



THE NEW RULES OF
DIGITAL
MARKETING

FROM ECCLES EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

THE NEW RULES OF **DIGITAL** **MARKETING**

Firetoss Founder and Eccles Professor Tony Passey discusses the strategic use of digital marketing channels to ensure messaging reaches your target customer.

U BY TONY PASSEY
(AS TOLD TO SARA LANGEN)

It's hard to imagine a business right now that doesn't have a big web presence. It's hard to imagine any company that's not going to focus on digital marketing as a huge part of their strategy.

In the last 15 years, we've taken computers and shrunk them down to pocket size. They're always in your hand. Almost everyone has high-processing information-gathering power within arm's reach. Because of this, we've stopped responding to "push" style advertising. Most of us can find whatever information we need on our own. It gives consumers a lot more confidence than they had 15 years ago.

In digital channels, you have an opportunity to influence people in a much more personal way. Not only are you hitting them through their personal device, but you have the power of data and segmentation to be much

more precise in your marketing and put your messaging in place for your specific target user group, as opposed to a broader market.

Unlike a lot of agency founders, I didn't come from an agency background. I serve as CEO of Firetoss, an online marketing and advertising agency, but my experience is really in entrepreneurial ventures and startups. I worked in building materials and manufacturing ventures—very non-digital industries. Around 2001, the Internet was this new frontier that nobody really knew how to utilize. So I decided to start experimenting, testing and evaluating and found a lot of success in companies early on by being able to do marketing online. The fact that I was taking a personal risk made me more aggressive and thorough with how I approached digital marketing.

When I founded Firetoss, my goal was to



Firetoss Headquarters - Image Courtesy of Firetoss

help other businesses that weren't as savvy in these new channels. I got a lot of experience early on by running my own businesses and I've been able to refer back to that experience as we've crafted strategies for hundreds of companies.

When I joined the Eccles faculty, I was charged with creating courses on digital marketing that were more about practical application and less about theory. Internet marketing changes rapidly, so I take what we learn on a daily basis in the agency and turn those lessons into actual teaching moments for my students.

A lot of my students work in marketing and are looking to answer real questions and solve challenges in their careers. Many people in high-level marketing positions didn't start with the Internet being a large part of their jobs and tell me they feel they lack specific knowledge in digital advertising. The focus of the new online Executive Education course in Digital Marketing is to answer some

of those feelings.

The course introduces students to the five major digital marketing channels that are common and accessible to businesses of all sizes: organic traffic, referral or content marketing (which also includes social media), paid search advertising, email marketing and display advertising. There are many ways to drive exposure and traffic online, but these five channels cover a broad set of needs. Developing a plan for how and when to use all or some of these channels is a complicated formula that marketers continually analyze and debate.

One of the advantages the Internet provides is you don't have to "buy in" to get exposure. A small mom-and-pop shop can go up against a large corporation in the same geographic area, which isn't something you can do with traditional advertising, like billboards, TV or radio. If you're trying to get exposure, a small company isn't going to have the buying

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power to compete. Often there's no path to success with traditional channels, but in digital channels you have the ability to refine and tightly segment who you want to see your advertising and how you want to position your product.

With search engines, all your advertising is based on demand for particular keywords. If you're selling products related to those keyword searches, you have the ability to advertise just to the small segment of the population that would essentially self-select into your market by typing in those keywords. You're not dealing with broad strokes; you're dealing with a very refined, filtered subset of the population.

We also discuss media buying and advertising, including how to create and run a campaign with Google Ad Words and using Google Analytics for tracking and evaluation. Google's platforms by far have the most market share. We also discuss advertising on social networks like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest offer up a lot of very personal data, so advertisers can segment by age, relative income or number of children. You can make a surgical strike and only spend advertising dollars on the people you want to reach.

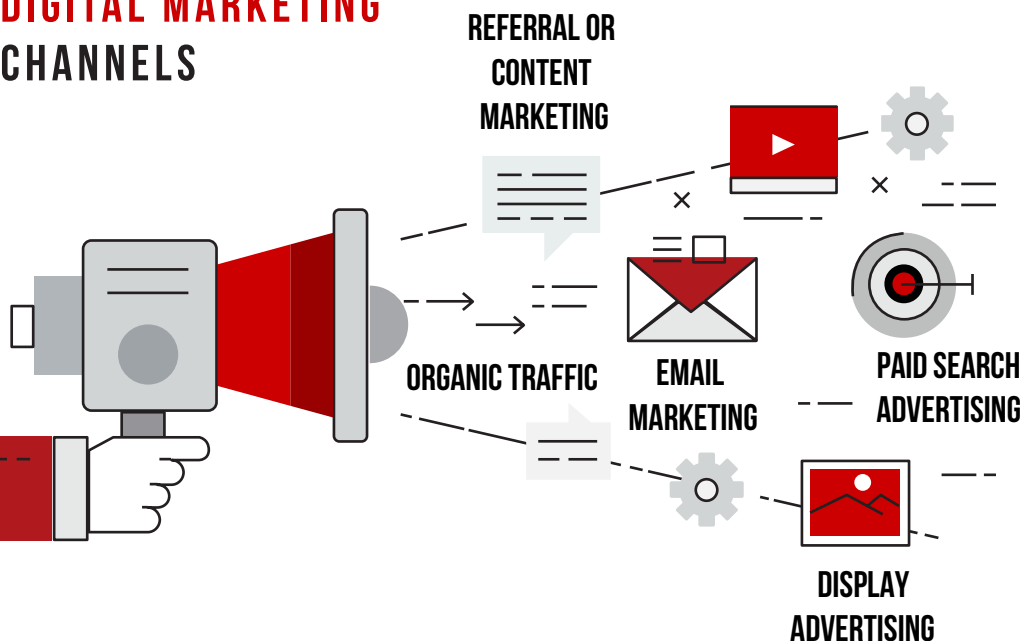
One of the biggest mistakes I see with digital marketing is that there's not enough commitment to tracking and analysis.

You have to set up tracking for campaign performance before you launch anything. A key difference between digital marketing and traditional advertising is your ability to track at a very granular level. If you run a billboard campaign, you don't know the exact number of people who reacted to those billboards, but in a digital marketing campaign you know how many people saw it and how many converted as a result.

As marketers, we're losing the ability to "push" consumers and users toward what we want them to do. With the power and accessibility of information, people choose to research whatever they're going to purchase on their own time, so you'll take a more authoritative and effective position if you create content and strategically place it so they find out about you, your company, your product or service. A lot of companies haven't figured that out yet.

My primary goal in the Executive Education course is that afterward, students feel very comfortable with these five channels, which encompass 90-95 percent of the digital marketing space. I want to help them fill in any knowledge gaps and develop proficiency so they can craft an online marketing plan, know which channels to utilize and how to utilize them. That's what fuels my teaching.

THE FIVE MAJOR DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS



MEET

TONY PASSEY

Tony Passey is founder and CEO of Firetoss, a marketing and web development firm in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is also an Assistant Professor, Lecturer in the Marketing Department of the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah.

Firetoss provides SEO, marketing and creative services to firms across the nation. Firetoss' integrated approach to strategy, creative development and marketing execution provide a unique advantage over other agencies.

Tony created a new digital marketing curriculum for for undergraduate and graduate students that applies marketing strategy to project-based assignments. Students learn through a mixture of lectures and hands-on group work for local non-profits and small businesses.

Tony has engaged in various start-ups ranging from tech companies to retail to manufacturing, including the creation of an elite brand of energy efficient products, Thermaglass Windows, and the west coast's first fully custom fiberglass door manufacturing company, SureFit Door Co.

Tony Passey received a B.A. in Economics and an M.S. in Finance from the University of Utah. He has received several business awards including being named to the Utah v100, a list of top CEOs in technology.



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