1) INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Digital disruption first occurred back in 1993 when Marc Andreesen, a 22-year-old student at the University of Illinois, created Mosaic. The first graphic web browser of its kind, it opened the Internet to the world and triggered the acceleration of the digital age.

The Internet created a new physics of business. It allowed entrepreneurs to apply radical operating models to traditional businesses, and to create businesses that simply couldn’t be conceived before. Examples of these billion-dollar web behemoths include Craigslist, Salesforce.com, Ali Baba, and of course Amazon and Google.

Ubiquity of Digital Media

With the shift from atoms to bytes, and physical to digital distribution, the means of reaching customers have also shifted from traditional media channels like TV, radio and newspapers to the ever present web. Mobile devices have further accelerated this shift by making digital an ever present part of our lives, 24/7, on virtually every corner of the globe.

Have a look at the Global Digital Snapshot provided by We Are Social (source: wearesocial.sg) to see how pervasive digital media is.

Source: We Are Social 2015
Everybody is Going Social

The fastest growing part of the digital world is social media. According to Statista’s projections, there are some 2.22 billion users on social networks around the world. This is greater than the populations of either China or India, and is projected to grow further in the next few years.


Singapore – The Most Internet Connected SEA Country

AT 80 per cent or 4.4 million people, Singapore has the highest Internet penetration rate in South East Asia. Out of the different age groups, the highest percentages of Internet users are in the 15 to 34 years age group. The more alarming thing is that most of the population in this age range have stopped reading traditional newspapers or watching television altogether.

On average, Singaporeans own 3.3 devices per person. Almost everybody has a smartphone these days, including primary school kids. A huge and unending stream of content are being consumed through screens of all sizes – most of them smaller than your desktop.

Being online alone isn’t enough. Singaporeans are also using the Web for commerce. While slightly over a quarter are buying stuff online, about 42% are using the Internet to conduct research, comparing choices before making their decision.

What this shows is that you need to have a presence on digital and social channels to continue to compete. Failure to do so could make you irrelevant faster than a digital Dodo bird!

#1 LIVING IN A MULTI-SCREENED WORLD

Smartphones are the backbone of our daily media use. They are the devices used most throughout the day and serve as the most common starting point for activities across multiple screens. Going mobile has become a business imperative.

This has several implications for us as both consumers and content producers:

1. **We are a nation of multi-screener**s. Most of consumers’ media time today is spent in front of a screen – computer, smartphone, tablet and TV.

2. **The device we choose to use is often driven by our context:** where we are, what we want to accomplish and the amount of time needed.

3. **There are two main modes of multi-screening:** Sequential screening where we move between devices. Simultaneous screening where we use multiple devices at the same time.

4. **TV no longer commands our full attention** as it has become one of the most common devices that is used simultaneously with other screens.

5. **Portable screens allow us to move easily from one device to another to achieve a task.** Search is the most common bridge between devices in this sequential usage.

6. **The majority of the times that we use devices simultaneously,** our attention is split between distinct activities on each device.

7. **Smartphones are the backbone of our daily media interactions.** They have the highest number of user interactions per day and serve as the most common starting point for activities across multiple screens.

8. **Multiple screens make us feel more efficient because we can act spontaneously and get a sense of accomplishment** – this results in a feeling of “found time”.

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Reading and Consuming Content Online

With the switch to screens, a new “screen-based reading behaviour has emerged. This is characterized by more time spent on “browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one–time reading, non–linear reading, and reading more selectively”, while less time is spent on in–depth reading, and concentrated reading.

When online, people switch between two poor kinds of reading

- “Tunnel vision” reading in which one reads a single bit of text without a sense of the context; and
- “Marginal distraction”, which happens, for example, when a person reads textual feeds on the sidebar of a Web site such as a blog

In an article by Val Hooper and Channa Herath of Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, the authors wrote that there were 6 main behaviours exhibited by online readers and consumers of content.

They are:

1. **Skimming**: Given that the most commonly cited online reading behaviour was skim reading, many respondents indicated that they read online primarily for work and to seek information. Therefore, they wanted to get through a lot of content and get to the point within the shortest time possible.

2. **Scanning**: Scanning the content was also repeatedly recorded as an online reading behaviour. Some respondents indicated that they felt impatient while reading online. Others indicated that they tended to browse online rather than get involved with the content.

3. **Cross referencing** behavior is also much more prevalent when reading online

4. **Speed**: The majority of respondents commented that they read much more quickly online and that their speed reading improved over time.

5. **Search/Find Feature**: Using the Search/Find feature of various applications was also reported as a common behaviour while reading online.

6. **Multitasking Behaviour**: Many respondents tended to multitask when reading online (i.e. read e-mails, check news, listen to music), and got distracted as a consequence.

Comparatively speaking, the same respondents highlighted that they read more slowly and in greater detail when doing so offline. They also inclined to read every word in a linear fashion. A few respondents highlighted and annotated content when reading on paper. These reading behaviours seemed to contribute to better information retention levels, a phrase that was used repeatedly for offline reading.

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2 Source: [http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=bled2014](http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=bled2014)
The principle of Hub and Spoke in any form of digital marketing essentially concerns itself with establishing the “home base” for most of your content (normally a website or a blog), and using various channels like social media posts, emails, and advertising to pull visitors to the platform.

Normally, the website is also the main place where customer conversion takes place. This could be a permanent page on the website or a landing page with a specific Call To Action (CTA).

With its ability to reach out widely to multiple social channels, social media marketing is a good way to generate “inbound” traffic to your website.

Content marketing, Search Engine Optimization (aka SEO) and social media marketing. Together, these three can work powerfully to propel your digital marketing strategy forward.

What do these digital marketing techniques involve? More importantly, how do you integrate them in a coherent and synergistic manner?

**Understanding Content Marketing**

Content marketing is defined by the [Content Marketing Institute](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com) to be...

"Content Marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action."

On the Web, content could include anything from e-Books, slideshare slides, infographics, videos, blog posts, to Facebook status updates, Instagram photos, and tweets. Note that the focus here is on the content more so than the channels.

Longer and more valuable forms of content are usually gated. In other words, you need to enter particulars like your name, email address, and organisation to gain access. They are normally employed as part of an [Inbound Marketing strategy](https://www.inbound.org) to generate leads.

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Defined**

Search Engine Optimization or SEO is defined as the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine’s “natural” or un-paid (“organic”) search results.
SEO’s ultimate goal is to get on page one of Google, Bing or Yahoo’s Search Engine Results Page (SERP).

When we talk about SEO, we try to guess a couple of things:

1. The algorithm of search engines and how they work;
2. What our targeted customers are searching for;
3. The actual search terms or keywords that they use when doing so; and
4. How well our content (text, image, video, etc) would rank on search engines.

To optimize a website for search, we look at a whole host of factors. They include both technical (eg speed of website loading, HTML and associated coding, meta tags) and non-technical (eg content, website architecture) areas.

A key strategy in SEO is to increase the number of backlinks, or inbound links, to one’s website. In the past, people have tried to do so unethically through fake websites or article directories created to generate links.

However, such “black hat” practices have been heavily penalised by Google, which is constantly tailoring its search algorithm to reward genuine content creators.

**Social Media Marketing in a Nutshell**

According to Mashable.com, Social media marketing is the “process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites”. Social media marketing normally focuses on creating content that attracts attention and interest while encouraging online communities to share it on their social networks.

Social media marketing covers a wide gamut of activities targeted at growing one’s online influence. It can be anything from starting a blog, participating in an online forum, to online community management of Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and Pinterest boards.

**How Content, SEO and Social Media Works Together**

As you can see from the definitions of the content marketing, SEO, and social media marketing, there are many areas of overlap between the three.

I love Lee Odden’s analogy of how the three works together:

- Content = bread that forms the foundation of digital marketing
- SEO = peanut butter that forms a nutritional base to help content be discovered
- Social media = jelly that helps content stand out and sweetens it for consumption
A key principle in digital and content marketing is what we call the content pillar. First conceived by the Content Marketing Institute, a content pillar is a substantive and

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3 Information from [http://marketeer.kapost.com/content-pillar/](http://marketeer.kapost.com/content-pillar/)
informative piece of content on a specific topic or theme which can be broken into many derivative sections, pieces, and materials.

Examples of content pillars include eBooks, reports, and guides. These in turn could be broken down into blog posts, social media posts (eg Facebook and Instagram posts), infographics and others.

By focusing your attention on creating a single content pillar, it’s easy to break that finished piece into blog posts, infographics, videos, emails, social media updates and more to attract different kinds of buyers through different channels. This also helps to improve your productivity and strengthen the “lifespan” of each content piece.

#5 THE THREE ‘S’s: SEARCHABLE, SNACKABLE AND SHAREABLE CONTENT

To address the unique characteristics of consumer behaviours on the digital and social web, content strategists and social media marketers have focused their energies on the three ‘S’s of content, namely Searchable, Snackable and Shareable.

Let us go through each of these ‘S’s in turn, and review how they influence the way we market ourselves online.

1) Searchable Content

How many of you have used Google to search to do research? Put up your hands!

I bet that almost everybody reading this would have done so, either on your laptops, tablets or smartphones.

Also known as search engines, Google, Bing, Yahoo! and other search engine applications help us to navigate and make sense of the digital world. As the saying goes, “You are what Google says you are.” In the world of digital marketing, it is necessary and beneficial to understand how search engines work so that your content can be found by your customers, partners and employers.

For the purposes of social media marketing, we will just focus on three aspects of searchable content. Naturally, there is a lot more involved in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) as I’ve highlighted above.

Start with Specific Niche Keywords

Keywords and key phrases are words or phrases that your prospects would use to search for information on the topic which you will write about. They are often closely mapped to the buyer’s journey of your customer, ie different combinations of keywords would be used depending on whether he is researching for product information, considering alternatives, or ready to buy.
In digital marketing, we normally start by trying to dominate long-tail keywords and to create content that is structured towards very niche areas. As we progress in our search ranking, we move towards medium and finally short tail keywords in content creation.

An example is seen in the chart below for men’s running shoes:


We will learn more about keyword research in the “Analyse” section of the course.

**Trending Content**

The other point to note about creating searchable content is to tap on what’s trending in the news. This can be done using keywords or #hashtags on tools like HootSuite, BuzzSumo, or Twitter itself.
You can check out more of such tools in this link here: http://tech.co/16-free-online-tools-help-find-trending-content-2015-02

Newsjacking for Content Moments

Coined by David Meerman Scott in his book *Newsjacking*, the term is used to describe the idea of injecting your story into a breaking news story. This has to be done early in the news cycle just as a story is developing, and not when it has already reached its peak or become old news. You can see the chart below to appreciate how this works:
Answer Customer Pain Points
My favourite content creation technique to make your content more searchable is to address your customer’s greatest pain points. Alternatively, you can also provide answers to your prospect’s search for his or her dream solution.

River Pools Spa has done a terrific job in doing so on their website. They have created a list of FAQs that address virtually every question that a potential customer would want to ask about fiberglass pools.

Here are some strategies on creating customer FAQs that rock:

- List out all major questions you receive
- Break these lists into categories
- Hard-link the entire question to a blog post that answers said question
- Include Call To Action to eBook with all the answers

2) Snackable Content

The next pillar is snackable content. With rising demand for on-the-go information by consumers on their mobile devices, you need your content to be catchy bite-sized pieces.

Here are some sobering facts why you need to do so:

- The average attention span of an adult online is only 8 seconds! And yes, we have a shorter attention span than a goldfish.
- 65% of people are primarily visual learners.
- There are 3,000 brand impressions people face each day. That’s a whole lot of competition out there!

To create snackable content, consider these wise words from Steve Jobs himself...
In social media, snackable content are stuff like tweets, snapchats, short videos, infographics and quick tips on blogs. On the other hand, main dish content would be things like white papers, e-books, webinars, podcasts, and in-depth blog posts.

You will learn more about creating snackable content that is visual-led as we dive into the different social channels in the workshop. However, the key message is this:

VISUAL CONTENT ROCKS ON SOCIAL!

Don’t believe me? Have a look at how these two different versions compare:
3) Shareable Content

Virality and Word Of Mouth (WOM) are the spark plugs of the social web. If your content is not passed along, you’ll need to invest prodigious amounts of time, money and energy to keep getting it in front of your audiences.

To trigger social sharing, you need to create content that is worth talking about.

Write Human Headlines
Create topics that resonate with the folks whom you are reaching out to, and make them relevant and interesting at the same time. Here is an example:

**Existing Headline:** “Winning Social Media Advice and Tips”

**More Human Version:** “Social Media Tips That Will Keep Your Business From Going Broke”

Turn on Emotions
Use words that have a higher emotional value. For example, instead of writing... “How to Run Your Business from your iPad” you should write “How To Be Awesome At Business With Only Your iPad.”

List Posts WORK
I guess this is why everybody is using it – from Buzzfeed to Mothership to even mainstream media channels these days.

**Existing Headline:** Tools and Websites to Find the Best Topics for Your Blog

**Listicle Version:** 10 Easy Tools for Finding The Best Topics for Your Blog
Banish Boring Buzzwords
Remember to kill all the jargon (technical, marketing, or government) when you create content for an online audience. Play the Buzzword Bingo game and kill these words if you use them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>empowerment</th>
<th>problem space</th>
<th>incent/ incentivize</th>
<th>take offline</th>
<th>going forward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>technology solutions</td>
<td>proof of concept</td>
<td>single-source responsibility</td>
<td>cost/benefit</td>
<td>touch base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on/off the radar screen</td>
<td>team player</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>push the envelope</td>
<td>strategic fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paradigm shift</td>
<td>results-driven</td>
<td>bottom-up</td>
<td>knowledge base</td>
<td>deliverable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leverage</td>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>outsource</td>
<td>drill down</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.stephaniefiermanmarketingdaily.com/category/cmo](http://www.stephaniefiermanmarketingdaily.com/category/cmo)

Focus on Your Lead In
In almost all social media channels – Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube – your lead-in can make-or-break how successful you are in generating interest. Use it to tease your readers, viewers or listeners, like this example from Digital Marketer below:

"I'll start this post with a warning."

This is part 1 & 2 of a whopping 10,000+ word guide to eCommerce email marketing. Before you continue, bookmark this page now because you’ll want to return to it later.

**Part 1** – [The Tools of an eCommerce Email Marketing Strategy](http://www.stephaniefiermanmarketingdaily.com/category/cmo) (Published December 9th, 2015)

**Part 2** – [eCommerce Email Marketing Campaign Roadmap – Stage 1](http://www.stephaniefiermanmarketingdaily.com/category/cmo) (Published January 19th, 2016)

**Part 3** – [eCommerce Email Marketing Campaign Roadmap – Stage 2](http://www.stephaniefiermanmarketingdaily.com/category/cmo) (Published February 2nd, 2016)

Imagine having email campaigns that trigger automatically — based on how someone interacts with your company and your website.

These “automated” campaigns then go out to do your bidding...

...they build relationships and trust... they indoctrinate subscribers into your
Create Youtility

Last, but certainly not least, consider the wise words of Jay Baer and look towards creating Youtility for your customer. In other words, focus on being as helpful as you can to your targeted customer. There are 6 steps you can take here:

1. Identify Customer Needs
2. Map Customer Needs to Useful Marketing
3. Market Your Marketing
4. Insource Youtility
5. Make Youtility a Process, Not a Project
6. Keep Score

An example of a company which have done that is P&G with Baby Center\(^4\). Virtually every question that a pregnant lady or new mother would ask is contained within its multiple pages. These are well segregated into different stages of motherhood. The site also has lots of social sharing buttons on its content (to encourage sharing), and have a thriving community section where mothers can seek advice from each other.

We will cover more of this topic in the section “Development” when we highlight the 6 STEPPS of Contagious content by Professor Jonah Berger.

\(^4\) Website address: [http://www.babycenter.com/](http://www.babycenter.com/)
6-STEP SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PROCESS

Now that you have learned about the world of digital marketing as well as the relationship between content, SEO and social media marketing, the next step involves building and managing social media campaigns. You will also learn how to set objectives, measure success, and build social media teams.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

First, we need to define how we can use social media for commercial purposes. This is where social media marketing comes in.

This is defined by “What Is”⁵ as the following:

Social media marketing (SMM) is a form of Internet marketing that utilizes social networking websites as a marketing tool. The goal of SMM is to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach.

In understanding how social media marketing works, it is useful to consider a 6 step process for managing social media campaigns. This well-trodden path will help you to be more systematic and results focused in managing your social media activities.

THE 6-STEP SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CAMPAIGN PROCESS

One of the first things you need to understand about social media marketing is that it is a journey rather than a destination.

The most successful social media marketers in the world know this. This is why they are relentless in continuing to push out great content, share interesting information with their communities, and refine their social advertising strategy with ever targeted messages.

Unlike traditional marketing efforts on television, newspapers or radio, social media activities need to stretch beyond campaigns to include daily and weekly practices. It is a continuous learning cycle of constant analysis, measurement and refinement.

To guide you along, I have developed a 6-step social media marketing process as follows:

![Diagram of Social Media Campaign Process]

⁵ Source: http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-media-marketing-SMM
#1 Discover – Know Where You Stand

The first step in social media marketing involves understanding where you currently stand.

By now, virtually every small or large brand would have some social media and online presence. However, few of them would know how successful they’ve been, who they seek to serve, or how they compare with other players in the market.

There are three things you need to do here:

a) **Company Social Media Audit**

Conduct a comprehensive social media audit to determine how well (or badly) your social media channels like your Facebook page are performing. This would look at Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) like the number of fans or followers you have, frequency of updates, levels of engagement (likes, comments and shares), and number of referrals made to your website.

b) **Customer Avatar Building**

You need to understand who you wish to target. Describe the demographics (age, education, income, etc), psychographics (interests, lifestyles, and attitudes) and online behaviours of your target customers. Identify what their pain points and how you can solve them. Zoom in on how they search for content online, and determine what keywords they use.

c) **Competitor Analysis**

Identify which brands your company competes against, and measure how you square against them online. Using tools like Fanpage Karma or Buzzsumo, you can track the frequency of your competitor’s social media posts, engagement of each posts, as well as their most shared content.

#2 Define – Zoom In On Objectives

Next, you need to establish what your goals and objectives for social media are, as well as how your customers search for, locate, engage with and transact with you.

a) **Marketing Problem, Objectives and Metrics**

With the analysis you have done earlier, you can identify where your current gaps, establish social media marketing goals and objectives, and layer on with suitable metrics to determine success. There are normally three main types of objectives and KPIs here:

- **Awareness**: Total number of views, impressions (served through ads), reach, and visitors
- **Engagement**: Likes, comments, shares, and retweets
- **Conversion**: No of sign-ups, eBooks downloaded, and purchases

b) **Map to Digital Marketing Funnel**

Part of defining also involves zooming on your customer journey and where they “land” on your website. You need to understand the role which social media plays in attracting visitors, generating leads and converting them to become your customers.

#3 Develop – Contagious Content and Sticky Communities

Now that you know where you’re going, you need to determine how you can trigger social sharing amongst your targeted communities.
a) Making Your Content “Contagious”

According to Joshua Berger, author of the best-selling book “Contagious”, there are 6 STEPPS to triggering virality and sharing:

- **Social Currency**: Remarkable facts or news, game mechanics, and making people feel like insiders.
- **Triggers**: Specific days, seasons, phrases, or contexts of use.
- **Emotion**: High arousal emotions like awe, excitement and amusement (or even anger).
- **Public**: Creating a monkey see monkey do effect.
- **Practical Value**: Offering listicles, tips, guides, and FAQs that help your customers.
- **Stories**: Using the power of storytelling, you’ll learn how to transmit your ideas using them as a “Trojan Horse”.

Beyond the above, you should also learn how to place your ideas into a narrative framework. In our social media marketing course, we introduce the StoryBrand Plot structure as a way to peg your customer intents to your offering.

b) Creating and Curating Content for Social Channels

Once you’ve got your basic content framework and storytelling plot in place, you need to repackage and fit them into the different social media channels and formats. These are the ones that we’ll focus on:

- **Blog**: How to blog like an influencer.
- **Facebook**: Killing it on the world’s largest social network.
- **LinkedIn**: Curating content for the largest professional social network.
- **Twitter**: From trending tweets to hashtags, learn what is best.
- **Instagram**: For consumer brands, Instagram works best. See how you can rule here.
- **Infographics**: These are a godsend for businesses with complex processes or for presenting statistics and research.

#4 Deliver – Monetize through Promotions and Ads

Once you’ve accomplished some social sharing through contagious content and built supportive communities of raving fans, you need to start monetising. There are two main ways to do so.

a) Create Social Promotions and Lead Magnets

These are promotional mechanics like contests, freebies and discounts which are aimed at triggering participation, sign-ups and even purchase.

b) Social Media Advertising

To get the word out there, you may wish to invest in native advertising channels like Facebook Ads, sponsored posts, or influencer marketing activities. A hot tip here is to ensure that whatever forms of advertising you do is trackable and measurable. This could include embedding a trackable URL, using tools like Google’s URL Builder.

#5 Measure – Track Success and Social Media ROI

You cannot manage what you do not measure. With superior analytics embedded into all things social, there really is no excuse for you not to know what your ROI is.
a) Know Your Metrics

Remember the social media KPIs which we have established earlier? Beyond these indicators, you may wish to also assess the effectiveness of your advertising investments using metrics like Cost Per Thousand (CPM), Cost Per Click (CPC), and Click Through Rate (CTR).

b) Calculate Social Media ROI

To evaluate what your social media ROI is, you need to know a few things:

- The costs of running your social channels
- Conversion rates for each social channel
- The value of each conversion (for example, 10,000 web visitors could translate to 100 eBooks downloaded, out of which 50 of those downloaders become your customers)
- The estimated spend of each customer (you can use your Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) as a gauge)

You can read more about social media marketing ROI in my comprehensive post here.

#6 Manage – Keeping Your House in Order

Finally, you need to manage and sustain your social media marketing activities by incorporating the right resources, policies and procedures to keep things running smoothly. There are four key areas to consider here:

a) Social Media Policies

Are there guidelines for your employees on how they should use social media? What about your Facebook fans? Consider crafting them to minimise ambiguity in managing your social media channels.

b) Community Management and Content Calendar

If content is king, community must be queen. Here, you need to craft out your social media community management tactics to recruit online members, engage them, sustain your communities, and develop advocacy amongst your members.

c) Influencer Marketing

Finally, you’ll need to learn how to engage with and work with appropriate influencers to improve your campaign reach and effectiveness. Learn the techniques needed to work with them, and develop an event or campaign idea.