



Digital Marketing like a PRO
Prepare. Run. Optimize.

**Lannoo
Campus**

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

I wrote the first version of this book because, back in 2018, I was looking for an all-encompassing handbook on digital marketing but couldn't find it. Over the years, it has been fine-tuned by the many readers, fellow marketing professionals and students who have provided me with their honest feedback.

Thank you!

Here is just a glimpse of who else might find this book of use...

- You are a **college or university student** taking a digital marketing course. Some of this handbook might be a bit advanced for your needs, but it can serve as a resource for anyone who wants to learn more about specific digital marketing subjects. You might want to jump straight to Part II, where we explain the channels and tactics you will need to learn about before getting started.
- You are a digital marketing **trainer**, using this handbook as a guideline for what you teach. You will find a lot of definitions and frameworks in here but will have to add your own cases and examples. Use the Prepare-Run-Optimize model as the overall structure of your course.
- marketing **professional** with an eye for the hard metrics, such as sales numbers. To grow your customer base, you might need to Prepare and refine the existing strategy. Once you have that Running, you know the drill: Optimize, rinse, repeat.
- You are a new digital marketing professional for a more established **company**. Hit the ground Running by implementing the tried-and-trusted

tactics in the most relevant channels. Then dare to Optimize: if you can't bill it, kill it!

A digital marketer's work is never done, and most of the concepts and tools outlined in this book will have changed before the (digital) ink has dried on the page. Reading this book is the first step in your digital journey. Use it to start learning – and never stop.



LIST



TIP



FRAMEWORK



CHECKLIST



EXTERNAL RESOURCES



REFERENCE TO OTHER CHAPTERS IN THE BOOK



QUESTION



WANT TO KNOW MORE?



QUOTE

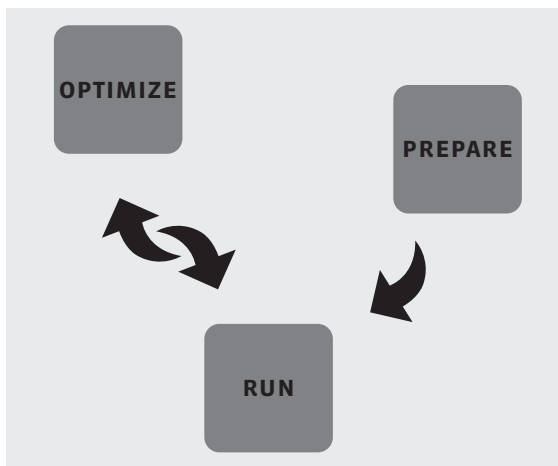


INTRODUCTION: PREPARE, RUN, OPTIMIZE!

Digital marketing is hard work.

Nowadays it's possible to customize and personalize advertising and messaging depending on the context. Literally every step you take in the digital marketplace can be measured and analyzed.

So how do you do manage to accomplish your growth ambitions without wasting money, resources and time? Simple: *by asking yourself the right questions.*



The Prepare-Run-Optimize flow

PREPARE: by designing strategies and setting objectives to feed your marketing plans.

How do you align your **Marketing Strategy** with your organization's business goals?

How does the **Digital Marketing Strategy** relate to the overall marketing objectives?

What types of **Action Plans** should I make?

RUN: by implementing measurable tactics in the right channels using the right tools.

Tactics that work – How will you implement your strategy?

Channels and tools to select – Where and how will you be present and active on digital platforms?

OPTIMIZE: and never stop improving until you get the right results.

Digital marketing optimization – How can you sustainably optimize your efforts?

And why digital marketing, you ask?

The explosion of digital communication channels and smart devices (such as web, email, social, search, mobile, AR/VR, gaming consoles, billboards, and so on) has led us all into a brave new world of blogs, vlogs, tweets, snaps and likes.

And yet, **digital marketing is not about technology; it is about people.** The technology is only interesting when it allows the marketer to connect with the target audience more effectively. And it *will*, because that same audience is already online.

Another good reason to go the digital marketing route: you can **measure results** (and ROI) more accurately. The digital sphere is almost entirely measurable, and often data comes in real time. You can see precisely how various campaigns are performing, which channels have the most benefit, and where to best focus your efforts. Sometimes results provide painful insights, but there's a positive side to it, too: you have the opportunity to refine and adjust your strategy.

Furthermore, digital is highly useful for **time-sensitive** services, products and events. You can measure results more efficiently (and adjust your campaign on the fly if needed). Your marketing spend becomes super cost-effective!

And one final pro-digital argument: your audience can be **segmented** with precision, even down to factors like current location and recent brand interactions, which means that messages can (and must!) be **personalized** and tailored to them.

Of course, like everything, digital marketing also has its downsides.

Given the relatively new nature of digital marketing and the democratization of the internet, there is a flood of **information overload** as well as myths and make-believe, which can cause painful misunderstandings and disappointment. Some examples:

Digital marketing is only for big business.

We need to be on every imaginable social platform in order to not miss out.

We need an app. – Why? – Because we need one.

If we upload this TV ad to social media, it will go viral.

Email marketing is dead/spam.

As you will learn throughout this book, **digital marketing is for everyone**, even the startups with tiny marketing budgets, but it does have its own specific uses and strategies. In other words: **digital marketing is the new marketing**. In a digital age, you simply cannot conceive of a marketing campaign without at its core a digital strategy that connects, enables and empowers each part of the overall campaign.

Are traditional marketing channels such as print, radio and TV dead? Of course not. These channels still play a significant role in your digital marketing strategy, depending on your marketing objectives and your target audience. However, if you take a step back, you will notice that **digital marketing has become an integral and crucial part of marketing as a whole**.

“ *It is not about doing ‘digital marketing’. It is about marketing effectively in a digital world.*

(Ivan Menezes, CEO of Diageo)

In some definitions of marketing, consumers are wholly overlooked: *marketing is defined as ‘the action or business of promoting and selling products and services, including market research and advertising.’*

In reality, **good marketing** is about reaching the right people at the right time and the right place with the appropriate message. Good marketing messages motivate people to take the appropriate action.

Bad marketing is simple: it is everything considered by people as spam.

In a 2018 blog post titled 'Marketing just means being considerate', CD Baby founder and TED speaker Derek Sivers leaves no doubt as to what marketing really is:

Really, 'marketing' just means being considerate.

Marketing means making it easy for people to notice you, relate to you, remember you, and tell their friends about you.

Marketing means listening for what people need and creating something surprisingly special for them.

Marketing means getting to know people, making a deeper connection, and keeping in touch.

Before we continue, there's one more misunderstanding to clear up: the difference between online marketing and digital marketing.

Online marketing stands for achieving marketing objectives through web-based technology using devices like computers, tablets and smartphones, and channels like email, search engines, the (mobile) web and social media.

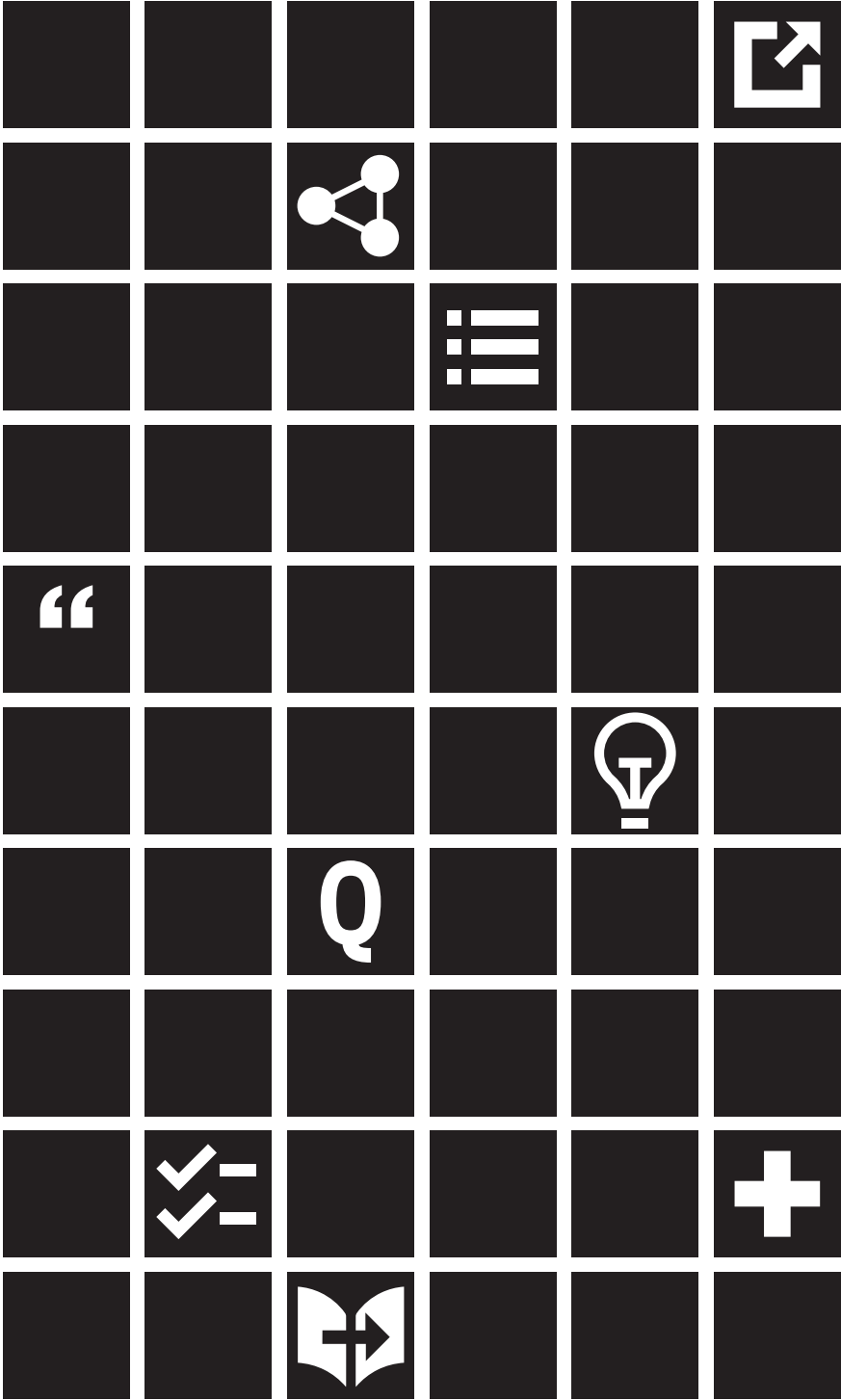
Digital marketing is more inclusive: it is all about achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies, used on devices like computers, tablets, smartphones, regular cell phones, digital billboards, and even game consoles. Typical digital marketing tactics can consist of those mentioned above, as well as mobile apps, digital billboards, SMS messages, and so on.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- *Principles of Marketing* (17th Edition), by Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong (2017)
- *This is Marketing: You Can't Be Seen Until You Learn To See* (2018), by Seth Godin
- *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity* (2021) by Philip Kotler , Hermawan Kartajaya, et al.





Q *Can you come up with a digital marketing plan?*

Don't confuse marketing strategy with the adoption of fancy new digital marketing technology. The overall attitude of whoever determines the marketing strategy in your company is crucial: their most important job is to **create and continuously adjust the strategic bridge between business goals and (digital) marketing objectives**.

Even if your task is to come up with a snappy online advertising campaign, without a plan nothing happens. And without a strategy, there's no point in planning. Strategy is about focus: making the right choices about what to do, and what to ignore.

A (Strategic) Digital Marketing Plan is not only a document, but also a process. Even though you manage to keep the eventual presentation under 15 slides, it takes a lot of time and effort to get there.

Q *What will your long-term end goal/focus be? How will the ends (objectives) be achieved by the means (channels, tactics, tools, resources)?*

This will probably not come as a surprise to you, but *strategy* was initially a military term. It refers to a long-term plan of action that consists mainly of planning and directing overall military operations and movements that help you win the battle.

Professor Richard P. Rumelt of the University of California offers a crystal clear definition of what a strategy is:

“ *Strategy is about how an organization will move forward.*

(Richard P. Rumelt, author of 'Good Strategy/Bad Strategy')

According to Rumelt, the kernel of a strategy contains three elements:

- 1 A **diagnosis** that defines or explains the nature of the challenge. A proper diagnosis simplifies the often overwhelming complexity of reality by identifying certain aspects of the situation as critical.

- 2 A **guiding policy** for dealing with the challenge. This is an overall approach chosen to cope with or overcome the obstacles identified in the diagnosis.
- 3 A set of coherent **actions** that are designed to carry out the guiding policy. These are steps that are coordinated to work together in accomplishing that policy.

Translated to your digital marketing strategy, these three elements are:

- 1 **Market analysis** followed by a diagnosis of the internal and external factors that are critical for your company's future.
- 2 **A marketing strategy** aligned with the business goals.
- 3 **Planning of digital marketing actions** for the next year

This could be the outline of your start-up's elevator pitch to potential investors, your master's thesis for a graduate training, or the briefing document for next advertising campaign.

“ If you can't describe your strategy in twenty minutes, simply and in plain language, you haven't got a plan. 'But,' people may say, 'I've got a complex strategy. It can't be reduced to a page.' That's nonsense. That's not a complex strategy. It's a complex thought about a strategy.

(Larry Bossidy, chair of Honeywell)



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- *Good Strategy Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters*, by Richard P. Rumelt (2011)
- *Strategy: A History*, by Lawrence Freedman (2013)
- *Your Strategy Needs a Strategy: How to Choose and Execute the Right Approach*, by Martin Reeves and Knut Haanaes (2015)

0 1

MARKET ANALYSIS

Q *What are the potential markets for my products and services?*

Market research is the quantitative and qualitative assessment of a market.

ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL EXTERNAL FACTORS

“ *Marketing without research is like driving with your eyes closed.*

(Dan Zarrella, social media scientist)

Deploying your digital marketing strategy without market research is like making every first date a blind date. You are bound to waste a lot of time, energy and resources!

Usually, a market analysis is performed to feed a business plan, but it is also crucial when mapping **your customers' online behavior**. And here's the good news: if you want to, you can be a fly on the wall, especially when you do your market research through social media channels. This proverbial fly can also

spy on the competition: learn from their strategies and tactics and determine what could work for you.



Learn the language of your customers, uncover emerging trends and study your customers' everyday online activities so you can integrate these into your digital marketing efforts.



FROM MARKET RESEARCH TO MARKET REPORT

- 1 **Identify the business problems.** Focus on the frustrations of your customers and the reasons people no longer want to buy from you – so you can have these issues fixed.



You want to be extra-rigorous about making the best possible thing you can. Find everything that's wrong with it and fix it. Seek negative feedback.

(Elon Musk, (co-)founder and CEO of SpaceX, Tesla, and Neuralink)

- 2 **Define the research objectives** and express them in quantitative and qualitative form.
- 3 **Explain what the findings will be used for** (e.g. for product development).
- 4 **Design a framework for the way you will perform the study:** what to collect (type of information), from where to collect, how to collect (methods, tools, techniques), why to collect (define an action plan).
- 5 **Plan the market sample:** find out who should be reached as a target audience, observe the size of this population (make sure it is big enough), and discover ways to learn more about this target audience. Focus on your *primary markets*: where do most of your customers currently come from?