**PAPER PRESENTAION**

**ON**

**EMERGING MARKETING TRENDS**

**BY**

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**EMERGING MARKETING TRENDS**

**Access the**[**9 Digital Marketing Megatrends 2018**](https://www.smartinsights.com/guides/digital-marketing-megatrends/)

Looking forward, in this article, I'm going to review 10 new trends which I believe, based on my experience consulting and training, are relevant for marketers across businesses of a range of sizes. But, first, I'm interested to know what you think will be important to you and your business in 2018.

**The ten marketing trends to act on in 2018**

If you look at the 14 themes that we covered last year, none of these top-level marketing techniques are especially new, so it's difficult to describe them as new trends or innovations. However, techniques like Big Data and analytics, Content Marketing and Email/Marketing Automation have continued to grow in importance and will be used by many businesses.

So in my look at the trends this year, I'll be looking at integration as the theme. In our [research on managing digital marketing](https://www.smartinsights.com/guides/managing-digital-marketing-2015/) (another free member download) you can see that only 6% of companies thought their integration process was completely optimised, yet many are actively working on integration.

[Integrated marketing communications or IMC](https://www.smartinsights.com/traffic-building-strategy/integrated-marketing-communications/what-is-right-touching-for-customer-communications/) isn't a concept you see written about much on blogs or social media since it's high-level with everyone getting excited at the latest minor innovations from the [frightful 5](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/technology/techs-frightful-5-will-dominate-digital-life-for-foreseeable-future.html?mcubz=0) - at the time of writing we're getting excited about the Animojis in iPhone X for example. Fun, but they're not going to help deliver the most relevant message and offer for an individual, which is the aim of IMC.

So, let's take a look at the 10 trends. You'll notice that in a lot of these predictions, I'll refer to [Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning](https://www.smartinsights.com/guides/ai-machine-learning-marketing/). It's what I see as the biggest trend to consider in the year ahead. There has been a lot of hype around it in 2017 and we're starting to understand the opportunities. In 2018 it will become more about selecting solutions and implementation.

**Trend 1. Integrating Marketing Activities Into the Customer Lifecycle**

Given the way the complexity of marketing and digital marketing has increased, techniques like customer journey mapping for different personas are increasing in importance to help define the most relevant communications and experiences for different touchpoints in the customer journey.

To support this, the way I like to think about how to improve the effectiveness of digital marketing is to think from the customers' viewpoint of the communications opportunity available through the [customer lifecycle](https://www.smartinsights.com/ecommerce/web-personalisation/what-is-lifecycle-marketing/) for different types of business.

**Trend 2. Integrating personalization into the user journey / customer experience**

To increase relevance and response of comms, website personalization has been widely used within transactional ecommerce sectors like retail, travel and financial services for a long time now.

More recently, lower cost options have become available with different types of solutions. There are many forms of web personalization varying from those integrated into content or commerce management systems; those integrated into analytics solutions or standalone Software as a Service (SaaS) personalization options that integrate with your CMS and analytics. A useful method to review your use of personalization at the top-level is this [experience personalization pyramid](https://www.smartinsights.com/ecommerce/web-personalisation/experience-personalization-pyramid/):

**Trend 3. Integrating machine learning into marketing automation**

Personalization can also be applied across the lifecycle in email comms.  Yet, our research on email marketing shows that despite the widespread use of email and marketing automation systems, many companies don't manage to put in place a full lifecycle contact system like that shown in the lifecycle visual above.

We assessed segmentation and targeting of emails based on the number of criteria that are used from none at all up to dynamic content.

The findings from our [State of Email marketing report](https://www.smartinsights.com/guides/the-state-of-email-marketing-2015) are shocking: Half (50%) don’t use any targeting whatsoever, less than a third (29%) use basic segmentation for targeting and less than 15% use segmentation and personalization rules to reach specific audiences within their database. This means that they may be missing out on opportunities for automated emails with dynamic content for welcome and nurture of prospects and customers.

Although email marketing automation is another technique where artificial intelligence and machine learning is being applied more often. Using machine learning offers opportunities to automate targeting as it does for web personalization. However, personalization is potentially more difficult since emails, by their nature, have more complex creative. This data suggests to me that many businesses aren't ready for AI and machine learning within email marketing and they need to deploy fundamental triggered automation features first.

**Trend 4. Integrating social messaging apps into communications**

The increasing use of messaging apps is a trend we have mentioned in previous trends round-ups. According to the latest[Ofcom Communications Market research](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/cmr/cmr-2017) more than half of the total mobile audience used Facebook Messenger (61%) and half used WhatsApp (50%). Both properties are owned by Facebook. The Snapchat mobile app had a reach of 28%, with 10.1 million unique visitors.

We've been looking at some early adopters of marketing applications of these social messaging apps on Smart Insights. Examples include using [Pizza Hut using Messenger](https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-platforms/tested-pizza-express-chatbot/) for booking tables and [IKEA for customer research](https://www.smartinsights.com/marketplace-analysis/customer-analysis/how-ikea-are-innovating-in-customer-research/).

**Trend 5. Integrating video into the customer journey**

Video is also increasing in popularity fuelled by social . This breakdown of Google popularity shows the dominance of YouTube. We used to say that YouTube was the second biggest search engine, but this data shows that it is now more popular than Google Search based on number of users in a given month (this research also from the comScore panel via Ofcom).

This visual reminds us of the opportunities to use video marketing through the customer lifecycle from pre-roll ads in YouTube (just one option, Google has [10 Video ad options](https://support.google.com/displayspecs/?topic=4588474&_ga=2.175378146.1107180774.1505826226-668174720.1505826226#topic=4588474)), explainer ads on site and retargeting through video.

[Augmented and Virtual Reality](https://www.smartinsights.com/tag/marketing-using-virtual-and-augmented-reality/) are closely related to video engagement, but although we've been tracking these, we have seen fewer examples and case studies this year. So, do let us know of any examples.

**Trend 6. Integrating content marketing into the customer journey using a customer engagement strategy**

Video is just one type of content, albeit important. In previous polls about the technique that will give the biggest uplift in future, content marketing has been popular, in the top one or two in the list.

The trend I'm seeing here is that businesses are getting serious about treating content as a strategic resource, that means developing a customer engagement strategy using different media as shown in the lifecycle diagrams above, and at a practical level, developing content for different audiences using techniques like Personas and Content mapping. Our research shows that these [customer-centric analysis techniques](https://www.smartinsights.com/user-experience/customer-experience-management-cxm/best-techniques-improve-customer-journeys/) are growing in importance, which has to be a good thing for consumers and businesses!

**Trend 7. Integrating search marketing into your content marketing activities**

If we look at the [top digital sales channels](https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/customer-acquisition-strategy/retail-acquisition-channel/), search marketing is dominant. Social media is far behind in most sectors, despite its ongoing popularity with consumers. We now know that in many sectors social media can be a great tool for engaging audiences with a brand and improving favourability and awareness, but it typically doesn't drive lead volume or sales. So I haven't given social media it's own section, although integrating it with other channels like web, search and email marketing remains relevant. See our recap of SMW London for the latest [social media trends](https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-week-london-2017-recap/).

However, within search marketing there is today *relatively* little innovation that we get to hear about compared to the past. Looking at natural search shows that the [Moz algorithm change history](https://moz.com/google-algorithm-change) has no entries since the non-specific 'Fred' update in March, whereas in previous years it would have had 5+ with new updates to Panda and Penguin. This is partly down to Google sharing less, with Matt Cutts no longer actively evangelising, although updates are available from [John Mueller](https://plus.google.com/collection/oSHR9) in their Search team.

Within organic search, one trend I think marketers should be aware of is the changing face of the SERPs as shown by the[Mozcast SERPs features](http://mozcast.com/features) update which shows the types of links within a bundle of top 10k keywords they monitor.

**Trend 8. Integrating marketing technology**

If you follow applications of marketing technology you have almost certainly seen [Scott Brinker's Martech landscape](https://www.smartinsights.com/managing-digital-marketing/marketing-innovation/marketing-technology-2014/) which has grown to over 5,000 vendors this year.

Our own [digital marketing tools wheel](https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-platforms/essential-digital-marketing-tools-infographic/) seeks to simplify this, but has over 30 categories of insights and automation tools which shows the challenge of integrating marketing technology. The trend here is that there is no let up in tools offering innovative methods to analyse or automate. Our final two categories highlights some of these.

Given the plethora of martech, the most apt [definition](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/plethora) seems:

*'very large amount of something, especially a larger amount than you need, want, or can deal with*'

You might expect there would be a trend to increasing use of marketing clouds, but our research suggests there isn't widespread adoption of these.

As we have mentioned throughout this article, machine learning and AI is one of the biggest trends here, see this article and infographic for [AI marketing applications across the lifecycle](https://www.smartinsights.com/managing-digital-marketing/marketing-innovation/15-applications-artificial-intelligence-marketing/).

**Trend 9. Integrating different data sources**

This challenge was highlighted to use recently in our members' Facebook group where a member asked about tools for integrating insights from different paid media ad serving tools which can give the best results if managed separately, for example, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn ads and Google AdWords. [Rivery.io](http://rivery.io/) is a new option that has launched recently, that should do well. The trend here is new integrated media insights tools other than Google or Adobe, which can help you compare performance of different media.

These services are surprisingly expensive, particularly since they are additional analysis tools. They're not martech that directly increases leads or sales to the business. For example, I was recently recommended this service ([Funnel.io](https://funnel.io/pricing) ) that costs a minimum of $200 / month, even if it's solely used to integrate data from multiple sources into Google Sheets. It's a lot when to get the value from these tools you have to ringfence time so that the analytics are reviewed and acted on sufficiently.

**Trend 10. Integrating digital marketing insights sources**

Our [digital marketing tools wheel](https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-platforms/essential-digital-marketing-tools-infographic/) contains many free and paid sources of insight about your digital marketing. Here, I'm talking specifically about services which help you stay up-to-date. We're avid users of these services since they help us keep readers up-to-date via our own blog, twice weekly newsletters and monthly What's Hot feature.

In a recent article on [keeping marketing teams up-to-date](https://www.smartinsights.com/managing-digital-marketing/marketing-innovation/keeping-digital-marketing/), Mark Kelly explains that we recommend using [Feedly](https://www.feedly.com/) as a way of aggregating primary marketing news sources via RSS. Plus, I recommend taking a look at [Zest](http://www.zest.is/) which is a Google Chrome extension, new in 2017, which I and the team at Smart Insights use and is well worth checking out. Its curated content is specifically designed for and updated by marketers. Like Feedly, you can use it to review the most useful content recommended by 'the crowd', in this case 'your tribe' of marketers.