

WPROMOTE

11 DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2019



If we were all challengers, what would digital marketing look like in 2019?

11 bold predictions to guide your marketing strategy

At Wpromote, our motto is to Think Like A Challenger, and we strive to live that every day. So when it comes to looking towards the future, we don't want to just retrace the same old ideas and deliver obvious predictions. Video will be a key marketing strategy in 2019? Segmentation and personalization will drive success? Tell me more, o digital prophet!

In lieu of digital prophesying, we're asking of ourselves what we ask of our clients: to think beyond the status quo. What would happen if we truly embodied the Challenger mindset and pushed it to the max?

Let's take a look at both specific trends and underlying currents that are shaping our industry.



We're asking of ourselves what we ask of our clients: to think beyond the status quo



1,000 Ft. View: Digital Trends & Predictions

8 actionable tactics to help you plot your course

The Ubiquity of Voice Search

Much has been made of the rise of in-home assistants, and how their presence has changed the nature of the top results on SERPs. With the rise of voice search, marketers have been told to go after long-tail keywords that more closely mimic spoken language, and to focus on local queries like “best restaurants near me” to bring in those ready-to-convert bottom-funnel customers. But voice search is only getting started: as new devices like smart watches, in-car voice command, and on-the-go smartphone assistants like Google and Siri become ever more ubiquitous, this search niche may soon be niche no more.

While home assistants such as Amazon’s Alexa, Apple’s Siri, and Google Home are certainly on the rise, it’s mobile voice search that will dominate the

voice search market in 2019. Voice search is tied closely to the ascendancy of mobile devices, as the two naturally go hand in hand. Making your business both mobile responsive and primed for voice search keywords is going to be the way of the future in 2019.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

The “50% of searches will be voice search by 2020” stat will be debunked and will NOT come to pass. Focus on your mobile strategies and quality content, and success with search will naturally follow.



Revamping Micro-Influencer Marketing

With some infamous macro-influencer stumbles, such as Pepsi's poorly received 2017 ad with Kendall Jenner, it's become clear that megawatt, high-view celebrity endorsements may not be the best way to go. But while big-name celebrity endorsements may be on the way out, a different star is rising to take their place: micro-influencers. These far smaller influencers on Instagram, YouTube, and other social channels may have follower counts in the single digit thousands, but their communities are much more tight-knit and based on sincere belief and trust in the influencer.



These micro-influencers are less expensive while simultaneously more likely to build long-term loyalty and goodwill with the audience you're hoping to engage. Micro-influencers help strengthen your customer lifetime value and build your lifetime profits rather than creating short-term revenue windfalls that lead to long-term losses.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Even brands who can afford celebrity influencers will replace them with micro-influencers, and you'll see celeb promotions (and payouts) drop dramatically.

Fully Connecting Offline & Online

Gone are the days of incomplete customer journeys, hindered by multitouch, multi-device paths that often alternate between offline and on. New tools have made it possible to better connect a user's session from the moment they start shopping online to when they actually walk into your location, and now that these sessions can be properly tracked and attributed, campaign reporting is more accurate than ever.

These tools include geofenced ads, coupons received online to be redeemed offline, email registration or customer surveys at the point-of-sale, and in-store beacons which tie a user's smart device to their online session ID. Google and Facebook also both offer their own tools for offline tracking. In 2019 and beyond, this abundance of tools will mean that advertisers no longer have an excuse not to connect their offline and online customers—and the customer journey will become fully transparent.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

In 2019 and beyond, offline-to-online attribution will become an expectation instead of an aspiration. Businesses will require their tracking to be seamless, and will spend the largest bucket of their yearly budget on making this happen. Agencies and in-house teams will have to take note.

The End of Last-Click Attribution

For many years, simple last-click attribution was all advertisers thought they needed to properly attribute sales. But the rapid growth of digital commerce totally upended this piece of common wisdom, and these days many different attribution models are needed to accurately account for complex customer journeys that wander across devices, both online and off. Standard-position and rules-based attribution models will soon become a thing of the past as their inherent biases and limited insights prevent advertisers from really seeing the full picture.

Instead, the next few years will see data-driven attribution rise to the fore. This computationally complex model of attribution constantly adjusts based on what new information is available, becoming a living algorithm that changes in real time.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Challenger brands will all have living models that grow and change in response to data analysis in 2019.

Amazon Advertising as the Next Digital Pillar

The major players of search marketing have long consisted of Google AdWords, Bing Ads, and Yahoo Gemini. But Amazon, different from them all as an Ecommerce giant, wants to disrupt this status quo. Amazon Advertising has already been a quickly rising force; according to [eMarketer](#), Amazon has grown to

become the number 3 digital ad seller in America as of 2018. To get to the heart of this meteoric rise, you have to understand Amazon's most fundamental strength: its install base.

Leading US Retail Mobile Apps, Ranked by Unique Visitors, March 2018

	Unique visitors (millions)	Total time spent (millions of minutes)
Amazon	110.5	11,277
Walmart	39.1	1,191
Samsung	33.9	240
Wish.com	30.9	1,793
eBay	30.9	1,612
Starbucks	19.6	515
shopkick	16.1	1,456
Target	15.1	486
The Kroger Co.	12.0	393
Walgreens	12.0	231

Note: ages 18+; includes mobile app only
Source: comScore Mobile Metrix, April 20, 2018

Combine this enormous and continually growing base of visitors with the robust ad options that Amazon offers both on and off its site and you get a juggernaut that can only continue to grow, making the [question of Amazon](#) more crucial than ever.

Challengers will know not to approach Amazon Advertising as if you're approaching a retail behemoth; Amazon Advertising is smaller and scrappier, and will require its own unique strategies.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Although Amazon is a relative newcomer to the advertising space, expect them to go head-to-head with Google and Facebook. A small portion of retail brands will spend more on Amazon Marketing than Google or Facebook.



LTV: The New Gold Standard

Wpromote has written extensively about the merits of lifetime value, including [why LTV is the future of marketing](#) and [how to calculate it](#). It is the one metric to actually get to the heart of what marketers want to see from any campaign: long-term profits in *addition* to short-term profits, not just either/or.

LTV helps brands lock in on their most valuable customers, get more brand loyalty and profit from those same customers, and cost-effectively find new customers that fit the profile of their existing high-value customers. Revenue, ROI, and even profits may fluctuate in the short term, but LTV will always clearly indicate whether efforts are succeeding or plateauing and where to adjust your strategy to keep that LTV high.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

For Challenger brands, LTV will overtake revenue as the number one key metric in business decisions and planning.

AI, Chatbots, & Automated Customer Service

Though some businesses balk at the “tech wizardry” they believe AI requires, the technology has actually never been more accessible or more useful. AI chatbots are exploding in popularity, offering social media users the chance to interact with a smart helper that helps them avoid long, automated phone calls. Brands benefit by saving big using these clever tools that eschew the need for costly, complicated call centers. While the culture around AI technology remains cautious, expect this to change rapidly in the next few years as the technology grows ever more sophisticated.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

AI chatbots will begin to drive lead generation instead of being solely a customer service tool. Expect chatbots to point site visitors to speak with sales, or even offer product recommendations.



The Evolution of Social Media Video

There has been much ado about the rise of video in social media and the ways in which video utterly dominates digital. While social for video will remain a crucial element in 2019 and beyond, it may be counter to existing expectations; thanks to inflated viewer metrics, we now know that users engage much differently with video than we previously believed. To truly experience video success, brands will need to shift their focus from video as an add-on to an existing strategy to video as the focal point of their entire strategy and their budget.

With the possibility that users may be watching less video than previously believed, which videos they do watch to completion will become much more crucial. Brands seeking to win on social media will need to significantly adjust their strategies to produce engaging and unique videos that hook audiences and keep them watching.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

The vast majority of marketing videos produced in 2019 will be under the 10 second mark.





30,000 Ft. View: The Underlying Changes Affecting Digital

3 overarching themes to guide your journey

We love specific strategies, but we also want to see what fundamental shifts are at the root of upcoming change.

Digital marketing as an industry is constantly evolving, and as progress marches on, advertisers will find new ways to adapt as inefficiencies fall by the wayside. These three broad market shifts tell us where the industry is going and what we can expect when we get there.

The End of Cheap Money

While interest rates had been near zero for over a decade, since 2017 they've steadily increased. The previous "buy 'til you die" strategy flourished in the era of cheap money. But as this changes, marketers will have to pivot to focus on efficiency. Large firms with the advantage of scale may have an advantage over medium-sized companies, and everyone will become more concerned with value and efficacy.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Access to cash won't change overnight, but over the long term, it will force marketers to prioritize efficiency.

The Shift from Execution to Strategy

Performance marketing is exiting a phase. Whereas companies that were the best at direct response were also often the best at investment allocation, machine learning is changing this. Decisions are moving to the sell side (Google, Facebook) and are only improving in effectiveness. The value of strong marketers (agencies or in-house) will swing back to strong strategy, creativity, and ideation on how to leverage the decisions along the way.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Execution is the easy part; value will be in smarter strategy which can adapt on the fly to a volatile industry. With as little bias as possible, companies will look to agencies that can deliver these strategic wins.

Layering Strategy Is the New Normal

Building on our discussion of online/offline connection, the complex customer journey will affect channels on an integrated level. Given the sheer number of channels, the smartest marketers will go beyond bidding or messaging or imagery.



Instead, they'll focus on how intelligently hundreds (or thousands) of bids, messages, and images can be applied to the myriad outputs of so many layers: geographic, audience, device, and browser, along with first and third party data. The only way to get closer to the 1:1 connection between brand and buyer is to use as many layers as available. Data science teams will be necessary to inform marketers who will have to ensure that each micro-segment has a chance to receive a unique, personalized message.



BOLD CHALLENGER PREDICTION

Challenger brands will have layering in over half of their campaigns.

APPROACHING DIGITAL TRENDS

With all of these changes in mind, both on an individual channel level and more broadly across the industry, it can be difficult to feel adequately prepared. The key is to adapt your digital campaigns and strategy as you go, while continually thinking toward the future in both overarching and channel-specific ways.

We've presented 2019 in the Challenger Mindset, but many companies will continue with ho-hum planning and lackluster results. If you're ready to take on convention and test the digital boundaries, you might break even the boldest predictions.

WPROMOTE

READY TO BE A CHALLENGER?



Wpromote's expert team of marketers know how to transform your digital plan to find success.

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