

Growth Strategies

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The Journal of Accounting Marketing and Sales

Digital Tools Issue

Improve Your Social Selling
with LinkedIn

Trends & Insights: Technology
as a Differentiator

7 Ways Technology Will Boost
Your Productivity

Q&A with Scott Wayne

brands ripe for picking



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From the Editor



I'm no craftsman, but I'm handy enough around the house to warrant a toolbox. And that toolbox contains all the tools I need to keep my house in (relatively) ship shape.

My marketing toolbox is similarly proportioned. Today, there are thousands of digital tools available to help us with any number of tasks. Are many of them useful? Yes. Do I need them all? No.

On the contrary, I stay up to date on the digital tool-verse; but I use only those that help me maximize efficiency, deliver the highest level of client service and show measurable ROI. You should, too.

In this issue, we profile digital tools in action for marketers across the accounting spectrum. See how one firm used Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) tags to track the results of a content initiative—or how high-growth firms are using artificial intelligence as a competitive advantage.

Find out how to design your own productivity “tech stack” to work more efficiently. Learn how to implement and manage a pay per click (PPC) campaign to drive ROI to new heights in our Technology Spotlight article. Examine the B2B buying process through a technology-oriented lens and determine how your inbound marketing efforts can drive the right content to the right prospects at precisely the right time.

Our lead article features an interview with LinkedIn about strategies for effective social selling, and how firms can leverage LinkedIn's Sales Navigator tool.

We're also pleased to introduce two new sections, which we hope you enjoy:

Take 5 – feedback from your peers on the hot topic from each issue

Q&A – get to know the experts with some fun, behind the scenes questions

In conclusion, I urge you to take inventory of your own digital toolbox. Identify the tools you use and those you could do without. And hopefully you pick up a new one in this issue that can help you do your job more effectively.

Matthew Seitz,
Executive Editor

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An interview with LinkedIn about the Sales Navigator tool, and how firms can use it to be more effective at social selling. *Derek Pando*



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Improve Your Social Selling with LinkedIn

Insights from Derek Pando, senior marketing manager, LinkedIn

Derek Pando, *LinkedIn*



Q. What is social selling?

A. Many professionals have heard of social selling but aren't quite sure what it is. Simply, it's using information on social media networks to approach people in a more personalized, meaningful way to grow your revenue. The results can have a significant impact on your business.

Q. Do people buy services, like accounting and tax, via social media?

A. We are seeing growth in social selling in every industry and in every region at a very fast pace.

Often, when people think about social media, their mind goes to a place that is not professionally relevant. After all, there are many social media platforms where business doesn't happen. People are using LinkedIn to sell socially, even if they don't realize it. If someone looks you up on LinkedIn before meeting with you in hopes of learning more about you and having a more relevant conversation—they are selling to you via social.

Q. What is the key to effective social selling?

A. We recommend two things. First, consider what your clients and prospects want to know about you. Use that to optimize your profile and company page. Every day people look at profiles and make assumptions. When they find valuable information, they begin to build confidence in what you do. Without a lot of information, they are unable to make that same determination.

Secondly, use LinkedIn to find the right targets, to better understand them and to engage with them. You can use LinkedIn to identify those companies you want to work with and the people at those companies who make the buying decisions. You then reach out only where it makes sense, otherwise the individual will simply delete your communication. We're seeing more of that as expectations are raised in the

sales process. Blanket emails are no longer acceptable when you have the ability to find the right person.

Q. Why are firms using Sales Navigator?

A. Firms have adopted it as they are trying to get ahead of big trends to better service clients. It helps accelerate adoption. It also gives firms the ability to leverage their entire networks in a more expansive way.

For example, if a firm buys 200 seats of Sales Navigator, everyone with a seat can see each other's connections. At Sales Connect, an annual event of ours, a representative from EY said there were very few decision makers they couldn't get an introduction to through their employee network. There is also a New York company that sells medical services that found out a parent of one of their entry-level employees was on the board of an organization they were trying to get into. Sales Navigator surfaced that relationship and helped them connect the dots.

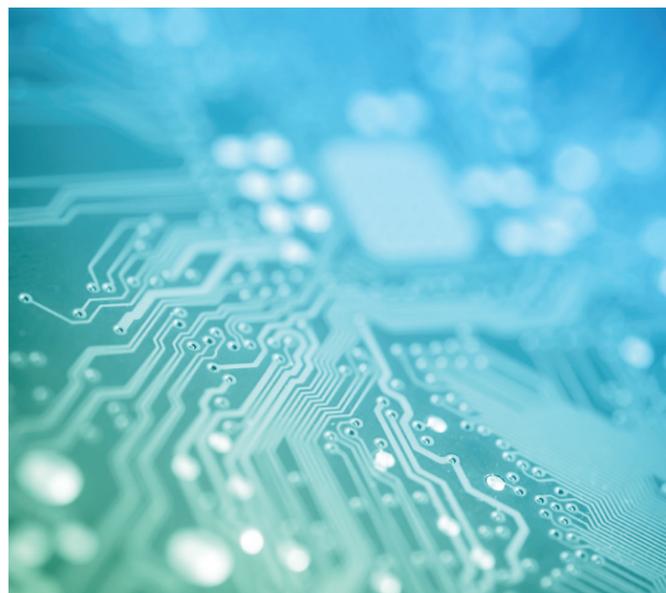
Q. Can you sell with the free version of LinkedIn?

A. Absolutely. Start with a good profile. Then look up people before you meet with them. Also, run searches to see what prospective buyers you can find. Sales Navigator comes in handy when people want to drive efficiency. It helps them take the basic LinkedIn functions to the next level.

Q. What should be included in a profile to increase success?

A. Just a simple professional picture will increase the number of people who look at your profile. You don't have to go to a studio, but you should be in professional attire. A picture in skydiving gear makes sense if you're a skydiving instructor. It doesn't work if you're an accountant.

Then fill out the basic information of where you work and what you do. Be sure to look at your profile from the eyes of your buyers. Write it from their perspective and not your goal.



Link to valuable resources such as your website or a client testimonial.

Q. Is content important when it comes to social sharing?

A. Consistently sharing relevant content with your industry is a great way to expand your brand and a key component of social selling. People are often nervous about what to share. Usually, if it's interesting to you and your industry, it will be interesting to your audience. You will be viewed as an engaged member of the community and as a thought leader. When people have questions, they will reach out to you because you put yourself out there as an expert.

Q. What tips do you have to help current users of Sales Navigator be more effective?

A. When you run a search in Sales Navigator, you can search on a very granular level. I wish more people would take advantage of this. You are able to search by people who:

- ✓ *Have shared something in the last 30 days.* This shows who is active and is mostly likely to engage.
- ✓ *Are mentioned in a news article in the past 30 days.* You can then reach out and congratulate them or discuss a point in the article. It helps open doors.
- ✓ *Changed jobs in the past 90 days.* Many new leaders make changes in products and services they buy after starting a new job. That makes them prime targets. Reach out to the new head of finance and talk about a problem they have you can solve. We often hear about companies closing their fastest deals ever by targeting these people.

Q. Do companies experience a positive ROI from their Sales Navigator investment?

A. Definitely. The Sacramento Kings used it to reach out to their corporate targets and saw a 42 percent increase in the size of their deals, and their reps using it have a higher Social Selling Index than those who don't. Another example would be Qualtrics. They calculated that 46 percent of their wins were influenced by Sales Navigator. Of those, the win rates were 20 percent higher and their deals were 50 percent larger.

Approach this question from a logical perspective. How many new clients would you have to find to have a positive ROI? Anyone putting these tactics and principles into use will drive new business they would not have gotten otherwise. The industry you are in and the effort you put into it do have an impact.

Q. What is the Social Selling Index and how should we use it?

A. It's a score between one and 100 that helps you track the adoption of social selling. It's an engagement metric. Everyone can pull it at www.linkedin.com/sales/ssi. You'll see how you compare to others in the industry and in what areas you can improve. It tracks your sales effectiveness.

Q. What resources are available to people who want to learn more about social selling?

A. We recently launched a series of social selling courses. There is an introductory training course that can be viewed at <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/social-selling-foundations>. You can also follow our blog at <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/blog> to stay up-to-date with what's happening with Sales Navigator.

About the Author

Derek Pando is a LinkedIn Sales Navigator expert and evangelist. As a senior marketing manager of marketing communications at LinkedIn, he manages industry analyst relations, influencer marketing, Sales Navigator course content and is on the Sales Connect events team. He can be reached via an InMail on LinkedIn.

Case Study

Jill Jacobs, *Friedman LLP*

Tag it to Flag it — Using UTM Codes to Capture Campaign Results



"Is marketing measurable?"

"What results do we get from the firm's marketing initiatives?"

Thanks to an array of digital tools, marketers can now effectively answer these questions and more. One simple but powerful way to demonstrate results and gain valuable insight to enhance future campaigns is to use UTM tags.

What is UTM Tagging?

UTM (Urchin Tracking Modules) tags are snippets of code that you add to a link to help you track the performance of your marketing campaigns in Google Analytics. For traffic that comes to your website via tagged links in your communications, you can identify important information—where the traffic is coming from, how it is getting to you, why it's coming to you, and whether it resulted in a lead.

This works by using three to five "UTM Parameters" in the links:

- ✓ **Source:** Where the traffic originated from, for example LinkedIn or a particular email list from your database
- ✓ **Medium:** What medium the traffic originated from: social, email, cpc, banner, print
- ✓ **Campaign:** Associated marketing campaign
- ✓ **Term (optional):** Keyword or other specific information
- ✓ **Content (optional):** Link or ad location, for example, "top-right"

You can then view results for each campaign in Google Analytics to gain important information about its outcomes. Let's take a look at a practical example.

Case Study

Issue: Throughout 2016, Friedman ran an integrated content initiative on the potential tax implications of the upcoming election. We wanted to measure the performance of an array of associated communications and campaigns—what worked best, what could be improved in the future and what generated the most conversions and leads.

Solution: We tagged the links in our communications, which included emails, articles, invites, banner ads, social media and more.

To demonstrate how tagging plays out, below is an example of a link we used in a webinar invite.

https://engage.vevent.com/index.jsp?eid=6474&seid=11&utm_source=evite_clients_tax_other_subscribers&utm_medium=email&utm_content=click_here&utm_campaign=webinarinvitemay4_2016_election

UTM Parameters:

Source	evite_clients_tax_other_subscribers
Medium	Email
Content	click_here
Campaign	webinarinvitemay4_2016_election

Helpful Hint: Google URL builder gives you a quick and easy way to create tagged URLs. Simply fill in the UTM parameters, and this tool will generate the link for you. You can find it at <https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/>

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7 Ways Technology Will Boost Your Productivity

Raissa Evans, *Running Reload, LLC*



It's 3:00 p.m. on Friday, and you're in the final struggling moments of a busy week—that time to decide when you've been productive enough to turn your brain on idle and enjoy the weekend. You chat up colleagues while dropping off reports for partners to read Monday morning and return to your desk to mark to-do's off your project list, flag a few priorities and read a Harvard Business Review article you saved to Evernote. You sweep crumbs off your paper-free desktop, and check Google Maps for the fastest route home while waiting for the elevator.

Sound like the end of your typical week, or the best week ever? For most of us, our desk looks more like a structurally unsound stack of notes, files and unread magazines. And although you know what's in each pile, for the hundredth time you think, "There's got to be a better way."

We're addicts to the fix of feeling busy, which substitutes for making progress on our key objectives. I find a great way to procrastinate is to Google articles on productivity, and there IS a better way. Aside from the habits of productivity, technology gets smarter every year at understanding, organizing and improving the way we work. Enter the personal productivity tech stack.

What is a "productivity tech stack"?

A tech stack is the group of technologies you leverage to execute, analyze or improve an activity. You may have read about marketing tech stacks (email blast tools, social media scheduling, etc.) and certainly your IT department has a network tech stack. The beauty of a personal productivity tech stack lies in its ability to give you and your team more bandwidth, usually without the rigors of budget approvals or firm-wide buy-in. As with all software, asking yourself what you actually need before you build it is key.

Focusing on Jobs-To-Be-Done

While the right marketing stack depends on your specific strategy and channels, the right productivity stack depends on what needs to be done during your day or week. I like to think in terms of the Jobs-to-be-Done framework popularized by Clayton Christensen, where it's not about which tool,

it's about which persistent tasks can improve with technology. Let's explore seven jobs that most accounting marketers and growth leaders face:

1. Project Management

A to-do list won't cut it when most marketing initiatives are mass groups of actions, processes, teams and vendors with competing timelines and priorities. Tools like Trello or Asana can help calendar deadlines, track your workflow, progress and manage what you take on at once. The best tools let you create templates, saving time and allowing for improvements and repeatable success.

2. File Management and Sharing

You need to send high-resolution files that exceed the email cap of 10MB. Or perhaps several people need to work on a spreadsheet at once, or you need to roll back to a previous version of a file. In most cases, your file network doesn't have these functions, whereas Google Docs or Box readily adds this capability, and more.

3. Save and Find Later

There's nothing worse than a browser crash where you lose dozens of tabs you hoped to read later. Or searching for critical notes that somehow slipped into the wrong file, or worse, the trash. Clutter, whether on-screen or the desk, hurts productivity. A tool like Evernote is a save-everything backpack that best demonstrates its usefulness when overloaded with bookmarks, notes and read-later articles that can easily be found by search, tag or category.

4. Communicating Remotely

If you give your phone the side-eye when it rings and would sooner text than talk, join a growing crowd. However, in the modern enterprise, we can communicate with remote teams or clients by conference call and meeting software supercharged with screen sharing, whiteboarding or chat using tools like Join.Me or Skype for Business. Another option is to get more done with collaborators and track the history of conversations by project in Slack.

5. Contact/Relationship Management

Contacts managed by spreadsheet keeps you in the dark ages of the connection economy. The demand for personal and relevant messaging combined with the competitive advantage of fast response makes more sophisticated tools a must. CRM systems like Zoho make tracking history, tagging and sales pipeline easy, while LinkedIn remains one of the easiest ways to research and meet prospects.

6. Scheduling

Playing email tag when agreeing on a place, date and time to have a meeting can be exasperating. Scheduling tools like Calendly allow others to book directly into your calendar, Doodle can poll for consensus in groups, and X.ai poses as your assistant to email on your behalf.

7. Do Things Faster

There are hundreds of tasks you can improve with technology. Voice dictation is faster than typing and possible in more contexts. Ifttt and Zapier can make manual tasks between applications automatic. Dashboards make data analysis easier to pool and visualize. And simple tasks that a human still needs to do can be outsourced at a fraction of the cost to Fiverr or Mechanical Turk.

No matter the individual tool, features like cloud-based (SaaS), open APIs and offline availability and data backup are critical. Be careful not to breach security or privacy protocols established by the firm, though, as you employ your chosen tools.

Overall, by setting up your personal productivity tech stack, you let machines handle the repetitive, boring tasks while human talent focuses on what we do best—discovering creative solutions to drive value and revenue.

About the Author

As Chief Strategist of Running Reload, Raissa works with accounting industry leaders and overwhelmed marketing teams on strategies to reach growth goals. She is a former marketer of the year and AAM treasurer, and can be reached at raissa@runningreload.com or (713) 416-3215.

Adventures in Lead Scoring: How to Pursue Digital Leads at the Right Time

Christine Nelson, *Ingenuity Marketing Group, LLC*



I was conducting a phone interview with a CPA partner to ghostwrite an article about the oil and gas industry. In the background, the marketing director was multi-tasking while being present to answer any logistical questions. At the end of the interview, she informed me that a very good audit lead had just come through their website.

Stage 1: Kicking the Tires (3-9 months)

These prospects have a need, but they aren't ready to talk to anyone yet. They have received a referral or they are doing organic search for services. Their main interest is collecting information. The site's content should be easily searched on mobile, of course, or your firm may lose points immediately.

Stage 2: Narrowing Options (1-2 months)

These prospects already have one or two other firms in mind when they hear about your firm. They decide to check out your website, comparing your information and team to other firms they know better. They will notice your site design first (because the human brain processes images faster than words) and immediately make judgments. Then they will look at your bios and any content relevant to *their interests*. They may even click to your social channels to see what you're doing in the community or what type of content you're promoting.

Stage 3: Inviting Proposals (2-3 weeks)

If you make it past stages 1 and 2, your firm may be invited to submit a proposal or speak with a representative. These are the known prospects in traditional business development. You aren't sure how many *didn't* call your firm after their search.

Stage 4: Vetting (1-2 weeks)

You've made it to the final round, but you should expect that someone on the vetting team will take another look at your online presence for reassurance that your team's knowledge and experience will provide the best fit for their needs.

What I have just described is a passive form of online business development. You put up the best website you can, update it with fresh content and hope. You hope that the right search engine keywords and a good reputation in the community will help prospects find your firm online and contact you.

Marketing professionals have a lot on their plates, so of course this marketing director was multi-tasking. She is always looking for tools to make work easier, to prove the value of marketing investment and to support sales. During a one-hour interview — with a partner in the room, no less — she demonstrated that all of these goals are reachable. She had outsourced quality content development, invested in a marketing automation tool and proven to partners that it works by identifying qualified online leads.

Did I mention that the leads started coming in less than 12 months after starting their content campaign? And that they got some nice industry press out of the same content that also filled their blog posts and social channels?

Multi-tasking. Multi-purposing. *Molto bene.*

We know that online marketing and business development are possible and happening in accounting. But like traditional marketing, your prospects are at different stages in the buying process when they visit your website. Without a marketing automation tool or inbound lead strategy, it's hard to know who is visiting and why.

Let's look at common stages of the buying process as they relate to website search, and then describe a couple inbound marketing options that can help you — with or without a marketing automation tool — pursue digital leads at the right time:

Or you can court them online.

With inbound marketing, you are gaining visibility for your firm even before prospects believe they have a need, and then earning that relationship with interesting content so that you are top of mind when they are ready to buy.

Maybe your firm has already invested in a marketing automation tool, the most recognized of which is Hubspot (and whose founder coined the term *inbound marketing*). Competitors are following suit with a whole range of options now, investment for which can range from \$1,500 a year to \$48,000 a year.

Maybe you would love to have this functionality to identify and pursue real online leads, but the partners just aren't sold yet. That's ok. Let's walk through the elements of a less-automated strategy and also a fully automated strategy. Both options are proving to be more cost-effective than the budgets spent on direct mail, tradeshow or advertising.

Option #1 – Online Lead Shotgun Strategy

Let's say you have a well-organized database and have been using it to blast out online newsletters or simple email campaigns. One of your goals is to get more traction with veterinarians. You've canvassed their associations and you know they struggle with slim margins, competition from corporations and a talent shortage.

Your partner is excited to write an article on strategies to operate an efficient veterinary practice. Okay, she isn't. But you convince her to work with an outsourced writer and get interviewed for the piece. With a couple drafts and final edits, you're ready to publish. Your shotgun strategy for inbound leads includes:

- ✓ A nicely designed white paper
- ✓ A web landing page
- ✓ An email capture form
- ✓ A social media blitz to promote the white paper topic

Imagine you have at least one white paper for every industry niche. Your social media feeds can then be populated with targeted industry posts pointing to the white paper. Your blog can take excerpts from the white papers and pique visitor curiosity to download them. You can even pitch your topics to industry magazines.

Option #2 – Online Lead Scoring Strategy

With a marketing automation tool integrated with your CRM database, your strategy just got steroids and your marketing team grew without hiring anyone.

Once your content is created, you set up an automated sequence. It starts with an introductory email to your selected list that invites people to view your content. Let's say some people are too busy to view your email when it first arrives. In that case, the sequence generates a friendly reminder email that lets them know that the content is still available.

For the people who looked at the content but didn't download anything, another automated email is sent to entice them back for a download and suggest another resource they might like.

For people who download the resource (e.g., white paper, guide, checklist), your sequence generates a thank you email (from a partner) with additional information to nurture that new relationship. The partner is hands-free on this communication since the automation tool generates the email using the partner's address.

Through your marketing automation tool, you can see the pages individual people viewed while on your site. You also capture email addresses. This is valuable information, but you may not be ready to reach out to them yet.

You have set up lead scoring methods to determine if your visitors are just tire kickers, warmed up leads or qualified, ready-to-buy leads. When a lead views certain pages, downloads resources or signs up for a newsletter, your marketing tool awards them points. Top point getters are tracked over time and eventually scored as hot leads, which you contact (or refer to the right partner) and let the conversions begin.

Online Essentials for Lead Success

Of course, seamless inbound strategies take time and the investment of a few critical steps:

- 1. Commitment** Commitment means more than investing in the right automation tool. Firms are downscaling or ending things like individual marketing budgets, tradeshow attendance and advertising to devote more capacity and resources to inbound marketing and social. The early adopters are seeing results that more than pay for the investment.
- 2. Strategy** Without an established strategy, you risk chasing leads that are either wrong or not sales ready. You also won't be able to measure success.
- 3. SEO Keywords** Create a list of 10-20 keywords that you want to rank for when creating content. Narrow down your large list by thinking who might search for something like "*QuickBooks software training*," and why. You have to think like your ideal prospect thinks and rule out bad keywords.

Use Technology as a Key Point of Differentiation



In today's competitive market, accounting firms need innovative ways to create a market-dominating position. If successful, they will uniquely position the firm to be the premier provider of accounting services in a certain space. While many firms are promoting the value they can bring to a relationship as a thought leader in an industry or service niche, others are focusing on creating more value for clients.

There is a difference between promoting and creating value. Promoting value through content and social media marketing is showing a contact that you are different because of what you know. Creating value is delivering a service that a client perceives as being valuable because it will solve their problem(s).

High-Growth Firms Use Technology

High-growth firms use technology as a point of differentiation. As reported by Hinge in its "2017 High-Growth Study", 42.7 percent of high-growth firms claim that technology sets them apart in the marketplace and gives them a competitive edge.

Hinge defines high-growth firms as having an annual growth rate of at least 20 percent. These firms are typically 50 percent more profitable than the average firm and generate 20 percent more revenue per employee. High-growth firms are also 22 percent more likely to be highly specialized in an industry niche than their counterparts and focus on:

- ✓ Offering very specialized services
- ✓ Solving certain client challenges
- ✓ Helping people in specific roles within client organizations

Offer Clients Systems and Apps

AccountingWeb recently published "What Clients Really Want" by Deanna C. White. She provides insight on technology-based services to solve client problems. Some services that White recommends focus on:

- ✓ **Easing a client's accounting and administrative burdens** Offer cloud-based accounting applications like QuickBooks Online, Xero or Wave to manage their business from any device, or Concur, Expensify and Tally for expense reporting. Industry-specific applications can be helpful to control inventory, measure productivity and manage time.
- ✓ **Improving cash flow** Offer a cloud-based dashboard of cash in and out of the company, as well as the timing of receivables and expenses.
- ✓ **Planning for the future** Offer apps to develop a strategic business plan that is practical, integrated into a client's tech platform and visible through a dashboard. Key performance indicators (KPIs) can then be monitored so your client is held accountable to reach his or her goals. Consider a cloud-based client relationship management system (CRM) linked to financial systems and accounting software to monitor data.
- ✓ **Ensuring the business is HR compliant** Offer a cloud-based human resource management system (HRMS) to manage payroll, employee benefits, health care, onboarding and offboarding, vacation time and compliance.
- ✓ **Tackling state, local and other compliance burdens** Offer apps that help with sales and use tax, business filing nexus, tax tables, as well as reporting and filing requirements.
- ✓ **Securing IT systems** Offer cybersecurity solutions to help safeguard client data.
- ✓ **Creating branded experiences** Offer CRM systems to help clients engage customers and prospects through compelling marketing, salesforce automation and customer service.

Integrate Artificial Intelligence with Your CRM System

A report published by Bpm'online entitled "Top Intelligent Tools That Every Marketing Professional Should Have in 2017" makes a case for integrating artificial intelligence (AI) with your CRM system to translate data into knowledge-based client and prospect interactions. AI is intelligent technology that leverages historical data and applies what is learned to current contexts to make predictions that can be used for:

- ✓ **Intelligent data enrichment** Automatically append missing or additional information on a contact from internal or external sources.
- ✓ **Intelligent segmentation** Automatically assign new leads to the most relevant segment and map them to existing clients based on specific criteria.
- ✓ **Smarter campaigns** Adjust marketing processes and optimize campaigns.
- ✓ **Next-best-action marketing** Consider various actions that can be taken for a specific contact and decide on the best alternative.
- ✓ **Predictive lead scoring** Algorithms that identify key factors that influence lead maturity and assign the most appropriate weight to each factor.

- ✓ **Intelligent lead routing** Determine which professional to hand off the lead to based on their expertise, pipeline load or other parameters.
- ✓ **Intelligent nurturing campaigns** Analyze browsing activities, profile information, behavior, information and service requests, and other data to automatically assign leads to the most relevant nurturing campaign.
- ✓ **Smarter marketing strategies** Scrutinize a labyrinth of data for insight on developing strategies to better engage prospects, improve lead quality and forecast outcomes.
- ✓ **Streamline processes across the client's journey** Effectively handle the client experience from the first interaction to client acquisition to cross-selling additional services and building brand loyalty.

Staying on top of innovations to create more value for clients will set you apart from the competition. When you look at where most firms are in what they offer, it is easy to see that the focus needs to be on client-centric applications that deliver value-added solutions.

About the Author

Eileen Monesson, CPC, principal with PRCounts, is a strategic marketer and coach who creates market dominating brands. She can be contacted at 848-459-3130 or emonesson@PRCounts.com.

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4. Valuable Content The best content is technically accurate and tailored to your audience as well as your firm's services. Google is also ranking sites higher when they have in-depth blog posts and articles (found through long-tail searches).

5. Lead Scoring Buyers can be scared off (or annoyed) if you approach them too soon. Marketing automation lets you keep score on leads appropriately and catch them at the right phase of the buying process—not too soon and not too late.

The technology is available now for B2B marketers to entice online prospects with their knowledge and services just as B2C marketers have been doing for at least a decade. These campaigns follow up on prospects automatically, saving the marketer time and supporting business development 24/7—whenever and wherever that prospect is ready to search. The question is: are you ready?

About the Author

Christine Nelson is a lead communications consultant at Ingenuity Marketing Group in St. Paul, MN. She helps professionals develop content that gets noticed, downloaded and shared. www.ingenuitymarketing.com

Result:

UTM tagging enabled us to gain a number of insights. For Example:

- ✓ **Medium:** The most website traffic was generated by our sponsored LinkedIn updates and tweets (CPC medium), followed by email, and then banner ads.
- ✓ **Conversions:** We were able to see how mediums differed in terms of engagement. For instance, while the sponsored updates and tweets generated great brand awareness with high traffic and a large number of new website sessions, our email communications had higher conversion rates (e.g., whitepaper downloads, webinar sign-ups) and engagement with our website (e.g., more page views).
- ✓ **Performance of Specific Communications:** We were able to evaluate the performance of specific emails, social posts, ads, etc. For example, our May 4 webinar invite attracted the most traffic and sign-ups, but our May 11 invite produced a higher conversion rate. And within communications, we were able to see which calls to action were more successful. We could also note the differences in ad performance. Since link tagging is so useful for A/B testing, we saw that we could leverage this type of analysis to a greater extent in future campaigns.
- ✓ **Overall Results:** Of course, we were also able to report on total numbers that could be tracked to the 2016 election initiative – website sessions, downloads, webinar sign-ups, subscriptions, etc. – and ultimately, which leads came from which campaigns.

Below is an excerpt from Google Analytics to give you a better sense of the information you can glean from tagging. You can view the source, medium and number of web sessions generated for each campaign. You can also see a number of engagement metrics, including the number of goal conversions.

Campaign	Source / Medium	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions	
		Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions
		528 % of Total: 6.03% (8,749)	65.91% Avg for View: 78.91% (-16.48%)	348 % of Total: 5.04% (6,904)	53.03% Avg for View: 50.49% (5.04%)	2.00 Avg for View: 3.09 (-35.43%)	00:01:10 Avg for View: 00:01:39 (-29.46%)	16.67% Avg for View: 1.34% (1,146.30%)	88 % of Total: 75.21% (117)
1. webinarinvitemay4_2016_election	evite_clients_tax_other_subscribers / email	102 (19.32%)	61.76%	63 (18.10%)	48.04%	2.08	00:01:15	27.45%	28 (31.82%)
2. webinarinvitemay11_2016_election	evite_clients_tax_other_subscribers / email	45 (8.52%)	64.44%	29 (8.33%)	26.67%	3.09	00:01:28	42.22%	19 (21.59%)
3. 2016_election_njbiz_ad	njbiz / banner	37 (7.01%)	86.49%	32 (9.20%)	81.08%	1.19	00:00:02	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
4. 2016_election_linkedin_sponsor_update	linkedin / cpc	26 (4.92%)	92.31%	24 (6.90%)	69.23%	1.58	00:00:25	7.69%	2 (2.27%)

Helpful Hint: To access campaign reporting in Google Analytics, go to Acquisition > Campaigns > All Campaigns.

Conclusion

While other aspects of your campaign outcomes will still be measured outside of Google Analytics, UTM tagging is an important part of the mix. It helps you to easily report on results and determine which techniques contributed most to an initiative's success. Equally important is that it provides insight into how you can improve performance going forward. You get a single place to view your data across all digital channels so that you can compare, analyze and optimize performance.

About the Author

Jill Jacobs is the Chief Marketing Officer of Friedman LLP, a top-ranked accounting and advisory firm with locations throughout New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Beijing. Bringing more than 20 years of experience in professional services marketing, Jill leads the direction of the firm's marketing and growth strategy. Jill can be reached at jjacobs@friedmanllp.com.

Take 5

What is the number one digital marketing tool that you prefer to use and why do you think it's so helpful?



Shelley Lazarescu
Marketing Director, **WISS**



"The number one digital marketing tool for our marketing department is SharpSpring, an automated marketing tool. It helps us optimize our communication as well as giving us insight into our audience and prospects' behavior. The email editor makes it easy for us to format our content in a mobile friendly world. We are also able to build forms to help us track downloads and follow our audience's behavioral path. Having this real-time data aids our department in figuring out which pages are relevant in today's world of shortened attention spans. Lastly, their landing page feature lets us easily build customized pages, whether it be blogs, events, webinars, etc., without having to contact a technical developer. In today's digital world, "content may be king and distribution is queen." Having the right tool to deploy content across channels and measure at the same time will give any marketer an edge to deliver relevant information."

sharpspring.com



Kyle Chandler
Director of Marketing Services,
Hileman Group



"Currently the team at Hileman Group jumps between 4-5 tools a day to best perform their job – things like content optimization, analytics, managing advertising networks and nurturing prospects into customers. If I had to pick just one, I would say Marketo (i.e. marketing automation). Your marketing automation platform truly acts as the infrastructure or engine of your marketing programs. It allows you to quickly launch and enable new programs in less time as well as manage complicated buyer journeys with multiple personas. It truly allows your team to do more with less. Once you have the system in place it allows you to quickly measure new programs and benchmark against others with very little manual data pulling. A definite must-have tool for any in-house digital marketing team or B2B company!"

www.marketo.com



Jesse Hutcheson
Digital and Marketing Strategist,
PBMares, LLP



"Digital marketing automation is critical to grow your web traffic and, more importantly, your reach, reputation and lead generation. There are hundreds of different platforms to assist in automating your digital marketing efforts. At PBMares, our team has been successful in using the CRM HubSpot. The platform allows us to create and schedule our blog posts, manage our social media channels and, most importantly, capture the data we need to develop and improve our digital marketing strategy. HubSpot incorporates landing pages, calls-to-action and forms to capture customer information, which has been very beneficial to our business development team."

www.hubspot.com/marketing-automation-information



Jason Jobgen
Director, National Tax Services, **BKD, LLP**



"No doubt the digital marketing tool I use most is our automated email marketing system. I sign up a client or prospect to receive content related to a specific subject or industry and I know my contact will receive any article, event or alert the firm puts out related to the criteria I select."



Cheryl Foster
Marketing Manager,
Brown Smith Wallace LLP



"Right now, our team is very excited about Canva, a free drag-and-drop graphic design tool. The online platform allows people that have no graphic design skills to create designs. It's so quick and easy to use. We're really busy. Canva significantly reduces the amount of time we spend making simple graphics."

www.canva.com

The Power of Pay Per Click in Finance



We live in a world of the informed consumer – one who spends at least 75% of their time online (Pew), and assumes the burden of research, rather than allowing brands to own the education and subsequent conversion process. Add to this a growing market penetration of mobile devices (65% of US adults access the internet from smart phones), and it becomes

more and more critical that marketing budgets have a digital plan in place. The problem with digital marketing is that it is not a simple media buy: any digital marketing medium you'd look to incorporate has rules of engagement, which if not followed, can lead to wasted spend.

So why should you build pay per click (PPC) in to your marketing plan?

Lead Quality: Know exactly what is responsible for your best and worst prospects and funnel marketing dollars accordingly.

One of the main reasons PPC advertising (AdWords and Bing) has become so popular is the unprecedented view it allows into what is working and what is not. Instead of having to build in promos so you can tag a user that came from a traditional media buy, now it's matter of considering your account and seeing that the conversion (desired action) came from a particular keyword in an ad group in a campaign. Conversely, if you see any part of your account is spending without converting, you know where to focus your optimization efforts, and/or pull the plug.

In finance this is especially important: there's a long funnel for a prospect to go through before they're ready to make an investment, or commit to a financial advisor. In paid search, we're focused on mid- to low-funnel users who have already researched terms like "is xyz right for me?" or "how much is a cpa?" Instead, we're going to bid on keywords (how we enter AdWords/Bing search auctions) with a more transactional nature: "cpa near me," "financial advisor services" and "tax prep services." The distinction in the keyword concepts is that the former group is still researching whether they will need financial services and figuring out how to budget for said services. The

latter implies the prospect is ready to engage in services in the immediate future and will be receptive to transactional language.

ROI Transparency: See direct correlation between marketing spend and real world profit.

One of the most important reasons to leverage PPC is the transparency into return on investment (ROI) it provides. While it's true you need to get structure right (we'll get to that in a moment), a well-constructed AdWords/Bing account can provide unparalleled forecasting into lead flow and profit. For example, when we allocate \$500 a day, and we factor in the average cost per click (CPC) for the finance industry (\$3.72), we know we'll get around 134 clicks per day. When we factor in the average conversion rate for the finance industry (7.19%), we can expect 9-10 qualified leads per day.

Knowing this, it's not surprising that the financial industry spends around 8.37 billion on PPC marketing. However, many brands find themselves drowning in the many set-up tasks that go into creating a well-balanced account. These action items sometimes go uncompleted or are not set up correctly:

- ✓ Conversion tracking: How we can see what led to a successful interaction
- ✓ Using automatic bidding strategies too early: Telling Google/Bing to use account data to inform what bids should be used and which ads/ad groups should be served
- ✓ Setting a budget too low to get enough clicks in the day
- ✓ Including keyword concepts that are too research oriented in nature

It's easy to fall into these pitfalls and miss the value of PPC, especially the technical ones like conversion tracking. Luckily there are options to help with management that fit how involved you would like to be in the account.

Option One: Leverage a Management Platform

Depending on the age/state of the account, managing PPC can take anywhere from 15-20 hours per week (which is why many brands opt to hire a full-time professional to manage their accounts for them). If the account manager also must manage learning the mechanics of PPC as well as overall account management, this timeframe can double. This is why many advertisers turn to account management tools designed to optimize workflow, provide prescriptive suggestions, focused analytics, or some hybrid of the three.

Not all platforms are the right fit for every business so it's important to go in with a checklist of most important features and how much human vs. in-software assistance you will want. Here's a good framework to help you decide between the management platforms on the market:

1. What is your monthly spend?
2. How much do you already know about PPC and how much do you need to learn as you go?
3. Do you work better with lots of data points and graphs, or do you work better with guided action items?
4. Will you want a consultant/dedicated rep?
5. Are you looking for a platform that will manage multiple networks?

In most cases, management platforms will live "on top" of your existing accounts, and will have a monthly/annual subscription rate. How can you assess ROI on the platform? Here are some examples:

- ✓ **Go2Africa saw a 193% increase in conversions**
- ✓ **Koru K9 saw an 80% decrease in Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)**
- ✓ **Residential Home Health Care saw online lead generation jump 200% in just four months for same period last year stats.**

All of these brands use a management platform to manage their ad spend. In addition to the added profit, they free up time to go to the many other tasks a marketer or C-level professional has on their plate. Many management platforms focus on consolidating tasks into a manageable hour or less per week.

Option Two: Outsource PPC to an agency/ make the internal hire

As powerful as account management platforms can be, sometimes profit deadlines just don't allow for taking on the task of PPC. Offloading the paid account to an agency can free up precious time, and ensure the marketing budget is used as effectively as possible. The main reasons to turn to an agency are:

1. There is no time/desire to learn PPC
2. The account is too large to manage within the scope of other tasks
3. Spend exceeds \$5K per month
4. Existing account manager is leaving and there isn't time to hire another
5. The account requires complicated structures

It's important to find an agency that knows your industry and can incorporate you into the process. Take WordStream customer Adaptive Insights, that turned to WordStream's agency to manage its account due to time and complexity. Some of these wins include:

- ✓ **An increase in average click-through rate of 30%**
- ✓ **Average position has increased by 5% since August**
- ✓ **CPA decreases across several areas, including remarketing, non-brand forecasting and budget campaigns, and Display initiatives**

Make 2017 the year of optimized lead flow, and data-centric marketing—try PPC today.

About the Author

Navah Hopkins is part of the Customer Success and Thought Leadership team at WordStream, with a passion for innovation, and all things data. When she's not working on PPC, she blogs about her favorite trends in online marketing, innovation, and finance, with the end goal of making complex concepts accessible to all. Navah can be reached at nhopkins@wordstream.com.



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Q&A with Scott Wayne

What book are you currently reading?

Sapiens: A Brief History of Mankind. Yuval Noah Harari is a brilliant historian who captures the history of Homo sapiens (we're only one kind of "human") in vivid, beautiful and funny writing. Everyone should read it.

Who do you most admire and why?

Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, is being incredibly brave in standing for her beliefs in defending refugees and the European Union. She may not survive this upcoming election, but if she doesn't she'll go down fighting for what she believes is true, not that which wins votes.

Favorite place to travel?

Anywhere I don't understand the language, there aren't many chain hotels/restaurants and I can wander without a car. Ho Chi Minh City would be a great example.

What qualities do you think make a good leader?

Clarity of purpose; leaders who stretch the people they lead and give and receive brutally honest feedback. I don't believe in "empowerment" or "servant-leadership" models.

If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?

I would instill myself with greater patience and become a better listener.

What character trait do you most value in your friends?

Loving my kids. I'm lucky to have incredible friends who treat my kids as their own, and vice versa. Feels like a commune sometimes...

What do you do with your down time or how do you relax?

Trail run, kayak, hike – pretty much anything outdoors. As far from a Macbook as I can possibly be...

What trends do you see shaping the future?

Artificial intelligence and robotics are going to turn our worlds upside down. Potentially millions of jobs displaced. When Uber or Google crack the driverless vehicle, we'll see millions out of work overnight. Law firm and accounting firm associates are increasingly going to be displaced by AI. We're going to have to reinvent our skills and the definition of "work."

With the increase in technology, how do we not lose the human touch?

I'm excited at the counter trends to technology – the explosive growth in farmers markets, the increasing demand for locally made products, community groups – that suggest that while we'll all be engaged with technology a great deal on a global scale, there's a hyper-local countermovement to balance it out.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

Chase your passion, the money will follow. If you chase the money, the passion will never find you.

What is one piece of advice you'd like to share with our readers?

Nobody has the "right" answers. Embrace what you believe is right. Fight for it. And be open to changing your mind.

About Scott Wayne

Scott is a partner with The Envoy Portfolio, a social-impact negotiation support and market influence firm that works on a small number of discrete initiatives to deliver positive outcomes for clients, society and the environment.



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