



# Marketing Health Check

Compare your current efforts to gauge the health of your plan against the seven essential new-media marketing strategies that attract customers and outdistance the competition.

Are your marketing efforts producing the return on investment you expect? This seven-point marketing health check can help you identify the weak spots to rev up your campaigns and achieve your marketing goals. Get your pencils ready, and see how your current plan stacks up.



Part of the 2014  
Success Kit series  
developed by

**COX**  
Media®



## HEALTH CHECK 1

### Are you embracing the Internet?

Television advertising remains as the best way to reach consumers, with cable TV giving advertisers powerful options to target specific consumer groups. Internet advertising is an ideal companion to TV advertising, delivering opportunities to strengthen brand awareness and recall. A March 2013 study by the Temkin Group showed that **Americans now spend 3.8 hours daily on non-work-related Internet activity.**<sup>1</sup>

Using only one kind of marketing media makes it increasingly difficult for advertisers to reach today's shoppers. Consumers love television as much as ever, but they are also embracing new web-based technologies to stay informed – frequently at the same time. Together, the two channels create a powerful impact. Combining TV and online strategies increases message recall by 44% and brand recall by 36%.<sup>2</sup>

Your business website is an obvious foot in the door to online marketing success, but you need to make an effort to drive customers to your site.

**Online display advertising is one of the most affordable and effective avenues for generating traffic both to your site and your physical location.**

For example, a large national concert producer was relying only on 30-second television commercials. It liked the results but wanted more. The goal was to sell more tickets to its summer concert series while reaching a younger demographic. So it supplemented the 30-second commercials with banner ads and adjusted its programming to appeal to a younger audience. The concert producer used a single banner ad one month and had such great success promoting its summer concerts that it added nine more banner ads to its schedule the following month.

With online advertising, you can nab prominent placement on some of the most-visited websites in your trading area at an affordable price, providing you with valuable exposure to specific customer groups. Craft your marketing

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## HEALTH CHECK 1

### Are you embracing the Internet? (continued)

campaign so that display ads appear on sites that feature content that's relevant to your business and target customers. **Geotargeting lets you reach consumers in particular neighborhoods and ZIP codes surrounding your business.**

Hauser-Ross Eye Institute & Surgicenter near Chicago increased revenue more than 300% when it deployed a geotargeting campaign that took advantage of locally driven keywords to attract customers to nearby offices.<sup>3</sup>

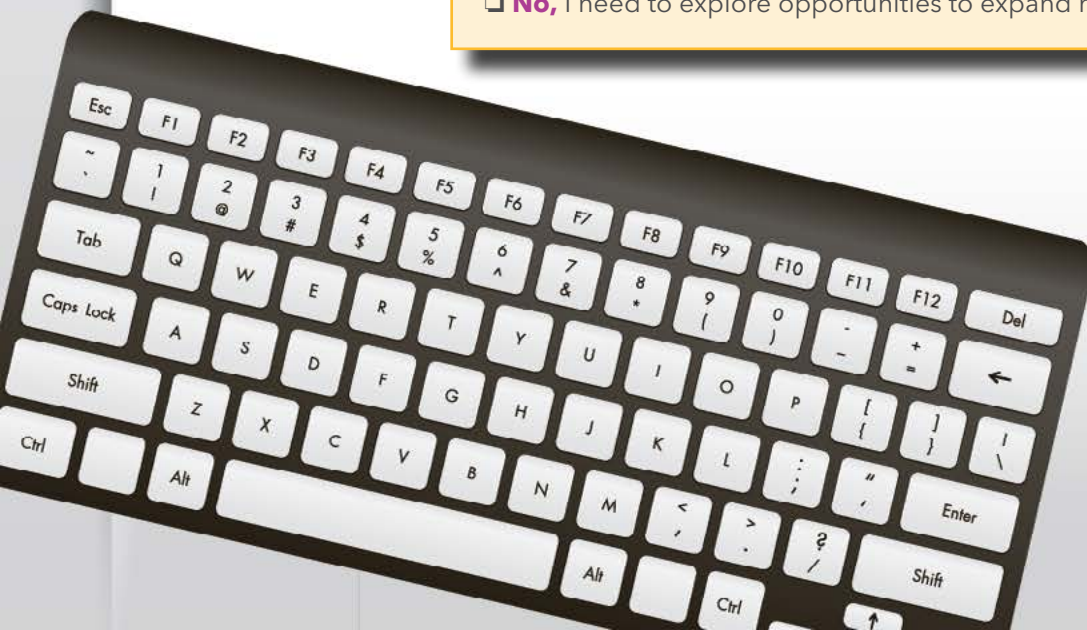
Paid search can make sure that when customers are seeking a business like yours online, your name will appear on the first page of their search results, not buried on page nine where they'll never see it.

Your website and online marketing campaigns should be optimized to make them readable on smartphones and tablets. **Annual mobile local search queries will exceed desktop search queries by more than 27 billion by the year 2016**, according to a BIA/Kelsey study.<sup>4</sup> Mobile search optimization is made more urgent by the fact that mobile searches occur closer to the moment of purchase than desktop searches.

☐ **YES!** I am optimizing my Internet presence and keeping up with changing media preferences, including:

- ☐ Website
- ☐ Online advertising
- ☐ Paid search
- ☐ Mobile-enabled advertising
- ☐ Geotargeting

☐ **No,** I need to explore opportunities to expand my online presence.





## HEALTH CHECK 2

### Are you telling a good story?

Storytelling is the oldest form of marketing, but don't mistake that to mean it's old-fashioned. The average consumer is inundated with marketing messages every day, so will they remember yours?

The campfire is virtual and very large, offering many avenues to reach customers and potential customers. **Storytelling is a powerful and cost-effective way to deepen relationships with customers.** A recent Stanford study showed that stories are 22 times more memorable than facts alone.<sup>7</sup> If you can start your story and get your friends to tell their friends, your story can go viral with amazing results.

Storytelling may seem obvious on TV, but it transcends media type and is important online as well. Visual storytelling plays to customers' emotions in a much more powerful way than a list of even your most compelling selling points. But keep in mind that a business story is not a random post or tweet. The stories you share should relay a consistent message, and that message should include elements that reinforce your core business principles, such as value, service and reliability. **Whenever you have the opportunity to make your story visual, grab it.**

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A tiny start-up called Dollar Shave Club has disrupted the men's shaving industry by focusing on its story: why it can – and does – charge so little for razors. The company released a humorous video on YouTube explaining why "shaving need not be expensive."<sup>8</sup> The video went viral with millions of views, and thousands of people instantly signed up for Dollar Shave's subscription razor service. Why is Dollar Shave's campaign so effective? Because, just like the company and its founder (who appears in the ad), it's simple, real and rule-breaking. Dollar Shave Club hasn't limited its marketing efforts to just viral videos. The company has embraced a marketing mix that includes TV sponsorships, commercials and radio sponsorships as well.

The Dodge Ram "God Made a Farmer" commercial from Super Bowl 2013 is another great example.<sup>9</sup> The ad worked so well – and was shared so much –

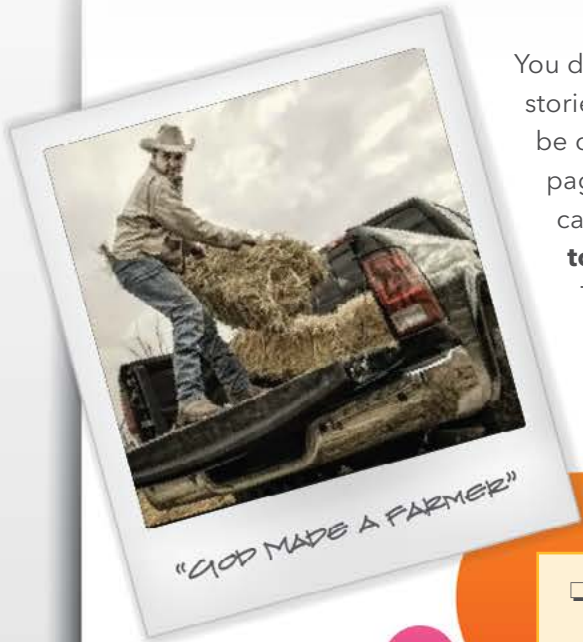




## HEALTH CHECK 2

### Are you telling a good story? (continued)

because it tells a story about the life of a farmer and invokes traditional rural values, like hard work and reliability, that Dodge would like consumers to believe reside in its pick-ups.



You don't need a General Motors marketing budget to tell stories that draw consumers to your company. Your stories can be conveyed in a blog, on your website or on your Facebook page. Indeed, social media can enhance an existing marketing campaign at low cost. **Incorporate the messages you want to convey in a creative way that will engage customers.**

Tell a story about how your product or service resolved a customer's problem, share the "aha" moment that inspired the launch of your business, or describe the impact your company intends to make on the community. Whatever you're most passionate about is likely to resonate with customers as well.

- ☐ **YES!** I tell an effective marketing story that stands out from the nearly 5,000 messages per day that my customers see.
- ☐ **No,** my ads rely on features and benefits and don't tell a compelling story.







## HEALTH CHECK 3

### Are your customers telling a good story?

A brand advocate is a highly satisfied customer who goes out of his or her way to recommend your business to friends, family and other consumers. That's crucial, because happy customers are your best marketers. A recent Trust in Advertising report from Nielsen showed that **92% of consumers trust recommendations from friends and family above any type of advertising, an increase of 18% since 2007.** The second-most valued sort of product information is online consumer reviews, which are trusted by 70% of consumers, a rise of 15% since 2007.<sup>5</sup>

If you haven't started to tap into the power of online word of mouth, there are some simple ways to get started. Begin by making a habit of asking loyal customers for their email addresses, and use them to distribute a review form that makes it simple to share their rave reviews via Yelp, Twitter and Facebook. Don't worry about imposing; **about a third of customers who are very satisfied with your product or service will be happy to take the time to recommend you to others,** says social media marketing firm Zuberance.<sup>6</sup>

When possible, use your positive reviews in your advertising media and even on your homepage. Also keep in mind that your brand advocates are excellent defenders of your online reputation. **Research shows that as many as two-thirds of consumers will form a negative opinion about a brand after reading just one to three negative reviews,** so you should encourage your brand advocates to post positive feedback regularly. View any negative comment as an opportunity to provide an outstanding response and great customer service. Monitor your social media pages regularly, and act immediately when anything negative arises. Start with a sincere apology for the negative experience, and then offer a solution that may save the customer. Not sure what to do to make them happy? Just ask.

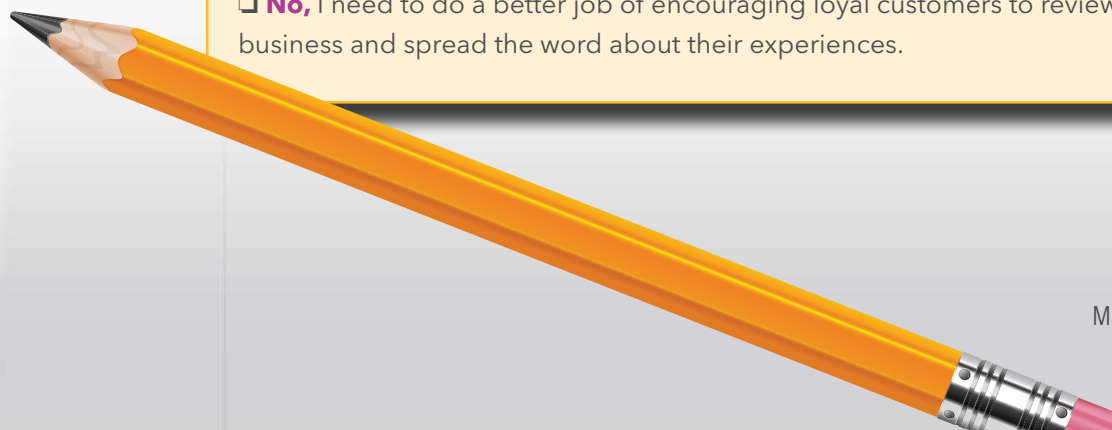
☐ **YES!** I am leveraging the power of my loyal customers as brand advocates by:

- ☐ Regularly gathering customer email addresses
- ☐ Distributing forms to encourage online reviews
- ☐ Monitoring customer feedback on social media
- ☐ Intervening to satisfy unhappy customers online

☐ **No,** I need to do a better job of encouraging loyal customers to review my business and spread the word about their experiences.



BRAND ADVOCATES





## HEALTH CHECK 4

### Are you helping or hyping?

Every consumer is faced with an information avalanche, seeing as many as 5,000 advertising messages per day.<sup>10</sup> In this environment, it can be hard to distinguish yourself from the next guy and reach consumers. The challenge is especially difficult online, where you're competing not only against other companies like yours, but also against Facebook friends, celebrity tweets and silly cat videos.

Today's smart marketers are turning to "edutainment marketing" to teach potential customers how their products and services work and what makes them so much better than the competition. By producing helpful content, you increase consumer interest in engaging with your message. By making it entertaining, you ramp up that engagement level and may even encourage viral shares. **Grab customers' attention by turning your marketing messages into information they can use.**

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Blender manufacturer Blendtec has produced a series of 116 edutainment "Will It Blend?" videos that show a company rep demolishing everything from an iPhone to a Justin Bieber action figure.<sup>11</sup> The videos are silly enough to inspire a cult viewing audience, but the marketing point of view is crystal-clear: That's one powerful blender.

Of course, "silly" doesn't translate in every market. Thought leadership offers another path to educating consumers while building a brand. Companies that want to position themselves as authorities in their field may opt to launch a thought leadership campaign. Rather than directly selling products and services, such campaigns focus on sharing information that consumers will find relevant and trustworthy. **The idea is to become a trusted advisor – one that customers will automatically turn to immediately or when they need your product or service somewhere down the road.** (The white paper you're reading right now is a prime example of thought leadership!)

- ☐ **YES!** My advertising answers the question, "What's in it for me?" and does a great job of positioning me as a trusted leader in my industry.
- ☐ **No,** my advertising tends to focus on product and service features and may not do an effective job of differentiating my business from the competition.



## HEALTH CHECK 5

### Are you leveraging multiple ad platforms?

The vast majority of consumers do their research before they make a purchase. They examine products and services on their TVs, desktops, laptops and mobile devices. Limiting yourself to just one of these platforms puts you at an immediate disadvantage in a world where consumers access information differently than they used to. **Embrace additional platforms that your customers are also using.** Research by Videology, an advertising technology company, shows that multiscreen campaigns boost brand recall by a factor of nine times.<sup>12</sup>

Some people turn to many different sources, depending on whether they're searching for entertainment or trying to find a business. Customers are "multi-screening," which means that while they're watching television, they're using their smartphones (46%) and tablets (43%) as second screens – a phenomenon that can inspire them to find you online immediately when they see your TV commercial.

**Reaching the widest possible audience requires that you build a presence on a variety of channels,** ensuring that customers can find you online, from their smartphones and on cable TV. Don't ask yourself, "Which would be more effective, cable TV ads or a mobile Internet campaign?" Do both.



Research by Videology shows that multiscreen campaigns boost brand recall by a factor of nine times.

☐ **YES!** Our company messaging tells a consistent story across at least two channels:

- ☐ TV advertising
- ☐ Internet advertising
- ☐ Mobile advertising

☐ **No,** our current advertising is limited to a single platform.





## HEALTH CHECK 6

### Do you keep customers engaged with “re-marketing”?

Re-marketing emails can generate nearly four times more revenue and 18 times greater net profit than marketing campaigns that use untargeted mailings.

It costs a business at least five times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one, so a 5% increase in customer retention can increase a company's revenue profitability by an impressive 75%.<sup>13</sup> If you don't engage regularly with your existing customers, they'll forget you.

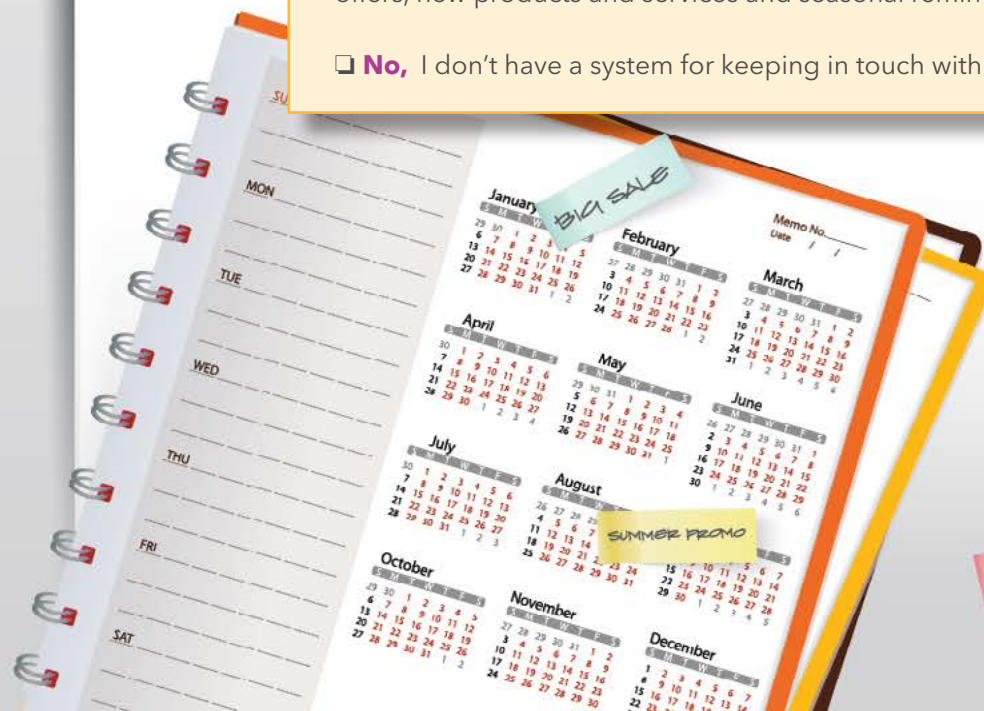
Re-marketing is a strategy you can use to follow up with both customers and potential customers who engage with your company but leave before completing a purchase. **By sending a targeted follow-up email to these customers, you can win them back and get them to complete their order.**

Forrester Research has found that re-marketing emails can generate nearly four times more revenue and 18 times greater net profit than marketing campaigns that use untargeted mailings.<sup>14</sup>

Compile a database of customer email addresses so that you can reach out to them on a regular basis with special offers, new product or service announcements and timely reminders. You can now easily re-market to people who have visited your website and left before making a purchase. You can show them a relevant display ad as they surf the Internet. You can also present them with a tailored message or offer that will help bring them back to your site to complete a purchase.

☐ **YES!** I'm in constant contact with customers, letting them know about special offers, new products and services and seasonal reminders.

☐ **No,** I don't have a system for keeping in touch with customers on a regular basis.





## HEALTH CHECK 7

### Do you have a smart marketing budget?

Information is power. **Try to understand your customers' media habits before setting your marketing budget.** Learn what media they consume, what devices they use and how much time they spend with each type of media. Consulting with a media expert can help here.

Your marketing budget should align with your business objectives, and the dollars can be allocated to the tactics that will most effectively achieve your goals. Customers have changed the way they interact with media, and technology has altered the way they shop. This shifting behavior requires that you shift the way you spend your marketing dollars to reach more consumers and reinforce your message.

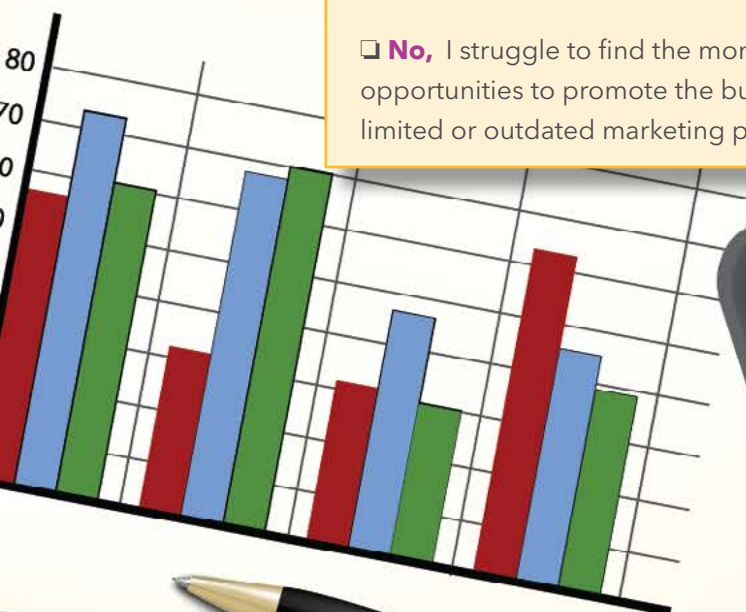
Be sure to explore the effectiveness of new marketing channels, such as mobile and online advertising, and understand how they work in tandem with traditional media to meet today's customers where they are.

*This shifting behavior requires that you shift the way you spend your marketing dollars to reach more consumers and reinforce your message.*

☐ **YES!** I spend 2% to 5% of gross revenues on marketing, with sufficient dollars allocated to:

- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Company website and promotion
- ☐ Marketing campaigns
- ☐ Community events

☐ **No,** I struggle to find the money for marketing and am probably missing opportunities to promote the business to current and potential customers due to a limited or outdated marketing plan.





## CONCLUSION

### Your Health Check Results

- ☐ Are you embracing the Internet?
- ☐ Are you telling a good story?
- ☐ Are your customers telling a good story?
- ☐ Are you helping or hyping?
- ☐ Are you leveraging multiple ad platforms?
- ☐ Do you keep customers engaged with "re-marketing"?
- ☐ Do you have a smart marketing budget?

How many **"YES!"** checkmarks did you earn?

- **If you scored six or higher, you're probably in great shape.**  
Keep listening to your customers to discover new ways to improve and reach them with your messaging.
- **If you scored four to six checkmarks, you could be doing better.** Take the reins to emulate some of the successful strategies we've highlighted in the areas where you need improvement.
- **If you checked fewer than four sections, you may need some help.** Turn to a trusted media professional for guidance on how to update your current marketing and build a robust plan to reach customers throughout the purchase cycle and deliver a strong marketing ROI.

Effective marketing evolves constantly, and new-media marketing can seem like a moving target. Is your business hitting the bull's-eye? Use this check-up regularly to ensure that your marketing strategies are always up to date. Make improvements whenever you can to maximize the return on your marketing investment, and be sure to give healthy strategies the time to generate results.





## RESOURCES

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- <sup>3</sup> "Local SEO: How Geotargeting Keywords Brought 333% More Revenue," Marketing Sherpa, <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article/case-study/how-geotargeting-keywords-brought-333>
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- <sup>9</sup> "God Made a Farmer, 2013 Dodger Super Bowl Commercial," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxQSFF5fuFM&feature=youtu.be>
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- <sup>13</sup> "Five Customer Retention Tips for Entrepreneurs," Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexlawrence/2012/11/01/five-customer-retention-tips-for-entrepreneurs/>
- <sup>14</sup> "Remarketing Done Right," Forrester Research, <http://www.forrester.com/Remarketing+Done+Right/fulltext/-/E-RES58081?isTurnHighlighting=false&highlightTerm=remarketing>



## ABOUT

Cox Media, a wholly owned subsidiary of Cox Communications Inc., partners with both local and national advertisers for marketing success, offering advanced cable and digital advertising products in 20 markets across the United States. In addition to proven media solutions, Cox Media offers consultative insights to help clients reach their audiences more effectively and efficiently. From broad reach, highly rated programs to lasersharptargeting of specific audiences, Cox Media is focused on developing customized marketing solutions that maximize ROI for clients.

