

PREDICTION FOR THE TOP TEN MARKETING TRENDS OF 2012



Video is centre stage 10

Anticipated to be big for quite some time, it looks likely that video is set to be one of the leading marketing trends in 2012. The growth of video within business marketing fits naturally with the broadening of social media channels and with increasing customer focus on feedback and recommendations.

Expect video to take on some surprising approaches in 2012 – with many companies developing fresher and more user-focused forms of viral marketing.

1 A broader brand presence across channels

With the range of available marketing channels growing all the time, businesses will start to recognise the value of connecting up their marketing approach across the web, social media and other channels. This will be inspired by the need to better manage business resource in more challenging times - and to create a more streamlined brand presence.

Instead of relying on one or two channel marketing approaches, more and more companies will link up their activities to create a truly coherent brand across multiple channels.

The influence factor takes over 9

Closely linked to prediction number 9, social media influence will gain critical mass in 2012.

Already gaining momentum, a powerful trend in the year to come is the ability for companies to influence, increase and map their influence across the social media channels.

The power to inspire users in a realworld, but professional way will make a huge difference to their performance in 2012.

The customer recommendation rules 8

In 2012, the voice of the user or the customer will get louder. Businesses are becoming smarter at integrating opportunities for customer feedback and response within their marketing approach.

Social media word of mouth will keep growing, with people increasingly relying on their own online social circles to advise and comment on their choice of services or products.

The companies that actively embrace this shift will be the ones that boost their profile and credibility in 2012.

Content diversifies - again 7

Content has been big this year – and its role and value is likely to diversify even more in the year ahead. With the increase of personalised marketing, more companies will start to present content that is focused on telling stories about their business and products or services. But this won't be a top down approach. Companies will need to draw out the stories from within their workforce – and encourage their workforce to share stories.

In 2012, carefully crafted, managed and distributed content will play a vital role in successful business marketing.

Up close and personal 6

Next year is the year that marketing becomes more personalised. Tailored content that is customised to the needs and interests of a specific market or audience will grow in value and popularity. This is for a number of reasons – the increasing growth of content's role within online marketing and the growing presence of online, niche communities, for example.

As people become more and more accustomed to selecting which brands and businesses can join them within their own online community, the value of personalised marketing approaches and content will continue to grow.

5 A clearer vision on the value of analytics

Companies will seek to improve their understanding of marketing analytics in 2012. With increased channels and brand presence, businesses will look to clarify and streamline their marketing data.

Companies will recognise the value of analytics that allow them to maximise on the flexibility of social media marketing by adapting their content according to live viewer response.

Add to this an increasing focus on cost management and online marketing analytics look set to become the vital flipside of business marketing.

2 The rise and rise of user-generated content

User generated content took on momentum in 2011 - and this will continue into the New Year. Whether it is a YouTube video showing a customer using a product or customers sharing their experiences within a selective online community, content that comes direct from the potential or existing customer is likely to grow in value.

The key test of this trend will be how successfully companies inspire and facilitate user-generated content.

However they do it, it looks like the voice of the user will grow significantly in value in 2012.

3 Mobile marketing reaches critical mass

Mobile is going centre stage. A third of smartphone owners have used their device to buy a product online (Source: EPIserver) and this number is growing.

The companies that fully prepare their marketing approach for mobile in 2012 are the ones that will benefit from a potential customer-base that browses - and shops - on the move.

This demands targeted, mobile-ready content and a willingness to adapt internal marketing processes. With 59% of UK consumers now in possession of a smartphone and 18% owning a tablet device (Source: EPIserver), mobile marketing is a trend that businesses can't afford to ignore.

4 The gap closes between business brands and social media

We all know social media is big news for business. But in 2012, it will be even bigger - and even slicker. Companies will start taking social media more seriously as a professional marketing tool. But it won't just be the big companies using social media to actively connect with customers. Many more companies will start to interact, meaning customer service - and customer interaction - via social media will evolve even further.

The gap between social media and the business brand will get ever smaller.

Again, the user or the customer will take centre stage with the rise of the brand advocate in recommending, recruiting customers and connecting with companies in 2012.



How's 2012 looking to you?

2012 is looking like a year where marketing channels and messages will diversify - and where user connection, influence and feedback will rule. Companies can stay ahead by embracing and facilitating how their customers interact with them on social media. Combine this with a more targeted content and better connected cross channel marketing can help grow your leads, customers and revenue in 2012.

Learn how to get more from your marketing in the year ahead – download our eGuide **What Exactly is Inbound Marketing?** now.