

MARKETING “FORWARD” DURING COVID-19



TACTIC 6: ATTENTION & PERFORMANCE METRICS IN THE “NEW NORMAL”

As the weeks have progressed into months, marketing performance metrics may be the last thing on your mind. We understand.

The point of assessing data that exists in this finite window of time may seem moot. Understandably, right now everyone's number one priority is simply keeping business afloat until the worst of this pandemic is behind us. But your metrics actually matter now—perhaps even more than any other time in your brand's history.

In this “new normal,” consumer mindsets are changing. Partially by necessity, but more importantly, by the state of this ongoing shelter-in-place environment. Your brand's metrics and data can uncover a substantial amount of eye-opening and valuable realizations that you can leverage to great effect during and after this pandemic. Here are just some performance metrics that you should pay attention to and examine right now.

Website Traffic Sources (Desktop vs. Mobile):

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, if you were to ask marketers to compare desktop vs. mobile to find the greatest opportunity, the majority of us would have gone all in on mobile—but that may be changing. Does mobile still matter? Absolutely. However, we're seeing an increase in desktop search and discovery since stay-at-home orders were put in place. Often, mobile devices are at the ready while we're on the go.

Well, currently we are not “on the go” like we used to be.

Most people (right now) are far more likely to have their laptops or desktops within arm's reach, making this type of search far simpler. What does this mean for your brand? The source of your website traffic and related search volumes may have shifted, and the experience of those desktop searchers needs to be recognized. If you are still running campaigns or have had more ad spend being pushed to mobile users, you need to look into this data to see if you need to reassess. Knowing where your traffic is coming from will give you great insights as to where you should focus your marketing assets during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recommend looking at your site analytics and assessing device-based traffic as well as traffic sources like search, direct, or social. Comparing this to historical traffic will give you a high-level idea if your web traffic sources are shifting. If you need assistance in uncovering this data, please contact your National Positions team.

Shrinking Conversion Timelines:

In addition to the changes we're seeing with shifts in devices, we're also seeing shifts in the items that people are searching for. More consumers are directly searching for more essential (or personal) purchases, which means we could be looking at shorter conversion timelines. While we are still waiting for concrete data, the outlook is that with less time being spent on mobile devices comparing pricing and competitors at physical retail locations, customers are becoming accustomed to searching for exactly what they want or need with a strong intent to complete a purchase.

Considering that a chunk of our previous purchasing process (the in-store part) has all but been eliminated for the time being, if your customer comes looking for your product, you want to give them the most seamless ecommerce experience available. Consider this as well, this "chunk" of the process may also be a huge chunk of your competition if they've had to shut down physical locations. This may present a massive opportunity to gain ground if your ecommerce game is better, faster, and simpler. If customers know what they want and are primed to purchase—don't give them a reason to go elsewhere.

We highly recommend looking at where you can "trim the fat" and/or improve your purchase or opt-in process. Can you use fewer fields in your form? Can you add a guest checkout option with more payment options? Can you add a "buy again" option for easy future purchases? There are always ways to improve your conversion process. If you need assistance or more ideas, contact us anytime. We're here to help.

Taking Advantage of "Me Time":

The idea of "social drivers" (or social pressures) flies under the radar for many as a purchase consideration. But consider how much of what we purchase revolves around our social ecosystem. While shopping, working, attending dinner meetings, going to family gatherings—there is an ongoing need to fulfill the purchases associated with what we do in public social situations. Basically, all the time we typically spend "face-to-face" (for the moment) has been slowed to nearly non-existent levels.

Now it is all about being in "me" mode when it comes to customer purchases. Consider these search shifts: "bread machines" is up over 650%, "weight training" is up 300%, and "computer monitors" is up over 170%. Inversely: "cameras" is down over 60%, "women's suits & dresses" is down over 50%, and even "cell phones" is down nearly 40%. While sheltering in place, consumers are on the search for what will fulfill them personally (and professionally) at much higher levels.

Consider how you can position your product or service to fulfill the needs of those staying at home. Will it save them time? Save them space? Make X, Y, or Z easier and make this time more enjoyable or productive? Lean into these value triggers wherever possible. Again, we are happy to help if you need a new angle. Even the smallest tweaks can lead to a more impactful message that can inspire a purchase.

More Time to Discover:

If you are like so many others, you have probably found yourself spending more time on social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. And this makes sense. We are trying to stay connected and entertained. And for many, when it comes to YouTube and Pinterest, we are looking for “how-to” or “DIY” content like baking bread, at-home exercise routines, or home repairs like fixing a clogged sink or putting up that fence.

Many people are consuming a lot of content while sheltering in place, and in turn, we are discovering a lot in the process. Brands can take advantage of this influx of attention by introducing discovery and awareness campaigns at reasonably low costs. These don’t even need to be “buy now” campaigns (unless it fits with current needs), but doing nothing to keep top of mind right now may set you further behind as restrictions are reduced and we enter the next phase of the “new normal.”

If you have pulled back on your marketing and are considering a more cost-effective approach for the time being, social media and YouTube ads may be your ticket. Generally speaking, many advertisers have scaled back their efforts, resulting in a bit of a supply and demand shift when it comes to costs. If you want to check out the possibilities, please contact your National Positions team.

Highest Value Engagement Sources:

As we stated previously, the last thing you want to do is go “radio silent” during this time. If you don’t have the budget to run paid media campaigns as you did before, engaging and communicating (or even over-communicating) costs you little more than time. For example, here at National Positions we have been sending more emails than ever as we have seen open rates reaching nearly 50%! We have also seen similar open rates with many of our clients’ campaign. The world (including your customers) want to know what is going on and want as much information as possible right now.

Social media also holds endless opportunities for engaging with your audience—and no, we are not just talking about posting. Actively commenting and engaging with customers or potential customers may take time but can go a long way toward building that connection with your audience. So, if you are willing to communicate and engage regularly, there’s a good chance your audience is ready to listen and engage right back.

Start by listing the biggest problems you are solving for your customers during this time and write email content that addresses how your brand is adapting. Begin sending these out a few times a week. Not sure what to include? This is where social engagement matters. Part of engagement is listening to what people are saying and asking. Use these questions as inspiration for social engagement and your email content. Need help? National Positions is only a phone call or email away!

If you are looking for additional strategies that you can put to use during the current situation surrounding COVID-19, we encourage you to check out the rest of our Marketing “Forward” During COVID-19 series. You can download the other five PDFs in this series for free at nationalpositions.com/ebook.

Stay safe, productive, and healthy—and we’re here when you need us.



Bernard May, CEO National Positions

Bmay@NationalPositions.com

818.451.5771