



2020 MARKETING PREDICTIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

12 Trends to Kick off a New Decade
(And How to Put Them into Action)

Another year has come to a close, and with that, another marketing chapter has been written. And what a cliffhanger we've been left with, leaving us all asking "What happens next?!"

With so many advancements in 2019, we can only imagine what 2020 has in store for us.

The options seem endless and the strategies are ever-evolving—but at the end of the day we need to focus on what will be—not what once was.

National Positions has been laser-focused on all the advancements that can affect our clients' marketing performance moving forward—from the **Google BERT update** to YouTube's stricter **policies**, our finger is forever on the pulse.

But what about the rest of the SMB world? What matters to other owners, managers, and team members across different industries and locations? Where do they want to improve and refresh as 2020 kicks into gear? We really wanted to know...so we asked.

We launched our 2020 Trends APB to the world and received hundreds of responses spanning dozens of tactics, strategies, and trends from coast to coast.

We picked 12 of our favorite predictions, explained a bit about why each trend will matter in 2020, and then shared some actionable tips and tools to help you leverage each and every one.

So, let's do this.

Read on for 12 marketing trends that others predict—and we agree—will hold the greatest opportunities for your business in 2020. Some are simple, some are complex, but all have the power to supercharge your marketing impact.

To a profitable and groundbreaking 2020!

Bernard May



TREND: ONE

ALL EYES ON VIDEO



I think video marketing...should be a focus in 2020. Video has been something that has completely transformed my business and I plan to use it even more in 2020 across my website, YouTube channel and social media platforms. I'm also coaching my clients on how to incorporate video and live events more into their businesses in the coming year.

In terms of marketing, it's allowed me to build human connection in a digital world. So, it's allowed me to attract the right people in. By implementing video into our sales process recently, we went from 25 percent sales close to 85 percent sales close in half the time.

Submitted by: Amber Vilhauer at <https://ngngenterprises.com>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Video? If you are in business, you are likely aware of how [valuable video](#) can be for your brand. However, [creating videos](#) can be a tall order, and producing videos on an ongoing basis can be an even bigger challenge. With this in mind, get in the rhythm of making every piece of content “multi-use.” So just because you have created one blog post or piece of site content in “text form” doesn’t mean that you can’t make a video version of the same content—or vice versa. Don’t try to reinvent the wheel every time. Focus on trying to produce consistent content—not perfect content.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 As you start creating video, use what you already have available in your pocket—your phone! Most new phones have fantastic cameras that can take high-quality video.
- 2 For audio, use an external mic to capture crisper, clearer audio tracks when you are recording and editing people speaking. If you are not an editor, use tools like Animoto or InVideo to easily edit your clips together in a short video.
- 3 Lastly, create a [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) account. You can upload, store, and embed your video content on these two platforms. Plus, it will make sharing and distributing your video that much easier.



TREND: TWO

FOCUS ON IGTV



2020 is going to be a big year for Instagram, and it's definitely time for your business to be on the platform if it isn't already. Next year, I really feel IGTV is going to take off and its full potential hasn't been tapped into yet. The Instagram feature lets you upload videos that are longer than a minute, meaning you can provide more informative, interesting and educational content in a long-form post. IGTV would be great for Q&As, showcasing new products and expressing any new news your company has.

Submitted by: Olivia Newman at <https://www.giraffesocialmedia.co.uk/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why IGTV? The market is still trying to figure out the best way to leverage IGTV. One of the biggest hurdles for brands has been IGTV's (mainly) vertical format. Reworking widescreen video content can look oddly cropped or strangely framed. So think about interviews, Q&As, and behind-the-scenes moments that can easily be filmed vertically with your mobile device and uploaded directly. So, if you are new to IGTV, try sticking to a few types of video branding content, like those we mentioned above—or the ever-popular walk-and-talk.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Shoot your video vertically and remember that your IGTV maxes out at 15 minutes, so don't make your edit too long.
- 2 Add an intro and outro animation (example: show your logo and use brand colors).
- 3 Reuse the same animation of intros and outros (created with something like InVideo) for each IGTV video you post to give your content a consistent, branded look that helps it stand out.



TREND: THREE

VOICE AND LIVE VIDEO



Smart speakers and voice search are growing in importance so being able to optimize for voice search will be key to maximize the marketing and advertising opportunities on Siri, Alexa, Google Home, etc. I predict that the brands that perfect the “branded skill” with more customer-friendly, less invasive ads are going to win big. Are you prepared when customers ask your specific brand for help like “Alexa ask Nestle for an oatmeal cookie recipe”—if not you are missing a big opportunity!

Live video will grow in importance—live streaming is available on every major social media platform and it is only getting bigger to hook in users with short attention spans, in a mobile first world, you have less time to grab people, attention spans are shorter than ever so video will be used even more, show don't tell for maximum impact, rich content drives engagement.

Submitted by: Paige Arnof-Fenn at <http://mavensandmoguls.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Voice and Live Video? When it comes to voice and creating more “voice-friendly” content, your content needs to be contextually rich. Pose and answer questions in a conversational way. Skills, Q&As, wikis, and more can bring more exposure to your brand via voice search. One of the most powerful things about video content is that it's reusable and you can purpose it in many different places. In fact, some social platforms prefer this content type, and live video organically gets a much wider reach than shared video. So don't fear “going live”—and doing it often. It is a great way to connect with your audience and interact with them in real time.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 For voice search:** You need to optimize content for where you want to be heard. Not every digital assistant will “source” their search results from the same place. If you ask a Google Home for “good pizza near me,” the top results you get are going to be from Google. Ask Alexa the same question and she is going to default to Yelp for these “pizza-first” results. So be sure to optimize your business listings everywhere you can.

2 **For live video:** Get a simple tripod mount for your phone so you can go live hands-free! This is great for doing an announcement or a Q&A session. Using a simple mount also adds a layer of professionalism and quality to your live cast by eliminating that “shaky cam” look (unless that’s what you’re going for, of course).

3 **For live video:** Make the point of your live cast clear—repeatedly. Not everyone will join a live **video** at the same time, so if you are doing something like a live 1-hour Q&A, make sure that you announce this several times—“If you are just joining, welcome to our Q&A session.” While this should also be in your video title, remind viewers as to why you are there and how they can engage with the live cast.



TREND: FOUR

SEO IS STILL "TRENDING"



Organic search is making a huge comeback. SEO was once about churning out content to trick the algorithms. Now search algorithms can sniff out authority, trust, and popularity. It's the right time to uplift your brand to newly qualified clicks coming to your website. Investing in your text, video, and now audio communication can make your business stick out in search results in 2020. The one SEO strategy I am double-downing on in 2020 is creating video content to increase your corporate profile online by creating content that speaks to your potential clients and customers.

Submitted by: Mike Zima at <https://zimamedia.com/>

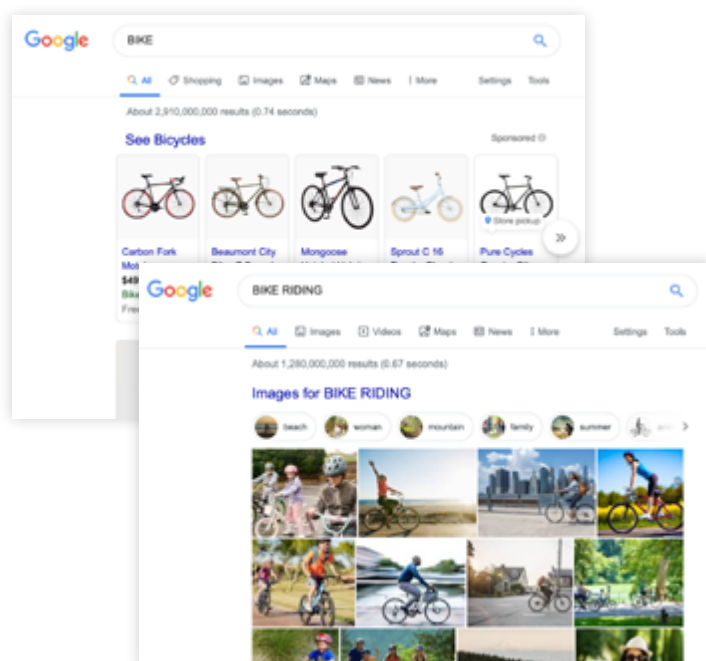
MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why SEO? What can drive brands a little crazy is that SEO is rarely a quick fix, even if it is an incredibly valuable long-term strategy. While content rules all, algorithms measure content (or rank it) on its ability to grasp and hold the attention of the searcher—no matter the type of content. So, the context of content is creeping into first place as one of the most valuable aspects—possibly the most valuable—of your content. Google's recent [BERT update](#) has made this contextual aspect clear—and it will be a major ranking factor moving forward.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

Example Time: If you go to Google and just search "bike," the first things you'll be shown are advertisements. Google is using this keyword to serve these relevant ads. Now, let's add context with a single word by Googling "bike riding." The addition of the word "riding" is a contextual word that Google will take into account and use to provide a completely different set of search results. Context matters!

*Shameless Plug! *A perfect place to start is with a complimentary SEO strategy audit from National Positions. You can get your free audit by [contacting us here](#)**





TREND: FIVE

FOCUS ON THE USER
EXPERIENCE (UX)



The primary focus for marketers in 2020, regardless of the tactic, should be User Experience (UX). In SEO, this can include the overall experience in the user's initial interaction with your website in the SERPs, the experience on your webpage, and even the experience after they exit your website (remarketing display ads, marketing automation/drip campaigns). All content and markup should be clear and concise—get straight to the point and be sure to deliver value to your user at each interaction. Transparency and respect of users' privacy are paramount and should be a critical component of any digital marketing strategy.

Submitted by: Brock Murray at <https://www.seoplus.ca/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why User Experience? Once you have caught the attention of someone searching on their mobile device or desktop—you need to keep it. Little else will kill an attention span more than a clunky or subpar user experience. Why? Simply put, the answer is trust.

A fantastic UX is about instilling trust in the customer, reassuring them that your brand is worth investing in out of the dozens of options out there. If links don't work properly, images are of low quality, checkout options are limited, or something worse, this hurdle is going to chip away at the customer's level of trust. So remember that being found is only part of the battle.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

Use a second and third set of eyes. Always keep in mind that there are different browsers, operating systems, and devices, so once you think you have things perfect, ask different people you trust (or other team members) to check out the site on their various devices. Don't give them any direction. Let them share their feedback before moving forward. These hands-on opinions are invaluable and can help you [make your UX](#) the best it can be.



TREND: SIX

FOCUS ON QUALITY



I feel what we can't ignore anymore in 2020 is video. I'm not talking about low budget, low quality video either. If we want to make it in 2020 we need to set our sights high. That means high quality recording, high quality editing and most importantly, high quality content. This isn't necessarily just about monetizing video or trying to one-up the competition either. It's going to be an important part of brand awareness. With Google becoming more and more volatile over time, the more channels we can expand our brand to, the better.

Submitted by: Mark Webster at <https://www.authorityhacker.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Focus on Quality? Producing quality video, audio, or even graphics has never been more cost effective than it is now. Yes, it still takes time, but the tools are available. Need a video? Break out your phone. Better audio? Plug in a mic. Need to edit? There are a number of free tools just a few clicks away. In fact, there are plenty of free or cheap tools available for all aspects of video creation from script writing to producing. If these creative aspects are not your thing, you can find a freelancer on Fiverr to help you out. Quality is in reach—so take a little more time in 2020 to put your best quality content forward.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Use free or low-cost tools. Canva, Animoto, InVideo, iMovie, Blender, and Lightworks are great options.
- 2 If you want to try something a bit more flexible (and advanced) you can get a free trial of Adobe Photoshop for graphics or Premiere for video editing.
- 3 Need quality but don't have the time? You can find fantastic artists and editors on Fiverr who can help build your video quickly. Even better—National Positions has helped hundreds of [brands create videos](#) for both onsite content and marketing campaigns, so if you have an idea (or not) [contact us](#) to get started.



TREND: SEVEN

**USING MACHINE
LEARNING IN 2020**



Embrace machine learning, because it's not going anywhere. Don't be reluctant to test smart bidding strategies or campaigns on Google. Use Campaign Budget Optimization (CBO) on Facebook and toggle Audience Expansion to give the algorithm room to breathe. We've seen Smart Shopping perform extremely well from a ROAS perspective for nearly all of our eCommerce clients, and we've seen similar results from Facebook's CBO.

Submitted by: Quinn Dolan at <https://www.perfectsearchmedia.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Machine Learning? Tech brands (and other brands) are in a machine learning race of sorts as 2019 wraps up. Google, Facebook, Apple, etc. are all looking for the best and most effective application for machine learning and AI but so much is in "beta" mode right now. Google is using machine learning in its automated bidding, Facebook is testing AI for ad text creation, and both are testing these technologies with us marketers.

In terms of marketing with machine learning, there is ongoing testing and optimizing—and many of these tools are available for your brand to use in your campaigns. Consider this, how long would it take you to determine all the causes, effects, and correlations in your campaigns and then use this data to optimize your bidding? A long time. However, machine learning can perform all of this for you by the time you finish reading this sentence.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Google - Google uses machine learning to optimize shopping ad campaigns and has introduced responsive search ads and smart bidding that are both powered by Google's machine learning and are available in the [Google Ads platform](#).
- 2 Facebook - Facebook also uses machine learning automatically when you start running your campaigns. Upon launch, you will see a few days where Facebook indicates it is "learning." This is fantastic for testing creatives. Want to test 10 different ads? Go ahead! Facebook's machine learning algorithm will help you [optimize automatically](#).



TREND: EIGHT

HARNESSING THE POWER OF
INFLUENCER MARKETING



Brands are facing challenges with both social media influencers (fraud) and social platforms (threatening to remove likes or related “vanity” metrics). On the influencer side, a small minority (11%) are properly disclosing relationships with sponsors/advertisers and there are major trust issues on all sides. That said, influencer marketing is here to stay and will evolve and mature, creating tremendous opportunities for brands moving forward. The secret sauce is aligning core values and being fully transparent regarding the nature of the relationship. Influencers that are able to evolve with the changing metrics and follow best practices will thrive.

Submitted by: Kent Lewis at <https://www.anvilmediainc.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Influencer Marketing? Generally speaking, “**influencers**” are social media personalities and content creators who have sizable followings. Dedicated fans follow the influencer’s content regularly—giving them built-in audiences that brands can advertise to. While there is obviously more to the influencer ecosystem, this oversimplification should suffice for the time being.

Influencers have become mini-celebrities of sorts—but what they do and what they buy, unlike traditional celebrities, is achievable for their audience. Their audience watches and listens for suggestions, reviews, and advice—so getting your product or service in front of their audience (if it’s a good match) can be invaluable. People tend to trust their favorite influencers, as they feel more “real” and relatable than traditional advertising avenues. But how do you know which influencer to approach and then, well, how do you approach them?

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Find out where your audience hangs out** (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc). You don’t want to choose YouTube influencers if your target demographic frequents Instagram.
- 2 Do your research before approaching or pitching to an influencer.** Ask yourself (before you ask them): Does this influencer’s beliefs match my brand’s? Does my product feel like it would be a good match for their audience? Look through their content and make sure this is an influencer that you would be comfortable representing your product or service.

3 Check their influence. There are a lot of tools available to check the validity of an influencer's followers such as HypeAuditor or FakeCheck.co.

4 Know your budget range. Don't be afraid to share alternative ideas if your budget and their rates don't match up, but don't insult them in regards to costs or try to stifle their creativity. Their channel is part of their brand, too.

5 When you officially decide to collaborate, don't micromanage the creative process. If you pair with an influencer, you will need to give the creative freedom to integrate your brand in the way that works best for their content. The influencer will know their audience the best, so to get the best results, you will need to let them take the reins!



TREND: NINE

GOING LOCAL...WITH
SERVICE ADS



Google Local Services ads will be a dominant marketing strategy for local businesses beginning in 2020. There are 2 main reasons that I see Local Services ads becoming so prominent. Firstly, they only charge the client or marketer when a legitimate phone call lead is recorded, which ensures that spend is NEVER wasted on unqualified users. Secondly, in the search engine results page, they occupy the very top area—above both PPC and SEO results. As the availability of Local Services ads increases to more locations and more industries, they will only become more popular from here.

Submitted by: Lee Dussinger at <https://www.webtekcc.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Local Services Ads? Like real estate, advertising is all about location, location, location. This is what makes Local Services ads such a hot digital commodity. Google has been putting a lot of time and attention into local markets—providing search results and services ads specific to a searcher’s geography.

Believe it or not, Google is looking for ways to make their ad offerings more valuable for brands—and Local Services ads are a step in the right direction. Their process with Local Services ads combines the best of both worlds—ad location and, if all goes well, overall ROI.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Currently [Google Local Services ads](#) are available for services like locksmiths, plumbers, electricians, etc.
- 2 To run a Local Services ad campaign you will need to have your company “Google Guaranteed.” You will need to make sure you have a Google My Business listing and provide proof to Google that your company meets insurance and license requirements.
- 3 Once you have your listing, complete the “Advanced Verification Section” of your profile and provide your licence number.

Note: This approval process from Google can take a couple of weeks to process.



TREND: TEN

CONTINUE TO BUILD TRUST



I think Google's move to treat no follow links as "hints" signifies a greater focus on a brand's online presence as a whole. While it seems counterintuitive, Google may be shifting away from links as a signal, and instead looking at brand mentions as a true signal of brand strength. In that regard, I would be less concerned about links for the sake of links, and more concerned about getting mentions (even without links) from prominent sources. This makes digital PR an even more important aspect of digital marketing, and something we're going to continue to expand into in 2020.

Submitted by: Geoff Hoesch at <https://dragonflydm.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Build Trust? Building a strong base of social proof through reviews and mentions or guest posts on prominent industry sites (on an ongoing basis) are going to be far more valuable than only collecting a large volume of links. Building trust also comes back to quality. The reputation and quality of the source that is plugging your name or brand is more valuable when it comes to the end goal of building trust from both a customer standpoint and a ranking standpoint.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Pieces of social proof that you or your brand collect—from article links to Google reviews—are great to repurpose and reuse on your website and in ad content. Add reviews as stand-out quotes on your website or in your social media profile bios.
- 2 Leverage [marketing automation](#) or a [reviews management](#) solution to make the gathering of reviews simpler and more effective. Remembering to remind your customers to "please leave a review" can be difficult—but using an automated system can keep reviews flowing without even thinking about it.
- 3 Use logos from notable placements with quotes in your sales sheets or presentations. Tying your brand to prominent reviews, quotes, and logos helps give your brand more credibility to build trust faster.



TREND: ELEVEN

**SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE—
EVERYWHERE**



Next year I will invest more in creating and distributing useful content for the community because Brand Awareness and social proof are increasingly influencing the sale... My advice to the owners of B2B companies is to develop their expertise and primarily bring value—share experiences, cases, insights, do webinars, podcasts. There are a lot of channels now, and the cost of entry to this channel is almost zero. You only need a laptop and the Internet. I suggest you take a look at email marketing, and it's hugely undervalued right now. And another tip is experimenting. Launching a PPC ad is very easy, and it works. But the price becomes very high.

Submitted by: Dmitry Chervonyi at <https://belkins.io/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Share Your Experience? Many types of distribution are free. It is the reach that takes planning, time, and investment. If you have a laptop—or even a phone—you have a production and distribution studio at your fingertips. You can share on social, your blog, your podcast, email, live video—the list goes on. In reality, you'll need to spend far more time distributing and getting attention on your content than it takes to create that content. When building your marketing plan start accounting for the time—and sometimes monetary investment—for sharing and distributing your content in 2020.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 Unscripted Interview:** If you want to **tell a client's story**, get a set of interview questions together and start filming. It's okay to prompt them with questions, but let the client tell the story in their own words and edit together the best parts. Sharing experiences this way will be much more authentic than trying to stick to a script.
- 2 Simple B-Roll:** B-roll consists of all those little clips you see of an office, people chatting, or any video footage that may be used as filler or background. If your edited interview is just three minutes of someone talking, it can get boring quickly. So use your phone to collect simple video clips from around your location, team members working—anything you like. These can add some great “texture” to your video, giving brief visual representations to accompany what the interviewer is discussing.

3 Tell a Story: Even an interview needs to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. “Please tell us your name and a bit about your business” is a great way to start an interview and gives you a simple place to edit from. So structure your questions with this in mind.

4 Distribution: When sharing on your various social platforms (or email) make sure your messaging for each is varied and suited for that content delivery avenue. On LinkedIn? Keep it business professional. On Facebook? Be a little more candid.



TREND: TWELVE

GOING "OLD SCHOOL"



The digital landscape moves so quickly; a new trend happens, the channel gets saturated, and platforms move the goalposts. Examples include companies receiving cold emails from the whole planet, and social media platforms gradually reducing reach and introducing a pay to play model. We're continually looking for the next opportunity. For 2020, we're re-introducing some "old school" strategies. How many digital marketers pick up the telephone? Knock on doors? Show up at a potential prospect or partner's office? Fewer than ever. Other possibilities include sending postcards or handwritten letters. These personal tactics are more likely to get noticed by decision-makers and get you past gatekeepers too.

Submitted by: Jason Lavis at <https://ootbinnovations.com/>

MAKE THIS PREDICTION A REALITY

Why Go Old School? Nothing beats a face-to-face meeting—looking someone in the eye, shaking a hand, asking questions, and listening to another individual one-on-one. So many people are becoming numb to the barrage of businesses trying to "connect" with them via cold calling, emailing, or the like. Why? Because ultimately it is not in any way, shape, or form personal anymore. This is why face-to-face interaction is so effective—it's personal. If you haven't made the leap yet, start getting more personal and programmatic with your marketing, and make your goal to connect—not to sell. Taking more time to really connect with a client will improve your close rates and set you up for greater lifetime value.

NP ACTION TIPS & TOOLS

- 1 When going old school with cold calling or in person visits—do your research and know your client to the best of your ability. How? [LinkedIn](#) is a great place to start. What sounds better? "Hi, is the marketing manager there?" or "Hi, is Samantha available?" Just doing a bit of research and knowing who your best contact is will be invaluable to sounding more credible.
- 2 This "research" goes for email and social direct messaging as well. Why should you do this? Because very few do. Just add a few details that show you haven't "cut and pasted" your message. This simple step will help make your efforts stand out from the rest.

3

Focus on quality over quantity. Even if a prospect doesn't convert, keep things cordial and keep the contact in your "value add" pile of contacts. Send periodic valuable business or industry articles/content—just keep giving them value—you never know when they might come back to you!

IN CONCLUSION

What can we say? Except that 2020 is going to be an amazing year for digital marketing!

With ecommerce records being broken year over year—along with higher budgets being allocated to digital activities—the game is only going to get more exciting, for both strategies AND capabilities.

We could have easily written a 100-page eBook just on social media trends. As you can imagine, trying to contain all the advancements in online marketing within a few pages is a futile effort. But one thing to keep in mind as you put these trends into action is that there is no shortage of tactics your brand can leverage in 2020.

THE 3 KEYS TO MARKETING SUCCESS

1

The 1st key to your marketing success truly comes from your ability to be creative, express a compelling message, and compose a story your core audience will connect with.

2

The 2nd key to your marketing success comes in your ability to test strategies, track progress, and optimize for greater campaign performance and revenues.

3

The 3rd key to your marketing success comes from your ability to balance risk and reward, looking beyond what worked last year and embracing up-and-coming opportunities.

Let's Try Out These Predictions Together

If your business is ready to hit refresh on your marketing strategy—our team is ready to go to work for you. While we may do it all—from SEO to influencer marketing—our focus is to find the right formula for your brand and your audience.

Whether you are an up-and-coming fashion powerhouse or the next subscription box sensation, your marketing with National Positions will be as unique and custom as your brand.

When you're ready, [contact](#) National Positions to get a complimentary 1-hour consultation, with no obligation.

Welcome to 2020 everyone! It's going to be a great year.



Bernard May
CEO & President