

The attributes of a successful digital marketing strategy

By [Louise Marsland](#)

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Companies should allocate budget to researching their customers' needs and wants and digital behaviour before developing a digital marketing strategy, advises digital communications consultant, Sue Disler, in this Q&A with Bizcommunity.com.



Sue Disler

■ What is your prediction for the key trends in digital marketing, currently?

I always hate that question! AI, Chatbots, IoT, Mobile, Wearables – all of the above! So many things happening in all areas – but to give you one observation I have made recently... I have been following LinkedIn activity quite closely and have noticed that more and more brands have started posting articles and even spending money on advertising too.

It's an extremely effective environment for B2B marketing and is rather underutilised at present, so those that are there now are ahead of the curve. We have seen a considerable growth on this channel compared to other social channels in the past year in SA and if I had to predict a trend right now, I would say that we are about to see a lot of business brands start finding ways to utilise this channel as the other social channels are way too cluttered.

■ What are the key attributes for a successful digital marketing strategy?

Research, research, research!! Most strategies are based on extremely little research and the stats that we do have access to, are largely out-dated unfortunately. It would be great if companies could allocate budget to researching their customers' needs and wants and digital behaviour before developing the strategy as this will help define a much clearer objective going forward.

And because consumer and user's physical and digital habits (and channel engagement) is constantly changing, the strategy will need to adapt and be agile too. So having the means to capture and analyse data on a regular basis, will allow you to accommodate an iterative strategy.

If you are not reviewing the data regularly you might lose sight of meeting your objectives. At present most of us focus on immediate ROI in terms of data – i.e., clicks and conversions as that's all we have access to, we need to adopt a more long-term view by tracking user behaviour holistically and glean insights beyond the click. This will also help in terms of research.

■ What is the problem with integrated campaigns in digital marketing?

The biggest problem I find is that most campaigns are just that – a campaign. Once it's done, it's over and we move onto the next... The content that gets produced for the various channels and the resultant content that is generated from the campaign invariably never lives or is designed to live beyond that campaign. Plus the data that's generated is also not really put to use. This seems like such a waste... content and data should be put to use after the fact.

■ What is the fundamental change in the marketplace today that is impacting on digital marketing strategies?

Brands are starting to realise that creating digital experiences does not necessarily have to rely on high production value and new, innovative and fancy tech in order to have impact. These brands are also confident in sharing the stage too... a great example of this is Mercedes-Benz's and New24's partnership with [Beautiful News](#), which is all about helping to "find and power the spirit of positivity from around South Africa and Africa". This very real content naturally pulls at the heart strings of every South African – it's so simple and clever – they can use the content on all channels now and in the future – so cost effective too.

■ What is the cornerstone of your digital marketing success?

An innate curiosity and need to understand human behaviour, coupled with the ability to interrogate (and appreciate) the tech that surrounds us every day.

■ Additional relevant stats showing current trends:

LinkedIn South Africa Stats

- 2015: 4.7 million active users*
- 2016: 5.5 million active users*
- 20 July 2017: 6+ million estimated target audience**

Sources:

* *Social Media Landscape report* - <http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2016/09/20/this-how-social-media-is-being-used-by-south-africans/>

** *LinkedIn Campaign Manager*

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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