TRI DIGITAL

12 STEP HIGH-PERFORMANCE

# IT MARKETING

# GUIDE

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TRI

## HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 1:

# ESTABLISH THE GOALS

Coco is the newest film from Disney/Pixar. It's a magical story about the power of music and the importance of family. Set in Mexico, it beautifully captures the sights, sounds and colors of the culture.

And there's good reason for that. As the film's creators explain in this video, they didn't skip a single step when it came to prep work.

That's what it takes to create something really powerful. You can't cut corners. You have to work through each and every step.

## All the secrets

Pixar doesn't keep their recipe for success a secret. And neither do we. This post is the first in a 12-part series about "high-performance IT marketing."

That sounds all official, right? I know. We're legit.

In all seriousness, we've spent the last several years fine-tuning IT marketing. From the moment we start with a new client, we're thinking strategically. Even playful content (like this post) is a carefully calculated piece of a larger puzzle.

And you know what? That's what high-performance IT marketing is. Calculated. Strategic. Well thought out and deliberately executed.

We've generated more than 100,000 leads for our clients, and in this series we're giving away all our insider info. Take it. It's yours. Use it to super-charge your own IT marketing.

If you're looking for ROI, this is how you get it.

## A journey of 1,000 miles

Lao Tzu is credited with saying, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." IT marketing in certainly a journey, and in this post we're going to start with step one.
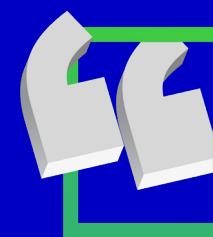
> " The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"
> -Lao Tzu

Get this step right and you're on your way to IT marketing greatness. Screw it up and any success you have will be accidental . . . and really hard to duplicate.

I can't emphasize that enough.

A lot of would-be marketers are ready to just jump in. They want to start promoting posts on Facebook and throwing up ads on Google. That's what the big players do, right?

Yes and no. Yes, they use some of those strategies, but *no*, they do *not* just start posting stuff. They start with clearly defined goals.

## Establishing the goals

In prepping to write this post, I spent some time talking to our CEO, Gio. When he presents at industry conferences like IT Nation and DattoCon, he shares these very same steps for IT marketing success.

So, you know, I thought he might be a good reference point. He was.

> **"** Before you jump in, figure out what you want"

"Before you jump in, figure out what you want." That's Gio talking about **Step One: Establishing the Goals**.

Effective marketing is all about results, but there's a catch. You have to know WHAT results you want, and you need to flesh out exactly what those results look like so you'll have some idea of whether or not you're meeting your goals.

You can't hit a target if you don't even know what the target looks like.

For most MPSs, there are three potential goals. If you're trying to develop your own IT marketing strategy, this is your homework. Read over each of the following possible targets and decide which ONE you want to focus on first.

Don't try to split your focus. Not out of the gate. And don't take any shortcuts. Answer every single question under the goal you decide to pursue.

Like I said, high-performance IT marketing is calculated. So, let's drill down and figure out what you need to set your sights on first.

## Possible target #1: Generate leads

Leads are like french fries. Everybody likes 'em, the warmer the better. So it makes sense that most of our clients are interested in IT marketing that generates leads. But there's a problem with that goal.

"It's too vague," Gio told me.

It's not enough to know you want leads. That's not the basis for IT marketing. If you want a strategic plan, you're going to need more details than that.

First you need to understand what a lead is. Here is the industry definition of a sales lead.

Then, ask questions like,

- How many leads does it take to set an appointment?
- How many appointments lead to formal proposals?
- How many proposals do you have to present to get a close?
- How much is your average deal worth?
- What are your monthly revenue goals?

From there, you can work backwards to determine how many leads you need on a monthly basis to hit your target. Also be sure to take into account the *cost of acquisition*.

For example, events (like private movie screenings) typically generate a lot of leads. But they're also expensive. The same thing goes for Pay Per Click (PPC) ads, like Google Adwords. You may not have the budget to spend that much on leads.

Less expensive options include things like email campaigns and online form submissions.

## Possible target #2: Promote brand awareness

A second option is to focus on promoting brand (or company) awareness. You won't necessarily get millions of leads from brand awareness, but that doesn't mean it's not valuable.

And I know what you're thinking. If brand awareness doesn't generate leads—which you kind of need to get sales—what's the point?

Over at *Forbes*, Scott Goodson summed up the value of branding this way: "No branding, no differentiation. No differentiation, no long-term profitability."

Branding is how you set yourself apart from the competition. It's the personality and flavor of your company. Without it, your company is entirely forgettable. But with it, everyone from prospects to the competition will remember who you are, what services you provide, and how you're different.

Branding is definitely a key component of IT marketing. But building brand recognition is not like generating leads. Completely different strategies apply:

- The cornerstone of your brand is your website. It's the hub for everything. All your campaigns will point to it, so make sure it reflects who your company is. If it doesn't clearly distinguish you from the competition, then you're missing your biggest brand-building opportunity.

- Social media is also huge right now for brand awareness. Most of our clients focus on Facebook and LinkedIn. And while promoted posts are typically short, that doesn't mean this is an easy form of marketing to tackle.

- Make sure you follow best practices for both Facebook and LinkedIn. A post that breaks from these rules isn't likely to perform well.

- Think through your budget, and be ready to commit a bare minimum of $500 to any kind of social media campaign.

- And just like we recommended when crafting emails, do *A/B testing*. That's the only way to gauge what works and what doesn't.

## Possible target #3: Become a thought leader

The last potential outcome for high-performance IT marketing is positioning yourself as a thought leader.

Here's how that works.

Right now you're reading a blog post on our website. Why? Because we know IT marketing and we're serious about sharing our knowledge. If this were pure sales push, you wouldn't be 1000+ words into it. And if this didn't include actionable, helpful content, you'd already be on to the next thing . . . whether that's a work project or videos of people popping zits.

Yes, that's a real thing. Yes, people really record video of it. No, we're not including a link. It's gross. You can Google it if you really wanna see.

Being a thought leader means regularly producing practical content that has value in and of itself. For an IT company, that includes things like:

- Basic IT maintenance guides and checklists

- Overviews of complex topics like cybersecurity, back and disaster recovery or regulatory compliance

- Tips and tricks on [fill in the blank with any common pain point]

- Reviews and recommendations about the best solutions for everything from VoIP to cloud storage

This strategy only works if your content is as helpful as possible. Basically, you want people to feel smarter because they read something on your site.

## Email rules them all

You can use email to accomplish all three of these goals. It's the quickest, most cost-effective place to start. Plus, it's fairly easy to design an email around a specific goal.

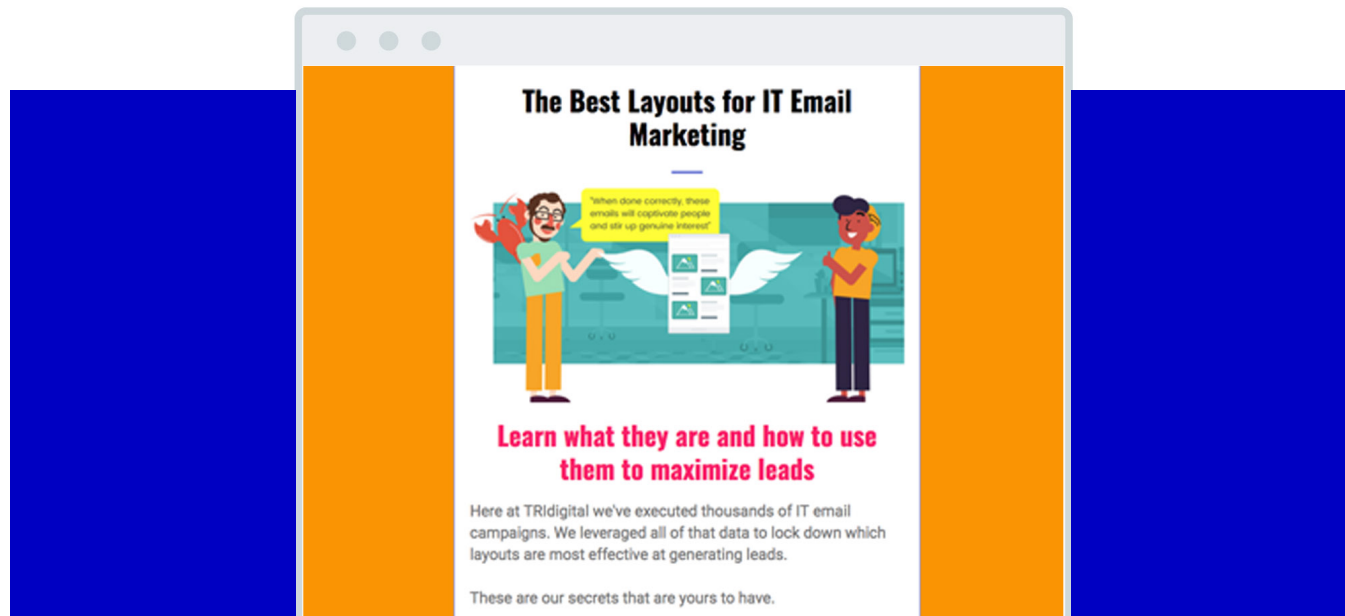How about some examples?

### Lead generation

Lead generation emails have a clear call to action. They shouldn't sound "salesy" because, frankly, no one likes that. But they *should* prompt action.
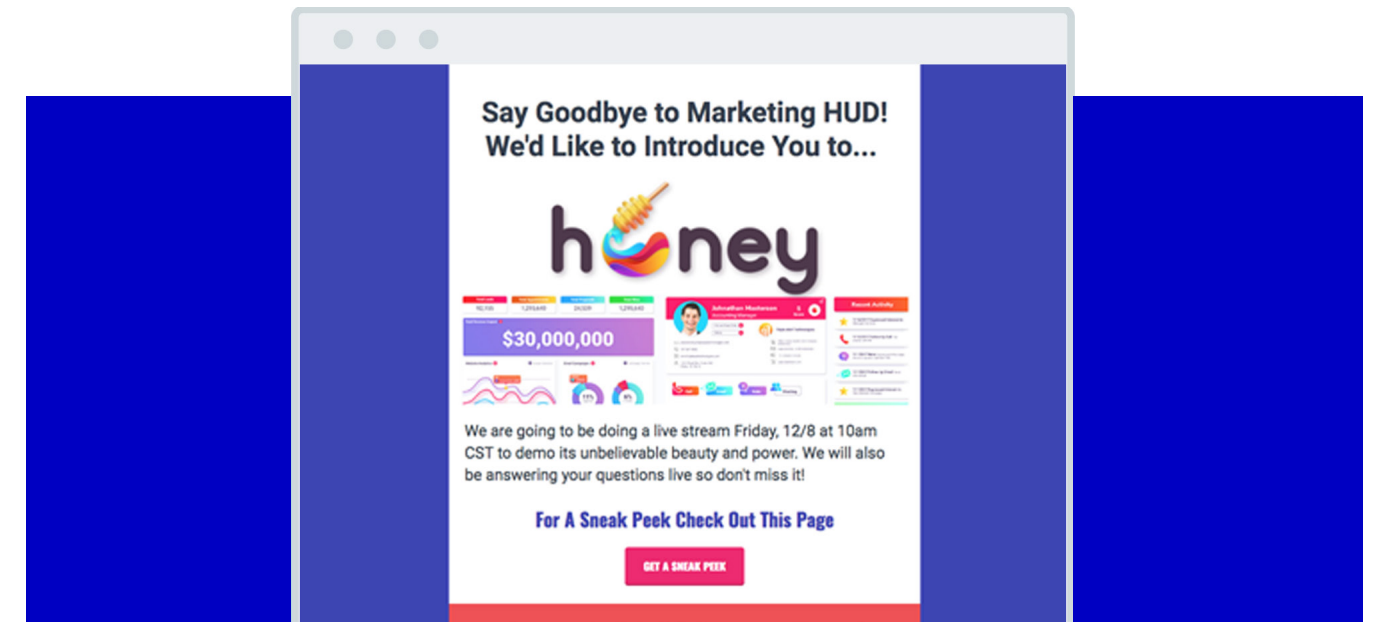
## Brand awareness

Brand awareness emails highlight who you are. Common brand awareness campaigns highlight things like a website redesign, your brochure, or even company culture.



## Thought leadership

Thought leadership emails are focused on sharing helpful, valuable information. Be sure to promote your *own helpful content* without any strings attached.

## Mix it all up

Naturally, you don't have to roll with a single approach. Once you get going, you can use helpful content (Target #3) to build brand awareness on social media which then links back to a landing page on your website (Target #2) with a contact form for follow up (Target #1).

But DO NOT start there.

I'm serious. It sounds easy. It's not. Especially in the beginning. Instead, pick ONE area to concentrate on, and really focus your effort, energy and budget on that. Don't even think about adding anything else to the mix until that first strategy is paying off.

When you can track ROI, then it's time to consider expanding your efforts. Not before.

The single best place for most MPSs to start is with lead generation. Remember, that's the main thing we help our clients with. That'll give you tangible results . . . if you're thorough and really dig into all the strategic questions listed above.

And that's the perfect place to end this post, because the next post in this series will cover KPIs—how to identify, target and track them.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 2:

# IDENTIFY KPIS

It's time to have the talk.

The KPI talk.

And if you're reading an article about IT marketing KPIs, then you should know what your marketing goals are.

If you don't know what those are, then you should probably figure them out first. It'll be pretty hard to establish KPIs on goals that don't exist.

You can get help establishing your goals here.

### First things first, what's an IT marketing KPI?

Let's go ahead and put IT marketing KPIs into terms that are easy to understand:

Imagine you decide to start a new diet, but you don't know how much you weigh or what your ideal weight is. Even without this information, you start working out and eating healthier.

After a few weeks, you notice some differences.

Your waist seems smaller and your pants appear to be fitting better. But that's the thing … it *might* be doing all of that. You don't know for certain what kind of impact it's having.

And plus, even if you have made some progress, did you backtrack at any point?

If you did, then you could be much further along if you had stayed on course. But the simple fact that you haven't tracked anything means **you'll never know where you're failing and what you could be doing better.**

However, if we went back to the very beginning of things, your situation would *probably* be much different. Here's why:

1. If you identify a clear starting point, then you can accurately measure progress.
2. If you're regularly tracking progress, then you can detect, identify, and remove hurdles.
3. If you're removing hurdles as you go, then you won't be forced to repeat the same mistakes.
4. If you don't make the same mistakes over and over again, then you'll reach your goal more quickly.

Makes sense, right?

Of course it does.

## So what's a KPI look like for you?

It's important to understand that a KPI doesn't have to be something financial. It can be anything — **as long as it's measuring a relevant part of your business.**

For example, one KPI could be your average ticket response time. How long does it currently take to respond to a ticket and what would you like that time to be in the future?

> Honey CRM can help you set up your sales and marketing KPIs for your MSP in less than five minutes. Visit honeycrm.com to start your free 30 day trial today!

But before you can improve your response time, you'll need to **clearly define your processes.** And if you don't have processes, then that's your first hurdle.

Everyone should be handling tickets the same way, and if they aren't, then any progress will be on a case-by-case, person-by-person basis. You want to make sure you can see that progress company-wide.

Besides your response time, here are a few other KPIs your IT company might want to consider:

1. Customer satisfaction score
2. Client retention
3. Employee retention
4. Average tickets per client
5. Profitability per agreement

## But what determines IT marketing KPIs?

Marketing can directly impact revenue — so it's important to get those particular KPIs established as soon as possible.

But before you can do that, you need to set your goals.

**What results do you want your marketing efforts to bring in and how do you expect to see your company performing within the next 12 months?**

Well, that's obvious. **You want marketing to bring in leads.** You want those leads to close. And you want those

closed deals to result in more monthly recurring revenue (MRR).

To bring this point home, let's set your annual revenue goal at $1 million. In this case, what would a legit KPI look like?

This particular KPI is simple to determine if you already know your numbers and — going back to the last point — your processes.

For example, how many appointments do you typically close, what's your pipeline process, and what's your standard lead-to-appointment ratio?

The answers to questions like these will influence the number of leads you need in order to achieve the desired MRR.

Here's an example:

*Goal:*
- $1M MRR a year is $83,334 per month.
- My average MSA is $3,000 per month.
- It's going take 28 new sales to hit it. That's 2.3 sales a month on average.

*Starting point:*
- I need 60 days to build a pipeline so I need to close 3 a month.
- Today, we close 5% working from a cold list.

*Target KPI:*
- With warm marketing leads, I think I can do 10%.
- I'll convert 20% of leads to appointments.
- 75% of appointments to proposals.
- 50% of appointments to a closed sale.
- I need 40 warm leads a month to hit my goal.

In this case, 40 warm leads is one of your IT marketing KPIs. To hit your goal of $1 million a year, you need to close 28 deals, which boils down to 40 warm leads every month.
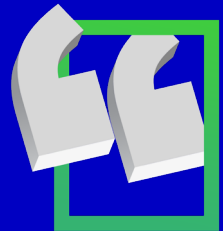
Easy enough, right?

## So what's next?

A lot.

All you really did was establish what you'd like to do and how those goals should be measured.

> You want marketing to bring in leads. You want those leads to close. And you want those closed deals to result in more monthly recurring revenue (MRR)."

That's cake.

But what about your strategy?

Heck, forget the strategy. How do you plan to pay for anything? And not to mention, who's in charge of the IT marketing cavalry? That's a job most won't volunteer for.

Don't worry, though. We've got plenty more insight where this came from. So stay tuned for step 3 of high-performance IT marketing: creating the right budget.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 3:

# CREATING THE RIGHT BUDGET

In collaboration with:

**TREND MICRO**

Before you get too far into planning your marketing strategy, you need to know how much money you're willing to spend. *Exactly* how much.

That's right, kids. It's time to talk about your marketing budget. And while the idea of reading about budgeting may get you about as excited as a Benadryl and a documentary on paint drying, we're going to try to make this fun.

In this post, we'll cover how to calculate your marketing budget down to the dollar. We've even included a downloadable version of the marketing budget template we use in-house.

Let's get to it.

## 1. Compare yourself to the competition

Before you do anything else to determine your marketing budget, take a few minutes to get some baseline information. You know who you're competing against. What's their marketing like?

For example, are they using email? Blog posts? Social media advertising? Pay-per-click (PPC) ads? Client video testimonials? Elaborate events, like movie premieres? And do they rely on an outside firm for marketing help or do they do it all themselves?

Email campaigns and blog posts are cheap. Events and PPC ads require a financial commitment. When you know what your competition is doing, you'll have an idea of how much they spend. Not a dollar figure, but a general sense of their range.

That's your financial benchmark. If the best-in-class MSPs in your area aren't shy about dropping coin to get customers' attention, then you're likely going to need to do the same.

If you're really serious about doing your homework, we recommend contacting Service Leadership Incorporated. They work specifically with MSPs to help increase marketing ROI and improve long-term performance.

## 2. Check your numbers

Now that you have a rough idea of what the competition is doing, take a look at your own financial reports. You can't spend money you don't have, even to grow your business. So determine how much money you can afford to allocate for your marketing budget.

On average, MSPs spend 3-5% of their annual gross revenue on marketing. Best-in-class MSPs spend 10% or more. If this is your first time taking a strategic approach to marketing, shoot for 3-5%.

## 3. Justify your budget (conversion)

This is really just a review of part 2 of this series, which was all about identifying your marketing KPIs.

You should already know how many deals you need to close per month to hit your growth goals. Working backwards, you should also know how many proposals you'll need to close those deals, how many appointments it takes to generate that many proposals, and how many leads you need to set that many appointments.

Your KPIs are the justification (and statistical anchor) for your marketing budget.

That's important because you should never "just do marketing." The best marketing practices are driven by data. If you want every dollar in your marketing budget to count, *always* tie your budget back to your KPIs.

## 4. Leverage your strengths

In addition to your KPIs, you need to start tracking some other numbers. Like, for example, the cost of lead acquisition and the cost of client acquisition.

When an MSP is new to marketing, we find that most of their previous growth has come from referrals. Referrals are great, in part because they're so easy to close. You could literally show up in shorts with Taco Bell leftovers and close a referral deal while chewing with your mouth open. They're that easy.

Closing from other leads (like email marketing leads) is significantly more challenging. So you need to track your closing ratios.

Here's why. If your conversion rate is lower than 20%, you should seriously consider investing in higher-quality leads. For example, leads that come from PPC campaigns or events. The higher the quality of the lead, the higher the cost.

If there are changes you can make (to your sales process, for example) to bump up your closing ratio on lower-quality leads, do that. The best mix is lower-cost leads with higher closing ratios.

## 5. Diversify

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

You may *love* the idea of PPC marketing. You may think it's the best thing since vertically partitioned baked grain. (You know, sliced bread.) But even if you have incredible luck with PPC ads, they shouldn't be your entire strategy.

Spread your marketing budget around. You need at least 3-4 tactics. That way, when one well dries up, you have other marketing sources still generating workable leads.

## 6. Budget for client experience

We also recommend setting aside some money for courting your very best prospects.

You should have some kind of system in place for ranking your leads based on size, potential revenue, influence and so on. The better the lead, the more you should be willing to spend to close that deal.

For example, one of our clients creates these massive architectural-style prints of the network configuration for their most promising leads. They even have the thing framed. It sets them back about $500 a pop, but when you're talking about thousands in recurring monthly revenue, that's nothing.

Here at TRIdigital, we give our best prospects a custom, one-of-a-kind drawing, complete with a certificate of authenticity. We call it The Gift of Art. When you calculate the amount of time it takes us to produce just one of these, the cost is significant. But it helps us create special connection with our most sought-after prospects.

Just ask yourself, what showcases how *your* relationship with a new client will be unique and different? Then find a creative, meaningful way to express that.
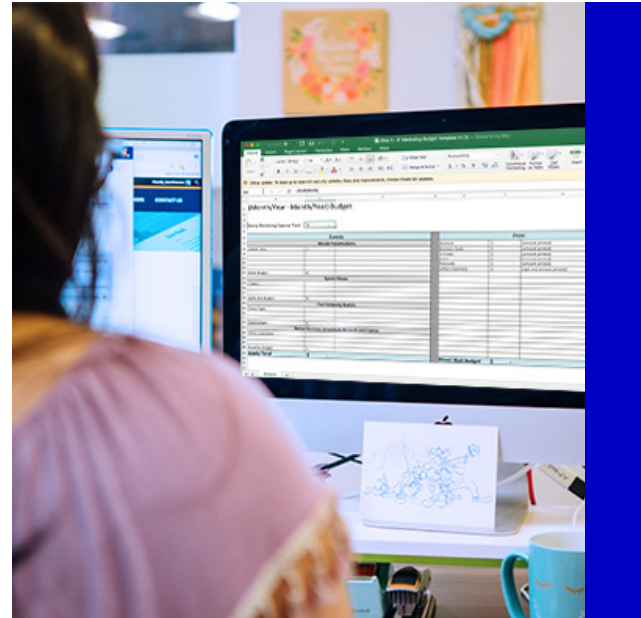
## A word on market development funds

Market development funds (MDF) can really help fill out your marketing efforts. But *don't* rely on them for determining your marketing budget.

Instead, calculate your marketing budget and *then* add MDF after they're secured.

As TRIdigital's CXO Adrian Cue explains, "This shows potential partners that you're dedicated to your own marketing efforts, regardless of whether or not you receive additional funding." Demonstrating that kind of commitment is important.

When you're asking for MDF from vendor partners, it's also key to provide those partners with an action plan for how you'll use that money. Include what you need to execute your plan, how you'll pull it off, and your expected ROI.

When vendors have an accurate picture of how their investment benefits their company, they're more likely to help you out.

## Download our IT marketing budget template

Our marketing budget template makes it easy to track how you're spending your marketing dollars. Simply fill in the sections in parentheses and ignore the sections that aren't a part of your current plan. If you're just getting started with your first marketing budget, this is an invaluable tool.

Also, it's totally free. And it's the same thing we use to create the best marketing in the MSP industry. So there's really no reason not to use it.

**DOWNLOAD:**

Want to stay on top of your marketing investments? Download your free IT Marketing Budget Template here:
**http://bit.ly/IT_Marketing_Budget_Template**

## HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 4:

# DETERMINE YOUR STRATEGY



In collaboration with: **TREND MICRO™**

It's finally over.

Not the blog series, mind you – just the part where you have to crunch those pesky numbers to find a budget that works for you. Now that you've got a number in mind, it's time to get to the strategic part of IT marketing.

There's a lot to consider here. But if you tackle everything in the right order, you'll come out on the other side ready to create a functional, targeted plan for your business.

Let's get started.

## Audit your own IT marketing efforts

Actually, hold off on starting for a moment.

Before you can focus on your new IT marketing strategy, determine what you already have out there. That includes any type of existing marketing collateral, tactics, and skilled marketing personnel. Really, it's all fair game.

Why put in the effort, you ask?

If you've got an existing brand (complete with a logo, color palette, branding guidelines, etc.), then you can save yourself a lot of time. That doesn't mean that you're stuck with these things, mind you – it just means you have an established track to follow if you so choose.

Or, to put it in plain proverbial English… if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

You can always build on it, tweak it, and make it great.

P.S. - It's totally okay if you're starting from scratch. The tradeoff is that you have more creative liberties, albeit for a bit more work.

## Set your expectations

You should have a fair idea of what you've got. Now, let's focus on what you **need**.

For the sake of simplicity, let's split it into two distinct categories: inbound and outbound IT marketing expectations.

### Your inbound IT marketing expectations...

First up, a definition:

**Inbound marketing** is catered to creating quality content that pulls people toward your brand. Killer logos, amazing websites, thought-provoking content – that's all inbound-focused.

This type of marketing is an especially critical tool for service businesses in industries like IT where expertise is specialized and competition is diverse.

In fact, the future of IT marketing lies with inbound marketing. Younger audiences don't want to be pitched anyone's solutions and services. They want value and relationships that last. Inbound IT marketing relies on building authority and **earning** trust with a base.

So what's the catch?

It takes time to build trust. You can't become the world's most trusted MSP overnight. Take this into account when you craft your IT marketing strategy expectations.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

84% of 25-35 year-olds are likely to click off a website with excessive advertising.

When you set your inbound marketing expectations, consider the following things:

- Do I have the right people on my team to deliver what I need?
- If not, how much will it cost me to hire the right people?
- Do I have the time to build up my brand? Or do I need to close deals fast?
- Do I even know how I want to look or sound to my audience?
- What kind of approach will inform and build trust with my audience?
- Do I have the right team of salespeople to follow up after these leads?

## Let's talk sales

Of course, it's not all about having master marketers in your pool of resources. You'll need talented salespeople that can qualify, follow up and close on these continually nurturing leads.

That means plenty of outreach, open conversations, and even some free advice. Before you go all-in on an inbound marketing strategy, consider the status and strengths of your current sales team.

If you're considering an inbound marketing approach, it's best to do your homework and consult with marketing experts to fine-tune your strategy.

## … and your outbound IT marketing expectations

Just to keep things clear, here's another definition:

**Outbound marketing** is the more traditional marketing form you're probably familiar with. It's the marketing equivalent of yelling **"HEY! NOTICE ME!"** over a channel of millions of other people.

Outbound IT marketing isn't worried about cultivating relationships or nurturing leads. It's about getting down and dirty about seeking out clients and taking your message to them. It's old-school, and it's reliant on your own drive and tenacity to keep it going. When used effectively, it's a potent driver of branding, leads and sales.

Alright, so what's the catch here?

Remember what we said earlier: younger people typically don't like it one bit. But outbound marketing strategies do work in the right circumstances. And, the results are usually instant – Have an IT need?

Click here, buy now. Fin.

Even with a clever, appealing approach, it's becoming an uphill battle to get noticed. What does it take to get noticed?

Money. A healthy amount of it too.

Why so much?

You need to spend money on events and advertisements over multiple platforms and channels, including social media sites, search engines, and more.

When you set your outbound marketing expectations, consider the following things:

- Do I have enough money to compete within my market?
- Is my team proficient in ad messaging, creation, placement and management?
- Do I know exactly what I want to achieve with my events, ads and campaigns?
- Do I have the knowledge of markets where competition is low(er)?
- Do I have more money to spend on it?
- Seriously, this is burning a hole in my pocket. Do I have enough money?

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Inbound leads cost 61% less on average than outbound leads.

### Let's talk sales, again

From a sales perspective, the outbound IT marketing strategy is a breeze. If it's successful, it's literally as easy as waiting for a lead to call you and tell you what they want.

In short, it's more akin to a transaction than anything else.
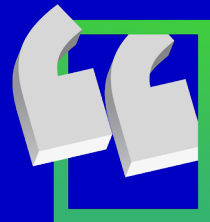
> **Even a Ferrari will get passed by a Corolla if it's out of gas."**

It doesn't require a particularly skilled salesperson, and it doesn't take many follow-up touches (if any).

But we're not going to sugarcoat it. Advertising, which is a core component of outbound marketing strategies, is a pay-to-win system. It doesn't matter if you have the most skilled ad team and salespeople.

Without money and knowing where to spend it, you're going nowhere.

**We've created a helpful guide to show you exactly where you should focus, based on your available resources.**

### Let's get creative

Alright, *now* we're getting somewhere!

By now, you should have a decent idea of how to develop and balance your inbound and outbound IT marketing strategies.

Now for the fun part: What's your theme? What's **YOUR** story? In other words, why choose you?

At TRIdigital, we like to walk our clients through a creative story arc exercise. In essence, you fill out your journey as a company.

Some of the questions include:

- **Why?**
  - Why do you do what you do?
  - What drives you to keep doing it?
- **Goals**
  - Where do you see yourself taking your business?
  - What's the end game?
- **Challenges**
  - What's stopping you from achieving your business goals?
  - What challenges do you see ahead of you?
- **Resolution**
  - What can you do today to prevent tomorrow's problems?
  - What do you need to resolve these issues?
- **Reflection**
  - What legacy do you want to leave behind?
  - What was the point of it all?

Sadly, answering these questions won't give you all the marketing answers you need. However, they'll set you on a path to understanding what your company and your people are about.

It's the soul of who you are, collectively.

From these questions, you can build a theme to drive your planning. It doesn't have to be expressed directly anywhere. Not in your copy. Not in your design. Heck, it doesn't even have to exist as a forgotten snippet of code in an email.

**DOWNLOAD:**
Want to fill out a story arc of your very own? Go to **page 76** or download a blank template here:
**http://bit.ly/Story_Arc_Template**

Your theme is a short, meaningful phrase that sums up who you are and what drives you. Others can help you find it, but nobody can take it from you.

You can't outsource it. You can't make it up. It what makes you, you.

## Go forth and be strategic

When you leverage your theme as a core component of your IT marketing strategy, you can develop unique content that **speaks for you**.

Keep your budget in mind, understand your capabilities, know what you need… and get out there. These are the keys to building an IT marketing strategy that will leave your competition in the dust.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 5:

# SELECT YOUR MARKETING ACTIVITIES

In collaboration with:  **TREND MICRO**

So far, we've looked at goals, KPIs, budget and strategy. Now it's time to get down to brass tacks—picking your actual marketing activities.

But before you do (you knew there was going to be a catch), we'd like to offer a word of caution. A lot of business leaders arrive at this very place without one important ingredient. An open mind.

Before you even started reading this guide, you likely already had an idea of the kind of marketing you want to do. You saw another company sending emails and you liked the look of them. Or you attended an amazing event and wanted to host one of your own. Or a friend told you about the amazing success he's had with PPC.

Here's a nickel's worth of free advice. The marketing activities you had before you started formalizing your plan? Ditch them.

If you go into this step with predisposed bias, your chances of making the best strategic decision drop considerably. We're not saying your original plan is bad. It might be incredible. Or it might not be a good fit for your company at all.

All we're asking is that you hold off on making a final decision about your marketing activities until you've considered all the factors. Fair enough?

## How to make good marketing choices

Okay, so how do you know which marketing activities will fit for your company? You need to take a good, hard look at three specific areas.

### 1. Your budget

The budget you developed back in step 3 serves as a guide for one very simple, very pragmatic reason. Some marketing activities are more expensive than others.

It doesn't really matter how much you want to rent out an entire amusement park for your prospects. Sure, you'd probably get some blazing-hot leads out of that. But you can't afford it. Period.

Any potential marketing activity that falls outside your budget isn't an option. Let that stuff go.

### 2. Your goals

Do you need sales in the next quarter? Are are you good right now and more interested in long-term growth with increased customer retention?

We'd argue that *all marketing* is long-term. You can't really dabble in marketing. If you're going to do it, you have to commit. That said, some marketing activities are more likely to produce fast results than others.

Hot leads close faster than cold ones. You need to know what kind of results you want.
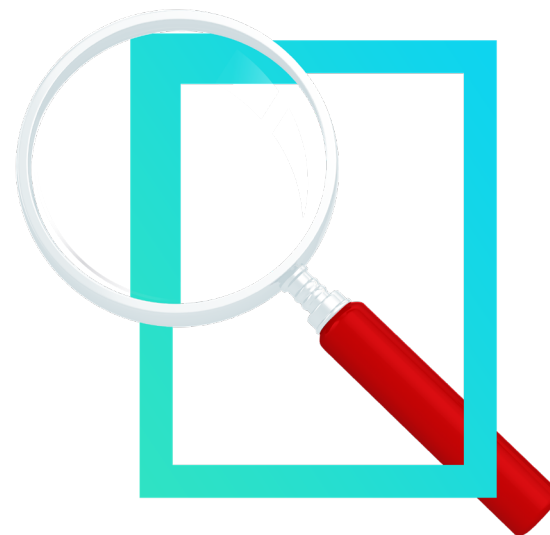
### 3. Your strengths

We'll let you in on a secret. Virtually every IT company thinks they're good at sales. The vast majority of them are not. (No judgement here!) That's part of the challenge when picking marketing activities.

You have to get really honest with yourself. If you don't have a powerhouse sales team, *admit* that. If you're not good at presentations, or terrified of public speaking, or just generally uncomfortable with networking, this is the time to fess up.

Dig down and determine your strengths and weaknesses. You want marketing activities that play to your strengths.

### It's all about balance

We mentioned the cost of lead acquisition and the cost of client acquisition when we talked budget numbers in step 3. It's time to revisit that idea. The best possible marketing activities for your company are the ones that bring both of those numbers as low as possible.

In other words, it's a smart business decision to reduce costs. Shocking, right?

The less it costs you to get your hands on qualified leads (the cost of lead acquisition) that you can actually close (the cost of client acquisition), the better. But cheap leads you can't close are no good. And awesome leads you can't afford don't really work, either.
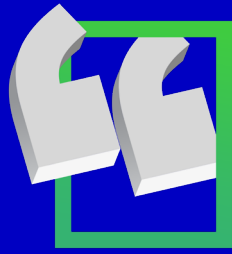
We're looking for the sweet spot in the middle.

### Yeah, but what does it look like?

Talking about marketing activities, budgeting and goals in the abstract is informative, but a bit on the philosophical side. Unless you have a history of coordinating marketing campaigns, it's hard to know how to apply this information.

How about a few practical examples?

Each of the following three marketing activities has the potential to be wildly successful—*if* it fits for your company. The trick is to make sure you're prepared for the cost, aware of the quality of leads you'll get, and equipped to do what you need to do for conversion.

## Email marketing

Email marketing is a modern classic. The cost is low, just about anyone can do it, and it absolutely generates leads. Sounds like the perfect fit for just about anyone, right?

Hold on there, slugger.

First, while the cost is low, email marketing isn't free. You'll need a platform for organizing campaigns (we use Campaign Monitor), someone to produce copy, someone to design your emails, and an email list.

If you're trying to trim costs as much as possible, you might want to check out MailChimp's Forever Free plan. If you're a decent writer, you can tackle the copy and design on your own to further cut costs. But you will absolutely need two things: a quality email list and strong sales skills.

Email leads are rarely hot leads. If your team doesn't handle follow up well, this marketing activity probably isn't a good fit for you.

**Cost:** Low
**Quality of Leads:** Semi-warm
**Necessary Strength:** A strong sales team

## Pay-Per-Click

One of the most common types of pay-per-click (PPC) ads is Google AdWords—those search results you see on Google with the little green "Ad" tag below the link. Because they pop up when someone does a specific search for a product or service, they tend to produce much higher-quality leads.

And like so many things in life, with higher quality comes a higher price.

PPC ads are billed exactly as the name implies—by the click. Every time someone clicks on your ad, you pay. Depending on the keywords you choose for your ads, the cost per click could be pennies or dollars. *For every click.*

As a general rule, you need to be ready to commit a minimum of $2,000 for a PPC campaign. And don't expect hundreds of leads for that price. You're more likely to get 10—*at most.*

Wait. *That few?!*

Yes. Because these will be folks who are *actively looking to buy what you sell*. You won't have to do a lot of cold calling. You just need to be able to deliver a solid presentation to an interested prospect.

**Cost:** Mid-High
**Quality of Leads:** Hot (active prospective buyers)
**Necessary Strength:** Solid one-on-one presentation skills

## Events

We'll be candid. Events are chaotic, expensive and *fun*.

Our favorite kind of event is a movie premiere. It's not that difficult to arrange a private screening of a movie the night before its nationwide release. And talk about compelling. Who doesn't want to see the next *Star Wars* movie a day before anyone else can?

But booking a theater and providing food and drinks for a movie premiere isn't cheap. You'll easily spend $15,000+ for an event like this.

There are less expensive event options—everything from happy hour mixers to other creative venues. But movie events are almost always well-attended, so long as you pick a film everyone's aching to see. (Obscure foreign biopics aren't your best bet.)

While that's a lot of coin to drop on a single evening, the leads you'll get from it are golden. We've seen MSPs book as much as 50 appointments as a result of a single movie event. And since any one of those potential clients could bring in enough recurring revenue to cover the cost of the whole event, it's not the gamble it might seem at first blush.

As marketing activities go, that's hard to beat. In fact, we love this marketing activity so much that we've included our movie event checklist as a downloadable resource at the end of this post.

All you need is the marketing budget to take care of the upfront cost—you can offset that some with MDF funds—and strong public speaking skills. Any movie event should begin with a *short* presentation about your products or services. That's how you book those appointments.

So if you're shy in front of crowds (or you just can't stomach the idea of spending that much), this won't work for you.

**Cost:** Mid-High (but potentially offset by MDF)
**Quality of Leads:** Very Hot (qualified appointments)
**Necessary Strength:** Strong public speaking skills & follow-up

## Know what you're good at

Which marketing activity is best?

All of them. Or none of them. It depends on you.

You'll have to decide on your budget and what your strengths are. Then prepare yourself and your staff for the kind of leads you'll be getting. When your expectations, resources and skills are all aligned, you're set up for marketing success.

**CHECK IT OUT**
Go to **page 77** to view the Movie Event Checklis.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 6:

# CREATE A PLAN

In collaboration with:

**TREND**
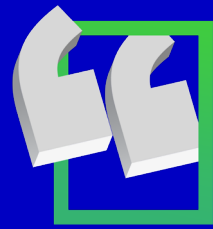**MICRO**

So you have goals, a budget, and a strategy.

Heck, you even have KPIs.

Now what?

Throw all your proposed marketing activities into a bag and pull one out at random?

I mean, you could. But that's not exactly effective …

You need a plan. A real one. One that goes over the whats, whos, and whens. One that outlines it all and keeps everyone on the same page.

> "You can't measure something you don't have a measuring stick for." — CIO

But what exactly is "it all?" What specifically should your IT marketing plan cover and how deep should it dive?

Before you get too far into the details download our annual plan template so you can fill it in when you are done reading.

## For starters, you need the goals …

You know your marketing goals. But does Becky in Accounting? Rick in Sales? Or Clarence in the NOC?

Should everyone in the company understand the point to everything marketing-related?

Maybe. Maybe not.

But it certainly wouldn't hurt if everyone could pick up your plan and easily understand why things are the way they are — or at the very least, why you're throwing a customer appreciation luau in the middle of December.

Maybe Becky doesn't care or even want to know what's going on with marketing, but I'm sure your Marketing Admin would like to know. And I'm sure that any future marketing, sales, or management hires would also like to know.

Your IT marketing plan should clearly state what your marketing goals are. If it doesn't, then anyone who's out of the loop will continue to remain out of the loop. As a result, wires will most certainly get crossed.

> "64% of employees believe their company's leadership isn't completely transparent when communicating top goals." — BetterWorks

## Don't forget those KPIs.

Let's go back to Rick in sales for a minute.

Sales is a challenging department to work in, and it involves a lot of recurring "what ifs." On top of this, sales and marketing are often speaking different languages — which can make things even more of a challenge.

KPIs can help with this.

When the KPIs are clearly outlined, something like "lead generation" won't be an issue. For example, if Rick suddenly starts to think that 40 warm leads is way too low, it won't make a difference. Because everyone got together earlier and decided that 40 warm leads is more than enough.

Here's a bit of a recap from our article on KPIs:

*Goal:*
- $1M MRR per year is $83,334 per month.
- The average MSA is $3,000 per month.
- It's going take 28 new sales to hit it. That's 2.3 sales per month on average.

*Starting point:*
- We need 60 days to build a pipeline, so we need to close 3 per month.
- Today, we close 5% working from a cold list.

*Target KPI:*
- With war, marketing leads, we think we can do 10%.
- We'll convert 20% of leads to appointments.
- 75% of appointments to proposals.
- 50% of appointments to a closed sale.
- We need 40 warm leads per month to hit our goal.

## What's your strategy, man?

This one is a bit of a three-fer.

Your marketing plan should include a strategy, but you also need to throw in a theme and a story.

The theme doesn't necessarily have to be more than a few words long, but it must come from your story.

*Who are you? Why do you have this company? What's your BHAG and why do you get up every morning?*

*Do you have big plans for your employees, the community, or the industry as a whole? Do you have an end game?*

All of this should be part of your story and then wrapped up by your theme. You can learn more about that process here.

However, this creates the foundation for your strategy. It's your marketing plan's backbone and your company's differentiation factor — two things that are incredibly important for IT marketing success.
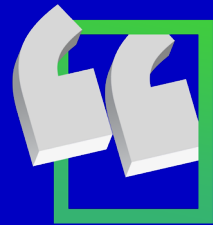
> "Story is similar to music. A good story takes a series of random events and distills them into the essence of what really matters." — Donald Miller,
>
> **BUILDING A STORYBRAND: CLARIFY YOUR MESSAGE SO CUSTOMERS WILL LISTEN**

## I'll have an activity with a side of scheduling.

You can have the most inspirational story, most epic strategy, and most perfect KPIs ever, but all of that will mean nothing without this crucial piece of your marketing plan pie.

You need every marketing activity. Listed. And with a date.

It's easy to push this piece off and to assume that it's not that big of a deal — you can fill it in as you go, right?

Not exactly.

You see, this is the actual "plan" part of your IT marketing plan. It kind of matters. Without your activities scheduled out, you just have a cute story and a bunch of random ideas thrown into a document.

> "For a marketing plan to be brilliant, it must be tight and focused." — Inc

## So there's this thing called a budget.

And some people actually use one. Crazy, I know. But when it comes to your IT marketing plan, in particular, you could really benefit from a budget. One that outlines projected revenue and ROI.

You can read up on that here.

## Last, but not least …

When you're done with your plan, print that bad boy out. Or … you know, just email it to everyone.

Either way, you need to spread the marketing plan gospel to your coworkers. Let it out. Share it around. And make it rain marketing from the front desk to the back office.

## What's next?

Oh hey. You made it to the end. Now, comes the hard part. You actually have to build your marketing plan.

Or not, and you can just keep doing what you've been doing — sans an IT marketing plan.

But we'd recommend against that. Because at the end of the day, all we want is to see you be as successful as possible.

> **DOWNLOAD:**
> Download your free Marketing Guide Template here:
> **http://bit.ly/Marketing_Guide_Template**

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 7:

# BUILD THE TEAM & APPOINT A LEADER

In collaboration with:

**TREND MICRO**™

So, you've got everything you need to put plan put together. That's pretty good. But if you want to put it to good use, you're going to need an IT marketing team.

What if I told you we're putting a crew together?

Well, not us. More like, you.

Choosing your marketing team, as well as who's going to lead that team, will be instrumental to your success. But how do you know who to hire first? Where do you even begin tackling the monster that is assembling an IT marketing team?

Read on and we'll tell you.

## Who comes first?

When you have no marketing team, you'll be a bit frazzled. Do you start with a writer that creates content? Do you first turn to a designer that can make your brand look better? Do you look immediately for a developer to keep your code in line?

In truth, all three of these positions are absolutely critical to the success of your marketing plan.

There's a *tiny* little problem.

You want them all, but you can't afford it. You're limited by your budget, so it's important to first keep in mind what kind of finances you're working with.

It's important to *eventually* hire specialists, but it can quickly get you stuck in a marketing budget black hole.

You see, if you hire one specialist, your budget probably won't allow you to hire anyone else you need. To add insult to injury, you're probably won't see many results from your specialist without the entire team present, either.
The truth is that the vast majority of MSPs aren't able to drop tons of money on an entire marketing team right out of the gate. In other words, You've got to strategically build your team from the inside-out but at a pace you can manage.

**CHECK IT OUT**
Go to **page 82** to view a guide to 3 critical positions and their average salaries

## Marketing leadership comes first

Now, you're kicking things off with someone that **knows IT** marketing best practices.

It's an inescapable fact – their salary will be higher. But like most things, you get what you pay for. Marketing strategists look at your IT marketing plan and figure out what exactly it takes to get it done. And then they make sure it happens according to plan.

Your marketing strategist should also be a jack of all trades.

Mind you, that doesn't mean they need to personally write stellar copy or create award-winning designs. It means they should be able to provide requirements, spot shoddy work and work to correct it to make it adhere to the branding guidelines.

## What comes next?

Now you've got your crown-jewel leader ready for action. You can start marketing with them at the helm. They'll locate and manage the resources you need to get things done on time and within your budget.

What does that entail?

Typically, it will mean outsourcing some writing, or working directly with freelance designers and developers.

You'll eventually hit a point where your budget will allow for more IT marketing team members. And, with better marketing employees, you can fine-tune your marketing message more effectively and execute your plan better than before

You've got your marketing strategist. That's your leader.

But who's next on the list?

### 1. Copywriter

Wordsmith, copy author, person of letters – they go by many names, but their purpose is always the same.

#### Why they're important:

Copywriters are your voice.

It doesn't really matter if you're doing inbound or outbound marketing. Your copywriter will always create SEO-conscious, clear-toned writing that crafts your message in a way that speaks to your target audience. The sooner you hire a good copywriter, the better. They can work

directly with your marketing strategist to learn your business needs and create the language for unique email campaigns, blogs, white papers, ads, and more.

#### How much they cost:

For copywriters, this is a tricky question.

IT can be a complex subject. You're always teetering on the edge of both general knowledge writing (appealing to the end user) and technical writing (expertise that can be difficult and expensive to hire).

Costs vary depending on your willingness to train your copywriter in all things IT for your business. You can hire younger talent with less experience for as little as $35,000, according to Payscale.

More experienced writers typically cost more – anywhere from $50,000 to $70,000. However, they can usually turn around copy faster, address the topic more accurately and keep a more consistent tone throughout your marketing collateral.

#### How to get one:

Finding a good copywriter that works well within your organization isn't terribly difficult. Most organizations choose to find their writers through contract-to-hire positions.
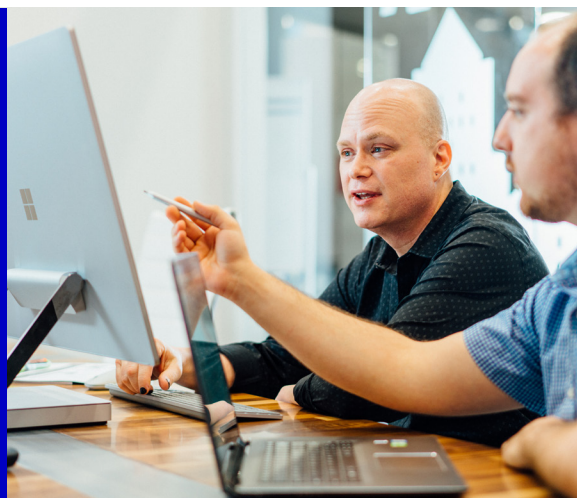
Usually, these positions run as a test over the course of 3 months or so. If the writer is a good fit, you can always extend an offer and bring them aboard full time.

If not, you simply wait for their contract to expire. And keep looking for the right person.

**CHECK IT OUT**

Use the job description on **page 83** when looking for a tech-focused copywriter.

### 2. Designer

Creator, planner, artist – this person is in charge of making you look good (and consistent) no matter where or how you market.

#### Why they're important:

Your marketing strategist and your copywriter are both creative people, but they don't hold a candle to your designer.

Your strategist will make the call on how your IT marketing strategy will play out. Then, your copywriter will craft the words to be powerful and meaningful.

But even if your message is well-written, it's hard to get across to your audience on its own. Like, **really** hard. Designers are a fantastic addition to an IT marketing team because they give form and context to your messaging, making it more digestible and visually engaging. They'll follow design guidelines that will keep your collateral looking unique, but consistent.

That's also great for brand recognition and overall professionalism.

The truth is simple. People are drawn into your marketing for the art, but they stay (and take action) for the **content**. It's a core 1-2 punch that makes the IT marketing world go 'round.

## How much they cost:

Designers get a little more leeway than copywriters because there's not really an IT-specific design style out there.

Payscale lists the average salary of a graphic designer at around $43,000. Much like the other positions, the final salary depends just how talented and experienced a designer you really want.

It's also important to note that "graphic designer" is a broad term. You could find a designer with rudimentary website creation knowledge, or you could find one that knows motion graphics and basic coding.

These specialized skills can make a huge difference in hiring a standard designer or a brand visionary.

## How to get one:

Good designers are out there, but you need to find one that fits your organization's style.

Since it's unlikely that you're going to hire a digital Picasso right off the bat, we recommend starting with a paid design intern and maybe a short-term contract with a recommended freelancer. Your design intern has the possibility to turn into a powerful asset for your IT marketing team.

On the other hand, a freelance designer may have the experience to help establish your foundational materials and then hand off to your internal team to create deliverables.

A word to the wise – even for an intern, you should ask to see a portfolio for any designer you consider. It'll help you avoid choosing a designer with a style that doesn't fit your brand.

**CHECK IT OUT**

Use the job description on when looking for a designer.



## 3. Developer

Programmer, coder, digital engineer – this is your code guru, also known as the person that will bring your website to life.

### Why they're important:

In the early stages of your marketing plan, your web developer isn't as critical as a designer or copywriter.

However, as your marketing program expands, you'll need someone to manage your website assets. Web developers take the words of the copywriter and the art of the designer and infuse them with code-magic to truly bring them to life online.

Data management, site animations, web security, user experience optimization – web developers are responsible for many of the hyper-critical aspects of your website marketing framework.

After all, your marketing collateral leads back to your website. It has to be at the top of its game if it's going to effectively convert leads into sales.

### How much they cost:

The average salary of a web developer varies greatly.

Web developer salaries depend on previous experience and whether they're experienced in **front end**, **back end**, or **full stack** development.

Front end developers are responsible primarily for the parts of an application that users interact with. That means interfaces, site responses, and user experience design.

Costs to hire front end specialists are usually $68,000 on average.

Back end developers deal with site architecture and more complex coding languages. They create manageable and durable site structures upon which your marketing sits.

Costs to hire back end specialists are usually $67,000 on average.

Full stack developers know both of the skill sets for front end and back end developers. Since they're largely development-autonomous, they do the brunt of the work without any help.

They're at the top of the pay range at around $76,000 on average.

### How to get one:

It's actually *fairly tricky* to hire a talented and competent developer if you don't know what you're looking for.

If you're lucky, your marketing strategist (or anyone else in your company) has rudimentary development knowledge, and they can ask candidates basic qualifying questions and evaluate an online portfolio of work.

Otherwise, you'll need to test them during an interview. Make sure they can recreate a basic web page (such as Google). When you review their portfolio of created websites, ask how different functions work, and how they coded them, and even why.

Additionally, you'll want to find developers that are already familiar with coding for your chosen environment (such as Wordpress, Wix, etc.). And, be sure to inquire about their familiarity with best practices for the deliverables you need.

If they answer these questions succinctly and confidently, you've found your first developer.

**CHECK IT OUT**

Use the job description on **page 85** when looking for a developer.

## Your IT marketing team, assembled

Of course, there are many more roles out there for in-house IT marketing departments. You might need an editor, a dev manager, an art director, and more.

But let's keep it simple for now. The rest can come later.

The marketing leader will craft meaningful results for you. And, following your marketing plan, you can use the full force of your talented team to market more effectively than ever before.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 8:

# EXECUTE WITHOUT DRAMA

In collaboration with:

**TREND MICRO**

By the time you get to this stage in your marketing plan, you'll likely be sick of planning. You'll be good and ready to actually do something.

You know what that means, right? This is where the rubber meets the road. Everything to this point has been theoretical. Now it's time to shift gears.

Which makes this a pivotal moment.

## How to completely mess up your marketing plan

Even if you've managed to work your way gracefully through all the previous seven steps, this is when your team will be tempted to get more dramatic than that random Facebook friend who keeps posting wildly polarizing things.

You know the one. Stop it, Randy. You don't have to share every socio-political view you have.

How do you avoid the drama? In our years of experience, we've discovered some key strategies for keeping things peaceful and collaborative. Keep in mind, we learned these by trial and error. When we ran headlong into a brick wall, we took the time to go back and ask how we could have avoided it.

This is your chance to learn from our reflections. Even if you feel confident your team is well prepared to make your marketing plan a raving success, we encourage you to read each and every one of the lessons we've learned.

You don't need to headbutt any brick walls we've already figured out how to go around.

## This is not a democracy

The idea of democracy is so ingrained in us that we often try to apply it where it doesn't fit. Like your marketing plan.

If you've followed our suggestions to this point, you've already given your team plenty of opportunities to share their thoughts, goals and ideas. They should feel heard. Now that you're moving into the action phase, it's time to focus on doing things, not talking about doing things.

And we'll let you in on a secret. You're going to run into snags.
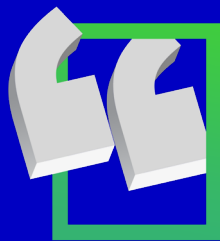
"A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours." — Milton Berle

You'll A/B test an email subject line and *both* of them will suck. The theater you booked for a movie premiere event will back out with short notice. You'll discover that your initial KPIs are way off.
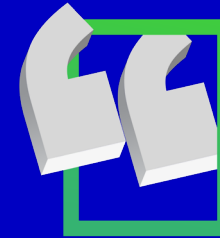
"Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines, practiced every day." — Jim Rohn

When those things happen, it's fine to ask your team what they think. But don't make decisions as a committee—especially in situations where there's a time crunch. The buck stops with you (or your marketing point person, if you've appointed one).

This is a benevolent dictatorship, not a democracy.

## The easy way is easier

The easier you can make your marketing efforts, the better.

If your marketing plan forces you to choose between two options, ask yourself which one you can shift to more conveniently. There are enough moving parts in the marketing machine. Don't go throwing a wrench in the works by opting for complexity when there's a simple alternative.

For example, complicated web design with custom animations, slide-in graphics and an elaborate sitemap can be impressive. But if this is your first time building out a custom website, it's far smarter (and faster) to hold off on those things.

Cover the essential bases. Build a solid site. You can have all the bells and whistles later. Get the basic foundation in place first.

## Ain't no time for stories

A funny thing happens when you start tracking marketing success. Everyone has an opinion about why some things work and some things don't. And those opinions? They rarely have anything to do with the facts.

Your marketing plan is really one big experiment. Sure, there are things you can do to increase your chances of success. (You're reading this guide. That's a good start.) But the only way to know for sure what works and what doesn't is to try things.
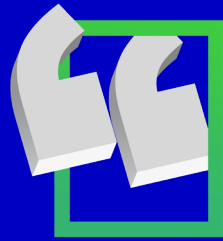
When you come across strategies that don't work, resist the urge to explain your results based on gut instincts.

If your PPC campaign crashes and burns (ouch!), don't immediately assume the keywords were all wrong. Maybe they were. Maybe that's exactly the cause. But you can't *know* that intuitively.

Instead, dig into the data. Data never lies.

Of course, you can't dig into the data if you don't have data to dig into. We recommend a tool for managing your marketing plan, like Honey, the first and only CRM designed specifically for the IT industry.

Don't draw conclusions based on stories. Instead, listen to the data.

## Give it time

Once you start your marketing plan, you're going to want to see results. And even if we tell you to be patient, you're going to want to see them fast.

But it's not like you can send out your first email and then come back an hour later to see if it was a success. Marketing doesn't work that way.

Successful marketing is a slow burn. Even when there's some epic high point, it doesn't happen overnight. Most companies that see breakthrough success have been plugging away with their marketing plans *for years* before they get to that point.

That's not to say you won't see results quickly. You can and should. But you can't judge the overall success of your marketing plan based on the first few weeks. You need to be prepared to wait a little longer.

We recommend giving any specific strategy you try a minimum of a quarter before you dig too deep into the analytics. If you try to assess things sooner, you won't really get a clear picture of what works and what doesn't.

## The hardest part

Even if you avoid every other possible drama pitfall when it comes to your marketing plan, there's one final obstacle that every leader needs to actively avoid.
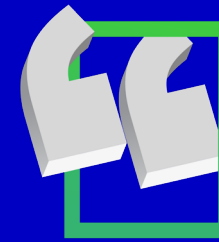
Your own opinion.

It's your company. That means it's not just business for you. It's personal. That's doubly true if you're the founder and owner. And because that's true, it's a monumental task to separate yourself from your baby. Your business isn't just a job. It's most likely a passion project for you.

That's a good thing. Use that passion to make your marketing plan as solid as possible. Just don't let your passion for your company's success get in the way.

You're going to have opinions about the kind of marketing you like. Sometimes strong opinions. Your preferences should absolutely play a role in the decision-making process, but the minute they get in the way of effective marketing, there's a problem.

We encourage you to invite candid feedback from your team. Get their genuine buy-in.

Even ask them to be brutally honest when it comes to the marketing plan and analytics. Open communication with your team can help you avoid accidental bias.

Don't let your opinion as the leader turn into an obstacle.

## Avoid it by being ready for it

The famed Irish playwright Sean O'Casey once said, "All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed."

Oh boy, is that right.

The key to avoiding drama is to be ready for it. We've covered some of the most common drama traps you're likely to encounter as you put your marketing plan into action. In the next part, we're going to talk about reviewing your data and making tactical adjustments. But first, we'd like to add one more thing.

*Remember what you've learned about avoiding drama and apply it to the entire process.*

When marketing really works, it tends to tap into passion. That's true for the target audience and that's true for the people behind the marketing. Passion is good, but it can easily turn into drama if you don't keep your guard up.

Through each phase of your marketing plan, do what you can as a leader to steer your team away from drama.
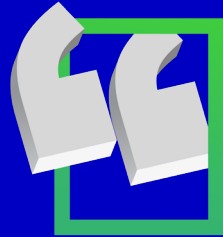
"The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinions." — Leonardo da Vinci

# REVIEW THE DATA & ADJUST THE TACTICS

In collaboration with:

TREND MICRO

You create an IT marketing plan and execute it with no drama.

Now what?

At this point, it's time to take a step back and review the analytics.

How are your marketing efforts performing, and does anything need to be adjusted?

Unlike advertising, marketing is all about the analytics. In other words, leave your instincts at home … you won't be needing those.

But before you can do anything with your IT marketing analytics, you need to know two things:

## 1. What's considered good (and bad)

Let's say you're batting an average open rate of 20% and a click-thru rate of 2.1%. You're not happy with those results, and you're certain you could be doing better.

However, when you look at real-world data, it appears that's not entirely realistic.

**Take a look at the industry averages for open and click-thru rates:**

| SOURCE | OPEN RATE | CLICK-THRU RATE (CTR) |
|--------|-----------|----------------------|
| MailChimp | 19.39% | 1.98% |
| GetResponse | 24.66% | 3.91% |
| Linchpin SEO | 21.19% | 2.30% |

Clearly, you're doing just fine. There's always room for improvement, but according to some sources, your email open and CT rates are above average.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Emails have higher open rates on Fridays but have higher CTRs on Tuesdays

It's okay to shoot for the moon, but you still need to have an accurate picture of what "good" actually is. This is mainly because you don't want to rock the boat too much — if you're already doing well, then you don't want to take too large a risk and hurt your good numbers as a result.

If you're already doing fine, then only make very minor, gradual, and targeted changes to your IT marketing strategy. If you're doing poorly, however, then go ahead and take some risks. See what works. Review the analytics. And make changes based on your data.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Emails perform better between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. or between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

## 2. What's actually important

CTRs and open rates are important to measure. But what about everything else?

How do you know what facets of your marketing strategy need more attention? And if you do need to measure something like CTRs and open rates, which one is more important than the other? Or are they both equally important?

To help you understand how it all fits together, let's take a look at one small piece of your IT marketing strategy — your website.

When it comes to your website, here are just a few of the areas you need to carefully analyze:

### Bounce rate

We like to see a bounce rate that's lower than 60%, and if we can manage it, lower than 50%. But why?

Because it means people are engaged.

Instead of landing on your site and immediately jumping back to Google (bouncing), they click on an internal link. This type of action lowers your bounce rate — which is a good thing.

However, one simple percentage does not give you the complete picture. As you should with all IT marketing analytics, it's important to consider all factors.

Imagine this …

Let's say a person lands on your site, reads all the content contained on that page, and then fills out a form found in the footer. After that person completes the form, they bounce to a different site.

Technically, this process would lower your bounce rate. However, that person did exactly what you wanted them to do — filling out a form. You converted them. Which brings us to our next metric.

## Pages per session & average session duration

How long does a person remain on your site? Are they engaged and reading your content? Or do they only remain on your site for a few seconds before they bounce somewhere else?

And if they are bouncing internally, how many times do they bounce? Only once or a handful of times?

These metrics can tell you a lot about your site's "stickiness" and the content contained on it. But again, it's important to analyze all of these metrics together and in the context of your goals.

Here's how Spinutech explains this concept:

"A site with a high number of pages per session, low session duration, and a high bounce rate can indicate page flipping behavior due to irrelevant content, poor accessibility, or disinterest. Similarly, a site struggling with low number of pages per session coupled with low session duration, and a high bounce rate can indicate low-quality content or user engagement. However, it's best to always consider your goals. In some instances, this might be exactly what you want for your marketing campaign."

## Overall traffic

Just like you need to know what "good" means for open and click-thru rates, you also need to know what good means for your website — and then you need to analyze it.

For example, a personal fashion blog might be able to get 1,000 unique visits per week. But is this traffic realistic for the IT industry? And even if it is (or isn't) and you manage to receive that much traction, does it guarantee anything?

Take a look at this example from A1 Web Stats:

# 1%

**Situation #1:**
A business selling widgets has strong website traffic (2,000 visitors per month) but both their marketing activities and website itself have weaknesses within them. The end result is that they gain 20 inquiries from their 2,000 website visitors (1%).

# 4%

**Situation #2:**
Another business selling the same widgets has relatively low website traffic (500 visitors per month) but their website and marketing focus are much stronger. The end result is that they gain 20 inquiries from their 500 website visitors (4%).

These companies are both getting the same amount of inquiries every month — but they're seeing drastically different metrics (same output, different input).

At this point, it's important to understand what your goals are, what your conversion rate is, and what your resources are like. Again, it's the bigger picture you're looking for — how does everything fit together and does it make sense for your company?

## So, what now?

When it comes to your IT marketing analytics, this is just the tip of the iceberg. There's much more to consider in the realm of marketing numbers and metrics. But if you're going to leave with anything, it should be this:

Review your analytics and replace (or verify) your instincts with data. Never forget to measure the results against your goals and always remember to look for the big picture.

After all, marketing is a puzzle, and it's your job to put the pieces together.

**CHECK IT OUT**

If you're looking to up your analytics game, go to **page 86** for a list of apps that can help you out!

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 10:

# ENSURE SALES FOLLOW-UP

In collaboration with:

**TREND MICRO**

You've reviewed your data and adjusted your tactics.

You're doing great!

Now it's time to focus on the sales aspect of your leads. You've got them coming in, after all. When monitoring your marketing, you notice that people have been opening your emails and they've been reading your content. Repeatedly, even.

Not too shabby.

But here's the tricky part – how do you *really* know if they're opening your emails with any intent to buy? Are they just compulsive clickers? Are they just passing information along?

You know, there's only one way to **find out**.

You need to reach out to them and work those sales prospecting muscles.

## Reach out and "touch" someone

When someone clicks on content piece, you've got mere hours of sweet spot time to contact them. After 24 hours, that click becomes old news. They've probably already forgotten whatever made them click.

In short, you've got to act fast if you want to effectively follow up on a lead.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

An analysis of more than 2,200 American companies found those who attempted to reach leads within an hour were nearly seven times likelier to have meaningful conversations with decision makers than those who waited even 60 minutes.

When you reach out to someone, be direct and polite in your tone. So if you're on your best behavior, does that mean they'll definitely contact you back?

**Nope**. It's not guaranteed.

As a sales prospecting best practice, you'll want to call your prospect to establish a more intimate relationship. If they don't pick up, send a follow up email offering your assistance.

It's a valuable 1-2 punch that covers all your bases.

## They're listening. Now what?

Holy moly. They *actually* responded to you, and now they want to hear what you have to say.

This is your big moment.

You don't need to sell the prospect everything you've got. In fact, you don't really need to sell them anything at all. It's not a binary system – don't look at it as sold or not sold. Even having them respond to you is a huge win. This is a relationship you are starting.

First impressions are important. So, always have a plan when you contact your leads.

Start by giving them some basic information. That includes:

- **Why you're calling them**. You know why you're contacting them, so tell them exactly why you're calling them. The truth is that you're calling to see if they have any questions. Put the focus on them, and you'll come off as helpful – not salesy.

- **How you can help them**. Again, you don't need to walk away with a multi-million dollar deal on the first call. You just want to let them know that you're their go-to resource when they need more information on whatever topic they want to learn more about.

- **What you want from them**. It's good to be direct here – you don't want to be a sly dog in your approach. They know you're in sales, but that doesn't make you annoying unless you make yourself annoying. Seek permission to follow up in the future to help them out.

**DON'T GIVE UP!**

It takes an average of 18 calls to connect with a buyer.

## Wait… where did they go?

If your prospects are responding to you, you're in good shape.

But what if they aren't?

It doesn't make sense from an analytics perspective. You've been following a prospect's activities closely, and they've been super-engaged with everything you've delivered related to network security.

On paper, they are your biggest fans. They read all your stuff, they open all your emails, and they love clicking on each and every newsletter article link.

You're confident, so you call them (no response) and send a follow-up email.

And yet, your calls and emails go unanswered.

What do you do?

Naturally, you need to keep following up. But it's important to know the distinction between being **persistent** and being **obsessively** annoying.

**FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES**

Reach out 4-8 times before moving on.

If you're getting snubbed from your prospect, and you've tried just about everything … consider sending them a breakup (or "take away") email. This email essentially says "Hey, I tried. You're busy, I'm busy – it simply wasn't meant to be."

While it may seem counterintuitive, it's actually a fantastic way of jolting a response out of a prospect.

## The point of all the sales prospecting

The end goal of all these follow-ups is for you to close a deal.

In theory, it's simple. In practice, it's not.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Nurtured leads produce, on average, a 20% increase in sales opportunities versus non-nurtured leads.

The reason you need to be careful with your sales practices is that you need to establish a relationship with your potential clients. Gone are the days of the cold-calling, slick-haired, devil-tongued businessman with a car phone, a wink and a cheap suit.

We're kind of sad to see it go. Not the tactics – just the fashion.

The fact of the matter is that the marketing of **today's digital economy** revolves around helpful inbound marketing. It's focused on helping *you*, and not doing what's most profitable for me. When you build a relationship with your clients, you're far more likely to win their business.

To sum it all up: you'll get amazing results with your sales if you align your sales strategy to match your marketing.

**CHECK IT OUT**

Struggling to write a breakup email? Go to **page 87** to view our template with a few choices.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IT MARKETING STEP 11:

# HOLD EVERYONE ACCOUNTABLE

In collaboration with: **TREND MICRO**™

Few things get in the way of productivity like excuses. That's true whether you're talking about your marketing strategy, training for a 5K, or finally finishing that DIY project you've been working on for the last 6 months.

If you're making excuses, you're not making progress.

Excuses can thrive in a team environment. Everyone feels a sense of responsibility and no one wants to be left with the blame if things go wrong. But the problem is you can't make excuses and move toward solutions at the same time.

The success of your marketing strategy is a time-sensitive thing. If you hit a snag, it's far more important to find a solution and move on than to dole out blame or make excuses.

So how do you handle accountability?

## Why accountability matters

By its very nature, accountability opens the door for excuses and blame. If you hold your team's feet to the fire to ensure your marketing strategy is a success, someone will inevitably respond to that accountability with either an excuse or an attempt to shift blame.

Some leaders just drill down, forcing their team to identify the person at fault. That's a bad, bad call. It will completely destroy the energy and passion needed for a successful marketing strategy. Other leaders avoid accountability so the issue of blame never comes up. Also a huge mistake.

Accountability matters because the only way to turn your marketing strategy into a well-oiled, lead-generating machine is to make sure everyone's doing their part. Said another way, you don't want team members to slack off, and you don't want them to waste time pointing fingers, either.

Here's how you pull that off.
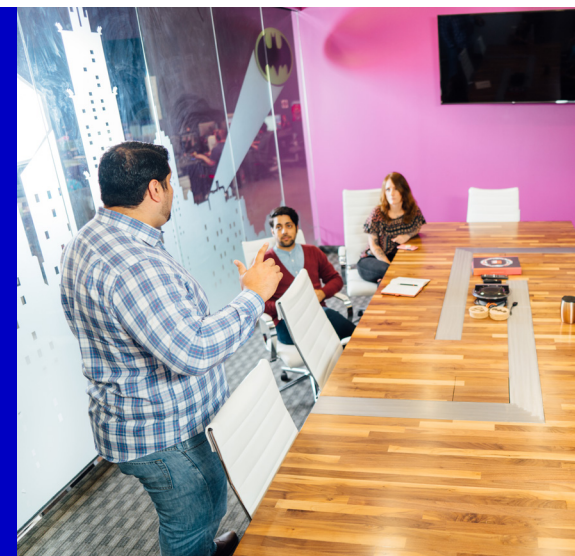
## Promises, promises

Promises are good, provided that everyone on your team knows exactly what they are committing to.

At each stage of planning, implementing, reviewing and revising your marketing strategy, go out of your way to make it crystal clear who's doing what. We're serious.

End every marketing meeting with a recap. Go over all action items, including the point person for each task, the due date, any other team members who will provide support, and the targeted outcome.

Do that with your internal team and with any external vendors or partners.

If you're used to being a little more casual, that may sound nit-picky. It's not. Give it 2-3 meetings, and you'll fall in love with this kind of communication. Everyone will know what's going on and what they're responsible for.

If someone drops the ball, *they'll know it*. They all know what's expected of them. There's no need to berate anyone, and there's really no reason for them to give excuses.

Just get things back on track and keep moving.

## Document KPIs

In step 2, we covered KPIs. KPIs serve as a gauge for the success of your marketing strategy. If you're hitting your KPIs, you're in the clear. You have goals, and your performance lines up with them.

But if you're not hitting your KPIs—well, then it's time to make some changes.

Of course, the only way to know if your marketing strategy is meeting your KPIs is to document and check in with your KPIs. It seems obvious, but you'd be surprised how many marketing teams forget this critical step.

Then one of two things happens. Either marketing efforts don't really achieve anything but everyone *feels good* about them, so no one notices. Or the marketing strategy achieves the stated goals, but no one realizes it and there's absolutely no celebration.

Both will suck the life right out of your marketing team. And undermine your goals.

So track your KPIs. When you don't meet them, huddle the team and have a productive conversation about what went wrong—so you can adjust and correct course. Steer clear of blame and bat away excuses. Make sure everyone knows you're not looking to blast anyone.

Instead, you're trying to help the team to adjust and get things back to where they should be.

## What to listen for

When you talk to your marketing team, there are some key things to listen for to know if they get the whole accountability thing. You'll know they're making the kind of adjustments they need to be making if you hear the following responses to common marketing activity issues.

### When your email open rates are low . . .

Your email open rate refers to how many people open the marketing emails you send out. In theory, this translates to how many people actually read (or at least start reading) emails. The subject line for marketing emails is often the tipping point.

A good subject line makes it far more likely that someone will open and start to read an email.

So if your open rates are low, you want to hear your marketing team say something like, "We're going to A/B test subject lines to improve open rates."

### When your email click-through rates are low . . .

Email click-through rates indicate how many people click a link (usually a CTA of some kind) in marketing emails. If no one clicks through, your emails are failing to set you up for conversion.

Click-through rates (CTRs) are dependent on open rates. People aren't going to click links in emails they haven't opened. But once the email is open, design and content determine whether a recipient is compelled to click on a link.

Low click-through rates usually mean there's an issue with design and/or copy.

So if your click-through rates are low, you want to hear your marketing team say something like, "We'll make adjustments to the copy/design to make the content more appealing."

### When the bounce rate on your website is high . . .

When someone goes to a website, the hope is they'll stay on the website for a while. If they show up and immediately leave, in marketing terms, they "bounced." A high bounce rate means folks are leaving soon after arriving.

All kinds of things can contribute to a high bounce rate. It could be the copy. Or the design. Or the layout. Maybe people just don't like that your contact form is at the end of the page. Or the beginning of the page. It's hard to say. But there's an easy way to find out.

On-page analytics, especially heat maps, can help. Heat maps show where a visitor's cursor goes while they're on the page, as well as how far down into the copy they scroll. Using that information, you can typically tell where a visitor bailed.

So if your bounce rates are high, you want to hear your marketing team say something like, "We'll dig into the on-page analytics and heat maps to figure out why people are leaving."

## When attendance at your events is low . . .

Events are usually easy to fill. If you have a good venue, a fun activity (like a movie), and clear communication, it's easy to hit capacity. So when there's poor attendance, that's a problem.

Like high bounce rates, there's a lot that can contribute to poor attendance at events. But unlike bounce rates, there's no easy, automated way to analyze attendance. Instead, you have to roll up your sleeves and have actual conversations with actual people.

You should always invite at least 2-3 solid, long-term clients to every event you have, even if you're targeting prospects. Invite people you know will show up . . . and who you know will give you candid feedback. When an event doesn't go well, turn to these people first.

Ask what they liked and what they didn't like. Ask how other events have been better. Ask what they would change about the poorly attended event if they could. That feedback is your best shot at isolating the problem.

So if attendance at an event is low, you want to hear your marketing team say something like, "We're reaching out to some key clients to get their feedback."

## When closing rates are low . . .

When your marketing strategy generates leads, you should be closing deals. If you're getting leads but no new sales, there's an issue.

This is one place where things can easily get sticky. Often, the issue at this point is a sales issue—either a lack of follow-up or a lack of sales skills. Neither is fun to address.

We love salespeople. Successful salespeople are among the most talented, driven, innovative, creative and hard-working people in the workforce. That said, there are some common excuses to watch for when dealing with sales.

The biggest one is this: the leads suck.

> You should always invite at least 2-3 solid, long-term clients to every event you have, even if you're targeting prospects.

Leads are leads. Some are hot and some are cold. All of them can be worked, and all of them have the potential to turn into deals. If you're getting a steady flow of leads, hot or cold, but nothing's closing, you need to hold your salespeople accountable.

Don't allow for finger-pointing. Instead, talk about follow-up and follow-through. With the right kind of sales activity, you should see new deals closing.

So if your closing rates are low, you want to hear your sales team say something like, "We'll do a better job of following up on every lead ASAP—even if we think the lead sucks."

### Keep things positive

Accountability done right requires finesse. Hold people accountable with precision and care, not with a sledgehammer.

You don't want anyone to feel like they're not valued. Instead, you want to position yourself as someone who's on their side, ready to support them, and committed to overall success for the sake of the team.

Focus on solutions, not problems. Focus on the root cause, not blame. Focus on improvement, not lack of performance.

Strong, empathetic accountability can turn an entire marketing strategy around and pull a team closer together. That's what you're shooting for. To help out with that, feel free to download our free resource below. It's a quick recap of how to handle the five common accountability situations we discussed above.

Use accountability to *build your team up*. This is a key ingredient for ongoing success with your marketing strategy.

**CHECK IT OUT**
Want success with your marketing strategy? Go to to check out the Accountability Guide.

# DON'T GIVE UP

In collaboration with: **TREND MICRO**™

The marketing one-night stand.

It's a thing. Seriously.

And it's ruining business owners everywhere.

But what exactly is a marketing one-night stand?

## It's exactly what you think it is … but not.

When it comes to IT marketing, there's this unrealistic expectation that fame is fast, traffic is inevitable, and success is guaranteed.

But that's not necessarily true. And when business owners realize this, they're quick to ditch their marketing strategy and give up completely.

We're here to make sure that doesn't happen.

Marketing takes years to get right, and it's really no different than building an effective sales team or service delivery department.

You need goals, processes, a strategy, KPIs, a team, and so on …

But more than anything, marketing is about time, patience, and dedication. Without those three things, you probably won't see the results you're hoping for.

## Okay, okay … but seriously, how long does it take?

There is no hard and fast number when it comes to IT marketing and the time it takes to see results.

And really, the only thing we can tell you is that it just depends.

HOWEVER, there are benchmarks.

For example, Fractl says that on-site content marketing should start to deliver results within six months (this includes blogging, whitepapers, case studies, and traditional website content).

Off-site content marketing, on the other hand, takes about six to 12 months (this includes awareness campaigns, off-site blogging, etc.).

In other words, you need to wait *at least* six months to decide whether your marketing is working.

But we're about to hit you with another however …

## 6 months or 6 years … it is what you make it.

That's right. It could take six years for you to see any results. Then again, it could take six weeks.

(And no, it won't ever take six days. That's just ridiculous.)

Sure, you need time, patience, and dedication — but the amount of effort you put forth will also have a big impact on whether or not you're successful.

In fact, Search Engine Journal says this:
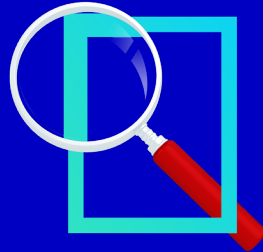
**DID YOU KNOW?**
100 unique organic visits daily in almost any niche topic can be acquired in about three to four months.

That's a lot of traffic for anyone, especially for a managed service provider. But for that to happen (and in less than six months), there's a lot of work involved.

SEJ says there are four main steps involved in this:

- **Quantity** — you must create a lot of content (at least more content than your competition is creating)
- **Quality** — you must create content that is valuable, timeless, and relevant (but also SEO-friendly and strategic)
- **Consistency** — you must update your content often (or at least as often as your competition updates their content)
- **Longevity** — you must keep at it and not give up (or at least keep at it longer than your competition keeps at it)

You probably get the point. You need a lot of good content, consistently and for a long time. But you only need to be ahead of your competition. Not every site ever created.
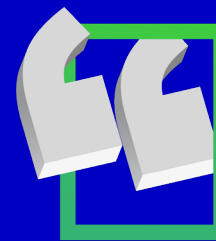
> Do a search on the keyword phrase that is important for your campaign to find out who comes up number one. Visit that site and count how many pages the website you want to beat has on that keyword phrase. Now, do more pages/posts, relevant and focused about that keyword phrase on your website than your competitor does and you will eventually beat them in the SERPs." — SEJ

## But why just the competition?

Well, we're glad you asked.

Every industry is different. Every target market is different. Every tilt is different. Every geographic location is different.

You don't have all the time, money, and resources in the world to go full beast mode on marketing 100% of the time. And luckily, you don't have to.

That is, unless your competition does.

You need to be strategic. You need to do your research. And you need to understand what your goals are.

If your goal is to rank #1 for the search term "Cloud computing in Dallas," then you first need to figure out who's currently ranking for that. Take a look at their page, examine it from top to bottom, and start from there.

However, if your goal isn't to rank anywhere on Google but instead to receive 1,000 unique visitors every month with a conversion rate of 20%, your wires might be a little crossed.

How do you expect to get that many visitors every month without a solid presence on Google? Unless you're Gandalf
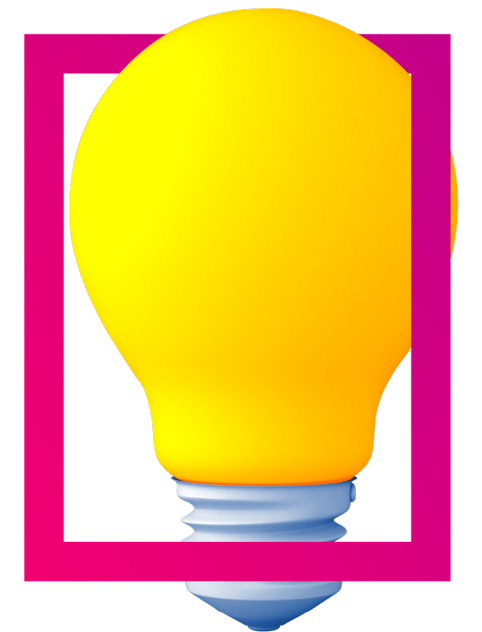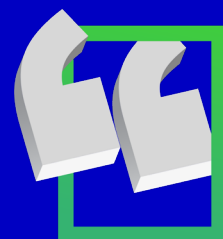
> "Crawling is the process where Googlebot goes around from website to website, finding new and updated information and reporting it back to Google." — SEO Mechanic

or you have a massive social media following (or both), that probably won't happen without some degree of SEO strategy.

However, if the latter is true, a byproduct of that will most likely be you rising in the ranks on Google.

## So what's the moral of the blog?

Don't give up. That is all.

Keep at it and knock off all those one-night stands. Understand that marketing requires time, patience, and dedication. If you don't have those three things, then you'll see no results.

But we believe in you, and we know you can do it. And if you ever need help, we're right here. Don't hesitate to reach out.

# NOTES

# YOUR IT MARKETING
# RESOURCES

How should you allocate your **IT marketing** resources?

Talented Marketers and Sales Team

Helpful, organic content

Time and Patience

IT Marketing Holy Trinity

PPC and Advertisements

Outsourced Marketing

Money and Effort

Notes:

**Story**Arc

Why
Goal
Challenge
Resolution
Outcome
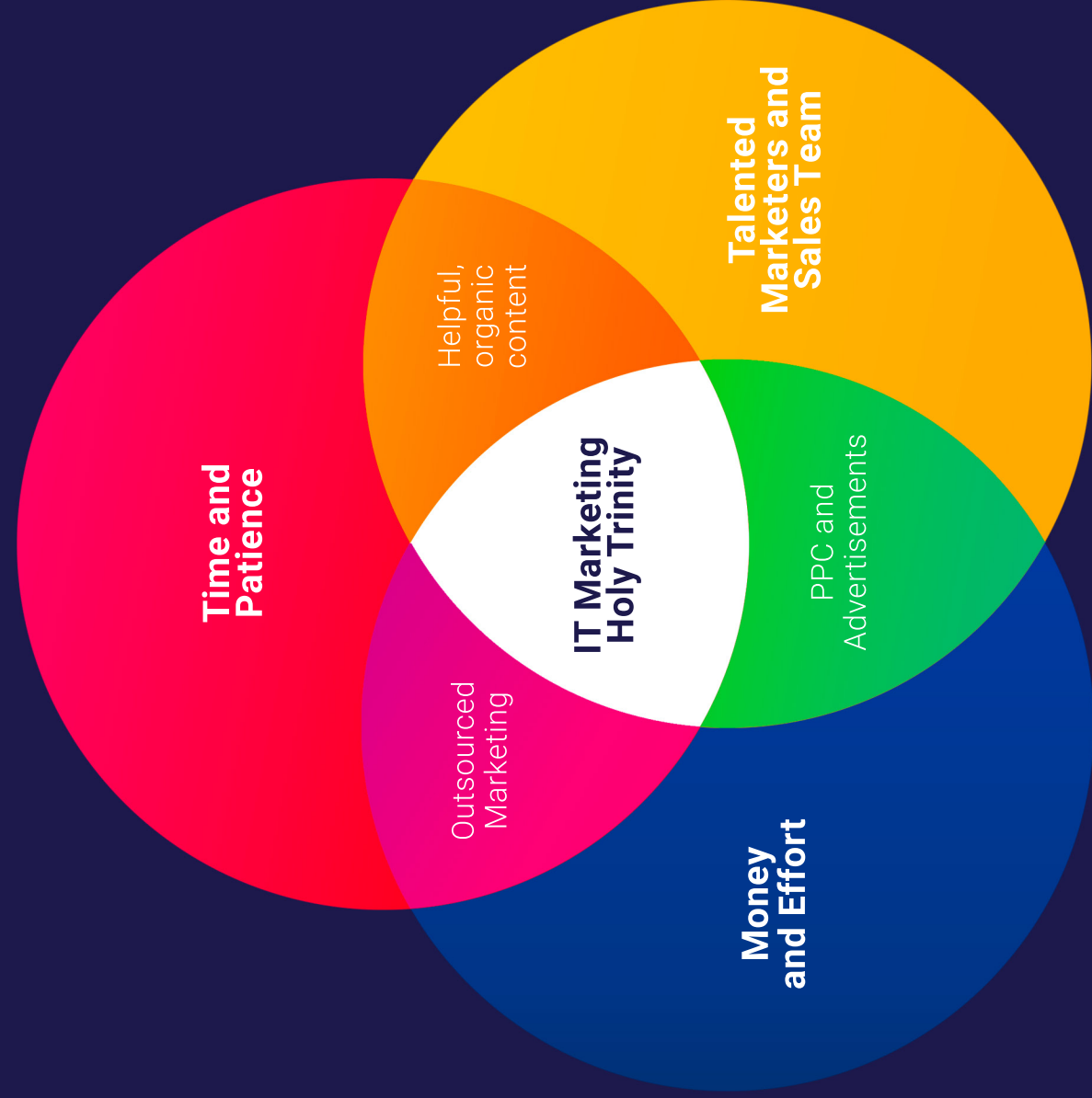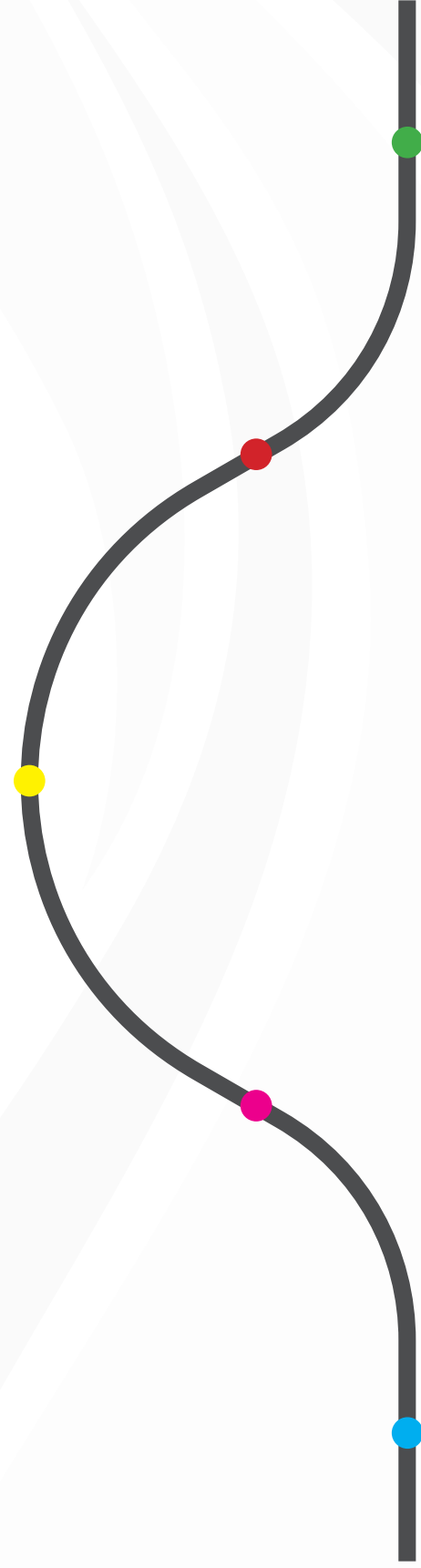
Notes:

# MOVIE EVENT CHECKLIST

## Before Event

☐ Week 1

**Call Agenda: Project Kick-Off Call**
- Overview client's role in event
  - Dedicated team at event:
    - Photo/video crew available
    - Social Media person available
- List expectations (sourcing/scrubbing)
- Event cost expectations ($8-$10k - may be more Cali/New York)
- MDF expectations
  - Current partners
  - Who they will be reaching out to
- Nail down 2-3 movie theaters
- Discuss options for characters at event

To-Dos:
- Start sourcing/scrubbing list (if needed)
- 2-3 movie theaters we will be reaching out to
- List of vendors we will be targeting
- Execute Creative Team Internal Meeting: copy, design, PM, CD
  - Create Theme
  - Define solution we will be targeting
- PM - Gather information from 2-3 theaters
- Internal Meeting - PM/CD to come up with best theater/options for client event

☐ Week 2

**Call Agenda: Theater/Theme Presentation Call**
- Present the best theater and options
- Review theme/solution for event

To-Dos:
- Sign movie theater contract
- Send initial payment to movie theater (if required)
- Approve event theme/solution
- PM - finalize payment and contract with client and theater
- PM - task out minimum deliverables
  - Usually 7 campaigns - tailored a bit to reflect urgency
    - General campaigns (2)
    - Urgency campaigns (2) - change the number each time (ex. 10 seats left then 5 seats left)
    - Auto-response campaign
    - Reminder campaign (1 day before event)
    - "Thank you" campaign + photos (sent to all who RSVP'd after event)
  - RSVP Landing Page
  - Follow-up blog with all photos (include in next newsletter) - *this should be tasked for after event*
  - Event Survey
  - MDF Sheet
  - Giveaways/swag (by request)

☐ Week 3

**Call Agenda: Deliverables Review Call**
- Deliverables currently in the queue
- Completion timeline for deliverables
  - "Minimum" deliverables should be completed by Week 4
  - Presentation Slide deck should be completed by Week 6 (if we receive copy by Week 5)
- Present timeline for go to market
- Discuss need for additional requests
  - Flyers
  - Banners
  - Table Cloths/Booths
  - Trailer Videos

To-Dos:
- Start reaching out to vendors - they will have the MDF sheet next week
- PM - Task out additional requests from this call with a completion date of Week 7

☐ Week 4

**Call Agenda: Marketing Kick-Off Call**

☐ • How people will be registering
☐ • Who on the client side gets notified of registrants
☐ • What the prospects will be seeing when they RSVP (auto-responder)
☐ • How to follow-up with the first 2 "general" campaigns
    ▪ Qualifying RSVPs (wait list if necessary)
    ▪ Reminding prospects to bring an ID to sign in

To-Dos:

☐ • Send MDF sheet and other deliverables to vendors and encourage relationship
☐ • Make sure all "minimum" deliverables are complete and scheduled

☐ Week 5

**Call Agenda: Slide Deck Brainstorm**

☐ • Ideas for slide deck
☐ • What they would like to get across to prospective clients
☐ • What we've seen in the past
☐ • What they can expect
☐ • How much time they have
☐ • When we need copy from client

To-Dos:

☐ • Send copy for slide deck
☐ • Sales Team - Start following up on RSVPs
☐ • PM - Start Marketing Efforts

☐ Week 6

**Call Agenda: Sales Follow-up Efforts**

☐ • Where are we with RSVPs
☐ • What's coming up next?

To-Dos:

☐ • Sales Team - Follow up on RSVPs
☐ • Complete slide deck

☐ Week 7

**Call Agenda: Sales "Urgent" Follow-up Efforts**

☐ • Where are we with RSVPs
☐ • What's coming up next?
☐ • What do we need to fill up the event?
☐ • Plan of action to increase urgency
☐ • How to follow-up with the 2 "urgent" campaigns

To-Dos:

☐ • Sales Team - Follow up on RSVPs
☐ • PM - Ensure any additional requested deliverables are complete

☐ Week 8

**Call Agenda: Marketing/Follow-up Check-point**

☐ • Where are we with RSVPs
☐ • What's coming up next?
☐ • What do we need to fill up the event?

To-Dos:

☐ • Sales Team - Follow up on RSVPs

☐ Week 9

**Call Agenda: Movie Theater/Client Intro**

☐ • Set up time for them to go tour before event and test AV setup
☐ • Iron out day-of details

☐ Week 10

**Call Agenda: Last-minute Preparations**

☐ • Answer last-minute questions
☐ • Remind client of anything that needs to be done before event

☐ Week 11

**Call Agenda: Event Run-through**

☐ • Have client run through their speech for the event
☐ • Confirm they have the deliverables ready for event

- Survey
- Pens
- Brochure
- Swag
  - Explain how surveys work
  - Dry run-through of whole event (start to finish)
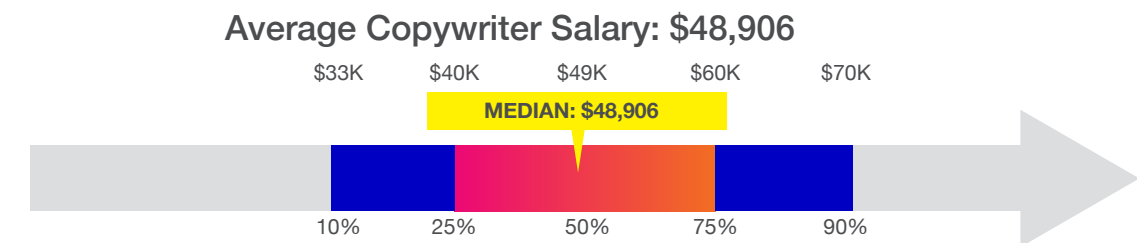
☐ Week 12
**EVENT WEEK**

## After Event

☐ Week 13

**Call Agenda: Sales Follow-Up Progress**
- Review how leads are turning out
- Post-event results
- Overview of experience
- Client satisfaction survey
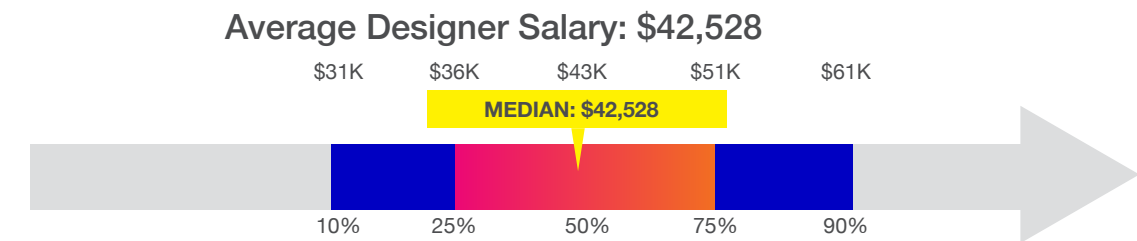
# THE COST OF 3 CRITICAL IT MARKETING POSITIONS

## Copywriter

The voice of the operation. Responsible for creating the written marketing content and curating your organization's tone.
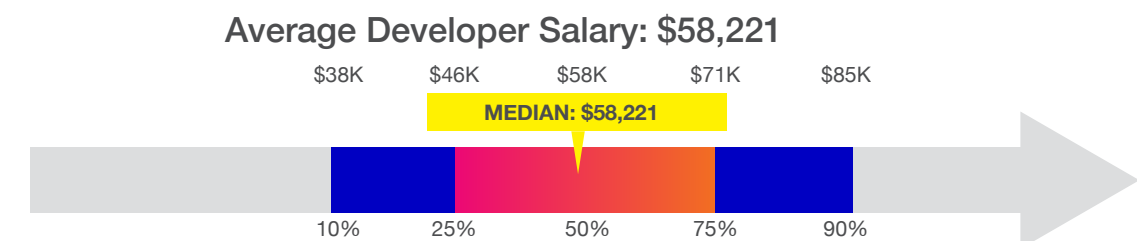
**Average Copywriter Salary: $48,906**

| $33K | $40K | $49K | $60K | $70K |

**MEDIAN: $48,906**

10% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 90%

## Designer

The visual form and function. Responsible for crafting art that keeps the brand consistent and draws user attention.

**Average Designer Salary: $42,528**

| $31K | $36K | $43K | $51K | $61K |

**MEDIAN: $42,528**

10% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 90%

## Developer

The animator and UX specialist. Responsible for keeping everything secure and operational.

**Average Developer Salary: $58,221**

| $38K | $46K | $58K | $71K | $85K |

**MEDIAN: $58,221**

10% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 90%

# SAMPLE COPYWRITER JOB DESCRIPTION

**JOB SUMMARY**
We are looking for new, energetic and experienced writing talent to join **[Company]**. We have a fast-paced work environment where individuals are recognized and rewarded for their contribution.

For the Marketing Copywriter at **[Company]**, the story is king! Everything we do revolves around our story. Your job is to work closely with the marketing strategist to tell our story creatively, technically, and most importantly, effectively, using marketing best practices.

Responsibilities for this position include brainstorming, sourcing, executing, and transforming ideas into written and spoken content for blogs, marketing campaigns and website content – along with whatever else we may need to position our brand and generate lead results.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**
- Organize and write compelling content for our blogs, emails, whitepapers, website content, and eBooks using marketing and company best practices
- Write persuasive copy for core content and campaigns to generate qualified leads
- Research and understand the technology behind our solutions and services
- Determine what makes technology services appealing to target businesses
- Develop unique concepts and story ideas
- Conceive, develop and produce effective marketing email campaigns
- Incorporate SEO optimization principles for client content
- Revise, edit, and proofread content for message, grammar and spelling
- Work within tight deadlines and meet production schedules
- Adjust campaigns to change effectiveness and meet monthly lead quotas
- Collaborate with various team members to complete projects on time

**DESIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**
- Business-to-Business marketing experience in copywriting
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills
- A team player comfortable in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment
- Good research and development skills
- Time management skills

**BENEFITS**
- To be determined by **[Company]**

**COMPANY DESCRIPTION**
- To be determined by **[Company]**

# SAMPLE GRAPHIC DESIGN INTERN DESCRIPTION

**JOB SUMMARY**
We want some new blood to come work for **[Company]**. We have a fast and fun work environment where individuals are rewarded for their contribution.

We're looking for a motivated Graphic Design Intern to join our team. We need someone who will take initiative and help us further our IT marketing and our brand.

Our interns are chosen based on portfolios, merit, and ability to work in a fast-paced design department. Daily interactions with both copywriters, marketing strategists, and other people within the company will offer our interns real-life exposure and insight into web design, marketing collateral design, email design, and content creation.

Our goal for this internship position is to give the candidate the opportunity to work on real-world projects and generate leads for the client (that's us!).

**REQUIRED EDUCATION**
Junior- or Senior-level college students currently enrolled in a graphic design, 3D animation, media arts, or related field.

**REQUIRED SKILLS**
- Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop
- Ability to take direction

**TASK AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**
- Design of a variety of projects including emails, websites, logos and printed materials
- Create work that demonstrates a strong sense of typography, layout and composition
- Develop best practices for graphic operations
- Prepare files for print and web production
- Think creatively and share ideas

**OUR IDEAL CANDIDATE HAS**
- Currently enrolled in a related study program (Graphic Design at a recognized college)
- Strong computer proficiency including WordPress, Microsoft Office, emails, and more
- Strong time management skills and overall prudence in for the completion of tasks
- Ability to complete projects independently
- Photoshop and illustrator experience a must

**COMPANY DESCRIPTION**
- To be determined by **[Company]**

# SAMPLE WEB DEVELOPER DESCRIPTION

**JOB SUMMARY**

We want some new blood to come work for **[Company]**. We have a fast and fun work environment where individuals are rewarded for their contribution.

We're looking for a motivated Web Developer to join our team. We need someone who will take initiative and help us further our IT marketing and our brand.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**
- Develop and maintain [Specific Web Platform] websites and hosting
- Collaborate with design and copy to assure all marketing material meets developed standards and consistency
- Interface with users and answer any questions or concerns they may have.

**REQUIRED SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE**
- A passion for learning
- Good understanding of front-end technologies, including HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, jQuery
- Intermediate knowledge of [Specific Web Platform]
- Minimal understanding of PHP back-end development
- Basic knowledge of Photoshop
- Basic knowledge of web development best practices

**DESIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**
- Good verbal and written communications skills
- A team player willing to work in a fast pace environment
- Great customer service skills
- Time management skills
- Ability to take constructive criticism

**BENEFITS**
- To be determined by **[Company]**

**COMPANY DESCRIPTION**
- To be determined by **[Company]**

# MARKETING TOOLS FOR YOUR COMPANY

## THESE RESOURCES CAN HELP YOUR TEAM BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS.

### Google Analytics, website traffic

Review monthly users, new users, page duration, page views, average duration, and more.

www.analytics.google.com

### Crazyegg, heat mapping

See where your visitors are coming from, where they're clicking, what their journey looked like, and how far they make it down your page.

www.crazyegg.com

### Campaign Monitor, email analytics

Review open and click-thru rates, know exactly who opens your emails, and A/B test your email campaigns.

www.campaignmonitor.com

### Buffer, social media

Understand how many people click on your social media posts, how much traction you're receiving every month, and which content is working.

www.buffer.com

### Sprout Social, social media

Benefit from advanced social listening, hashtag analysis, trend reports, and more.

www.sproutsocial.com/small-business

# BREAKUP EMAIL TEMPLATES

## Version 1: The Ever-helpful

Hi [Sales Prospect],

We've fallen out of touch. Last time we spoke, I asked about your interest in [solution] and if I could you get you additional information.

Do you need any help with something else? If not, let me know and I'll stop reaching out.

Best,
You

## Version 2: The Holier-than-thou

Hi [Sales Prospect],

I'm cleaning up my sales list and I saw that I still have you listed. I haven't really heard from you in a while. I'm guessing you're probably busy or you're no longer interested.

If you need any additional information on [solution], please don't hesitate to ask.

Otherwise, let me know and I'll remove you from the list.

Best,
You

# HOW TO HOLD YOUR MARKETING TEAM ACCOUNTABLE FOR KEY ACTIVITES

### When your email open rates are low...

| WHAT'S WRONG | THE FIX | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| Recipients aren't opening your marketing emails. | You need better, more compelling subject lines. | "We're going to A/B test subject lines to improve open rates." |

### When your email click-through rates are low ...

| WHAT'S WRONG | THE FIX | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| Recipients aren't clicking on links in your marketing emails. | You need better, more compelling design and/or copy. | "We'll make the copy/design content more appealing." |

### When the bounce rate on your website is high ...

| WHAT'S WRONG | THE FIX | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| People are leaving your website quickly without engaging. | You need to determine where you're losing visitors. | "We'll dig into the on-page analytics and heat maps." |

### When attendance at your events is low...

| WHAT'S WRONG | THE FIX | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| Your events are poorly attended. | You need to determine why people aren't coming. | "We're asking key clients for their candid feedback." |

### When closing rates are low ...

| WHAT'S WRONG | THE FIX | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| Your sales team isn't closing deals. | You need better, more consistent sales activity. | "We'll follow up on absolutely every lead ASAP." |

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