



12 Social Media Marketing Predictions From the Pros : Social Media Examiner

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Is your marketing ready for the coming changes? Looking for expert insight to help you get your marketing plans on the right track?

In this article, 12 marketing experts share their predictions to help you prepare your social media marketing plans for the coming year.



#1: Facebook Ad Costs Push Advertisers Off the Platform



Facebook advertising is going to get much more expensive in 2020. CPMs will increase, which means it will now cost you more to reach your target audiences.

The implication of this change is that companies with a low average order value or that don't change how they evaluate their Facebook advertising returns will be priced out of the platform. The statement, "the business that can pay the most for a customer wins" has never been truer. The solution to combating increasing Facebook ad costs is threefold.

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The first is to decrease your cost per purchase or cost per lead. There are numerous ways to do this. One of the most effective is to continually refresh and test your ad campaign components—such as ad copy, creative, audiences, offers, and objectives—to reduce the impact of ad fatigue.

The second, which requires no work in your ad account, is to increase your average order value or client value. By increasing the amount that someone spends when they first buy from you, you create a bigger gap between your cost per purchase and the revenue from that purchase, thereby increasing your return on ad spend (ROAS).

The third way to combat increasing Facebook ad costs goes back to my earlier point: Change the way you evaluate your Facebook advertising returns. Instead of measuring only your first-purchase ROAS, which is reported directly in Ads Manager, you should also measure your true ROAS, which factors in your customer lifetime value.

CLIENT A			
AOV	\$107.91	LTV	\$157.91
CPA	\$15.79		
		<hr/>	
ROAS	6.8X	TRUE ROAS	10X

True ROAS is the real worth of a customer to your business when you acquire them via Facebook or Instagram advertising and they go on to become a repeat customer who spends a multiple of what they spent when they first bought from you.

By using the lifetime value of your customers, you can attribute more revenue to your Facebook ads and therefore a higher overall ROAS and effectiveness for Facebook advertising as a marketing channel.

Achieving success with Facebook advertising now goes beyond just the media buying and dives deep into the fundamental components of your business such as pricing, product positioning, and customer insights.

Charlie Lawrance is the founder and CEO of Gecko Squared, a Facebook and Instagram advertising agency that specializes in working with high-growth businesses around the world.

#2: LinkedIn CPC Climbs Higher



Driving traffic in Q4 has always been expensive and this year is no different. LinkedIn advertising costs are currently high and there was a significant jump in cost per click (CPC) when the platform released objective-based advertising in March 2019. Perhaps LinkedIn's objective-based advertising created a more competitive marketplace in Q4 or maybe rising Facebook ad costs have pushed more marketers to LinkedIn. If CPC drops in January, we'll know whether the jump was due to seasonality.

Regardless, you need to know how to get the highest ROAS on your LinkedIn advertising in 2020.

First, I recommend that you always bid on CPC regardless of the ad format because it presents the lowest risk to you as the advertiser. Additionally, CPC bids tend to be significantly lower than bidding by engagement or impression 90% of the time.

When you bid on CPC, begin low (at the base bid) and only raise your bid when you need more traffic. LinkedIn won't initially tell you what the minimum bid is, so start low—say \$2. LinkedIn will then give you a message in red that tells you what the minimum bid is; now you know where to set your opening bid.

Second, disregard LinkedIn's bidding recommendations. Most often, LinkedIn will select auto-bidding, which is crazy-expensive and the likelihood that your ads will fall into the 10% of affordable bids is low.

Finally, don't use audience expansion. It's just not worth it to pollute the traffic you're paying for by letting LinkedIn advertise to someone you didn't select to be in your audience.

AJ Wilcox is a LinkedIn ads pro and founder of B2Linked.com, a LinkedIn-specific ad agency. He manages sophisticated campaigns worldwide.

#3: Rising Ad Costs Lead Marketers to Refocus on Organic Video Content



Facebook has more than 7 million advertisers and shrinking available inventory. The ever-increasing costs of ads across every major social platform will encourage marketers to dust off their content marketing playbooks.

Smart marketers are making investments in high-value video content that's super-useful to future customers. We'll see increased use of IGTV and YouTube content in social marketing. And yes, that YouTube content will be promoted using Facebook!

As time spent with content becomes a very valuable metric for marketers, video represents the ultimate scroll-stopping experience that can and will increase "know, like, and trust."

, and the man behind Social Media Marketing World—the industry's largest conference. Michael Stelzner is the founder of Social Media Examiner, author of the books Launch and Writing White Papers

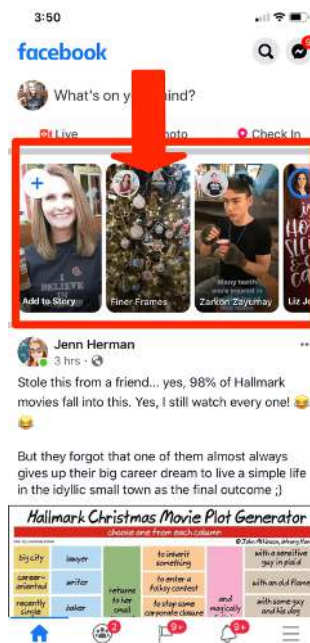
#4: Stories Are Central to Visibility on Facebook and Instagram



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The Facebook and Instagram Stories format will continue to grow in popularity throughout 2020. So much so that regular feed content will noticeably slow down. And it's quite feasible that both Facebook and Instagram may start rolling out more robust tests of its blended feed and Stories format. Both platforms very briefly tested such a merged, horizontal interface and both were met with disdain.

Most social media users balk at sudden, radical change so Facebook has to come up with a way to gradually phase in this merged feed on either or both platforms.



One approach has been to make the Stories “cards” bigger and more prominent on the Facebook mobile app and intersperse them throughout the regular news feed. Facebook also continues to make it easier and more enticing for users to publish content to Stories by sharing daily memories and automatically publishing feed posts to Stories as well.

Marketers should understand why the Stories format is being pushed so heavily.

First, back in July 2016 on the Q2-2016 earnings call, Facebook CFO Dave Wehner declared that the company was running out of places in the news feed to show people ads. To help mitigate this max ad load, Facebook spun up ads on Instagram in 2018. Soon the ad load started to max out there, too.

This means that Facebook absolutely has to find new places in which to place ads. And those new places include Stories, video ad breaks, and Messenger ads, among others.

Second, the future of Facebook's news feed has been in question ever since CEO Mark Zuckerberg published his 3,200-word privacy manifesto, declaring that the company would be pivoting away from permanent public posts and toward private, encrypted messaging.

Consider how incredibly easy it is for users to consume content in the Stories format. Tap, swipe, tap, swipe. The user is in complete control. They can view as much or as little of any individual account's stories as they wish. Additionally, creators can publish an abundance of stories and not worry about jamming up their followers' feeds. Plus, with the 24-hour shelf-life of a story, creators have to keep producing content, which means more inventory for ad placement.

Inserting ads into Stories just makes sense and there's plenty of inventory. On Facebook's Q3-2019 earnings call on October 30, COO Sheryl Sandberg stated that of the more than 7 million advertisers across the Facebook family of apps, there are already 3 million advertising across Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger Stories.

So publishing more organic stories and creating native stories ads is a great place to focus in 2020. One hot tip for you: Be sure to include interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, sliders, questions, and donations in your stories. People love to touch their phones. Some studies show that people touch their phones over 2,600 times a day and extreme cell phone users (in the top 10%) touch their phones as much as 5,400 times daily. Amazing.

Other notable trends and changes marketers would do well to observe is any new ad unit and/or ad placement options that Facebook and Instagram roll out. These include ads in search results on Facebook and ads in Instagram Explore. Video content will also continue to grow across all social platforms. I declared way back in 2013 that it was the Year of the Video. It seems that keeps being true every year!

Mari Smith is known as "the Queen of Facebook," and is one of the world's foremost experts on Facebook marketing and social media. Her agency provides consulting and training on Facebook marketing best practices for SMBs and brands.

#5: Personalized Brand-to-Customer Experiences Are No Longer Optional



I believe in 2020, brands are going to see a shift in online marketing starting with the dramatic rise of dark social conversations. This means more people are moving into private conversation channels.

Brands that haven't focused on relationship marketing techniques will either spend more on their pay-to-play model or dive into building and hosting community conversations that create brand advocates and support a belonging vs. buying mindset.

The latter will strengthen their online home bases (their websites) and create better, faster customer experiences online with automated processes through conversational marketing via chat as well as personalized experiences with dynamic ads, video emails, and text.

To build deeper connections with their audience, brands will put more heart and personality into their brand story by aligning with feel-good causes and taking a strong stance on what they believe. Collaborations will still be important and brands will look to a new kind of influencer content in the form of stories from clients or team members.

Additionally, businesses will increase adoption of native tools like Messenger subscriptions, appointment setting and purchases on Facebook, shopping within stories, and convenience-based integrations to reduce any friction.

In 2020, a company's story must be felt by its audience. The process of doing business must be easy for companies to win, keep, and activate their audience into becoming advocates.

Jessika Phillips is a social media strategist and founder of NOW Marketing Group, a Forbes recognized Agency Partner and a certified inbound partner with HubSpot.

#6: Template-Based Marketing Fails to Produce Results



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Most social media marketing fails because it looks like marketing. People are sick of marketing. Gone are the days when you can create a standard template image in Canva talking about “National [insert something generic] Day,” post it on social media and wait for the sales to roll in.

Social media is saturated and the cream really does rise to the top. To understand how to sell your product or service to your audience on social media in 2020, you really need to understand three things.

- What types of content your ideal customer actually enjoys consuming and where they want to see it.
- What content and where to put it to attract, convince, and convert your prospects.
- The decision-making process your prospects go through to identify and choose a supplier to help them with the problem you solve.

Now you can map your marketing efforts to provide the right message to the right person at the right time, driving conversions in a super-creative way.

Stop making bog standard template-based rubbish. Start creating entertaining advertising like this.

With a Beard Like This, You Can Do Anything

Who do you know that is as perfect as Frank?

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Posted by [Wahl UK](#) on Monday, November 4, 2019

Dan Knowlton, a UK-based digital and social media marketing expert, has grown Knowlton (formerly KPS Digital Marketing) into a multi-award-winning business that works with the likes of FIFA, Nestle, Citibank, Eurotunnel, and Boston Consulting Group.

#7: Reducing Platform Channels Produces Better Results



The social media marketing industry changes at the speed of light and it's not going to slow down in 2020. Here's how to stay ahead of your competition.

Advertising costs will continue to rise. You'll either need to build stronger ad strategies or stronger organic strategies.

To that end, platform-specific strategies will be key to the success of your marketing campaigns.

Your YouTube audience isn't the same as your Twitter audience, and neither are the same as your Instagram audience. Don't try to spread the same marketing messaging everywhere. Stop being a dabbler and cease using the platforms you barely use.

Take the time to master the algorithm on one platform at a time, and make sure you can put a considerable amount of energy into every platform you manage.

Amanda Bond is owner of The Ad Strategist and creator of The StrADegy System.

#8: Niche Marketing Is Key to Success



In 2020, the race isn't to be everywhere and reach everyone but to reach the right people with focused intent. It's about choosing the quality of engagements over the quantity of engagements.

How can your business make the shift?

Pick one thing you want to be known for and stick to it!

Choose two platforms and excel on them. Choose these platforms based on your ideal client, your best-performing content to date, and the platform demographics. Here are a few platform combination suggestions for you to consider:

- Pinterest + LinkedIn
- YouTube + Instagram
- LinkedIn + Instagram

Now create a solid hashtag and keyword strategy around your one thing and keep your marketing hyper-focused on it.

In short, don't do what every other brand is doing. Do what's right for your brand to reach your goals.

Peg Fitzpatrick, the co-author of the best-selling book, The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users, and beloved blogger, has spearheaded successful social media campaigns for Virgin, Audi, Mercedes, Google, and Motorola, as well as brand ambassadorships for Adobe, Nestlé, and Kimpton Hotels.

#9: LinkedIn and Pinterest Regain Traction



First, I think we're going to see continued consolidation and expansion of the incumbent social media platforms in 2020, namely Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

Contrary to what a lot of people are saying, I see TikTok following a similar path to that of Snapchat in 2020. TikTok is a hot trend right now, but long-term, the user base will move on to a new hot platform in 2020—just as they moved from Snapchat to TikTok in 2019. Businesses don't want to continue to invest resources in the next big thing only to continue to get burned as attention fades and moves elsewhere, which is why I think they'll refocus that energy into Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest in 2020.

The two platforms that I think will deliver disproportionate results are LinkedIn and Pinterest.

We've seen a resurgence of LinkedIn throughout 2019, and that will only continue to build momentum in 2020. The ad platform on LinkedIn has a long-held reputation of being prohibitively expensive for most small businesses and difficult to achieve a positive result on, but I think that will also change in 2020. We're already starting to see ads on LinkedIn become more effective as they improve the platform for advertisers. I believe that will continue in 2020.

Pinterest holds a unique position as a social platform in that it behaves much more like a search engine than other social media platforms. This is why I think marketers will give it more attention in 2020. Investments of time and effort in traditional social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn only deliver results for a short period of time.

The life of content on those platforms is very short—days at best. However, on Pinterest, pins can continue to drive traffic for years. It's that long-term return on investment in the platform that I think will entice marketers who are looking for the best way to invest their limited time and resources in 2020.

Andrew Hubbard is the founder of Hubbard Digital, a social media advertising agency that specializes in helping online educators scale their businesses with Facebook and Instagram ads.

#10: Personalized Micro-Engagements Are Essential On Instagram



Small businesses that struggle to sustain a share of voice in the marketplace can make a deep impact with two strategic uses of Instagram.

First, when you or your business is tagged, featured, or replied to in Instagram stories, be sure to send a personalized response via a voice note through Instagram Direct. When someone hears your voice, you (or your brand) become that much more real to them and they feel more connected to you.

Second, when people visit your business and post about it on Instagram, they may tag your location rather than your account's username. Be sure to search your location tag and open every conversation to provide a personalized reply to thank people for their purchase or for visiting your business. It's a great way to create a deeper connection with people.

Alex Beadon is an Instagram Stories expert and online business strategist who helps small business owners and marketers learn how to use Instagram Stories. She's the creator of the online course, Gram Slam, and a daily prompt subscription service, Project Storyline.

#11: Authentic Content Trumps Polished Marketing



2020 is the year the facade of perfectly polished marketing crashes and burns. Too many people have been burned by influencers faking it with perfect photoshoots, and consumers are desperate for authenticity. As consumers' hunger for real answers grows, they're looking for signs of congruency, for proof that their favorite people are actually walking the walk on and off the platforms on which they engage.

2020 is the year of humanized marketing, and the business that provides all-access, behind-the-scenes, contextual marketing wins. Here are six tips to help you beat the bandwagon marketers with authenticity:

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- Test out TikTok. TikTok is a rare platform that shows more dimensions and allows audiences to fall in love with your creative, unpolished, impromptu, or user-generated content.
- Go live. Anywhere. Showcase the chaos of getting ready for an event with three kids when your baby has the flu and your last clean outfit was *cough* messed up.
- Record your podcast within real-life scenarios that allow your audience to experience your life and surroundings through the audio.
- Drop the face filters. You have a scar on your eyebrow? The holiday eating magically added an extra 15 pounds on your photos? Let it be. Let your audience see.
- Video tells all. Consumers are looking for contextual clues in your video marketing. They want more than a perfect set and script; they want to see who you are. Give them more to work with.
- Tell the truth. Was 2019 was a hard year? Tell your audience about it and don't brush it off with the usual, "Oh man, it was a challenging year!" Share what went wrong, how your heart broke, about the night when you almost quit. Tell them about the mistakes that nearly destroyed you. Just tell them the truth.

Rachel Pederson is founder and CEO of award-winning social media marketing agency, The Viral Touch, and founder and CEO of Social Media United.

#12: AI Makes Humanizing Your Brand Imperative



Artificial intelligence (AI) will be the beginning of the end of marketing as we know it. 2020 will officially mark the start of the next industrial revolution and the social media industry will be affected in a variety of ways.

Data analysis and programming will become the new marketing manager's role as AI replaces community managers and copywriters. Not even influencers and content creators are safe because it's possible to use AI to build an entire persona. To illustrate, Lil Miquela is a computer-generated influencer with 1.8 million Instagram followers at the time of this writing.

Humanizing your brand is more than a catchy hook. It's a real business strategy that every marketer should take seriously to stay in business. Here are five ways to humanize your brand in the next year.

Step 1: Create content as if it's coming from an individual. When a brand shares content on social media, they're not just competing with other brands. They're competing with everyone on social media for users' attention, including an individuals' friends and the celebrities they follow. As such, if you simply share salesy messages that sound like they came from a press release, social media users will scroll right past your content until they find something more social or entertaining to engage with.

Brands should try to create content that sounds more like it came from an individual than a corporate entity. Don't be afraid to adopt a more personal, casual tone, and aim to create content that you would want to engage with yourself.

Step 2: Engage in actual conversations. If someone comments on your content, don't send them a copy-and-paste response. Instead, treat that message more like a note from a friend and respond in a personal way. Similarly, you can jump into conversations others are having online. To visualize this, if you're a real estate agent and you see someone talking about things to do in your city, chime in with a personalized response about what you think that person might like to do, rather than pitching your real estate services.

Give those conversations room to naturally evolve, and eventually, a personal conversation can turn to a more business-focused conversation initiated by the customer.

Step 3: Highlight the employees behind your brand. Try showcasing what a day in the life of different employees at your company is like by letting them do a Snapchat or Instagram Stories takeover for the day or week. You can also share more content about company events and employee initiatives to help consumers connect with your brand on a personal level.

Today's consumers don't simply want to purchase from a logo. They want to purchase from companies they feel a connection to, and highlighting your employees can help in that regard.

Step 4: Give a voice to the customers who help make your brand what it is. Encourage customers to submit content as part of a contest you're running. A restaurant, for instance, could ask customers to share their favorite holiday foods and holiday memories, and the restaurant could then choose a winner to receive a free meal and share their story on social media.

In doing so, you not only provide a more human element to your marketing but you can also expand your reach by leveraging the individual networks that your customers each have when they share content related to your brand on their own channels.

Step 5: Don't try to be all things to all people. Accept this as part of being human and it will also make you a better marketer. While you may be tempted to hop on every social media platform and try to amplify your message as much as possible, you likely won't be very effective. Just as it's difficult for a person to be everywhere at once, your brand marketing will likely be diluted if you try to be active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok all at the same time.

Similarly, you can't always comment on every trending topic or be funny, informative, inspirational, and more, all at the same time. Focus on the platforms and content you excel at.

By following these steps, you can form more genuine connections online, which tends to translate to more marketing success. The online landscape is too crowded for most brand messaging to stand out. Instead, organizations need to adapt by being more human to form connections that make a lasting impact.