

Digital Marketing Strategies For Ecommerce Brands



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Digital marketing strategies for ecommerce brands

For every ecommerce brand you hear about, there are many more creating great products that never see the light of day.

Great ecommerce marketing strategy isn't simple or easy; if it was, anyone could – and would – do it. But the good news is that every quality product can succeed if it's accompanied by great marketing.

Additionally, you can significantly increase your chances of success by setting a solid foundation that is aligned with your mission and vision. Once you have a vision for how your ecommerce marketing strategy ought to look, you can gather [the right tools](#) and personnel to execute that strategy.

Ecommerce campaign strategy: An overview

Ecommerce marketing typically involves a thoughtful integration of several pieces, such as product design, production, advertising, sales, and customer service. Launching a product through an online store is a little more complicated than crafting a product description page.

Before you build your digital marketing plan, let's take a moment to define the following components:

- ☺ **Your product** – What is it?
- ☺ **Your audience** – Who are they?
- ☺ **Your channels** – How will people find you?
- ☺ **Your campaigns** – How will you reach them?
- ☺ **Your performance** – How do you know if it's working?

Your product(s) and services

It's important to position your product and or service in a way that makes sense to your audience. So before you launch your marketing campaigns, you should **brainstorm your product descriptions, pitches, and unique selling points (USPs)**.

Your audience

The better you know your audience, the easier it will be to pitch your brand to them. That's because you've created your online shop to serve a particular crowd with a shared set of problems and lifestyle goals.

The success of your marketing comes down to your ability to build relationships with that audience.

The best way to establish who your audience is is through an exercise called the Buyer Persona. Your goal is to identify your ideal customer.



Lily Candor

Age: 18
Occupation: Student
Income: Dependent
Education: High School
Location: Minnesota
Status: Single

Interests

Skincare, skiing, and Gen Z fashion trends. Lily spends a lot of time watching YouTube and TikTok videos.

Challenges

Dry, flakey skin. Lily spends a lot of time outdoors during the winter.

Real Quotes

"I'm just starting to shop for non drugstore skincare options. It needs to be affordable and cute packaging is a plus."

Goals

Lily needs a moisturizer that can withstand the elements when she's skiing.

What can we do?

Long-wear face lotion that lasts 12+ hours. Helps keep your skin hydrated all day long.

Common Objections

She's used to receiving online ads, so if your advertising and product packaging don't stand out she won't click through.

Marketing Messaging

Long-lasting face moisturizer designed specifically for student athletes.

Elevator Pitch

Keep your skin hydrated all day with our long-lasting, wearable moisturizer. From the ski kill to the ice rink, we've got you covered.

Once you know your target audience and customer niches (segments), you can tailor your message to those niches and put each message in the right place for the highest number of impressions, engagements, and conversions.

"Brands trusted by consumers aren't just trendy, they're more valuable. This is because of the 'halo effect' that trust and authenticity creates: Trust improves conversion rates across the entire marketing mix, delivering higher ROI on marketing investments." - GRIN, [Authentic Influencer Marketing](#)

Your channels

Once you know who your audience is, you can figure out where those people are talking about the problems and/or personal goals that your products address.

For example, consumers frequently use search tools to get answers to questions or find a particular product/service. There are search engines (i.e., Google), as well as search tools within platforms like Amazon, Reddit, Discord, etc.

US vs. Worldwide Retail Ecommerce Conversion Rates, by Device, Q4 2019–Q4 2020

	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
US					
Desktop	3.7%	2.4%	2.1%	2.5%	2.3%
Mobile	1.9%	1.6%	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%
Tablet	3.8%	3.1%	3.3%	3.2%	0.6%
Other	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%
Worldwide					
Desktop	3.7%	2.6%	2.4%	2.6%	2.6%
Mobile	2.1%	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%
Tablet	3.7%	3.2%	3.5%	3.4%	0.9%
Other	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	1.0%	0.3%

*Note: Represents activity on Kibo Commerce's network, broader industry metrics may vary.
Source: Kibo Commerce, "Ecommerce Quarterly Benchmarks Q4 2020," Feb 9, 2021*

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Most likely, you're going to find a lot of relevant **online chatter** on social media. Try to note on which social channels your target audience are most active.

Your campaigns

When building an ecommerce marketing plan, you'll be organizing your initiatives by campaigns. Some of those campaigns will be temporary, such as a BFCM (Black Friday Cyber Monday) sales event or Mother's Day.

But you will probably have a campaign (or two) running nonstop. Marketers often refer to these campaigns as "evergreen" or "always on." For example, if you opt to build out a content marketing and social media strategy, you need to maintain a consistent flow of engaging content for your audience, regardless of the time of year.



As you consider your campaign options, it's critical that you understand your full marketing funnel.

Conversions and sales are the ultimate goal, but **ecommerce marketing success comes down to understanding how your customer got from point A - having never heard about your brand - to point B - completing a purchase.**

Your marketing funnel reverse-engineers the buyer's journey and allows you to see exactly which customer touch points are most essential to your brand's bottom line.

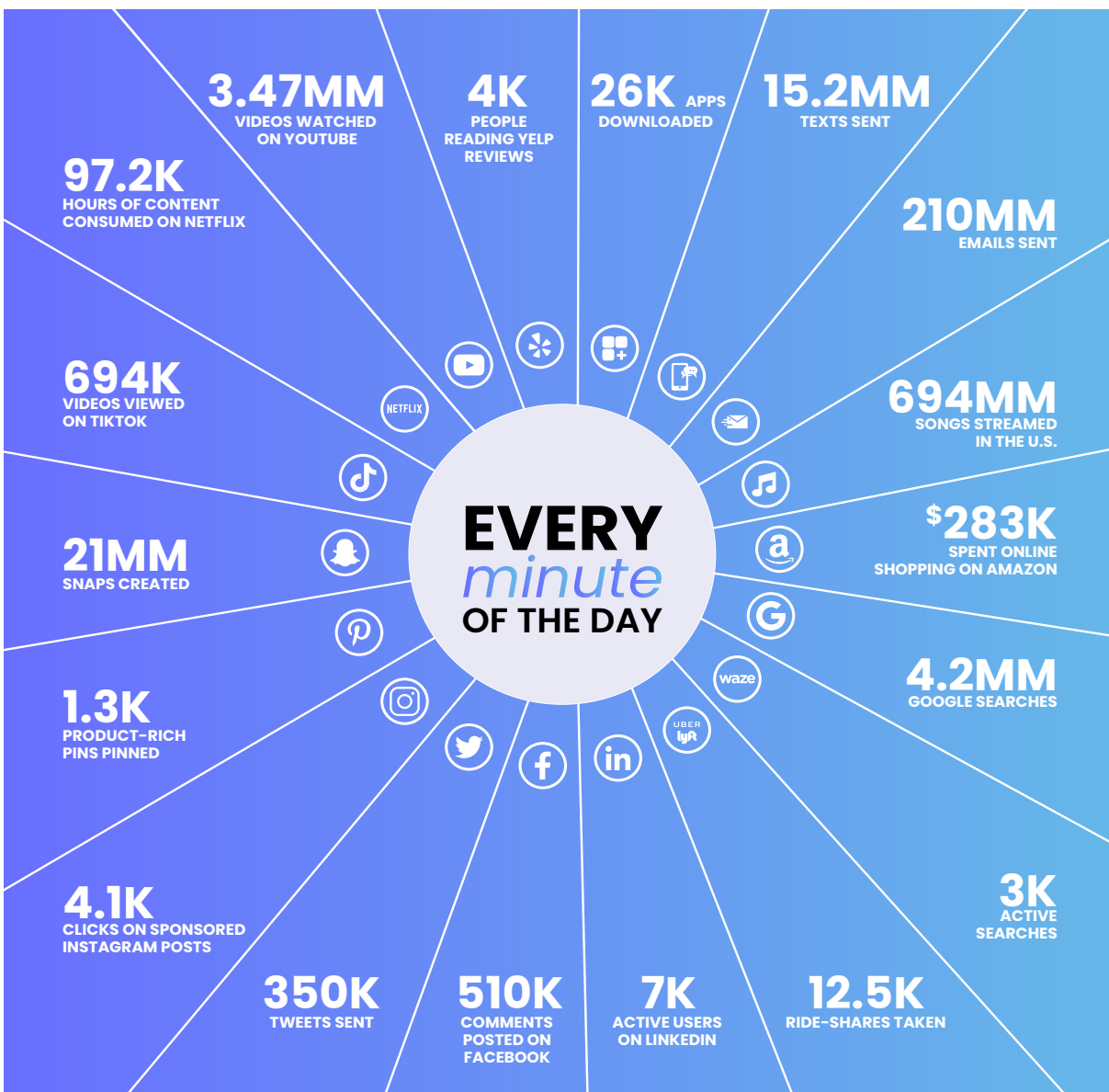
Your campaign performance

Some of your campaigns will succeed, and others will not. **The key to increasing your ROI is knowing which marketing initiatives are working.**

For the low performing strategies, you can pick apart the reasons why those campaigns failed to meet your expectations. Conversely, high-performing campaigns show you where to invest more marketing dollars.

To track performance, you'll need the [right marketing tools](#) to gather metrics that align with your ecommerce goals.

What different ecommerce digital marketing strategies are there?



Search engine optimization (SEO)

What is it?

Search engine optimization is the process of improving web page performance on Google and other search engines.

How does it work?

The key to SEO performance for ecommerce is building relevant product description pages (PDPs) that are easy for Google to index (that is, crawl your page and understand what it's about). Ideally, you'll want to work with an SEO expert that understands ecommerce to help you structure your pages correctly.

Where US Internet Users Are Most Likely to Begin Their Search For a New Clothing Item/Footwear/Accessory, by Age, June 2020

% of respondents in each group

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Total
Amazon	37%	35%	37%	32%	21%	33%
Multiline store	8%	13%	15%	23%	44%	19%
Google Search	18%	19%	15%	19%	11%	16%
Brand's website	12%	12%	15%	13%	11%	12%
Brand's store	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Social media	10%	9%	4%	2%	0%	5%
Fashion blogs/experts	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Other review site	3%	3%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Other	1%	0%	2%	1%	4%	2%

Source: Cowen and Company, "Gen Z and Millennials Are the Driving Force in Scaling Digital and Sustainability," **INSIDER INTELLIGENCE** | **eMarketer**

SEO is also a critical factor when setting up product pages on Amazon, Google Shopping, and other ecommerce marketplaces. Search engine bots use your product descriptions and alt/meta text (images descriptions) to refer your products to those using a search tool to find what they are looking for.

PROS



- Contributes to organic website performance
- Cheaper than paid ads
- Strengthens your website overall, as well as the user experience

CONS



- Demands consistent, long-term effort
- Requires expert input from quality SEOs and copywriters

Pay-per-click

What is it?

Pay-per-click, or PPC, is the preferred method of buying digital ads online. PPC is available on the leading search engines and social media platforms.

How does it work?

PPC is an auction (known as real-time bidding, or RTB) setup, and you pay per click or impression. Your online paid advertising success often depends on your budget, who you're trying to target, where you're targeting them, and ad keywords.

PROS



- Performance-based costs
- Reach targeted audiences
- Helpful in every stage of the marketing funnel

CONS



- Can be costly
- Complexity of many PPC platforms (you might need to hire an expert to do it right)

Remarketing

What is it?

A few PPC and paid social platforms allow you to place your ads in front of consumers that have visited your website or social media page. This is known as remarketing.

How does it work?

Remarketing helps you remain front-of-mind with those that have interacted positively with your posts or web pages. It is a great way to move prospects through the marketing funnel.

PROS



- Refines paid ad spend
- Keeps brands front-of-mind with interested consumers

CONS



- Consumer privacy law and cookie changes could negatively impact remarketing results

Social media

What is it?

Social media marketing includes building your brand on specific social channels by creating a business account (or profile) and engaging audiences with relevant content.

Currently, the top social media channels for ecommerce are:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- TikTok

How does it work?

While social media platforms often include their own paid plans and sponsored post options, a social media strategy usually refers to the work you invest in organic social growth.

Social media is a great way to provide a behind the scenes look at your brand.

Additionally, social media is the perfect place to [build brand communities](#), engage your audience, and recruit influencers. Successful ecommerce brands should take social media seriously, because it is often the fastest way to generate word-of-mouth for products online.

PROS



- It's free
- Connect with audiences on an emotional level
- Nurture user-generated content
- Drive organic brand growth
- Opportunities to connect with influencers

CONS



- Requires consistent participation for best results

Social commerce

What is it?

Social commerce is a collection of ecommerce selling tools on certain social media platforms.

Currently, the leading social commerce features exist on:

- Facebook/Instagram
- Pinterest
- Google Shopping
- Amazon (while technically not a social platform, Amazon does offer some of the most advanced s-commerce tools for ecommerce brands)

How does it work?

Depending on which social channels you use, you may have the option to create a store on those channels. For example, Facebook Marketplace allows ecommerce brands to offer their consumers [in-app shopping](#) so that they don't have to leave Facebook or Instagram to make a purchase. Also, Pinterest and Google Shopping are pioneers of [shoppable image ads](#).

These s-commerce features integrate seamlessly with your organic social, paid social, content, and influencer marketing strategies. It is also the latest virtual contribution to omnichannel retail.

PROS



- It's often free to create a store on each platform
- Seamless integration with organic social media and influencer marketing
- Better shopping experience for social media users

CONS



- Some s-commerce features come at a cost
- Can be challenging to manage inventory without the right ecommerce tools

Influencers

What is it?

Influencers are social media power users who promote the brands that they love to their online communities.

How does it work?

Influencer marketing allows brands to reach engaged audiences through the compelling content of social media creators. Currently, it is the most impactful strategy for DTC ecommerce brands.

“Influencer marketing can be **top of funnel** because you’re hitting people that might have never seen your brand before... It could be **mid funnel**, meaning someone has seen your brand somewhere else before, then they see one of their favorite influencers post about it. Now they’re like, ‘Oh, wait. I’ve seen that before. Cool...’ It can be very **bottom funnel**... They know the brand and the influencer gives a call-to-action, like, ‘Swipe up now.’”

- **Ethan Frame**, Chapter 3, [0-100: Getting Started with Influencer Marketing](#)

The key to an effective influencer marketing strategy is [choosing the right influencers](#) to promote your products. Transactional creator relationships will nurture distrust among consumers. However, genuine, direct relationships with influencers that love your products can help you scale your [ecommerce business](#) at a surprisingly fast rate.

PROS



- Immediate access to compelling, authentic social content
- Automatic user-generated content
- Lower cost than traditional marketing
- Genuine brand love

CONS



- Difficult to track [without the right tools](#)

Content marketing

What is it?

Content marketing is using all the various content types to attract audiences to your owned media channels. It is often a critical part of a wider inbound marketing and sales strategy.

“The Adobe survey also found that consumers are not only engaging with digital content more, but 55% are doing so across various devices simultaneously.” - **Adobe**, [“Consumer demand for personalized content reaches all-time high”](#)

How does it work?

In any content marketing strategy, **the more effectively that a brand can wield various types of content to nurture their audience, the greater their ROI will be.** That's why it's critical that you experiment with different forms of content to find the ones that do the best job of authentically showing off your brand.

While the list below is not exhaustive, here are some of the most popular content types that can help you build a robust content marketing strategy:

- Blogs
- Live video streams
- Webinars
- Podcasts
- Long-form video (vertical and horizontal)
- Short-form video (vertical and horizontal)
- Case studies
- Downloadable eguides
- Infographics
- Lifestyle images
- Studio images
- Memes and gifs

PROS



- 👍 Focused on organic growth (vs. paid)
- 👍 Lower cost than PPC
- 👍 Drives inbound web traffic

CONS



- 👎 Demands consistent, long-term effort

Email & SMS

What is it?

Email and text message marketing uses each channel to nurture audiences once they've subscribed to receive brand updates, discounts, or newsletters.

The "drip campaign" approach allows customers to convert even if they're not yet ready to buy. By subscribing to your content, they've indicated that they see the value of your brand and want to hear more from you.

How does it work?

Due in large part to consumer privacy laws and the [TCPA](#), the FCC no longer permits brands to spam consumers with cold calls, texts, and emails. But as long as brands adhere to email and SMS compliance standards, consumers can opt-in to hear from your brand even after they've left your ad or website.

Email and SMS are perfect for nurturing audiences in the middle and lower parts of your funnel. Additionally, they are great for encouraging repeat purchases or retrieving abandoned carts.

PROS



- Email marketing is free
- [Two-way SMS ROI](#) is among the highest in digital marketing
- Prospects are already interested in your brand
- Engagement with leads after they've left your website

CONS



- Deliverability issues can impact open, click, and engagement rates
- While [10DLC SMS](#) is cheaper than dedicated short code, it still comes at a cost

Affiliate marketing

What is it?

Affiliate marketing is leveraging third-party relationships to generate brand awareness and sales on behalf of a brand, business, or organization.

How does it work?

Closely-related to influencer marketing, ecommerce brands can lean on [affiliates to drive sales](#).

Some of these affiliates are industry experts who act as consultants for their audience. Others are simply [brand ambassadors](#) who are also influential customers on social media.

PROS



- Cost is commission-based
- Affiliates act as an extension of your sales team
- Automatic user-generated content
- Direct impact on sales/revenue

CONS



- Consumers may cannibalize [affiliate discount codes](#)
- Strictly focused on conversions
- Commissions lower profit margins

Localization

What is it?

Localization, or local marketing, focuses on reaching buyers within a specific geographical area.

How does it work?

Local marketing used to be a strategy primarily for service-based businesses and brick-and-mortar retail. However, many ecommerce businesses have learned that they can fulfill orders more efficiently by targeting regions.

Also, many brands deliver time-sensitive products. For example, more meal-planning brands have launched their business online during COVID-19. And in order to serve their customers, they must ship fresh ingredients to those within a certain mile radius.

Localization techniques focus on [online directory listings](#), as well as geo-targeting for PPC and influencer marketing campaigns.

PROS



- Dominate specific, local markets
- Easier fulfillment & returns
- Expand to new markets more strategically

CONS



- Smaller audience
- Difficult to grow market share if competing with national or international brands

Crafting your ecommerce marketing mix

When it comes to your ecommerce marketing mix, it's never "either...or" - it's always "yes...and."

In other words, you will be most successful if you build your own combination of various strategies, mediums, and types. When one marketing initiative complements another, both produce better results.

Your ecommerce marketing mix may not include every strategy listed above. But for best results, you'll need to experiment with several to come up with your own recipe for success.

In conclusion – It's always about the relationship between you and your customers.

Ecommerce brands that focus on pushing ads and sales often miss the bigger picture – it's about the connection between you and your audience.

Consumers today want more than a product or service.

They want to improve their quality of life, join a community, and see their spending make a difference in the world around them.

That's one reason why influencer marketing has exploded in the last decade. **Influencers and social media creators give consumers a deeper look into real life problems and inspire them to take action.**

And thanks to how fast the creator economy is growing, many of your best influencers may already be your customers. By nurturing long-term relationships with your influential customers, you can use your ecommerce marketing budget to build thriving brand communities that lower your acquisition costs and increase customer loyalty.

Make relationship-building a cinch using [GRIN's influencer automated platform](#). Check it out today!