Defense to Offense: Leveling Up Your Business Strategy in the New World

It’s time to start thinking about how your pandemic strategy can help you in the post-pandemic world.

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Last year, the name of the game for so many businesses was simple — just keep swimming. Staying afloat alone was a monumental task for many, and long-term plans were temporarily shelved; a business strategy that prioritized defense was the only option. It’s no surprise that the biggest initiative for so many was taking on a more robust digital strategy. Although we’re not at the finish line of the pandemic, there is now light at the end of this never ending tunnel and businesses are able to start thinking long-term; a robust offense is once again on the table.

Maybe organizing your online product info, a quick e-commerce cart or digital marketing campaign was part of your defense last year, but how are you going to make these now-essential business pillars part of your long-term offense? How are you going to invest and make it last? Here are three quick keys to rebounding and getting back on offense.

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Don’t stop!

It sounds overly simplistic, but the last thing you want to do right now is waste the momentum you’ve built. Even if you’ve done everything right, now is not the time to stop and congratulate yourself. In fact, now is the time to build on what you accomplished over the last 18 months.

Generally speaking, we saw organizations fall into one of two categories last year: They either made tiny incremental digital investments to defend themselves and stay afloat, or they used last year to double-down with online customer experience so that when the dust settles, they’ll be ahead of the curve. The companies in the latter bucket are using analytics to drive smarter digital marketing and are already wondering what the next functions are for their digital presence. Even if your company falls into the former bucket, all hope is not lost and you need to continue to build on whatever digital momentum you have.

In fact, make it permanent

Part of keeping your momentum means truly investing in digital. This means it needs to be its own line item in your annual budget – not a special task force that dissolves after the pandemic. Having the right infrastructure and talent steering your digital strategy is crucial. This means both internally and externally. Your internal marketing team has to be up to the task, as do any agencies, vendors and technologies with which you work. This probably sounds expensive, and honestly, it might be more than you’re used to spending here. But without it, you’re only continuing to put a band-aid on the problem. Understand that from now on, marketing *is* digital marketing – it’s not going anywhere, and it’s time to get on board.

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Books Won’t Teach You

Use one unified cloud

Something that might not immediately come to mind when you’re working out your new permanent digital framework: Make sure everything talks to each other. Unifying your digital strategy into one tightly-integrated cloud-based architecture can be the difference between a cohesive, customer-friendly experience and a disjointed mess.

Tech advances over the last 10 or so years have made it possible for everything to live within one stack. Whether you pick Salesforce, Microsoft, Adobe or any other number of solutions, you can continue to raise the bar in the quality of your customer interactions by getting everything together on one platform – with CRM at the heart of it. Eventually, this will lead to being able to further customize the experience for your customers and answer questions like: What suggested products are they most likely to click on? What does their homepage look like when they login? Which e-newsletters are they getting?

These questions are impossible to answer without the data to inform them, and when you’re getting data that comes from a single source (or sources that can translate it into one set of data), it makes your life infinitely easier and your customer’s journeys with you much better.

The pandemic isn’t quite behind us, but it’s time to level-up your business strategy and start thinking long term.

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