

# How can you derive an optimum distribution mix for your B2B marketing dollars?

## An Insight into B2B Online Marketing

# How can you derive an optimum distribution mix for your B2B marketing dollars?

I came across an exciting job post just today for Madagascar. It was an exciting role for marketers such as me who are thirsty for unknown territory. But remember Grade 5 geography? Madagascar is in Africa right? The 'k' put me off just like a lot of B2B marketers around the world are put off when they see the CEO or CFO's diktat. Reduce spend, get more ROI...branding be damned.

I swear I love ROI because I know what I would do. I would say – “You need to only spend for 4 months. That’s a quarter & a bit. Beyond that I won’t bother you with budget haranguing.” But in those first four months I would need:

- ▶ An analyst endorsed, syndicated content piece. Industry thought leadership they call it.
- ▶ 3 Webinars with 2 of our clients targeted at geographies we work in. The Webinars have to be necessarily in partnership with a business media of choice with the latter driving promotion of the webinars.
- ▶ Some budget for paid search & PRs.

That is all. Once I have these, I would spend the next 2 quarters simply peddling my fare on the Internet while the Webinar leads keep my ever nagging sales team on ‘Run Forrest Run!’

Every marketer worth his/her salt needs a cushion when they can strategize on ROI. But in the real world this cushion never materializes because you are always chasing the eight ball. When I was handed this real world challenge at several places, all I asked for was a budget for 4 months that gave me the cushion to experiment without ever letting the pipeline run dry.

It is almost impossible to predict a model for lead generation that ensures highest bang for your buck. But what I have found is:

- ▶ Organic Search can be the cornerstone for free, high quality leads from month 4 onwards since kick off.
- ▶ Paid Search should come into the mix only after 3 months into your annual marketing program.
- ▶ Social Marketing can provide the odd gold mine but only after your Organic Search is firmly in place

The day you enter the 3rd quarter, you are primed to get rich. And then come the focus groups & discussion laundering for you to sing aloud on the Web.

If you are reading this piece, then I shall talk about how the magic starts unfolding from the 4th month onwards in my next dig.

## Optimum Mix – Achieving the Demand Generation Mojo

My first task at the start of Quarter 2 soon as my webinars have ended & I have the analyst endorsed content piece would be to create a 'content map'. This map would comprise pieces of audio, video & static content taken from the webinars & analyst pieces.

While my team was handling the logistics of Q1 activity, I was researching & thanking John Kotter for 'A Sense of Urgency' & basically getting on with it. And what was I researching - how should I distribute my content?

This is key to the magic unfolding over the next 6 months wherein I intend to bombard my Sales folks with leads enough to last forever. Content distribution planning also enables me to show to my bosses up there that I have been able to achieve the stars without denting the dollars & gives me the leverage to demand for & get these dollars when I would need those most – at the start of Q4. Here's how a part of my content distribution plan could look like:

| Content                                   | Target                     | Objective                                          | Channel                                                                                              | Geography     | Time     |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Webinar-1- 4 minute video extract         | Mid rung decision enablers | Lead Generation to engage for reaching higher rung | Website, Paid Search, SEO with specific landing page optimization                                    | As applicable | 3 months |
| Webinar-2-5 minute audio & video extracts | C, V level decision makers | Lead Generation, thought leadership branding       | Website, Social Media for audio, video & 3rd party blogs with specific search optimization & linking | As applicable | 3 months |

| Content             | Target                     | Objective                                          | Channel              | Geography     | Time                                   |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------|
| Analyst White Paper | Mid rung decision enablers | Lead Generation to engage for reaching higher rung | Website, Paid Search | As applicable | 1 month for paid, 3 months for organic |
| Press Releases      | All rungs                  | Lead Generation, spreading awareness & branding    | Online premium wires | As applicable | 15 days                                |

If you are reading this piece, then I shall talk about why this kind of a content map will give me what I need. But, that's for next time!

## Optimum Mix – Almost there!

Here's a quick rationale for my choice of content & channel mapping in my previous piece. For instance, C/V level decision makers in larger businesses would rarely, if ever start researching stuff on Google. They will ask somebody with more time to do it. They wouldn't mind attending a webinar & if they miss out, they could be found though looking up social media – blogs, video & audio networks – in spare/research time just to catch up on what's going on. This explains choices for 1 & 2.

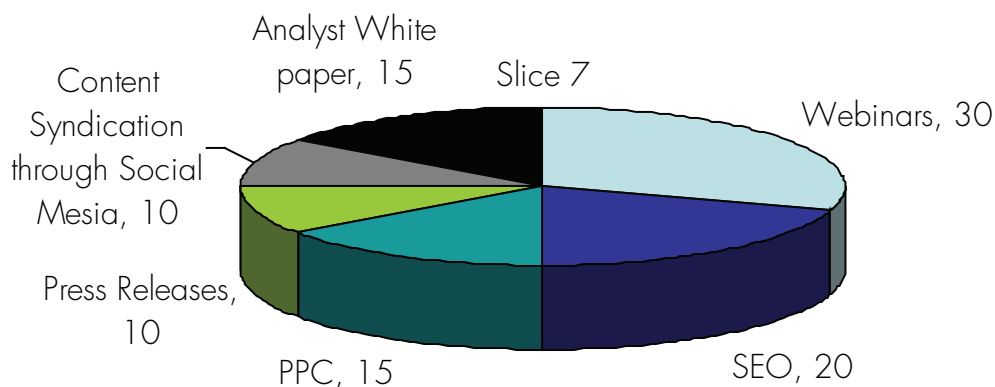
Now about 3. Analyst white papers are typically, red hot lead generators for you. Picture this – a Veep asks his managers to look up some strategic content around data rationalization so that they can review what's out there, what they can do, next steps, etc. in a team meeting next week. If I am targeting this scenario 50% of my time as a B2B marketer, my white paper will potentially get me almost every single lead there is to milk in my area.

The catch is, I have to get 'found' at any cost. Here's where my paid search needs to be ultra aggressive & my organic search guy needs to think between his ears. If you notice too – I have kept just a month aside for my paid search & that's because any piece of content has just about 30-40 days of shelf life on paid search for a particular region/geography. Beyond this, you will notice a sharp drop in both the quality & number of inbound leads from that particular content.

## B2B Online Marketing

Finally 4. Press Releases are great tools to tell all who matter or care that 'we have done something exceptional! Come visit us'. In the age of feeds & widgets, online PRs have just gone up several notches in importance. If nothing gets to your target audience, a well written & distributed PR always will. In many ways, PRs also drive people to 1, 2 & 3 & ensure your planning doesn't go bust.

So what does an optimum mix look like from quarters 1 to 3?



What I have tried to achieve is a ready-to-go, B2B demand generation mix which will work on more days than not. If you notice, I have not spoken about things like Mobile, behavioral/contextual targeting, etc. That is because those are more elaborate, relatively risky options. They hold undeniable value, but we will think about them in Q4 or year 2!

by Abhiraj Banerjee, Online Marketing Expert with 10 years of experience in B2B online marketing

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