. But so are all the business deals that would have gotten done at those events.

Amongst the carnage, martech providers and early adopters saw staggering growth. Not just big tech players like Amazon. Up and comers like Zoom, Peloton, and Shopify saw **share prices soar** as well.

But not everyone has a Shopify website optimized for ecommerce. For startups, scaleups, changeup and grownups that are mid-pivot, there's a ton of work to be done to compete online.

With Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease expert, saying **it's unlikely things will get back to normal before late 2021**, expect businesses that sat the digital revolution out to look hard at pivoting to digital in 2021.

To generate qualified leads from business customers online, these are the skills required. In B2B marketing, you'll use them in this order. So if you want to lead the charge, learn them all. If you want to specialize, get baseline fluency in skills 1-4, and then drill down on any of the 5-12 skills that interest you.



**Here are 12 critical digital marketing skills that will be most in-demand in 2021.**

# 1

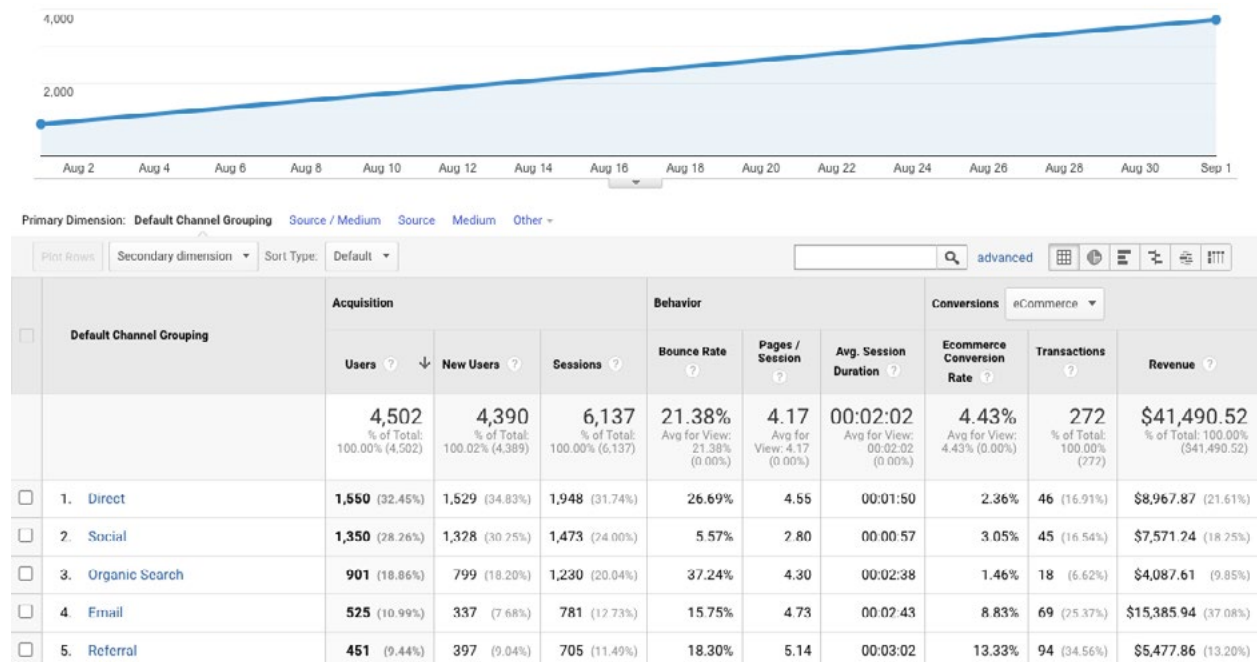
## Digital Marketing Analytics

You can't improve what you can't measure. So this is the first skill you need, whether you intend to specialize or not.

The ability to measure and evaluate what's working (and what's not) based on hard data is a critical, foundational, digital marketing skill.

At a bare minimum, you should know how to do website usage analysis using **Google Analytics**, a search engine visibility assessment with **Google Search Console**, and website user-experience evaluation with **Hotjar**.

These are all free tools that (if set-up correctly) can be used to establish a baseline for where you started and benchmark your progress moving forward.



# 2

## Marketing Automation

Digital marketing doesn't happen in a vacuum. You're generating leads that will be contacted by sales, and some will convert to customers who will receive invoices and need service.

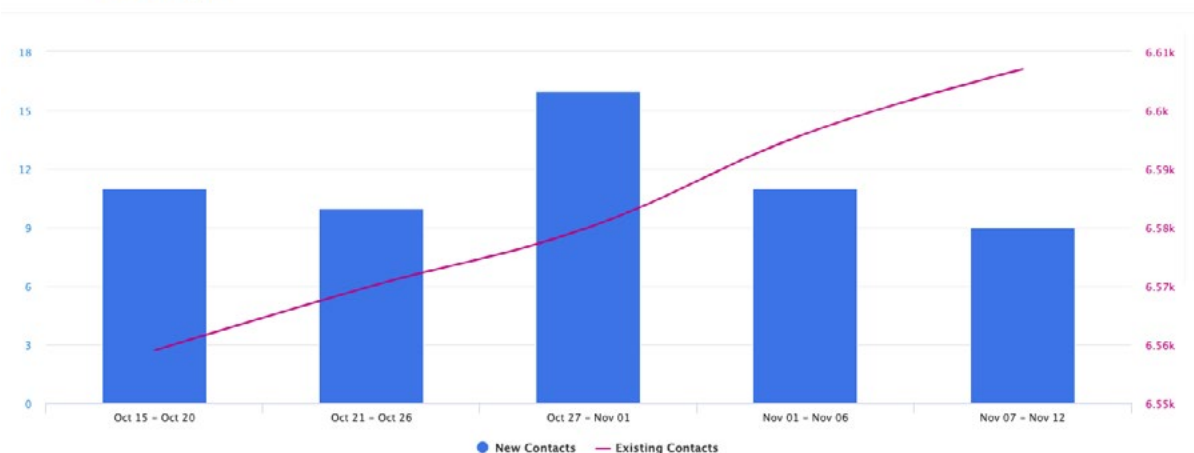
So marketing, sales and service are part of a continuum. Marketing automation tools give you a way to manage the lead generation and nurturing components of the customer journey in collaboration with sales and service.

At its core, marketing automation is about tracking the interactions you have online with potential customers, regardless of the media channel, so you can score and separate the warm from the cold leads, so sales can contact them.

Prospects interact with B2Bs brands through five basic media channels, which are organic search, social media, referral links, email marketing, and paid media. Marketing automation tools track engagement frequency through various channels, so you can see which channels are most effective and which leads are ready to talk to a salesperson.

Marketing automation platforms collect all that user activity on lead records. Popular **vertically integrated** platforms with marketing, sales and customer service apps include **Salesforce** Marketing Cloud, **HubSpot** and **Zoho**. Get good at any one of these and you'll always have work.

Contacts - Last 30 days ▾



# 3

## Web Performance

The ability to get a website to load quickly on desktop and mobile and indexed correctly by Google is an extremely valuable skill. Google considers a number of technical factors to determine search ranking.

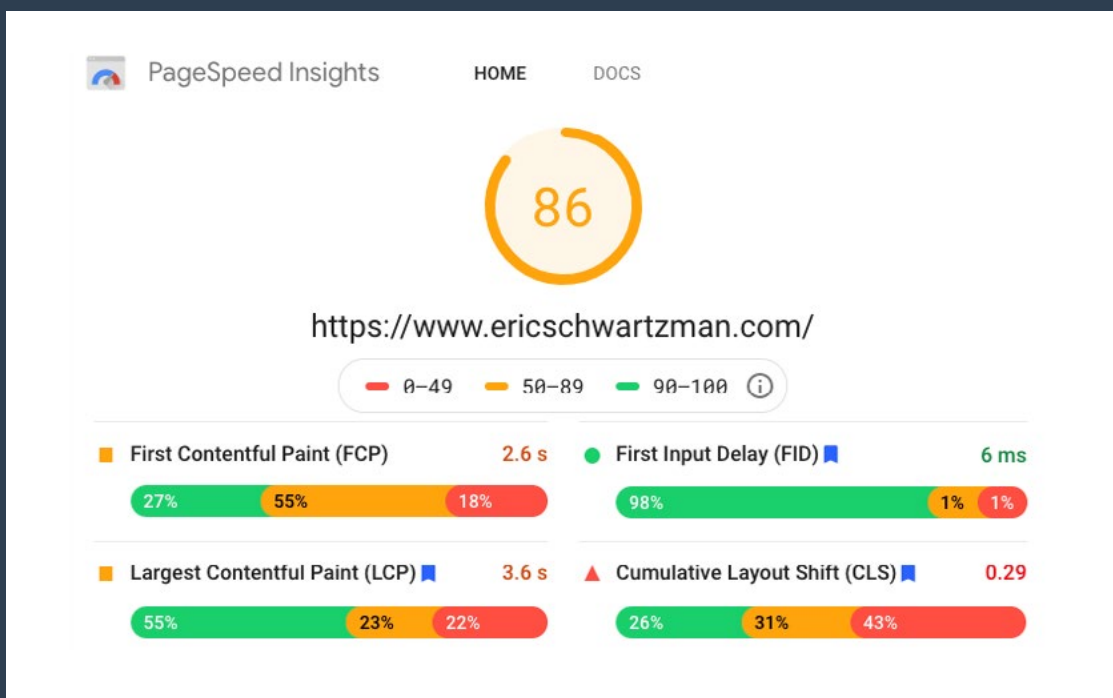
In an effort to provide a positive search experience for users, they monitor site load speed, the order in which content loads on the page and other UX factors, like if the location of menus or buttons shift while the page loads, luring misclicks.

Slow load speeds and poor UX often result in the user searching the same

term again, which Google regards as a failed search experience. They score websites that fail negatively in their algorithm.

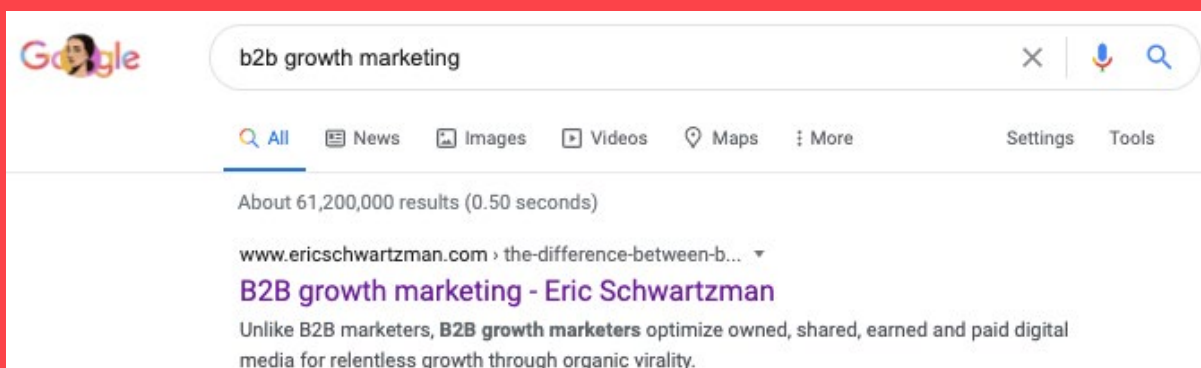
To get up to speed on the basics of technical SEO, there's a ton of useful content online. Start by monitoring your technical SEO performance on Google Search Console.

Other useful tools for diagnosing and improving your technical SEO performance include **Screaming Frog**, **Google PageSpeed Insights**, and **GTMetrix**.



# 4

## Search Engine Optimization



Of all the digital media channels through which prospects engage with your company online, organic search is the most important, because it delivers the most qualified audience.

When someone is searching for an answer to a problem you can solve, they have higher commercial intent and are further along in the **B2B customer journey**. When we start searching, we are problem aware, which means we are aware of a problem and are actively trying to solve it.

As we continue to search, we become solution aware, which means we begin to see various providers in a given category who can solve our problem. And as we get towards the end of our search session, we become brand aware, which means we start to see specific companies appearing in multiple searches who appear to be able to solve our problem.

Search engine optimization, which is the process of making web content discoverable through organic search, is the first part of the **B2B lead generation** process. It is a lucrative profession with all sorts of subspecialties like mobile, local, and branded search. But even if you don't specialize in SEO, you need to know the basics of keywords research, because it applies to every other skill on the list. The popular SEO research platforms are **SEMRush**, **Ahrefs**, and **Moz**.

# 5 Email Marketing

**Email marketing best practices** are about delivering relevant communications leads and customers through personalization. And there are three levels of personalization, which are account-based personalization, role-based personalization, and hyper-personalization.

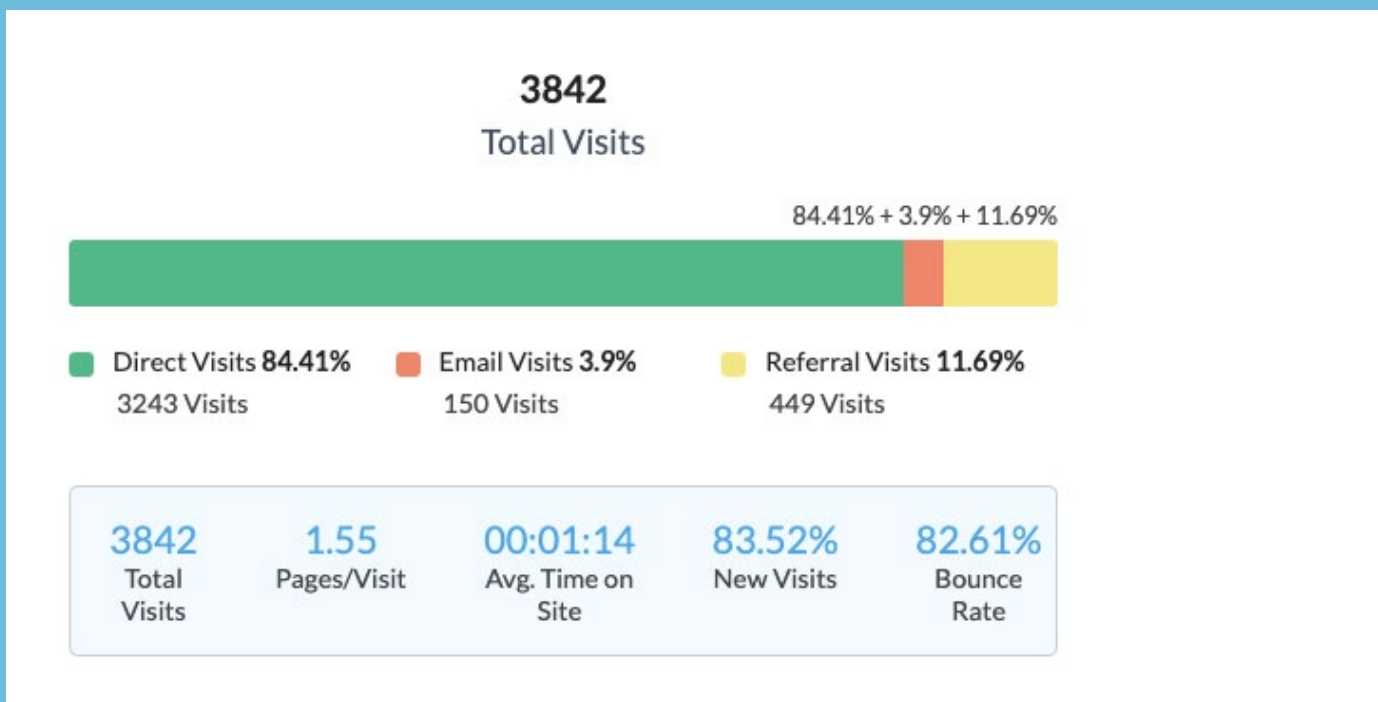
There are also levels of list segmentation based on the degree of engagement which are those who opened an email, those who click a link, and those who ignored it. Email marketers write modular emails that can be personalized and segmented to appeal to the buying triggers of each group.

Typically, disengaged recipients get more aggressive communications and if they don't respond, they get disregarded entirely.

The most important piece of an email marketing campaign is the subject line, since recipients use it to decide whether to open or ignore the message.

**Subjectline.com** is a free tool you can use to sharpen your language.

To get good at email marketing, learn how to personalize and segment campaigns on **MailChimp**, **ConvertKit**, and **Constant Contact** and your skills will always be in high demand.





# 6

## Content Marketing

### Post Pandemic Guide to B2B Content Marketing



 By Eric Schwartzman

Content marketing is authoring compelling, useful, smart web content designed to get shared and found by leads who are looking for answers to questions that your product or service solves.

Since they're actively searching, the idea is to create informational content designed to get found and self-qualify them as potential buyers.

**B2B content marketing** is a particularly effective way of leading prospects through the funnel to conversion.

Sometimes, you have to fill out a form to download the content, which becomes a lead that gets nurtured via email. Unlike copywriters, content marketers take a more informative, journalist approach to educating prospective buyers. There's a marked difference in writing style between a content marketing piece like a blog post, white paper or webinar and the marketing copy you'd see on a product, service or offer page.

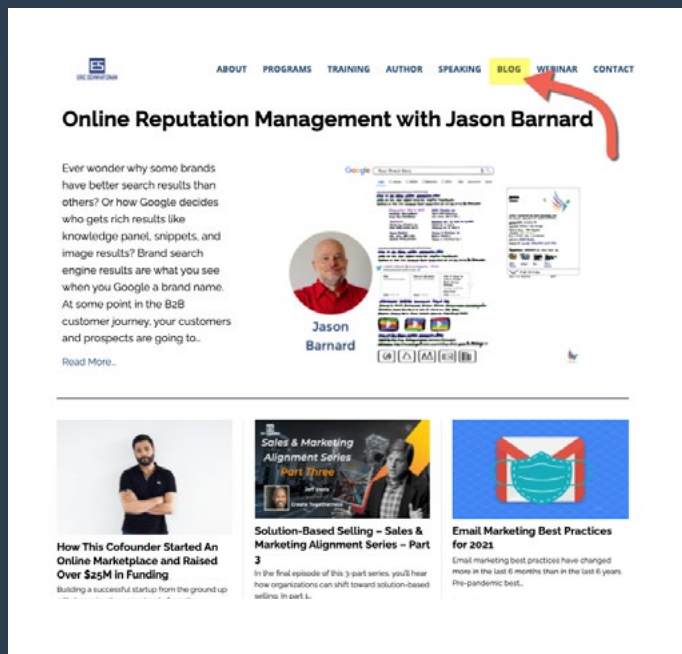
Content marketing is more like journalism, whereas marketing copy is more like advertising. Content marketers need web analytics and SEO skills to hone their written materials based on what's popular online.

Tools that can help here include **Answer the Public**, reading trending questions on relevant subs on **Reddit**, and checking what's trending in social on **BuzzSumo**.

# 7 Blogging

Bloggging is the maintenance and publishing of a brand's news media outlet. Bloggers write editorial content designed to inform and inspire, rather than sell. For B2Bs, maintaining a blog that helps customers solve problems is a very effective strategy, even if your blog doesn't seem that popular from a traffic standpoint.

One B2B, **Indium**, a company sells solder paste, uses its blog to convert content into contacts into cash. Why would a solder paste company maintain a blog for such a niche audience? Well, it may be true that not a lot of people buy solder paste. But those that do, back up the truck.



So if a blog post generates one sale, it's going to be a very large sale. So Indium has 17 bloggers maintaining 73 blogs. They've seen a 600% jump in leads since they started blogging. Not they even blog in Chinese. And they stopped attending trade shows about 10 years ago, long before trade shows were interrupted by the coronavirus.

Good bloggers are good writers, and good writers are avid readers. So if you want to get good at blogging, allocate an hour a day to read popular bloggers in your category. And if you have something to add, leave a comment so they get to know you.

But make sure you says something useful and advance the dialogue forward, instead of leaving a generic "great post" comment. In addition to developing your writing skills, if you want to blog for business, learn WordPress.

Yes, there are others. But **WordPress** is the gold standard blog engine.

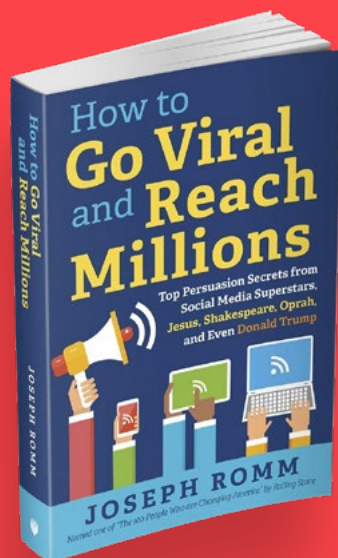
# 8

## Copywriting

Copywriting is the use of persuasive language to convert buyers from the awareness to consideration. Copywriting is the use of rhetoric to get prospects to notice, read, remember, and respond to your message.

In the Elizabethan Era, rhetoric was the basis of education. But with the Age of Enlightenment and the birth of science, we shifted from stories to facts. Interestingly enough, as research from **MIT PhD of Physics Joe Romm** proposes, our beliefs are still seduced more by emotional stories than they are by cold, hard facts.

He argues that we actually make decisions based on gut, and rationalize them with our intellect. Facts are not what persuades us. Sure, facts may be peppered in, and you can certainly have a persuasive story that includes facts.



But the real secret to effective copywriting is striking an emotional chord and using persuasive language to make it memorable. So whereas facts are the stuff of journalism, copywriters live more on the realm of the story.

They specialize in using figures of speech such as metaphors, memes, analogies, alliteration, rhymes and repetition laced with irony to get your attention, to convince and convert us into leads.

Develop these skills by taking note (and saving copies) of what communications get your attention and apply those same techniques in your writing.

Online tools that can help include **RelatedWords.com**, **RhymeZone** and **Idiom Search**. And regardless of the title, **Romm's book** is a must read.



# 9

## Podcasting

**The Theory of Multiple Intelligence** shows that some people absorb information better by listening than reading.

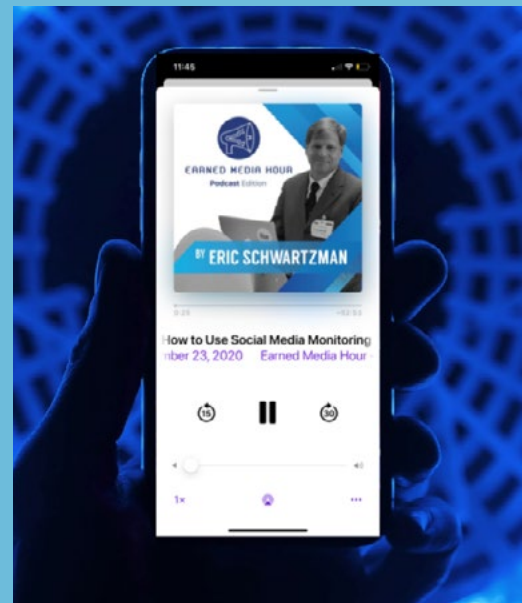
For those who'd rather listen, there's podcasting.

Podcasting is the digital delivery of an original audio program to a subscriber base. And they work great for nurturing leads and building and managing one-to-many relationships.

### **The Benefits of Podcasting**

- Podcasts allow listeners to time-shift and place-shift media consumption.
- They're 100% efficient because downloads are opt-in.
- They are accessible to a global audience, regardless of geographic boundaries.
- They draw a more educated, affluent, influential audience.
- They give marketers a way to bypass the news media and go direct to customers.
- And they are the most cost-effective electronic media distribution channel available.

Successful podcast producers put the needs of their audience first. Rather than go with a news format, it's much easier to produce a more evergreen, feature-oriented interview format program, so the content has an extended shelf life.



In addition to learning how to book high-profile guests and producing interesting discussions people want to listen to, you also need to know audio recording, post-production, search optimization and how to secure distribution on iTunes and Spotify.

Technical tools to learn include **Audacity**, **Levelator** and **Blubrry**. But producing a good show is the harder part. For that, read NPR producer Eric Nuzum's book **Make Noise**.

# 10 Social Media Marketing

Unfortunately, most people start here, because it's easy, fast, and fun. But if you're not sharing something that generates leads, what's the point? And if you don't already have a website with a path to purchase, you can't make a market for anything.

So start by getting your own web presence in order first. LinkedIn is a bloodbath these days because everyone's looking for deal flow online, and most of them don't have a website that's optimized for conversions.

Everyone's all over social media trying to sell. Social networks are designed to generate clicks for advertisers. Not you. You get to share posts for free so they call sell advertising impressions against your content.

**Proximity drive conversions.** There's a saying in Silicon Valley that goes like this: If it's free, you're the product. So before you invest time and energy in social media marketing, get your website in order first, then search optimize it, and get your email marketing up and running.

At that point, you're ready to try your hand at social media. This is the most crowded area in digital marketing, and many employers and clients consider your own following as a measure of your capabilities.

So if you want to go this route, build a following first. Popular tools in this category for B2Bs include **Talkwalker**, **Hootsuite**, and **Twitter Analytics**.




**Pinned Tweet**

**Eric Schwartzman** @eric schwartzman · Apr 21

With new artificial intelligence & advanced filtering options getting better all the time, it's never been easier to monitor everything that's being said in traditional & social media abt companies, brands & individuals.

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# 11

## Digital PR

MUCK RACK
For PR Pros - For Journalists



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This is a really important skill set because this is where your credibility comes in.

**Digital PR** is about getting relevant, high-profile websites and blogs to write about and publish links back to your site.

It's about building visibility and credibility through neutral third-parties because if other experts who don't work for you say your products are good, that's a powerful endorsement.

Unlike conventional media relations, digital PR is also about guest blogging in exchange for backlinks to lift your search rankings.

In the old days, marketers led with PR. By scoring media coverage early on, they could accelerate their visibility.

But now that reporters check you out by Googling you, it doesn't make much sense to pitch until you're sure they'll get impressive results.

They're also going to check out social media presence and you're not being

followed by influencers in your trade, you're a more risky person to write about or publish.

In fact, your social media following has become a veritable proxy for how much of an influencer you are.

Got less than 1000 followers? Meh. How do they know you're legit if you don't have a vibrant community.

There's a logical sequence to making a **digital pivot** and it goes like this:

- Step 1 is owned media, or getting your own website in order.
- Step 2 is building community on social media.
- Step 3 -- after you're built an impressive website and amassed a respectable following -- is earned media.

And earned media is digital PR. Tools of trade here include **Cision**, **Meltwater**, **Talkwalker** and **iPR Software**.

# 12

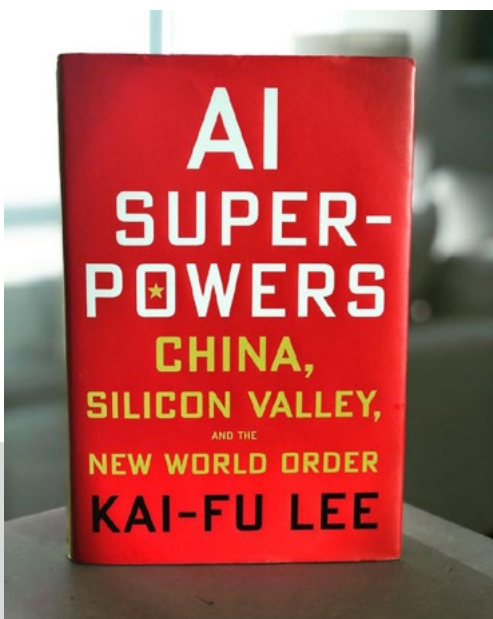
## Online Advertising

If you have lots of money and want quick results, you can use **paid media** to drive traffic faster than you can through organic search, email, referral links, and social media.

But if you're a B2B catering to a niche audience, even lots of money may not do the trick.

If, on the other hand, your selling insurance, or computers to business customers, advertising can be very effective. If you want to test out different approaches, you need traffic because more visitors mean more data, and there's no data like more.

In his book **AI Superpowers**, former Google China president Kai Fu Lee agrees that the lack of regulation in China around consumer data collections and harvesting has put Chinese artificial intelligence startups ahead of their US counterparts because they have more data they can analyze to determine what consumers want.



If Tik Tok is an example, he could be right. Tik Tok's algorithm is better at sustaining our attention than any of its predecessors. In digital marketing, online advertising today is Google Ads and paid social media.

Focus on learning **Google Ads**, **Facebook Ads**, **Twitter Ads**, and **LinkedIn Marketing Solutions**.



If you're just starting out, think about which of these areas align best with your existing skills. **It's going to be easier to specialize in one of these areas than it will to master them all.** On the other hand, once you earn your stripes and become a generalist, you're ready to lead the digital marketing effort. But that comes with time.

The important thing is, there are more companies that need good digital marketing than there are good digital marketers, and that is an opportunity for anyone that likes and wants to dive deep in this space.



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