How to Plan Your Quarter-One Marketing Strategy in 5 Simple Steps



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Whew! Another (hopefully) successful year is in the bag. But don’t rest too easy because the best time to set yourself up for success in 2024 is right now. The beginning of the year is a perfect opportunity to reflect on last year’s wins and losses and use them to refresh your strategy heading into Q1.

Read on as I reveal how you can develop a cohesive plan that focuses on your audience, goals and budget.

1. Nail your quarter-one marketing

plan

Every new year brings new opportunities for brands to grow their profits and keep those customers smiling. Now is the perfect time to conduct an annual reflection on your marketing and deeply dive into how your strategy performed.

The year's busiest season is over; now it's time to plan for an even better coming year. That said, here's how to develop a cohesive plan focusing on your audience, goals and budget.

Related: How to Create a Successful Marketing Plan: 5 Steps

2. Reflect on the previous year

Now isn't the time for business as usual. The goals you set for this quarter will set the pace for the entire year, so it's the perfect time to reevaluate what you think you know about your brand and audience. If you want to see success this year, it's time to question everything.

That means taking stock of your past achievements and mistakes (key word there). Analyze your previous years' KPIs and metrics. How did last year compare to the years before it? The answers to these questions hold the secrets of success and should be the light that guides you throughout the new year.

Start by gathering these key things: your annual website traffic, engagement rates, conversion rates and customer acquisition costs. Identify the patterns of your consumers' behavior by studying the social media engagement flow, website behavior and sales data to use for your next batch of creative ideas.

3. Audit and optimize your online

presence

Every business strives for a strong online presence, and while some of you may have seen that come to life, others may not. Regardless of your performance last year, it’s time for a full online brand audit. Pull together all the metrics from every community you are a part of and determine whether critical elements such as brand message, social content, ad campaigns and website visits are working or need adjusting.

Remember, you should always go into your audit with a plan in mind, so here’s how you can work your magic:

Firstly, take a look at your website design and content. Is it making you want to explore what’s on the page or click away immediately? Is it user-friendly and easy to navigate where the customer needs to be? Can your website be easily viewed on mobile? If not, it needs a refresh.

Additionally, take a quick look through your social media profiles. Update your bio, banner and profile picture to reflect your current brand and target audience. Keep your profiles consistent with one visual aesthetic, and optimize using keywords in every content posted.

These small steps make the most significant difference in the world when it comes to attracting a new audience and keeping your current one.

Related: How to Grow Your Brand’s Digital Presence from 0 to 100,000 Followers in Just 6 Months

4. Clean up your communities

If you want to stay in your audience’s good graces, you need a solid plan to tell them about your products and provide something valuable that keeps them coming back. This includes everything you post online, including blogs, social media,

emails, networking groups, etc.

The answer to this? It’s simple: every quarter, you should be going through and cleaning up all of the communities your brand has been involved in within the last year. Identify your messaging, content types and aesthetics across all platforms to be sure your brand is represented consistently and cleanly.

Online communities are vital for any brand, but too many communities can often lead to slip-ups.

Most importantly, remember your email community. Take a look at your subscriber lists, as they’ve likely changed a lot in the last year. Reevaluate your content, and make sure it’s written to speak to your audience as it is today, and not the audience you had a year ago. Remember, it’s not about you.

5. Adjust your paid advertising plan

Advertising is truly an art form and with each campaign comes new insights into how you can continue to improve. The beginning of the year is the perfect opportunity to look at the annual overview of how your ads performed over each month or quarter. So, to refine your ads, here are the top things you should be looking for when analyzing the previous year’s results:

First, take a close look at how your ad campaigns over the full year performed individually. Look at each campaign’s numbers and analyze the specifics. Looking at details such as ad spend, engagement, and ROI, you can figure out which campaigns did well and which ones didn’t, determine why, and going forward you won’t waste time and resources on things that don’t work.

Next, make some changes to how you fund your ads. This could mean moving money around to the campaigns that did the best or

making small adjustments to how much you’re willing to pay for certain demographics or geographic areas.

Finally, something we marketers know all too well: adjust your campaigns based on changing trends. There are always new places to show ads and new ways to make them. So, be on the lookout for new opportunities, like trying out video ads instead of carousels.

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