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## GETTING YOUR PIECE OF THE PIE: HOW TO SUCCEED AS A PRINTER IN THE DIGITAL MARKETING AGE

By John Foley, Jr.



## GETTING YOUR PIECE OF THE PIE: HOW TO SUCCEED AS A PRINTER IN THE DIGITAL MARKETING AGE

It's a fact: digital marketing is here to stay. But does that mean the end for printers? Absolutely not, and here's why.

Digital and print marketing are a fantastic team. Each can be used to reach customers in different but effective ways. Both have their strengths and, even better, print and digital play very well together.

Mixed print and digital campaigns can help your customers stay relevant, and help your print business stay strong.

### GET TO KNOW DIGITAL

It's all too easy for printers to think digital has nothing to do with them. After all, their focus is on producing print material. In fact, getting to know and understand digital marketing is an absolute must for printers who want to strengthen their business and ensure long-term survival.

When you understand digital marketing, it's only a short learning curve to understanding how print and digital work together. You already know how to use print marketing to its best effect. Knowing how to combine print and digital will set you above the competition. As your customers embrace digital marketing more and more, your print shop will be able to give them the print they need alongside the digital marketing they want.

Your new-found expertise will position you as the go-to expert for your customers. Your advice will help them understand how print and digital can work together for their business. That means more effective marketing campaigns for them, and more sales and customer loyalty for you.

### WHY PRINT AND DIGITAL ARE A GOOD TEAM

Print and digital don't seem like natural bedfellows, but in fact, they make a strong team. Both tactics have their strengths which complement each other well. Digital is fantastic for immediately accessible, interactive content that inspires interaction and engagement. Print gives customers a tangible, personal product that they can hold in their hands and is wonderful for showcasing products and services and creating a strong impression.

Print and digital can be used to cross-pollinate; or in other words, to drive customers from digital advertising to print products, and vice versa. They are easy to integrate, for example by using social media to encourage customers to sign up for a brochure or using QR codes on print media to drive customers to digital mobile content.

## HOW DIGITAL MAKES PRINT MORE EFFECTIVE

Here's the thing your customers really need to know about using print and digital together: digital makes print trackable. When you incorporate QR codes, personalized URLs, shortened URLs, or Near Field Communication into print marketing for your customers, you give them the ability to track click-through rates. They'll be able to see at a glance how well their campaign is performing, and how many customers and conversions it's bringing in.

This trackability gives print plus digital campaigns an edge over print-only campaigns.

## TYING PRINT AND DIGITAL TOGETHER

There are lots of ways to tie print and digital together in a marketing campaign:

- Use printed materials to drive customers to a website or social media page (by printing the URL or by using a QR code to direct them there).
- Use printed materials to make exclusive offers that can't be accessed any other way (for example a QR code or personalized URL that leads to an exclusive download).
- Print special coupons or codes that can be redeemed online and that aren't available through any other channels.
- Track click-throughs from QR codes or personalized URLs to gauge the effectiveness of cross-media campaigns.
- Use social media to encourage subscriptions to print mailing lists.
- Use email to promote print brochures.
- Use social media or email to encourage customers to sign up for a free gift or content, in return for being willing to receive occasional marketing materials through the mail.

Tying print and digital together like this gives your print shop customers a richer marketing campaign with even wider reach.

## USING DIGITAL TO REACH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Understanding digital isn't just about creating combined print and digital campaigns for your customers. An understanding of digital marketing also gives you the tools to connect with your customers and prospects and encourage them to turn to you for their marketing needs.

Customers are on social media looking for businesses to connect with. They're using search engines to look for the services they want. And when they find those services, they look to social media or email to get in touch. This is as true for printing as it is for any other business.

That's why you need digital marketing. An up-to-date responsive website, easy ways to contact you, and a vibrant social media account or two will give you a strong digital presence. That means you can connect with your customers, remind them why you're the best choice for their needs, and build long-lasting and loyal relationships.

## MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH MARKETING AUTOMATION

Connecting with your customers via digital marketing takes time and focus. That's why marketing automation is a useful choice for any printing company.

We've already established that using digital marketing is a powerful way to build connections with your customers. This can include social media posts and email – and both of those can benefit from marketing automation.

Marketing automation means taking your marketing tasks and setting them to automate. For example, you might choose to craft a careful roll-out of social media messages after a prospect receives a print piece. Or you might choose to trigger a welcome email every time a new customer subscribes to your newsletter or orders their printing online. Then six days later, this triggers an offer via email or direct mail that keeps you in front of your customers. The possibilities are numerous.

Marketing automation makes keeping in touch and getting the right messages in front of your customers and prospects quick and easy. That means a strong online connection and, ultimately, more print shop sales thanks to timely, relevant messages that keep you fresh in their minds.

Now that you understand the value of marrying print and digital in the print materials you create for your customers and in your own marketing, it's time to make a plan. Set out the ways in which digital can help both your print shop and your customers, and draw up a plan for incorporating those benefits into your offerings, and your marketing. With print and digital together you can reach more customers, provide a higher quality service, and keep your print shop going strong into the digital age.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**John Foley, Jr.**

John Foley, Jr. is CEO of interlinkONE and Grow Socially. John and his team speak with print companies on transforming their businesses in the digital age, write strategic online marketing plans, and offer an affordable and easy-to-use marketing automation solution, MAX, that was designed to help print companies tie all their multi-channel marketing efforts together in one place. Learn more about John at [JohnFoleyJr.com](http://JohnFoleyJr.com), and MAX at [MarketWithMAX.com](http://MarketWithMAX.com).

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