

The Role of Digital Marketing in MedTech

The why, how, and who behind
implementing a winning strategy.

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The Case for Digital Marketing in MedTech

Is your brand getting the attention it deserves? Even when you have a firm understanding of your product and its benefits to HCPs and patients, it's more difficult than ever to get recognition. The problem may not be your product, but how and where you're promoting it.

New Normal for HCP Outreach

The pandemic ignited a drastic shift in the medical device market that is continuing to this day—a shift that all medical device companies need to adapt to in order to generate adoption with HCPs.

One of the hardest adjustments for MedTech has no doubt been the drastically different way healthcare providers now operate. The pandemic made in-person meetings a temporary impossibility, but HCPs didn't just adjust, they discovered their new preference.

With 87% of providers wanting to continue virtual meetings, and nearly half expecting fewer in-person interactions with sales repsⁱ, face-to-face meetings with HCPs are no longer a strategy on which businesses can rely. In an industry previously dominated by face-to-face sales, this paradigm shift is forcing MedTech companies to either find new ways of getting their foot in the door, or risk their brand and products not getting in the hands of the people who need them. This is especially true for newer or less established brands—who not only need to keep up with evolving sales trends, but do so at the same pace as their larger competitors.

Post-pandemic, it's still challenging to get sales and HCPs in the same room.

87% of providers want virtual sales meetings to continue, and nearly half are expecting it.ⁱ

Most MedTech Organizations Are Investing in and Getting Greater ROI From Digital Marketing

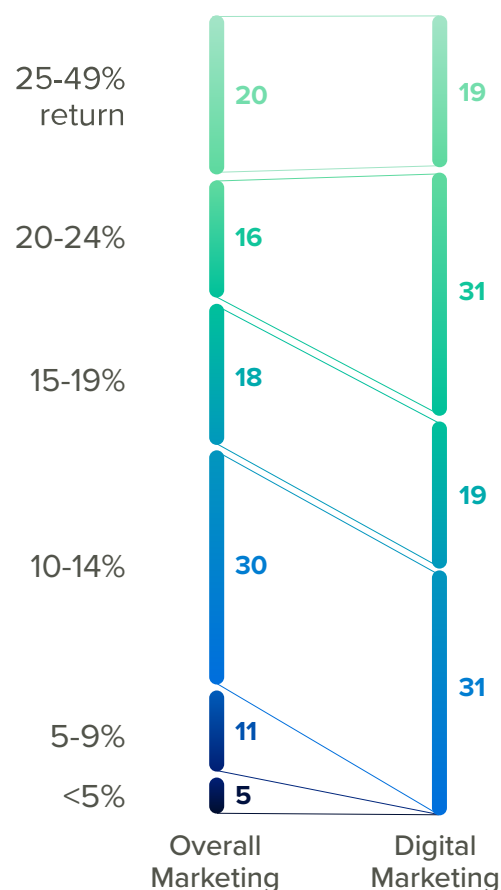
MedTech companies have been investing more and more in their digital marketing spend over the past five yearsⁱ, and looking at the numbers it's not hard to see why. When surveyed, 50% of U.S. MedTech companies reported a high degree of success with their digital marketing, with ROIs of 20% or more on digital efforts.ⁱⁱ

This is because buyers today are more empowered than ever before. Within several seconds, they can discover anything they want to know about product quality, availability, and value. Think With Google found that 48% of customers start their research online, of which 33% go directly to brand websites, and 26% turn to mobile applications. MedTech organizations must be ready and willing to engage with their audience across digital platforms and devices. Generating and promoting digital content can help capture the attention of your audience, build trust in your organization and its offerings, and to turn prospects into loyal customers over time.

Meet your audience where they are today: Online.

48% of consumers start their research online. 33% will do directly to a brand website to begin their search.ⁱⁱⁱ

Investment Returns for US Medtechs, %ⁱⁱ



Why Some MedTech Companies Are Slow to Adapt

Digital marketing is a business essential. As much as we'd hope that every MedTech company has already adopted the necessary best practices, this isn't the case.

There are a number of reasons why some medical device companies have yet to realize or act on the digital marketing boom:

Lack of Time or Resources

Companies may be unwilling or unable to devote the necessary effort or resources to mount new campaigns and tactics.

Not Enough Content

Most organizations don't have adequate libraries of content to fuel digital campaigns, and view developing this content as too great an undertaking.

Too Focused on the Short Term

Sales and HCP training cycles can be lengthy, so many companies prioritize quick marketing wins and near-term earnings over long-term benefits.

Overreliance on Traditional Growth Strategies

MedTech companies often look to other actions to clear growth barriers (M&A, divestitures, other portfolio moves) but that isn't a practical growth strategy on its own.

Lack of Cooperation Between Sales and Marketing

When these two branches of the company are not in sync, implementing and innovating on promotional strategies becomes increasingly difficult, if even possible.

If any of these sound familiar, read on for the steps your company can take to move away from its old approach and start integrating strategies that work in this increasingly digital-focused era:



Strategy Integration Steps

Must-haves

- ✓ Audience definition and targeting
- ✓ Sales and marketing alignment

Execute Internally

- ✓ Search engine optimization
- ✓ Content marketing
- ✓ Social media marketing
- ✓ Video marketing
- ✓ Email marketing

Requires Additional Resources / Media Spend

- ✓ Paid advertisements
- ✓ Training and education portals

Digital Marketing Must-haves

There's no true "one size fits all" digital marketing approach, but some things are just too valuable to be ignored when it comes to bolstering your online presence.

With an understanding of why digital marketing is so meaningful, and what mindsets or pitfalls businesses need to avoid, let's look at some of the necessary elements that go into building the perfect digital marketing strategy.

Audience Definition and Targeting

The first step is the same for digital marketing as it is for traditional: defining your target audience(s). However, given the scope of potential customers that digital campaigns can reach, companies can, and should, be much more aspirational in their approach to targeting.

Digital marketing allows for highly personalized communications across audience segments. You can pinpoint several promising segments for each campaign and tailor the content specific to each, broadening the scope of potential leads without diluting the message. The exact number of audience segments within your digital marketing strategy will vary based on your business and needs, but most marketers focus on three audience segments.^v

Sales and Marketing Alignment

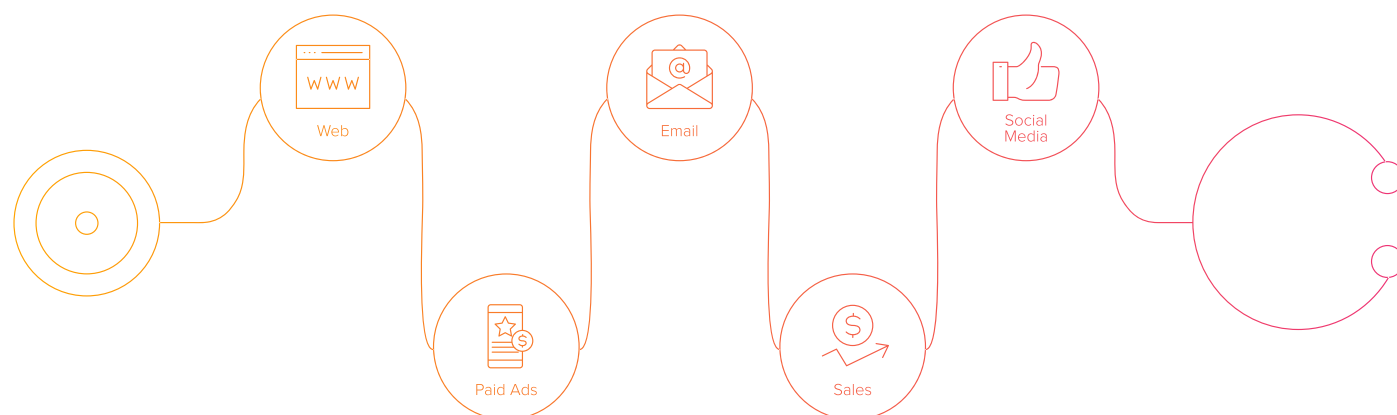
In many businesses, sales and marketing are inexplicably viewed almost as rivals—constantly butting heads with each other. This divide between teams can negatively impact the rollout of your digital marketing. It can also be a challenge to align efforts with sales and marketing teams as they grow and expand. **Organizations with tightly aligned sales and marketing teams saw 27% faster profit growth and 36% higher customer retention.** What's more, 56% of these companies met revenue goals and 19% exceeded them.^{vi}

Sales and marketing alignment is critical to ensure that these departments are working in tandem to target the right customer base, create more conversations, and drive more sales.

Sales and marketing teams are more profitable when they work together.

75% of organizations with tightly aligned sales and marketing teams met or exceeded revenue goals.^{vii}

Looping in your sales reps as early as possible is key to successful digital marketing for two main reasons. The first is obvious: sales and marketing teams work better together. When these two teams are properly aligned, businesses see big increases in both profit growth and customer retention. But in the context of building a marketing plan, the sync between teams is important because it is the only way to ensure truly omnichannel messaging. If sales reps are telling leads the same things they have been seeing and hearing from your website, emails, and ads, it gives a sense of brand consistency while driving home the point of your messaging.



CASE STUDY

Custom Sales Enablement Tool Enables Faster Lead Qualification and Personalized Content Distribution

When marketers understand how the sales team operates, it's easier to identify and fill communication gaps and create necessary sales collateral that reps need to close deals. Many teams apply digital tools to optimize sales conversations and knowledge sharing between these teams.

D2 Creative recently built a sales enablement tool for a pharmaceutical organization within their existing Veeva environment to help reps qualify leads and share relevant collateral faster and easier.

The client wanted a way to integrate marketing data to determine which clinics and doctors made for qualified leads. Their sales team needed to know, what prescriptions made sense to offer HCPs, based on prescription viability, cost, and what was on formulary. Our team built them a pull-through optimization platform that catalogs relevant HCP prescribing information gathered via marketing campaigns and research, and relayed it to sales with a simple search. With **Veeva CLM** integrated into the platform, reps could use this data to create customized detail aids and other leave-behind materials for each HCP, making it even easier for sales to finish what marketing started.

Where to Start When All You Have is Time and Talent

One of the most common concerns putting a plan like this into action is cost, but it doesn't have to be. While putting some capital behind your marketing plans can help achieve more impressions and, by extension, conversions, there's a lot more that can be done without having to invest significant ad spend.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Gets Brands Noticed

SEO refers to increasing a website's rank in online search results by using popular and relevant keywords and phrases. Optimizing your website for search engines is an absolutely vital, but still far too overlooked, necessity for any business. Nearly 30% of all worldwide website visits come from search engines^{viii}, but 75% of users never even see past the first search page^{ix}, making getting on that page absolutely critical.

Once you've identified your short list of target keywords, **optimizing your content** can be easy and inexpensive to implement. When relevant keywords are used strategically on your webpages in headings and copy, as well as title tags and meta descriptions (part of a site's HTML code), they help search engines understand your content so your pages can rank higher for those queries. A proper keyword optimization strategy should include both broad (short tail) and specific (long tail) keywords that your organization can reasonably compete for. This will give search engines even more context about what kind of content is on your site, and make them more likely to rank it higher.

Keywords aren't the be-all end-all when it comes to SEO—site performance and UX are equally important. Google's search algorithm prefers responsive sites that have been optimized for mobile, and will rank them higher over sites with poor layouts or content that doesn't render quickly. While addressing your site's SEO, be sure to look at your site's design, bounce rates, and whether your navigation makes it easy to find products and content.



Content Marketing

When it comes to having an online presence with impact, content is and always will be king. Content plays a large role in the SEO; the fresher and more relevant your site content is, the more value Google will place on your pages and the better your chances will be at ranking for competitive keywords.

Gone are the days of “keyword stuffing”, or churning out copy only intended to attract search engines. A steady stream of high-quality, helpful, and valuable **thought leadership content** from your brand is vital to growing awareness and sales. Quality content is more likely to be shared by third-parties, which will help SEO even more.

But, in truth, content is less about ranking on search engines, and more about developing your company's reputation as a thought leader. HCPs use content to ensure their patients will know how your device is used before they prescribe it. Nearly half (47%) of buyers view at least 3-5 pieces of content before they contact a sales representative. 96% of B2B buyers look for more information from industry thought leaders before buying, and 54% of decision makers say they spend more than one hour per week reading and reviewing thought leadership content.^{iv}

So, how can your business create this valuable content consistently? Determining thought leadership topics that matter should send you back to your target audiences. Sales and marketing teams should take time to identify topics most important to each audience segment, as well as opportunities to customize content for a more targeted approach. Once you have said content, make sure to promote and repurpose it as much as you can to bolster your output of thought leadership pieces.

Video

If you're looking for a place to start developing new content, video is one of, if not the, most engaging forms of digital content for consumers.

Who reads thought leadership content?

96% of B2B buyers will seek out thought leadership content before buying.

54% of decision makers will spend more than 1 hour per week reading thought leadership content.

47% of buyers view at least 3-5 pieces of content before contacting a sales rep.^{iv}

The results of video-centric thought leadership content speak for themselves^{iv}:

80%

of video marketers claim that video has directly increased sales

87%

say that video has increased traffic to their website

84%

say that they've been convinced to buy a product/service by watching a brand's video.

95%

felt they'd increased understanding of their product/service using video

93%

of brands got a new customer because of a video on social media

However, video production can be a heavy lift for marketers. That's why we recommend **repurposing video content** as much as possible. For example, one three-minute product overview could be re-cut into shorter clips for use on social media, landing pages, paid ads, or other channels. This approach helps build out a library of video content faster and keeps the message consistent.

Social Media Marketing

Not all life science and medical device companies believe their business is “the right fit” for social media, but in our experience, this couldn't be farther from the truth. With close to 90% of the internet's users on social media^x, it's a part of the internet you can't afford to ignore.

We discussed SMM for MedTech in-depth in the white paper [Navigating and Optimizing Social Media](#), here are some of the key takeaways:

Find Social Platforms That Fit Your Target Audience

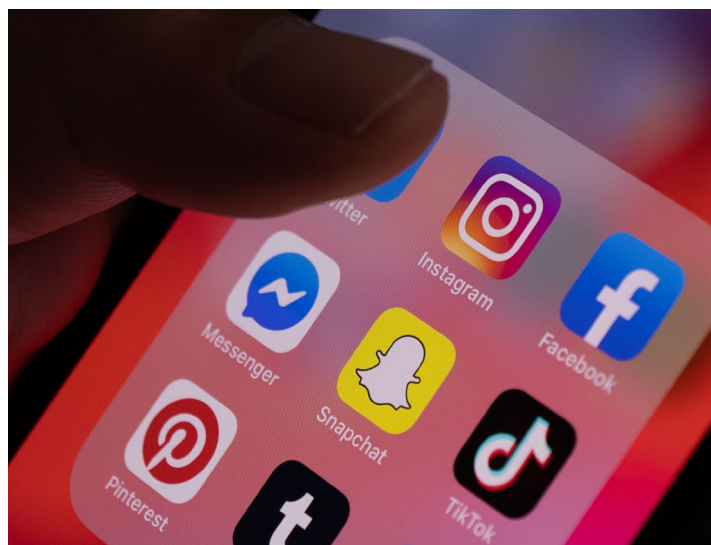
LinkedIn offers the best audience building capabilities for paid ads. You can build audiences by industry, job title, education, and other demographic information.

Tailor Your Posts and Images to Each Platform You Decide to Utilize

Periodically check for asset sizing best practices, as they can change.

Use Engaging Content and Imagery in Each Post, Supported by a Solid Tag Strategy

Hashtag research should also be specific to the platform.



Email Marketing

Email communications are usually the last piece of the digital market puzzle, but that makes them no less important than the rest. In fact, email can play a vital role at every step of the customer journey.

Having **email campaigns** as part of your digital marketing strategy helps you reach buyers throughout their journey and advance them to the next step.

Automation saves marketers time and helps them manage the narrative throughout the sales journey. Set up automated email campaigns (also known as drip campaigns) to send a series of pre-written, pre-scheduled messages over an extended period of time.

Prospects

Share relevant content to prove expertise, build trust, and drive engagement.

Leads

Keep the conversation going and keep your brand top-of-mind while leads evaluate options and make their decision.

Customers

Use post-sale email communications to keep in touch with customers, cross- or upsell products, and improve overall satisfaction.

Land and Expand: The Benefits of Customer Email Communications ^{xi}		
	Head of Purchasing	Clinician or Nurse
Post-sales Communication Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended accessories or compatible equipment for purchased items• Consumption reports based on past purchases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinical training opportunities• Onboarding support• Customer satisfaction surveys
Customer Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers feel secure in this and future purchases when they understand the total cost of ownership and clinical benefits• They don't have to spend as much time shopping for accessories• They can have more informed conversations with suppliers, based on consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Users are confident in their understanding of the purchased technology• They can provide direct feedback and ultimately have better products/services for their needs
Successful Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved completion rates• Higher purchase volumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better customer satisfaction• Increased purchase frequency and volumes

When You're Ready to Spend (and Get) More

You'll have access to some even more impactful traffic and lead generators if your business has the budget to throw behind its digital marketing. Adding these to your digital marketing strategy can be pricey, but if done correctly, the payoff is absolutely worth it.

Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising

PPC is a tried-and-true method of generating traffic to your website and overall brand awareness. By integrating keyword-based ads as part of your digital strategy, you can potentially bypass search results and appear at the top of the first results page for your priority keywords. By Google's estimates, every dollar spent on PPC can result in up to \$8 of profit^{xii}, making it a sound investment when done properly.

MedTech companies can find great success using PPC advertising to catch doctors and even patients searching for specific solutions, medical devices, or device services by creating ad groups for top-of-funnel goals, such as brand awareness and content promotion. To turn this attention into qualified leads, you should be setting up bottom-of-funnel ads as well as product-focused ads with strong calls to action.

However, it's important to keep in mind that these ads aren't guaranteed to work if the content they're leading to isn't up to par. The quality of ads is directly tied to the quality of the landing page they're directing to, so make sure to keep your pages up-to-date by using the keywords you're targeting.

Avoid PPC Pitfalls

Google will assign your ads a "Quality Score" based on the quality and relevance of your keywords, ads, and landing page.

Choose keywords carefully and purposefully, and make sure your landing page delivers an optimal user experience.

Training and Education Portals

Gating educational content (i.e. requiring clients to pay or request access) may seem counterintuitive because fewer people are able to access your materials, but its role in increasing lead quality can't be overstated. Proprietary training and education portals as part of your

digital strategy can be incredibly fruitful for MedTech organizations, as it offers one convenient location for clients to go in order to learn more about how to use a device, while providing the organization with extensive user tracking and engagement data that can be used to inform sales, product, or content decisions. Marketing and sales teams get greater insight into what content is being viewed and by whom, making it easier to quickly follow up on hot leads and guide promotion and content creation efforts around your most popular topics. Having a central hub can help with user compliance, HCP awareness/training, and even promotion.



This approach is best for businesses that already have wealth of educational content and need a single repository for easy access and tracking.

CASE STUDY

Building a Centralized Education Portal for HCPs

D2 Creative recently designed an education portal for one of our clients. This major medical brand had a vast library of content, including surgical procedure videos, webinars, product overview PDFs, and other important documentation. The breadth of their content and lack of an existing way to organize all of it led to a need to streamline educational and promotional content in a single repository.

We designed and built a highly configurable single-page app on Google's Cloud Platform. This gave them not only an easier way to store their content, but a simple solution for promoting it, as they now had a centralized location to send HCPs. And, with extensive tracking in place on the portal, the organization has increased visibility into which types of content are the most engaging, for which products, who is viewing it, and when.

But What if You Don't Have the Time or Resources?

Not every company has the time, resources, or experience to build and deploy a digital marketing strategy from the ground up. The answer may be turning to a partnership with a marketing agency that specializes in communications and digital marketing tactics.

There are plenty of reasons why a business may prefer, or feel it's in their best interest, to keep their digital marketing efforts in-house. Employees will have in-depth knowledge of your business and its offerings, giving them the potential to deliver uniquely accurate and relevant insight. Working with your in-house team also offers a greater level of control over individual marketing efforts, allowing you to easily adjust the focus and messaging of campaigns and strategies.

But oftentimes, the difficulties of in-house marketing outweigh the benefits. Most businesses see marketing agencies as an expense that can be saved with an internal approach, but usually the opposite is true because digital campaigns require a diligent and talented team of writers, artists, managers, and more. The costs of recruiting, training, and maintaining an in-house marketing team can quickly outweigh what you would have spent on an agency contract—especially when factoring in turnover that can force you to repeat the process multiple times.

An agency partnership gives you immediate access to a marketing team that will work as an extension of yours to optimize your online presence, saving you effort when creating and implementing strategies. Partnering with an agency focused on digital solutions also gives you access to that agency's unique expertise and technology. This means larger-scale campaigns and previously unfeasible work, such as site redesigns and custom sales enablement tools, become real options. And, agency support can scale with your growing business without you having to take on additional help, saving you time and money on hiring.

Who Should Handle Your Digital Marketing Efforts?		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
In-house Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brand familiarity• Focus• Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Usually) higher costs to recruit, train, and retain• Turnover• Multiple needs require multiple hires
Marketing Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to expanded capabilities and diverse expertise• Software and tools• Scalable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location• Multiple clients• Control

There are, of course, some things businesses need to consider before jumping into a contract. Working with an agency does mean giving up some amount of control over how individual marketing projects are done. You also may find yourself competing for time with your partner's other clients. However, the right agency partner will bring convenience and capabilities to your digital marketing team.

Conclusion

The goal of digital marketing in MedTech is the same as any other type of marketing: getting as many eyes on your products, services, and brand as possible. However, thanks to digital marketing's rise in the MedTech industry, the time has never been better for marketers in this industry to step outside their comfort zones and use their online presence to open new opportunities for growth.

Our hope is that this white paper has given your business some of the information needed to start implementing a stronger digital marketing program. If you need help getting started, D2 Creative would welcome the opportunity to work together.

About D2 Creative

D2 Creative is the marketing, communications, and technology partner behind the salesforces of some of the most well-known medical device and life sciences companies. With two decades of industry experience, paired with extensive knowledge of emerging technologies and digital marketing tactics, they've brought brands to life with apps, websites, videos, and other content that enables salesforces, attracts new leads, and makes meaningful connections between brands and their audiences.

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