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Digital marketing trends to watch in 2019

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The digital landscape changes every day. Social media outlets make updates to algorithms, affecting what's in your personal feed, new technologies like chatbots and augmented reality (AR) emerge, and the amount of content on the internet grows exponentially.

This year saw a rise in video — especially food-related and live videos — and privacy issues were brought to the forefront. Instagram launched IGTV and flipped our perspective of video, Apple is building on AR technologies to allow users to animate themselves with Memojis, and more brands are embracing chatbots to assist with customer service needs, answer questions and survey



customers. Amber Bloom

Today, consumers crave quality content but are bombarded daily with Facebook updates, video ads,

push notifications and more. As we look ahead to 2019, here are some digital marketing trends to integrate into your marketing strategy to help your brand stand out among the noise.

Transparency and privacy

One of the biggest news stories of 2018 was centered around privacy issues on Facebook and the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Since then, executives from Facebook, Twitter and Google have all been called to appear in front of Congress. That, coupled with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation earlier this year in Europe, brings forward a call for transparency and better privacy controls.

As an industry, we're familiar with transparency in other aspects of our businesses. Consumers want to know where their food comes from, how it's grown and transported to their local store. The same applies on a digital level. Consumers who visit your website, subscribe to your newsletter or sign up for your rewards card want to know what their information will be used for and if it will be stored in a secure place.

Make it personal

Personalization is more than simply adding a name to an email, there's a deeper level of personalization that consumers are looking for. Social media feeds are oversaturated with content, ads and updates from friends and family. Consumers are craving a unique experience. They want one-on-one conversations that meet their needs.

Information can be gleaned from consumer purchase histories, clicks on emails and tracking pixels on your website to help customize the information you send to consumers. Instead of sending one email listing new coupons to all customers, offering targeted emails based on purchase history or past coupon usage can result in an uptick on engagement. According to Statista, open rates for personalized emails were 5.7 percent higher than those without personalization.

Alternative ways of searching

The days of pulling up your web browser on your desktop computer, going to Google.com and typing in your search query are dwindling. New ways of searching, like voice or visual search, are on the rise. Nearly one-third of the 3.5 billion daily search queries on Google are voice searches. With smartphones and the adoption of smart technologies like Amazon Alexa, more consumers are speaking to devices to get information.

Pinterest, Google and Microsoft are also leading the charge on visual search. Consumers have the ability to point their camera at a storefront and pull up information like store hours or a phone number. In-store, shoppers can snap a photo of strawberries or bananas in Pinterest to pull up recipes and more, which can lead to an increase in basket size.

CEOs go social

People connect with people. While hiring a spokesperson for your brand can help amplify your message, in this era of transparency it's important for your company leaders to be visible. Not only can this help boost your company's image and build trust with customers, these "social CEOs" can also humanize your brand, attract potential employees and position your company as leaders in the industry.

The influence of great content

In the digital age, content is king. Traditional advertising is struggling, and consumers are turning to content to drive their purchasing decisions. In turn, brands are spreading their message through

influencers, advertorials and sponsored content.

Turning to influencer marketing to build content doesn't mean going after ones with the largest following or securing a celebrity to push your message. In fact, according to a study by Collective Bias, a leader in shopper-focused influencer marketing, only 3 percent of consumers would consider purchasing a product in-store when promoted by a celebrity, compared to 60 percent when promoted by an influencer.

Brands need to be agile with their digital marketing, ready to think outside of the box, adapt to the changing landscape and be unafraid of experimentation. Humanizing your brand, turning to influencers to help spread your message and offering a customized experience to consumers can all help elevate your business.

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