

The Power of Converged Media

Internet marketing has evolved rapidly over the last decade and new marketing techniques and mantras appear with regular intervals. The only thing that stays constant is the desired end result; marketers still pursue the challenge of reaching and selling a product or service to a defined target audience.

It is easy to identify the significant changes in the marketplace. It is far more difficult to create the strategies and tactics needed to deal with new challenges.

- The Internet has evolved into a huge information repository that is causing information overload.
- Research has found that a majority of content published online is self-centred and overly promotional in nature.
- Ad blindness is now a fact of life and direct response advertising no longer works. More subtle marketing strategies are required. The diagram shown below illustrates how the click-through-rate (CTR) for direct advertising has declined from approximately 10% in 2000 to a mere 1% in 2013 (*diagram courtesy iprospect.com.au*).
- Social media has grown rapidly, both in size and importance. Facebook alone now has more than 1.4 billion users.
- The use of mobile devices to access the Internet is growing exponentially. For this reason, website design must be *responsive*. This means that the content display must automatically re-adjust itself to smaller screen sizes.
- Companies and organisations who maintain a website have to adjust to new market realities. Static content no longer ranks well in search engines. Website content needs to be added weekly and this content has to be relevant to people's search intent. Search engines have changed SEO rules, particularly the relative importance of keywords, backlinks, and content.

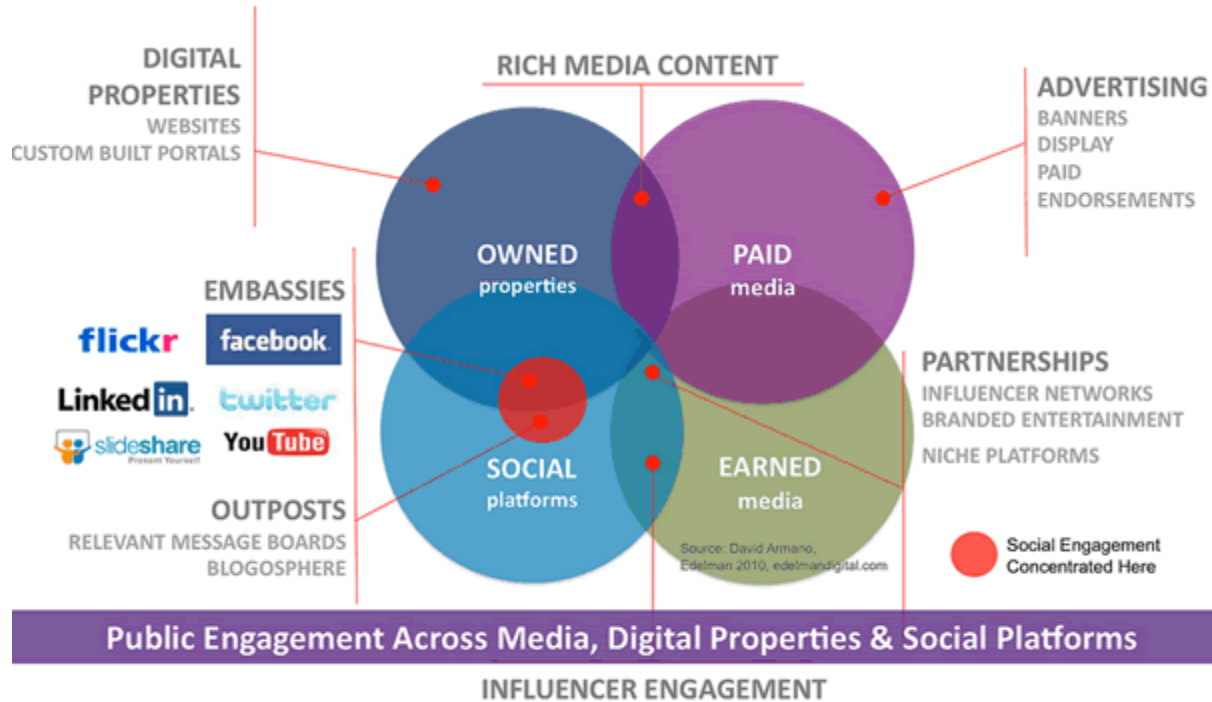
What does all this mean for marketers and business owners who wish to maintain a web presence and reach prospective clients?

Forrester Research has defined what they call "*the early research phase of a buying cycle*". People now take a different approach when making buying decisions.

- They use the search function of search engines like Google or Bing.
- They consult peers who they believe possess relevant information.
- They read what experts and influencers in a particular market segment write about the problem they want to solve, or the type of product or service in which they are interested.

The 4 Media Types

Image attribute Edelman Digital



Paid Media

This is the traditional medium for paid advertisements. This media type includes:

- Magazine and newspaper advertisements.
- PPV or PPV advertising with search engines like Google, Bing, and others.
- Paid content promotion.
- Mobile and news feed advertising on Facebook.
- Advanced advertising using Facebook Exchange (FBX).
- Twitter and LinkedIn paid advertising.
- Retargeting ads on a variety of platforms including Facebook.

Direct response advertising is no longer successful and marketers should use more subtle methods. Instead of linking an ad directly to a sales page, it can be linked to a website or blog post, or to a product catalogue and from there to a check-out page. In other words, introduce an intermediate page.

Owned Media

This media includes content published on channels other than the company website. Included are:

- Social media channels. The primary ones are Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, and Twitter.
- Video content on YouTube and other video sharing sites.
- SlideShare presentations on sites like SlideShare.
- Webinars.
- Podcasts.
- Image galleries.
- Infographics.

Owned media is best used to create brand awareness that eventually brings people into a sales funnel.

Marketers are strongly advised to develop a written content strategy and a content schedule.

Earned Media

This media type includes online and media presence resulting from media relations and publicity. Included are:

- Press releases.
- News coverage in newspapers, magazines, radio or TV.
- Reviews.
- Ratings.
- Viral spread of content.
- Social media content liked, commented on, or shared by other users.
- Guest posts that earn brand name recognition.
- Word-of-mouth recommendations.
- Brand recognition following other people's media posts, tweets, product reviews, videos, photos or dialogues that include your content or your presence online.

Primary drivers for this media type are first-page ranking in search engines and relevant, interesting content.

Shared Media

This media includes the following:

- Syndicated content published on website or social media channel.
- Connections and engagement with other people on social media channels.

The Integration of 4 Media Types

The prime objective of a marketing campaign is to reach and preferably engage with a target audience. In today's marketplace it is not enough to have a website and to engage in paid advertising as a separate activity.

Success in the marketplace does not come from having a mere presence on each media type. A successful marketing campaign should focus on the combined effect of using all media types. The best results are result from their integration; the pursuit of areas where these media types overlap.

This is not a particularly easy task and a mere presence on all media types will not by itself yield the best results. What is needed is a content strategy that defines how and in what manner to gain maximum benefits from their integration.

Converged Media

The primary resources required to gain benefits from converged media includes a website, a Facebook page, a LinkedIn page, a Google+ page, and a Twitter account. Other social media channels may include a YouTube channel and a SlideShare account. Owners should also set up an account with a social bookmarking site and add an RSS feed button and social media buttons on their website.

To develop brand recognition, logos and content published on a company website and social media sites should be consistent in style, colour and presentation. Think about "touch points", places where the media is visible regardless of medium or device. All media types should work in concert to promote the brand.

The new thinking is to create value at the top of the sales funnel in order to build brand recognition. Sales promotion is a follow-on activity, secondary to the pursuit of credibility, authority and brand recognition within a particular market niche.

Example

The first requirement is to have a content-rich website that is regularly updated with new content. Do not make the content self-centred and overly promotional. Once published, consider the following add-on activities.

- Have a RSS feed button visible on the website so people can subscribe to your content.
- Place social media buttons that enable people to share your content on social media channels.
- Bookmark the content and distribute to at least 10-15 different sites. This can be done using a site like socialadr.com.
- Place online or print advertisements. Ensure the ads comply with defined objectives and target them to a well-defined audience. Facebook has the most advanced targeting options of any advertising platform. Limit direct response advertising in favour of native advertising.

- Create and publish posts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+. This can be a short post that introduces the topic and links to the full content published on the website. A link for more information placed at the end of the content can link to an opt-in or sales page.
- Write similar posts and post them to Facebook and LinkedIn groups in which you are a member.
- Write a tweet with a link to the website content and tweet it 3-4 times in a day.
- Write a post on one or more relevant blogs or forums with a link back to the website content. Also pursue any opportunity of writing a full guest post on relevant blogs or forums.
- Find “influencers” using the Facebook or LinkedIn search function. Contact the person, introduce the content and ask if they can share or post it on website or blog. The objective here is to acquire mentions in order to build a reputation as an authority.
- Email your list and promote the content.
- Repurpose the content and turn it into a video, slideshare presentation, or podcast and publish to relevant sites like YouTube and SlideShare.

In summary, these different actions will amplify the benefits accrued from working in one single type of media.

If, as a small business owner, you find this strategy too complicated or time-consuming, please refer to a more condensed version published with the titled “Three SEO Pillars for Small Business in 2015.”

Feel free to contact the author if you need assistance in content creation or the creation of a content strategy. See the [portfolio page](#) on this site where you will find an extensive portfolio and testimonials.