

The background of the entire page is a blurred, light blue-toned photograph of three business professionals in a meeting. In the foreground, there are several documents with colorful bar charts and a pen resting on them. The overall aesthetic is professional and modern.

A CEO'S GUIDE TO MODERN MARKETING

**UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIC MARKETING
PILLARS THAT CAN DRIVE YOUR GROWTH**



You've decided you're ready to drive your business's growth by embarking on a strategic marketing effort. But getting started can feel overwhelming.

How do we decide what to do? What marketing approaches are best for our business? Who can make this all happen? How will we measure results?

This guide helps answer those questions, and more. It explains the five pillars of modern marketing – an approach designed to drive a measurable return on your marketing investment (ROI) using a mix of digital/online and other channels. These pillars are the essential components of a strategic marketing program that generates warm leads, engages customers, and accelerates growth.

WHY IS MARKETRI THE RIGHT SOURCE FOR A GUIDE TO MODERN MARKETING?

As a strategic marketing company, it's our job to know about everything that goes into effective marketing: the methodologies, planning approaches, technologies, measures, and more. That deep knowledge enables us to develop highly customized marketing programs that accelerate our clients' growth. By selecting the right pieces of the marketing puzzle, and optimizing how we put them together, we create strategic marketing programs that drive our clients' success.

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MARKETING METHODOLOGIES

There are many methods for approaching your marketing. These are the most common methodologies B2B companies use today.

INBOUND MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

Like a magnet, inbound marketing pulls leads toward your company by ensuring you're present where your buyers spend their time. It starts with conducting research to understand your typical buyer, then uses those insights to tailor your content to their interests and intent. With inbound marketing, the buyer initiates the first contact with your company and chooses where and when it happens. Typical inbound marketing activities include:

- Blog posts
- Social media posts
- Paid search ads
- Opt-in e-newsletters

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

Because inbound marketing content tends to stay relevant for a long time (also known as "evergreen"), it can continue to generate leads long after the content is first posted. It's an especially good approach to use when you're well-informed about your buyer. Done well, inbound marketing becomes a machine for generating a steady stream of qualified leads.



OUTBOUND MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

Outbound marketing takes a "push" approach, pushing messages out to buyers. It's typically used when you don't know much about the buyer or whether they have interest in your product/service. With outbound marketing, your company initiates the first contact and decides where and when it happens. Typical outbound marketing activities include:

- Paid print, TV or radio ads
- E-mail blasts to a purchased list
- Cold calls

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

If you're just at the point of generating awareness and you want to attract buyers to opt-in to your inbound marketing, then outbound marketing can be a viable approach in the short term. But keep in mind: when the ads and cold calls stop, so do the leads. That makes outbound marketing less sustainable and more expensive than other approaches. Since it's not highly targeted, it's also difficult to tailor the content to your buyers, the percentage of leads that become buyers isn't very high, and results can be tough to track.



DIGITAL MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

Digital marketing encompasses any marketing that happens online or electronically, including websites, email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing (which can be paid or unpaid/organic).

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

Because most people spend a lot of time online, digital marketing is one of the most common marketing methodologies used today, suitable for any B2B company.

It tends to be more targeted, more cost-effective, faster to execute, easier to scale, and more conducive to tracking your results and ROI as compared to non-digital marketing. If you use it in tandem with marketing analytics (explained on page X), you can pinpoint which buyers to target based on their online behavior and you can reach them at the point they're ready to take action, boosting your results.

ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

Account-based marketing targets specific prospects that fit a certain profile and uses personalized campaigns to reach them. First you define what your ideal buyer looks and acts like; then you identify specific accounts that fit this profile and categorize them into tiers. Account-based marketing usually targets prospects that have already expressed interest in your product/service.

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

Account-based marketing can be especially effective for bigger-ticket sales involving multiple decision makers, and it has the potential for a large payoff. But it can be a costly, lengthy undertaking because it requires highly customized content, close alignment with the sales team, and an investment in marketing technology. It's only viable when you have enough intelligence about your target accounts to personalize your content in a way that truly resonates with them.

CONTENT MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

You may have heard the phrase, "content is king." That's because content marketing has the power to generate qualified leads, making it an increasingly important methodology for B2B companies. Content marketing involves developing written subject matter your customers and prospects want to hear about and sharing that content on different platforms (usually unpaid). Effective types of content include:

- Blogs
- Infographics
- White papers
- Guides
- Case studies
- Webinars

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

Content marketing is a great technique for generating awareness of your product/service and improving your search engine rankings, drawing in more leads. Good content creates a pathway from the buyer's symptoms or problems to your solutions. And it positions your company as an expert in the minds of buyers, engendering their trust and improving the odds they'll buy from you. When you gate some of your content – requiring prospects to provide their contact information before you make the content accessible – you can generate a list of leads to continually reach out to and nurture.

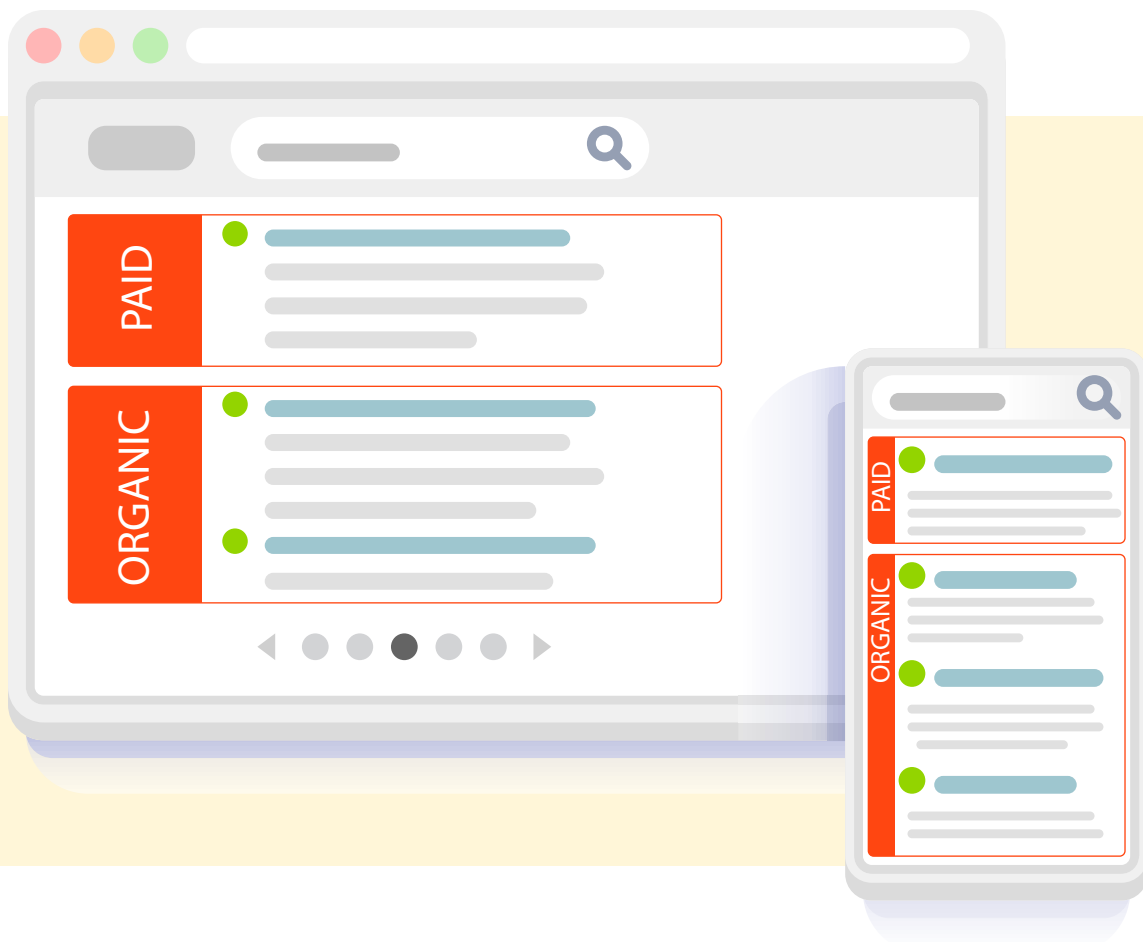
SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

WHAT IT IS:

Search engine marketing (SEM) is paid Internet advertising that's based on a particular search keyword or phrase. (It's different from search engine optimization or SEO, which uses unpaid techniques to optimize your website so it ranks higher on Google and other search engines.) The goal of search engine marketing is to deliver an ad for your product/service when a buyer searches on a specific keyword or phrase, and then draw the buyer to your website for more details. Search engine marketing is typically priced based on how many people click on your ad, which is why it's often referred to as pay-per-click advertising.

WHY AND WHEN IT'S USEFUL:

When buyers are looking for a product or service, the first step is often an Internet search. They might search on a question ("what is the best software for expense tracking") or a product type ("expense tracking software"). Or if they're already aware of your brand they might search for your product by name. No matter how the search starts, search engine marketing helps ensure your ad shows up in the search results, driving traffic and leads to your website. If you use digital marketing, it's likely search engine marketing will be part of the mix.



STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING

A strategic marketing plan creates a path forward, ensuring your marketing activities support your business goals.

If you're like many business leaders, you may have a good handle on your business strategy and competitive position...but you might not have a strategic marketing plan. The benefits of having one are immeasurable.

A STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN:

- Enables clear decision-making – so you can develop focused marketing initiatives that align with your business goals and yield a high ROI
- Formalizes ideas and strategic opportunities – so you can turn concepts into actionable, achievable steps
- Establishes roles and responsibilities – so your team has the structure and roadmap to carry out marketing successfully

WHAT EXACTLY IS A STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN?

A strategic marketing plan lays out the marketing strategies and tactics you'll undertake to promote the right products/services to the right buyers at the right time. A strong strategic marketing plan can give you a competitive advantage, focus your resources, and drive high growth. It's ideal for growth-minded companies that are ready to differentiate themselves and willing to invest the resources to make it happen.

Your strategic marketing plan should be a living document that evolves as your goals change and as the business landscape shifts. It's not uncommon for the plan to incorporate parallel paths: scoring quick wins while laying the groundwork for longer-term growth in high-potential markets.

Developing a strategic marketing usually starts with these key questions:

- What are our strategic business goals?
- What initiatives and tactics will we use to achieve those goals?
- What markets can we best serve?
- What is the profile of our ideal customer (someone we would replicate 100 times over)?
- When should we roll out the plan?
- What should drive changes in the plan?
- How often should we revisit the plan?

Besides strategic marketing plans, there are other types of marketing plans that serve unique purposes.

TRACKING AND MEASURING YOUR MARKETING

NICHE MARKETING PLANS

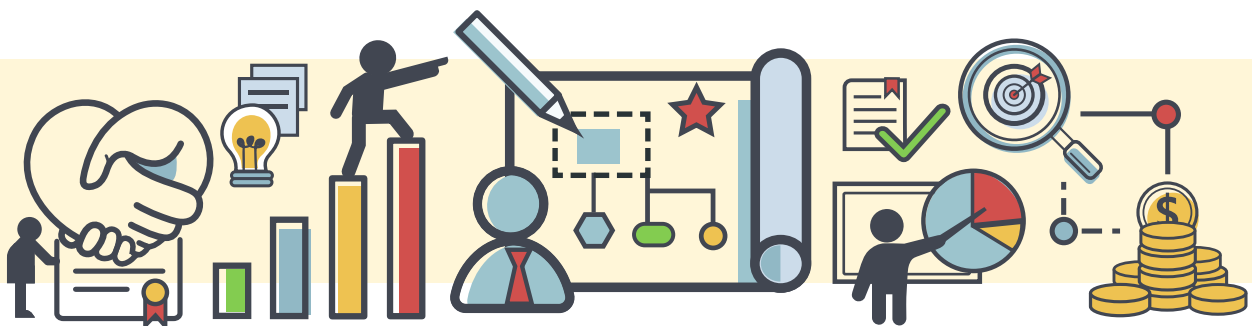
Niche Marketing Plans are useful when you want to move into a vertical or geographic market or expand into a new niche. It requires having the subject matter expertise to be positioned as a thought leader in your chosen area. A marketing consultant experienced in the vertical market or niche you're targeting can jump-start the process by leveraging their knowledge and streamlining the research and planning.

PRODUCT, SERVICE OR SOFTWARE LAUNCH PLANS

Product, Service or Software Launch Plans may be a fit when you're introducing a new offering or a new version of a product/service. An effective launch requires sufficient lead time and close coordination among the product, sales, and marketing teams.

MARKETING ACTION PLANS

Marketing Action Plans are best for smaller companies and those with limited growth goals. These plans typically don't involve setting strategy; instead, they're tactically focused, often around campaigns, and they leverage existing marketing technologies and infrastructure. A marketing action plan's short-term, tactical approach means it's likely to have a more limited impact on sales and revenue growth.



MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES

Technology is an essential underpinning of modern marketing. Here's a high-level look at some fundamental marketing technologies to consider.

WEBSITE

WHAT IT IS:

Your website is the foundation of your online presence. It's where prospects tend to learn the most about your company/product/service and it's often the first place for you to have a meaningful interaction. Your website must be easy to use, quick to load, and easy to view on digital devices. And it should be more than just informational; think of it as a 24/7 extension of your sales team.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

A well-developed website is a valuable lead generation tool, turning site visitors into leads that eventually become buyers. To support lead generation, your site should include some gated content – content you only make accessible after site visitors provide their contact information. And to drive traffic to your site, it should be optimized to rank high on Google and other search engines.

RESPONSIVE DESIGN

WHAT IT IS:

Responsive design is an approach to website design that ensures every page automatically displays well on different devices and screen sizes. Whether your buyers view your website on a phone, tablet, or desktop computer, and no matter what browser they use, responsive design makes sure every page displays correctly.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

If your site isn't responsive, you don't stand a chance of succeeding in the search world. Google now looks at your mobile site first when deciding what order to display search results, making responsive design a must. Approaching your website from a mobile-first perspective can avoid frustration on the part of buyers and help your site rank higher in searches.



MARKETING AUTOMATION

WHAT IT IS:

An effective marketing initiative will generate lots of leads. Marketing automation makes it easier to interact with those leads and move them along their journey to becoming buyers. A marketing automation platform enables you to set up workflows that guide what happens each time a lead takes an action in response to your marketing. There are many marketing automation platforms that remove the manual work and guesswork from the process, all varying in their ease of use and complexity. Hubspot is a good point of entry since it's relatively easy to use, while more robust options like Marketo are designed for enterprise-level use involving a large volume of workflows.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Automating your marketing campaign workflows ensures each lead receives the right message and is moved to right next step, and it helps you keep track of your leads throughout their journey. As marketing takes on more responsibility for generating warm leads to hand off to the sales team, marketing automation tools deliver valuable insights on where those leads are coming from, what they're interested in, and what messages have resonated with them. Rather than tie up a marketer's time manually managing the process, marketing automation handles it automatically. It takes some upfront work to map out workflows for each marketing campaign, but the effort is well worth the efficiency and effectiveness gained. If you're ready to queue up qualified leads and you have the content to drive traffic to your website, it's worth investing in marketing automation.

EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS

WHAT IT IS:

Email marketing tools serve a similar purpose as marketing automation platforms but focus only on managing email campaigns. They allow you to easily tailor the email subject line, content, visuals, and even the days of the week or times of day you distribute the email. You can also schedule different follow-up emails based on how each contact on your list responded (or didn't respond) to the initial email.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

If email marketing is part of your strategic plan, and you're not already using a broader marketing automation platform, then an email marketing tool is a must. It can help you manage your email marketing campaigns much more efficiently and effectively than you could manually.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TOOLS

WHAT IT IS:

If you're actively marketing on the many social media channels your buyers interact with, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, social media marketing tools can be a great help. There are many types, each with a unique purpose. Social listening tools tell you what content and hashtags are trending, what your competitors are posting online, and which channels your buyers are spending time on. Other social media marketing tools automate and streamline the task of scheduling and distributing posts through a central hub; measure how your audience feels about a topic and how they're reacting to it on social media; or report on each social channel side-by-side so you can compare results by channel.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Social media marketing tools make it easier to manage your social campaigns, track their results, and refine your approach accordingly. Which tool is best for you will depend on the maturity and complexity of your marketing. But whichever you choose, a social media marketing tool can help you assess how well your social strategy is working and take routine tasks off your marketing team's plate, allowing them to focus on more strategic functions.

KEYWORD AND SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) TOOLS

WHAT IT IS:

You want to be sure your website shows up high in search engine rankings when a buyer searches on keywords that are relevant to your product/service. Keyword and SEO tools help ensure that happens. Using tools like SEMrush or Moz, you can identify the keywords your buyers are searching for on Google and other search engines, find out how your site ranks on those keywords, and see how your competitors rank by comparison. Or you can choose a keyword you think may be relevant to your audience, then check your hypothesis.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

The insights you glean from keyword and SEO tools can directly impact your online lead generation. Based on the findings, you can tweak your website content and structure so that it ranks higher in search engine results, driving more organic (unpaid) traffic to your site. And you can ensure all your online content builds in the keywords that will drive buyers to your site for more information. As you map out a content schedule, keyword and SEO tools can serve as a great guide.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

WHAT IT IS:

When it comes to executing a strategic marketing plan, there are usually lots of moving parts. Project management tools bring structure and organization to all these tasks. Tools like Basecamp, Teamwork, and Asana provide a home base for organizing, scheduling, tracking, and assigning responsibility for the many tasks associated with a marketing initiative or campaign.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

When you devote resources to a marketing plan, you want to optimize those resources to achieve the best possible results. A marketing initiative that has multiple tasks can seem like an overwhelming effort, but the right project management tool makes it more manageable – and that ultimately yields better outcomes.



MARKETING TALENT

Putting your strategic marketing plan and your chosen marketing methodologies to work requires the right marketing talent.

There are three primary approaches to building your marketing talent: hiring in-house staff, outsourcing the marketing function to a third party, or using a hybrid approach that combines one or more in-house employees and the services of a third-party firm. Each approach has pros and cons.

IN-HOUSE MODEL

- A dedicated internal resource that knows your company culture
- Fixed overhead cost (no surprises, but you pay whether you need it or not)
- Perceived as being more accessible than a third-party firm (although the shift to remote work is changing this equation)
- Potentially high turnover due to a lack of career advancement
- Difficult to get the right level of talent (not too senior, not too junior)
- Usually a jack of all trades, master of none

OUTSOURCED MODEL

- A team of specialists that provide deep expertise and proven best practices
- Variable cost (easily scaled up/down as your needs change, but less predictable for budgeting)
- Perceived as less accessible than in-house staff (although evolving work models are changing this dynamic)
- Offsets the risk of internal turnover
- Easier to obtain the right level of talent to match your needs
- Familiar with the company culture, but not fully integrated into it

HYBRID MODEL

- A mix of external specialists with broad knowledge of best practices and internal resources embedded in the culture and readily accessible
- A balance of fixed and variable costs, combining budget flexibility and predictability
- Flexibility to scale up/down as your business needs change
- In-house resources can help outsourced talent navigate the internal landscape
- Provides built-in mentors for in-house marketers
- Potential for role confusion between in-house staff and outsourced firm

SO, WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

How you structure your marketing talent may evolve as your business and its needs change.

- Smaller companies with less aggressive growth goals tend to have a single in-house marketer who is tactically focused.
- Companies looking to drive strong growth often outsource, so they can tap an experienced marketer to guide the effort without taking on a full-time salary.
- At a certain size and scale, companies often move to a hybrid model – outsourcing strategy development and specialty functions while bringing tactical execution in-house.

MARKETING ANALYTICS

*You've set your marketing plan in motion. Now, how do you measure if it's working?
With the help of marketing analytics.*

WHAT IT IS:

At a high level, marketing analytics uses data to determine how your marketing is working and to measure its impact on the business. A subset of marketing analytics is customer analytics – using data to better understand different customer segments based on factors like their demographics, their needs, how they're engaging with you, and whether they're showing loyalty by renewing a service or buying more products.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

There was a time when it was tough to measure marketing results. But when you invest in a marketing initiative, you need to know how your efforts are working and what to adjust to improve your results. Using marketing analytics enables you to assess the impact your marketing strategies are having on your business and to refine your approach accordingly. Applying marketing analytics creates a cycle of continuous improvement, allowing you to:

- Plan your marketing
- Define your metrics
- Test different approaches
- Measure the results
- Learn from the results
- Apply what you learned as you repeat the process

HOW TO USE IT:

Employing marketing analytics starts with defining what you want to accomplish. Besides an overarching goal like driving revenue growth, you might have other marketing goals, like improving brand awareness or generating more leads. Once you identify your goals, you develop key performance indicators (KPIs) – the metrics you'll use to measure whether you're achieving your goals.

WHEN TO USE IT:

Growth-minded companies use marketing analytics to evaluate their marketing at every stage.

- For high-level branding campaigns aimed at building awareness, you might use marketing analytics to measure how often your brand is mentioned on social media or how often buyers search for your brand on search engines.
- Further along the journey, when buyers begin to consider your product/service and demonstrate their intent, you might use marketing analytics to measure the amount of traffic to your website, how long visitors spend there, what content they consume, and what actions they engage in.
- When you're running a specific campaign, you might use marketing analytics to measure how many people clicked on your ad, whether those clicks generated traffic to your website, what actions they took, and whether they turned into leads.

GETTING STARTED:

An entire guide could be dedicated to marketing analytics alone! But for purposes of getting started, it's helpful to look at a few tools and technologies that enable you to put marketing analytics to work.

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems track all the touchpoints you have with a current customer or prospect and which touchpoints are working best. Smaller companies often use Hub spot for CRM, while large organizations are likely to use Salesforce.
- Tools like Google Analytics and Adobe Analytics assess how a buyer engages with your website, including the content they consume and the actions they take.
- As noted earlier, SEMrush and Moz measure your organic search performance – how well your site ranks on search engines based on specific keywords. You can use these insights to determine if your site has the rich content needed to engage your buyers and to demonstrate you're a thought leader on topics that are important to them.
- Social media tracking tools can tell you how many followers you have, how they're engaging with you on social channels, how often they're talking about your company, and whether their sentiments are positive or negative.
- Customer surveys can provide continuous feedback from your customers and create an ongoing dialogue with them, allowing you to refine your marketing for the best results.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As you can see, a lot goes into successful marketing! But you don't need to be an expert in the many facet of marketing—because the Marketri team is. We apply our deep experience with B2B companies to put it all together for you, choosing and assembling the right mix of marketing components to suit your needs. The result: A customized strategic marketing program that helps your business grow, thrive, and succeed.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF MODERN MARKETING CAN ACCELERATE YOUR GROWTH.

READY TO GET STARTED?

GIVE US A CALL, OR SEND AN EMAIL TO [DANDREWS@MARKETRI.COM!](mailto:dandrews@marketri.com)

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