

2015: the year of online marketing changes

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Online marketing regularly introduces new features in order to satisfy marketers seeking new ways of creating a unique brand image accessible on a variety of platforms. The latest social media and Google innovations which will be discussed in the following article should not be omitted from any online strategy as they help build brand awareness effectively.

Social media

The popularity of less-used social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn or Pinterest is expected to grow in the CEE region. In addition, these websites already have a stable community of important influencers. LinkedIn is becoming essential in terms of HR.

On Twitter, hashtags should be followed since they can help you reach a wider audience. There is nothing complicated about it: on the basis of hashtags, users are able to categorize content and to read your posts even if they are not following you. Do not forget about images as they increase the post size in the stream and, as reports show, the engagement rate.

Facebook fan pages are generally created in order to have a company directly connected to (potential) customers and to make its current activities immediately visible to hundreds of people at once. The simple and basic process of promoting by posting and boosting statuses and images and sharing links is a thing of the past now – Facebook advertising is taking a new shape. The major reason seems to be that the number of people to who posts are displayed by unpaid distribution, the so-called organic reach, is decreasing.

The number of promotional and click-baiting posts appearing in News Feeds is also being reduced. For this reason, marketers are expected to change their Facebook strategy. Content will have to become more educational, innovative and engaging and headlines should not only encourage people to click on a given post, but also clearly indicate the content users are about to see.

Mobile phones: the most popular device

When marketing on Facebook, one cannot forget about these devices. Traffic from mobile phones is now higher than from desktops in several countries and we expect Slovakia to follow the trend this year. Facebook has revealed that more than half a billion of its users access the website solely from a mobile device. This indicates that Facebook ads should be more mobile-oriented; desktop adverts are not as popular as they used to be.

It is necessary to also apply this change to general online marketing strategies; marketers are thus starting to concentrate more on mobiles (a responsive web design is essential today). Google has recently introduced call-only campaigns on mobile devices. The ads show the brand's phone number, business description and call button.

When users click on an ad, they do not reach the promoted website. Instead, they have to confirm the call and the brand is dialed.

Videos everywhere

2015 will be the year of the video: Facebook will soon surpass YouTube in the number of video views. Reports also show that video posts have the biggest organic reach. The reason may be that once a video is posted both on Facebook and YouTube, the access is different. In order to play a video on YouTube, the user has to search for it or subscribe to a channel. When using Facebook, he only has to like a given page; the user will be directly exposed to the video in the News Feed.

On the other hand, YouTube adverts are slowly catching up with TV spots. They are more personalized, cheaper and more advantageous, since you do not pay for users who only skip the ad. In 2015, video ads are expected to grow rapidly and to become one of the key AdWords ad formats.

Tell your story!

Storytelling is one of the hottest marketing possibilities which can be employed on the different platforms discussed in this article. The idea is that a story which represents your brand and its

vision should be shared before asking customers to take an action. If possible, it should be something breath-taking, exciting or emotional. People will have a feeling that you are sharing a kind of personal experience; the story will get into their brains and so will your product. By identifying with your company, they will become loyal customers.

Changing reality

Facebook is currently launching a free money transfer service via Messenger. All you have to do is to add your credit or debit card info to your account. You then create a PIN which has to be entered every time you want to make a transaction. If you are using an Apple device, you may use your Touch ID as your PIN. Facebook also plans to introduce Atlas, a marketing solution to compete with Google AdWords.

Google is working hard to introduce devices such as smart watches and even smart cars. These will also be possible places to display your ads.

To conclude, marketing needs to keep pace with the latest news and trends which are ever changing, and not only those of big corporations. For this reason, we are seeing business moving from self-made specialists to high quality online marketing agencies. This is happening because marketing is becoming ever more professional and experience matters. More experience means higher efficiency. Working in a cross-platform environment requires professionalism as many very specific networks are involved.