



The bleep, bleep, bleep 2015 marketing plan

By Neil Edwards

No, that's not expletives being deleted: it's the sound of a heart monitor! That's what your 2015 marketing plan should be, the heartbeat of your business, pulsing away in the background. Sometimes it will race, other times it will rest a little, but what it will never do is stop.

'Metronomic' became my favourite word in 2014. I love the way it captures our approach to a client's marketing plan. Emails going out as scheduled - sometimes several times a week - drip campaigns following on the back of them; social media being populated multiple times a day; search marketing being 'always on' to make sure our clients can be found by potential customers looking for the services they offer; blog posts being created with reliable efficiency; the market and competitors being monitored for news or activities that we can react to in minutes if we need to.

Bleep, bleep, bleep - it operates as a process and, when it's working well, it's like a well-oiled machine.

Sometimes, clients will write articles and update social media for themselves. Some can distribute their own emails - and they should. They live their businesses 24/7 and it is to be expected that they will be on the pulse when the opportunity strikes. But that is the key point 'when the opportunity strikes'. For the marketing plan to be effective, it can't be only opportunistic, it has to operate

round the clock, always on - bleep, bleep, bleep.

And it's not easy. To achieve this consistency requires a combination of systems, processes and people that is rarely found outside of the largest of businesses, which is why many smaller businesses turn to outsourcing.

As an agency, we use systems, and we're proud of it. We use marketing automation, CRM and analytics software in powerful combination to create our clients' life-support systems. We've invested heavily in finding the right ones and learning how to use them - and we never stop learning either. As the saying goes: 'owning a box of spanners doesn't make you a mechanic' and we want to be great marketing mechanics.

The consistency doesn't stop with the delivery. The performance management has to be just as metronomic. For many clients, we have weekly performance calls, bringing marketing and sales together to review a dashboard of lead and lag indicators. The results don't lie and it is the unremitting focus on the numbers that drives up the performance.

The results can be astounding. For one client in 2014, we increased website traffic by 42%, increased registrations by 38% and helped put the business within reach of its turnover target for the first time since its inception - all within 5 weeks. Admittedly, the budget was there to allow us to approach the challenge with the required intensity, but it shows what can be done if the management commitment exists

and marketing isn't treated as something only to be done when there's a bit of spare time and cash around.

So, go for it. Forget campaigns in 2015 and plan for regular, persistent activity across as many channels as your budget will allow. As one well-known brand says: Just (bleep) (bleep) (bleep) do it!

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About the Author

Neil is a Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing with many years' experience in marketing, brand and communications. His experience includes being a Director of Marketing in The Royal Bank of Scotland Group where he was responsible for brands in the UK, Ireland and US. Those brands include: Lombard, Jamjarcars.com, Angel Trains and Dixon Motors. Entrepreneurial, creative and energetic, Neil's success has come from a pragmatic and intelligent approach to combining marketing with business needs.

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