

DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS

FOR ADDICTION
TREATMENT CENTERS



Another year has passed, and great strides continue to be made in the world of digital marketing. Emerging trends and technologies continue to open doors of opportunity for strategically and programmatically targeting your addiction treatment center clients in 2021. With this in mind, we are focusing our 2021 trends and suggestions on where we feel your addiction treatment center will see its best return on investment in 2021.

Here is a quick look at some of your top priorities for 2021:

- 1 Mobile Domination
- 2 Reallocation of Budgets to Paid Facebook
- 3 The Power of Influencer Marketing Continues to Grow
- 4 Video Reigns Supreme
- 5 2021 Is the Year for AMP
- 6 Google My Business to Own Local Business Listings
- 7 Content Marketing Gets Smarter
- 8 Use of Voice Search Continues to Grow
- 9 The Importance of Personalization
- 10 An Increased Emphasis on Client Engagement

How We Predict the Future

Keeping up with new trends is no mean feat – in this guide we analyze existing data on current trends; we've included our own internal tests as well as the insights we have gained from managing hundreds of digital marketing campaigns for addiction treatment centers. This continuous collection and analysis of data provides us the insight needed to offer our clients the most relevant digital marketing strategies year after year.

2020 has been a year of great changes for addiction treatment centers in terms of digital marketing, and we understand the challenges involved. The intent of this guide is to give you a more actionable approach to your digital marketing strategies for 2021. Let's dive in and see what trends are going to be driving your digital marketing in 2021!



MOBILE DOMINATION

ONE



The shift to mobile dominance has happened. Mobile devices now make up nearly 60% of all web traffic, up from just under 50% in Q4 of 2016.¹ What this mean is that we are moving towards a mobile first world. Unlike in previous years where we began design on a desktop, all of our decisions regarding content, websites, and UX (user experience) need to be designed for mobile first in 2021.

Prediction: Web design will begin with the mobile experience as first priority.

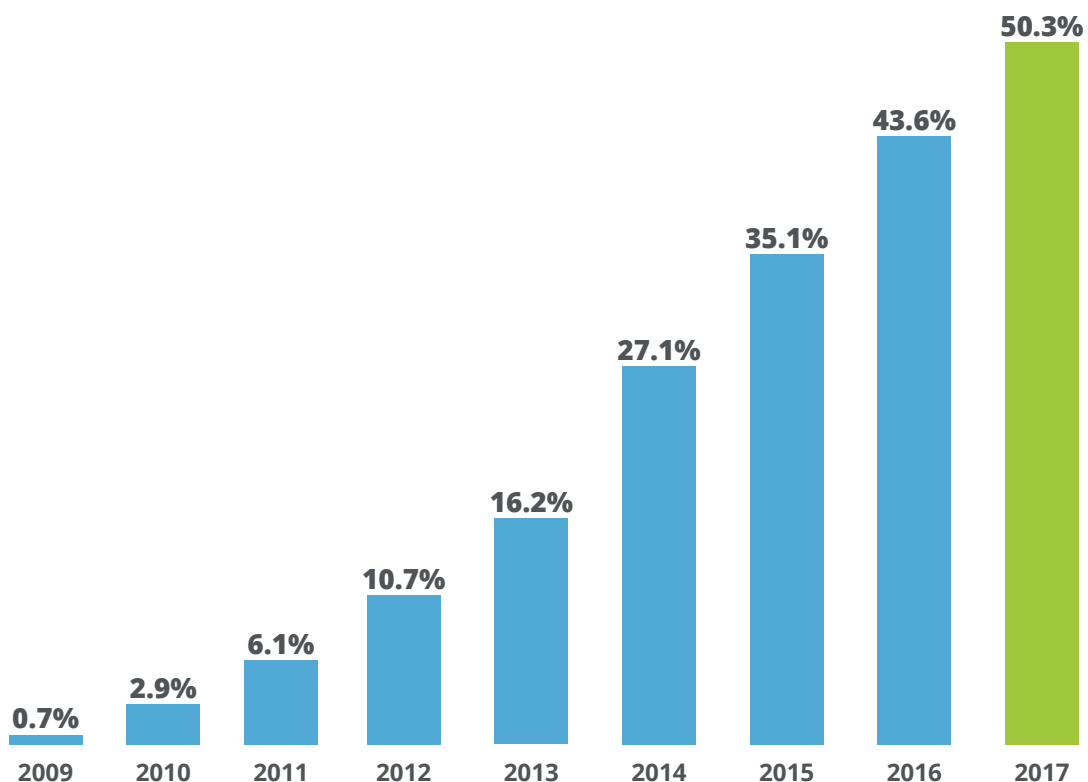
Responsive design is nice but doesn't always give the mobile user the experience they need. We interact with desktops differently than we do with mobile. If you are redesigning your website, consider a dedicated mobile user experience.

Prediction: Addiction treatment facilities will build dedicated mobile environments - a move away from responsive designs.

Studies show that a poor user experience on mobile has far-reaching implications. In fact, 57% of internet users will not recommend a company that has a poorly designed mobile website to friends and family.²

Action: Start with mobile first design and keep mobile experience your primary consideration.

Mobile Web Traffic Growth (2009-2017)





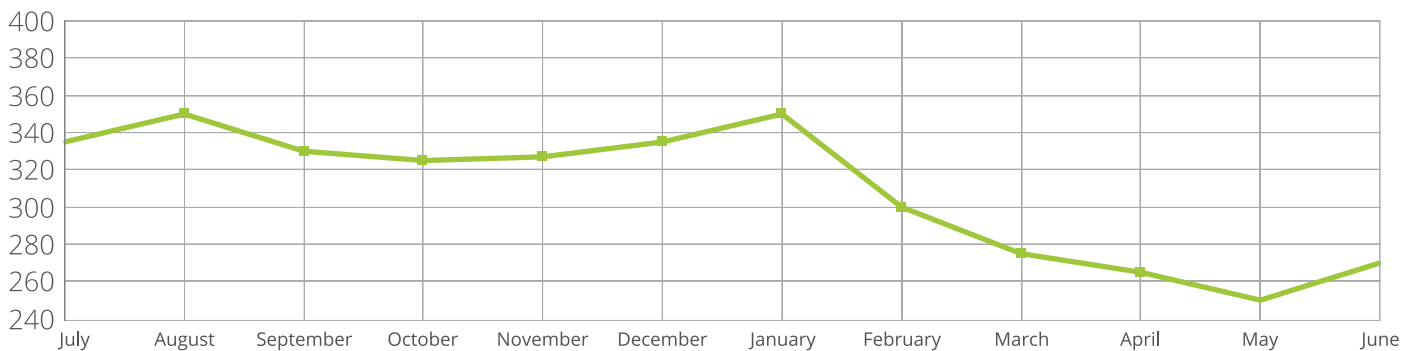
REALLOCATION OF BUDGETS TO PAID FACEBOOK

TWO



Social media will dominate paid search in 2021. In 2020, we saw many important trends occur, including a drop in organic Facebook reach,³ a rise in mobile video, and users attending live video broadcasts on social media. Changes to Google’s paid search algorithms also presented new limitations on advertising for addiction treatment facilities on AdWords, leaving many looking for viable alternatives. Beyond this, Facebook continues to build out their AI messenger bots on Facebook messenger, and we saw our addiction treatment center clients move a much larger portion of their budget over to paid Facebook ads during the year.

ORGANIC FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT 2016/17



Prediction: Emphasis will shift away from Facebook organic placement in favor of Facebook’s paid placement.

Business pages saw a diminished reach in 2020 – organic posts from business pages and addiction treatment centers simply do not reach the audience numbers they once did. Facebook’s updated algorithms prioritize the newsfeed with content from direct connections over posts from businesses, even if those users are followers or fans of your business page. However, boosting posts or advertising on Facebook will allow you to push your message out to larger targeted audiences. As Facebook becomes more of a pay-to-play platform, addiction treatment centers will need to rely on paid placement more heavily to have their message heard by the widest possible audience.

Action: Use boosted posts and ad placement to reach your targeted audience.

Prediction: Images will still be valuable, but video advertising will dominate Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook video ads receive 10-30% more views, and populate up to 11 times longer in news feeds.⁴ Video advertising on Facebook is typically short (15-30 seconds) and requires messaging to be clear both with and without audio. Why no sound? Because 85% of video viewed on Facebook is watched without sound.⁵ Visual and animated text content with clear calls to action are going to provide you better results.

Action: Test various video lengths in your advertising, but start with shorter “more digestible” video advertising with clear text.



Advertising on Google 2020 Update! (LegitScript)

As of May 2018, Google made an update regarding the availability of Google advertising services for recovery-oriented businesses and services.

In order to advertise with Google Ads, addiction recovery providers are required to be certified by LegitScript for Google. LegitScript vets the legitimacy of addiction treatment service providers and filters out “fraudulent providers.” The certification process can take up to 90 days to complete and can be quite rigorous. However, in many cases this timeline may be completed much sooner. For legitimate addiction recovery providers wishing to use Google Ads, LegitScript certification will be a requirement for the foreseeable future. National Positions can manage the LegitScript process as part of your onboarding, if desired.



THE POWER OF INFLUENCER MARKETING CONTINUES TO GROW

THREE



Rehab centers and addiction treatment centers have a huge opportunity to pair or “collaborate” with influencers with thousands if not millions of followers to help bring clients into their facilities. The value here comes from pairing with the right kind of influencer who is already reaching an audience that matches your target client demographic.⁶

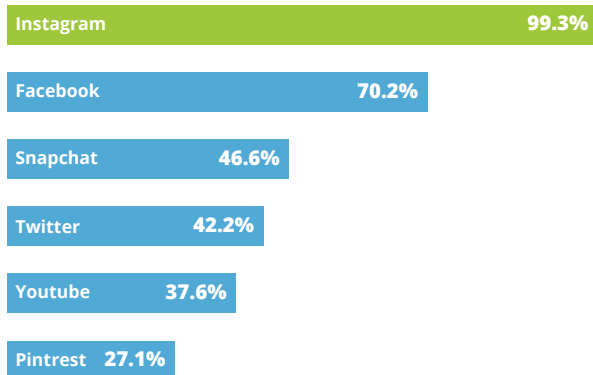
Prediction: Investment in social media influencers to grow exponentially in 2021 as facilities try to capitalize off influencers’ built-in audiences and extended reach.

From our own experience, we have seen great success through influencer campaigns across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to drive traffic and provide a supply of “warmer” leads to our clients. With a single campaign of having our client’s facility featured in an influencer’s YouTube video, our client benefited from thousands of visits to their website, positive SEO impact through video description links, and additional social media exposure via the influencer’s Facebook and Twitter announcements.⁷ The ROI from influencer marketing campaigns are difficult to beat. In an influencer marketing study, results show that, on average, \$6.50 in revenue is generated for every dollar invested in influencer marketing. This spread comes from 70% of advertisers making \$2 or more, and 13% making \$20 or more per dollar invested.⁸

Action: Work with influencers in your industry niche for the greatest ROI.

Prediction: In 2021, influencer marketing investment will be focused on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, as opposed to other platforms like Twitter.

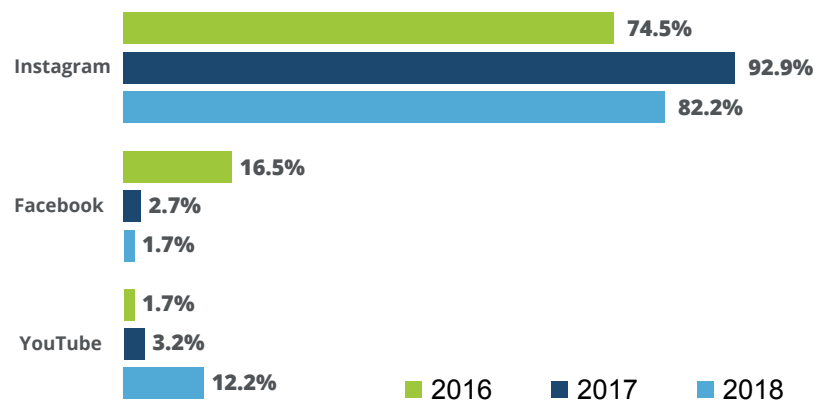
Platforms Influencers Use in 2017 (%)



A study conducted by Hashoff shows the distribution of influencers across platforms in 2017.⁹

While some influencers focus on a single platform, others choose to distribute content across multiple platforms.

Preferred Platform Last Year, This Year, and Next Year



In the associated graph, we see the projected shift in influencer platform preference, with the focus in 2021 on Instagram and YouTube.

Action: Focus your influencer efforts on the highest value platforms.



**VIDEO REIGNS
SUPREME**

FOUR



The rise of video for both content and advertising is staggering. On mobile, clients are not prepared to read paragraphs of content. With the shift to mobile we need to move away from heavy text content and apply more video content. Video accounts for 88% higher time on-site, video has 1200% more shares than images and text combined, and video drives 157% more search traffic.¹⁰ Video allows you to provide more information faster, it can improve on- and off-site SEO, and video will continue to be the highest type of content consumed in 2021.

As an advertising tool, video is powerful and affordable on both Facebook and YouTube. This clear preference for video should be worked into your marketing budget in 2021. As Google PPC advertising grows more competitive and expensive (and, in some cases, limited), video advertising on Facebook and YouTube can cost a fraction of a single paid click on Google.

Prediction: : Video will produce better returns as people move away from reading long-form content.

A study from Wordstream showed that 59% of executives, if given the choice between reading content or watching a video of the same content, prefer video.¹¹

It's been suggested that video is 52 times more likely to show up on page one of Google than a text article. Video can be leveraged as a tool of transparency to show your clients what sets your facility apart from your competitors. Additionally, using video on landing pages has been shown to increase conversion rates up to 80% and combining that with your mobile landing pages makes these pages more valuable.¹²

Action: Build video content to replace long-form text content.

Prediction: Addiction treatment centers will replace existing text content with video on mobile pages.

Facebook video has greatly increased reach. Interaction and shares on Facebook video has outpaced YouTube. A recent study of 167,000 Facebook users' posts showed that native Facebook videos performed better, averaging 110% more interactions and 478% more shares than posting a YouTube link of a video. In December 2016, this number skyrocketed with Facebook videos receiving a 1055% higher average share rate than YouTube videos. Interaction and engagement beat out YouTube by over 300%.¹³

Actions: Upload your video content directly to Facebook for higher engagement and reach.

Prediction: Live video will help expand your Facebook organic reach and engagement.

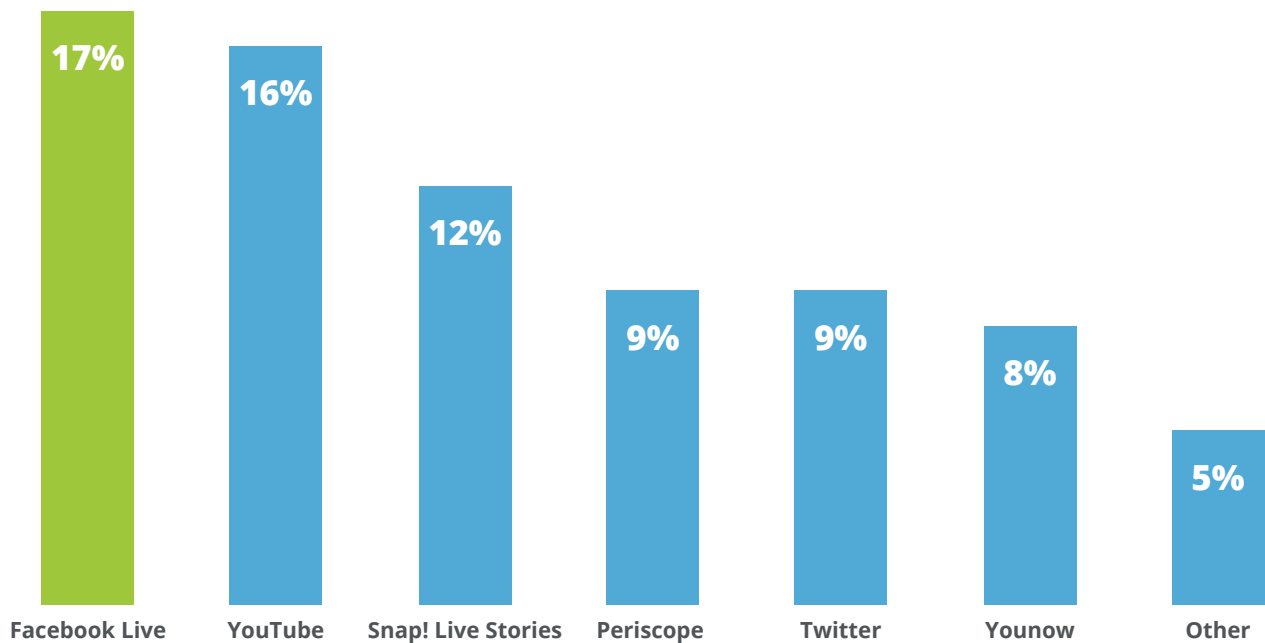


Studies have shown that 80% of clients would prefer to watch live video than read a blog, and 82% prefer live video from a brand on social posts.¹⁴ Facebook also prioritizes Facebook Live video content above other video content on its platform.¹⁵

With Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube all providing a means to produce live video, the demand for live video will continue to grow, and so will its reach.

Action: Invest time in producing live video directly from a mobile device.

Percentage of respondents who streamed live video on the following platforms





**2021 IS THE
YEAR FOR AMP**

FIVE



Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) generated a lot of buzz in 2020, but the adoption rate across non-media sites has been slow, mainly due to the effort required to convert a regular lead generation website into an AMP.

Prediction: Accelerated Mobile Pages will be embraced by traditional lead generation websites in 2021.

More tools and plugins will come to market in 2021, making the conversion easier and less painful. Although Google doesn't directly link improved rankings to AMPs, it does score sites on usability and load speed – both byproducts of AMPs. Additionally, Google studies have shown that a one-second load delay results in a 7% reduction in conversion.¹⁶ More recently Google has released new data showing that 53% of users will abandon a site if it takes longer than 3 seconds to load.¹⁷

Beyond this, we expect our mobile viewing experience to remain fluid – any load lag, scroll lag, or unprompted page refresh will exponentially increase the chances of a client bouncing from your site and not returning. Using tools like Accelerated Mobile Pages help reduce this friction and improve conversion rates.

Action: Invest in AMP development for your key pages.

Prediction: There will continue to be direct correlation between load speeds and improved conversion rates in 2021.

One recent Google study showed that industry sites that implemented AMPs had an average 20% higher conversion rate than those that did not. An additional poll showed that over 51% of users prefer to click an AMP link site over a regular mobile site because they prefer “a stripped-down version of a site” when reading on a mobile device.¹⁸

Removing navigation obstacles and improving mobile load speeds with AMPs can help clients find the information they need and make their conversion decisions faster.

Action: Prioritize improving load speed to improve conversion rates.



**GOOGLE MY BUSINESS
TO OWN LOCAL
BUSINESS LISTINGS**

SIX



Google is doing everything it can to make sure it dominates the Local Search Environment. In 2020, we saw a frenzy of changes on Google Local. Some of the noted enhancements to GMB includes Google Websites, Google Posts, Google Messaging, Google Q&A, Google Bookings, improved Google API, and of course Google AdWords Express.

Predictions

- GMB will replace your website as the most important source for local results.
- Google will continue to crack down on local spam with the introduction of Verified Businesses. This began with locksmiths and plumbers and is expected to extend to other verticals in 2021.
- Google will continue to focus on mobile enhancements to make their local mobile experience the best in the industry.
- Google is expected to continue to take direct aim at HomeAdvisor and Yelp to further solidify their position as the number one lead source for local.
- Active GMB profiles utilizing reviews, posts, and engagement features will have a greater ROI.

Local search is a clear priority for Google. The GMB platform has been designed to appeal to the local mobile user with calling, scheduling, and “get directions” functionality. Google studies have shown that visitors searching for your business will often use GMB alone to contact you.

Addiction treatment facilities with a website linked to their GMB profiles received 25%-35% more traffic.¹⁹ Keeping your GMB information fresh for local search will be seen more valuable by Google and can contribute positively to your search rankings.

Action: Use every GMB feature that applies to your specific business, and keep profile content fresh.

Prediction: Google will continue to value positive reviews in GMB profiles, and clients will also place a high value on positive reviews.

Reviews are no longer something that is “nice to have” – they have become a very important factor not only to your local Google rankings but also a valued part for your clients’ journey. 91% of clients regularly or occasionally read online reviews to determine whether a facility is good or bad. Additionally, 84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.¹⁹ If your addiction treatment center can regularly add positive reviews and have your specific type of addiction treatment as well as location mentioned in those reviews, this will have a positive impact on your local search rankings.

Action: Work towards continuously gathering positive public reviews on Google and Yelp.



**CONTENT MARKETING
GETS SMARTER**

SEVEN



Your approach to content marketing is going to continue to evolve in 2021, especially from an SEO standpoint. The content you create can help move the needle on your search rankings, and optimizing that content the right way can move the needle even more. Advances in AI, machine learning, and associated voice search technologies has shifted the content focus from quantity to the deeper contextual quality of that content. Let's look at some ways you can take advantage of these changes to create more valuable content for your audience and your SEO.

Prediction: Google focuses on providing highly targeted search results, and RankBrain will continue the need to produce rich, valuable, and highly targeted content.

The signals used by Google in search queries to provide results have grown. Ongoing search results are being refined through AI and machine learning to provide highly contextual search results. Beyond signals like keyword relevance, links, and anchor text, we also have domain authority, freshness, engagement, related topics, and content depth that all contributing to search rankings.

This means that Google wants to provide deep contextual results that people find engaging and valuable. RankBrain considers a number of factors to determine content value, including calculating dwell time spent by users, how long users are staying on your content, as well as the click-through rate of your content.²⁰

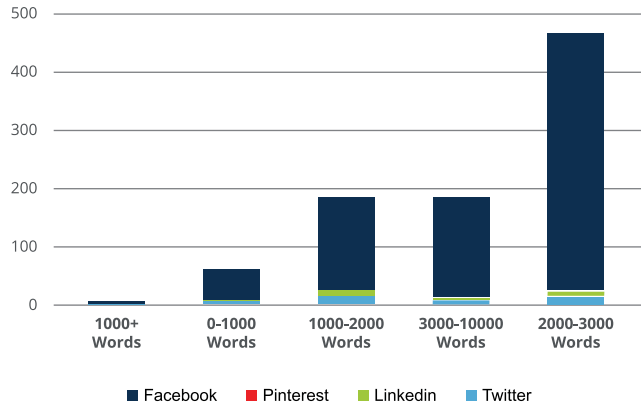
Machine learning also means that SEO ranking factors for content will vary significantly across industries, even within industries. In the past you used to draw inferences across the web, today SEO is specific per industry. Your content quality and context are more valuable than the quantity with machine learning in the search process. In analyzing different types of content from within the addiction treatment industry, we can see variations in preferred content length and correlation in the content's "shareability."





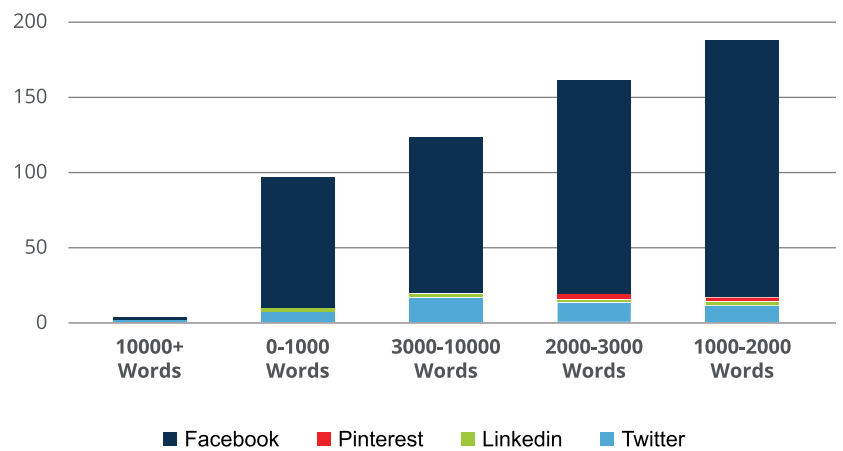
In analyzing content across three different industries:

Average shares by content length



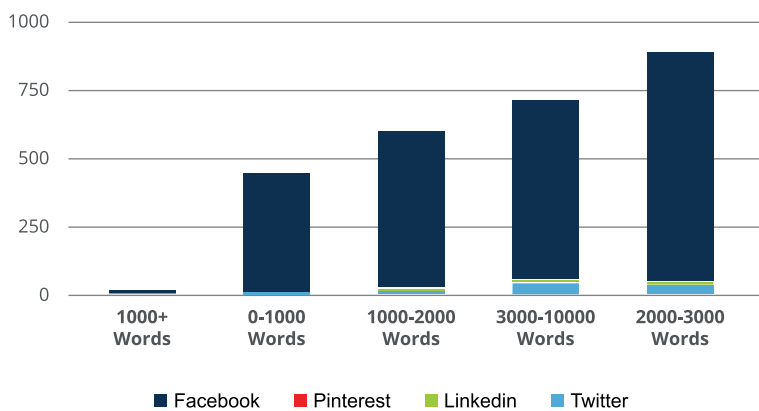
Analyzing over 10,000 pieces of content centered around **“addiction treatment”** showed that content ranging from 2,000-3,000 words had the greatest level of social sharing.

Average shares by content length



Content centered around **“eating disorders”** with a word count ranging from 1,000-2,000 words had the highest rate of shares.

Average shares by content length



Moving onto a more specific type of addiction content, **heroin addiction**, we not only see that **2,000-3,000 words** had the greatest reach but also that **3,000-10,000 words** also had a high share rate. This more specific type of subject matter had higher overall shares than “addiction treatment” and “eating disorders” combined.

Action: Build highly targeted content that is contextually robust and the proper length for your specific type of addiction treatment center.



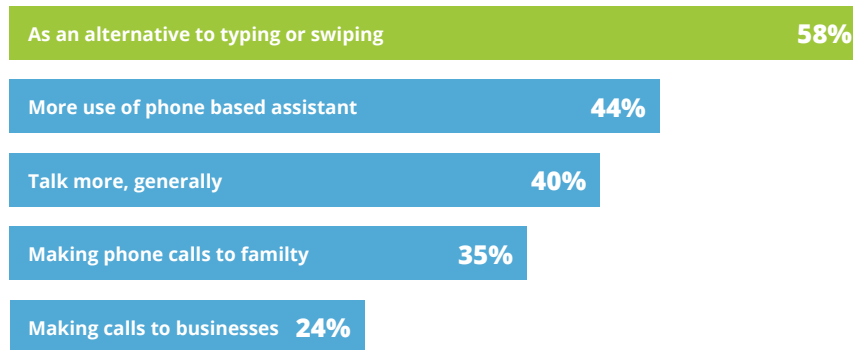
**USE OF VOICE SEARCH
CONTINUES TO GROW**

EIGHT



The use of voice search continued to gain ground in 2020 and will continue into 2021. In fact, 1 in every 5 searches on Google Android is a voice search, and 40% of adults now use voice search once per day.²¹ That means we need to be building our content to meet the demands of voice search. The first big difference is that we don't search the same way with voice as we do when we are typing.

Voice trends for owners of digital assistants



Prediction: As voice search algorithms get better, more and more people will be using voice for search.

Speech is gaining ground quickly over typing and texting because it is 3 times as fast with 20% fewer errors.²² Most voice searches are much longer and are very specific. What that means for us is that our content needs to answer questions and our facility descriptions need to be more targeted, detailed, and keyword rich.

Action: Write content for voice search that answers questions, utilizes longer tail keywords and phrases, and speaks to your niche.

Prediction: Voice SEO will focus on Siri, Google Now, Amazon Echo, and Microsoft Cortana to generate more traffic.

It is important to know the types of results that your smartphone returns after a voice search. For instance, if you ask Siri on an iPhone "Find me a rehab near me," Yelp listings will be returned. Based on these results, it is well worth it to put work into building out your Yelp listings. The same may be true for other off-site directories for your industry.

Action: Optimize your listing for voice search to take advantage of local search traffic.

Prediction: Chatbots and messaging powered by AI and machine learning will help facilities scale more quickly.

AI and machine learning are becoming more hands on with clients. Innovations like chatbots for messaging allow clients to interact with facilities quickly and accurately. Use of chatbots on websites and social media messaging continues to accelerate, at the end of 2020, 30% of our interactions with technology were done through chatbot-based "conversations."²³ Development of chatbots for your addiction treatment center to answer FAQs and contextually based rehab questions, or scheduling is a reality that you can capitalize on to connect with clients faster.

Action: Apply basic chatbots to streamline the client experience.



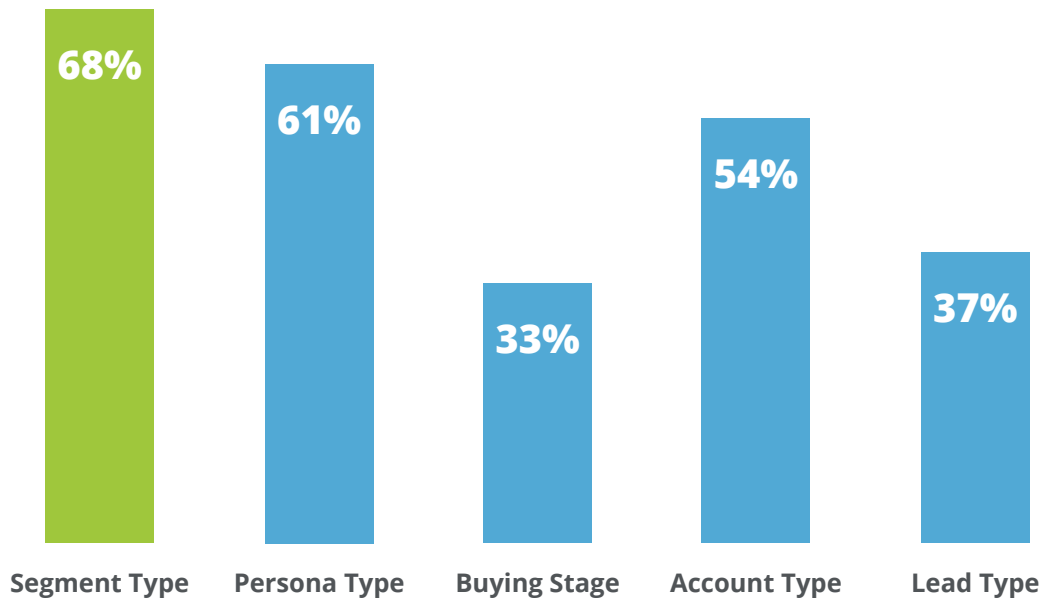
THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALIZATION

NINE



Mobile devices have become an extension your clients' personality. These personalities often determine how they prefer to interact with addiction treatment facilities on their mobile device. At the same time, our ability to adapt your messaging and mobile experiences for your clients has never been greater. Personalizing the individual client journey helps clients feel as if you are an extension of their personality – if you can personalize the right way.

Personalizations' Being Used (%)



Prediction: Addiction treatment centers will be able to use multiple segmentation and data points to create more personalized experiences for clients.

Personalization still comes down to the data, harnessing it and applying it to the client journey. Data collected from previous website visits, social media, and mobile apps can be used to create your personalized follow-ups, text push notifications, and content. Personalization can improve your ability to nurture your clients, allowing them to find the help they need faster.

Here are just some of the personalization segmentation you can apply to streamline your clients' journey to recovery:

- Specific Addiction Type
- Specific to Affected Client or Family Member
- Geographic Locations
- Age Group(s)
- Source (Advertisement vs. Site Visitor)



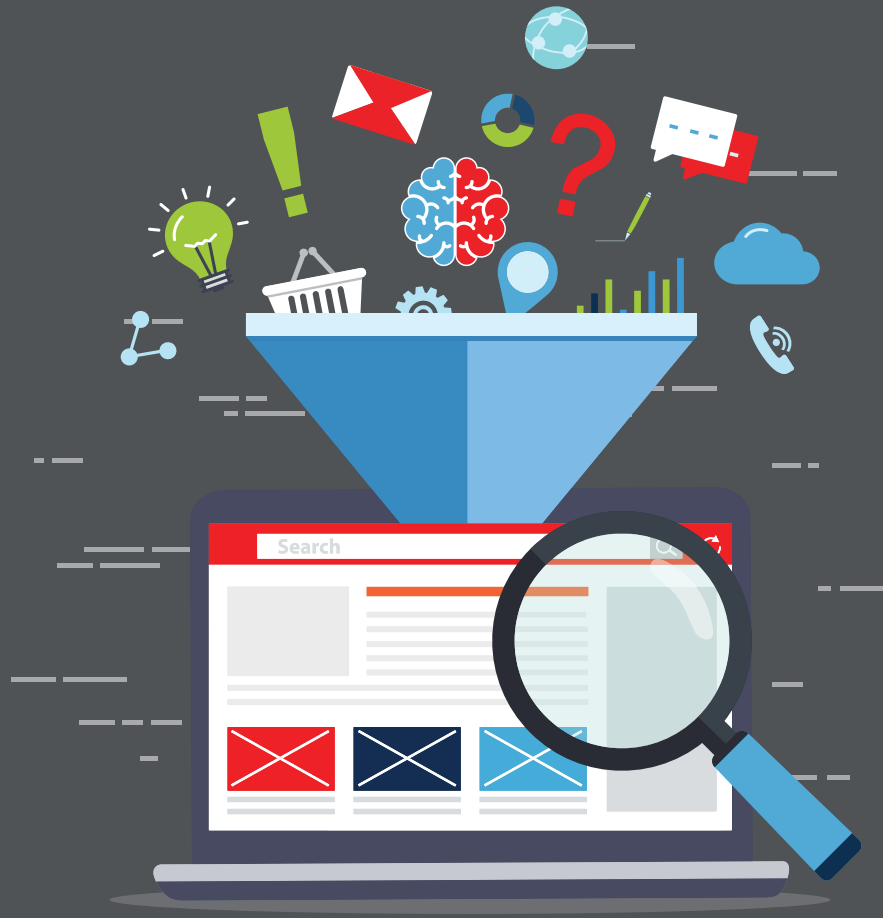
One study showed that 70% of people visiting your website are not ready to convert due to a lack of nurturing; additionally, 70% of companies don't personalize their content.²⁴ This gap indicates an opportunity to gain market share by personalizing your content when nurturing your clients. Personalized nurturing comes from your site content, email automation, Google and Facebook advertising, messaging, and much more.

Action: Personalize your client nurturing funnel(s) for better conversion and ROI.

Prediction: Geo-fencing and segmentation data will be used to leverage proximity marketing and differentiate personal client journeys.

Geo-location and IP data can be utilized to create personalized location-based content. Geographic indicators and dynamic web content (such as local images) can be created and will change depending on where the client is viewing your site. You can also base your personalized messaging on local audiences by time of day or proximity to your location.²⁵ The ROI of personalization cannot be understated. In a study by Harvard Business Review, it was found that individual clients who perceived a company's content to be tailored to their specific needs were 40% more willing to convert than with a company that didn't use personalization.²⁶

Action: Create personalized content based on geographic locations as well as your client demographics. Apply automation technologies for streaming personalized client journeys.



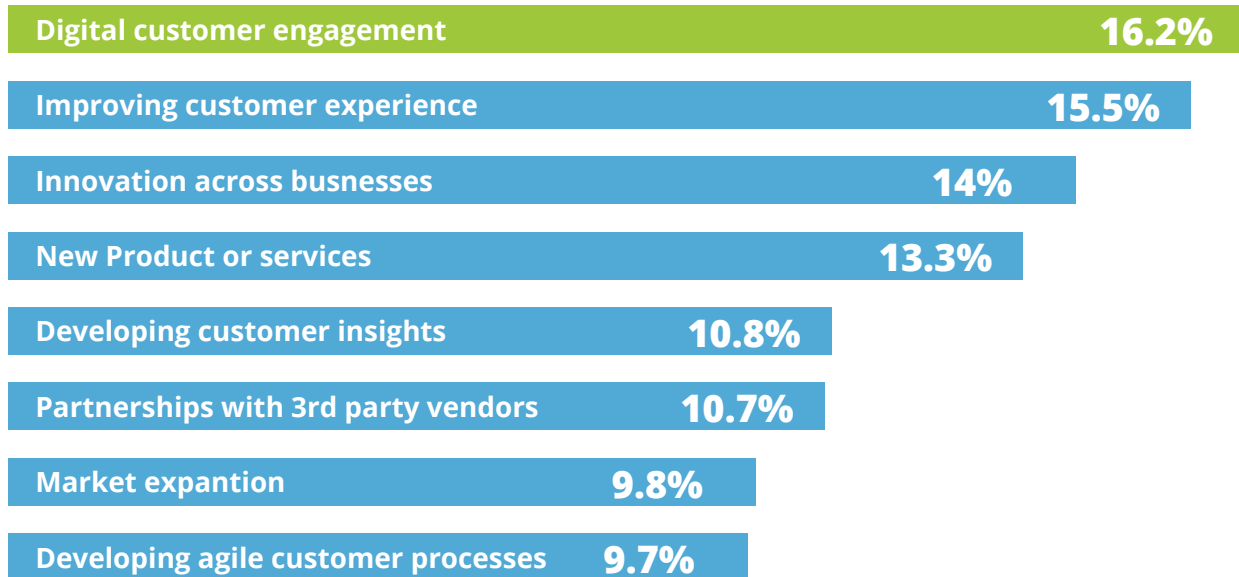
**AN INCREASED
EMPHASIS ON CLIENT
ENGAGEMENT**

TEN



Each year we talk about the importance of user experience and the ability to convert more visitors to clients through conversion optimization. As lead generation costs increase and competition intensifies, this strategy will continue to be important.

Prediction: Addiction treatment centers will become more strategic about understanding how to increase the number of repeat interactions with their facility through conversion optimization and strategic content development.



In the coming year, we see addiction treatment facilities focusing more on the client journey and how to increase engagement across the entire marketing funnel. As digital marketing becomes progressively more data driven, optimizing engagement means becoming clear about your KPIs.

A huge emphasis will be placed on measuring content engagement. This means better understanding your clients and knowing what content helps them in seeking the treatment they need. You can focus on the best channels to help move clients through the funnel and which content medium strengthens your clients' psychological and emotional connection to your addiction treatment facility. Finally, in 2021, we will continue to optimize activity across devices to make sure that there is a smooth transition as users move from one device to another.

Actions: Consider moving beyond analytics to user experience tools that record and review client sessions across devices. Also add heatmaps, form analytics, and conversion funnels to improve your overall client engagement.

IN CONCLUSION

2020 presented vast changes in terms of digital marketing in the world of addiction treatment, and looking into 2021, capitalizing on these trends can help give you the edge over your competition. One thread tying these trends together is the rapid growth in prioritizing your digital marketing for the mobile audience. There is no denying the power of mobile and the advantages you can gain by making it a prime focus of your 2021 marketing strategies. From the basics like thinking mobile first with your website to the more advanced AI and machine learning technologies, it all comes down to what the most valuable trend is for your specific addiction treatment center. So, watch these predictions closely, apply the most sensible, and have a fantastic 2021!



ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTER DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS “ACTIONS CHECKLIST”

The trends for 2021 open the doors of opportunity to stand out from the competition and attract clients to your facility. You can follow this checklist to take full advantage of these trends for a truly effective 2021!

Mobile Domination

- Action: Start with mobile first design and keep mobile experience your primary consideration.

Reallocation of Budgets to Paid Facebook

- Action: Use boosted posts and ad placement to reach your targeted audience.
- Action: Test various video lengths in your advertising, but start with shorter “more digestible” video advertising with clear text.

The Power of Influencer Marketing Continues to Grow

- Action: Work with influencers in your industry niche for the greatest ROI.
- Action: Focus your influencer efforts on the highest value platforms.

Video Reigns Supreme

- Action: Build video content to replace long-form text content.
- Action: Upload your video content directly to Facebook for higher engagement and reach.
- Action: Invest time in producing live video directly from a mobile device.

2021 Is the Year for AMP

- Action: Invest in AMP development for your key pages.
- Action: Prioritize improving load speed to improve conversion rates.

Google My Business to Own Local Business Listings

- Action: Use every GMB feature that applies to your specific business, and keep profile content fresh.
- Action: Work towards continuously gathering positive public reviews on Google and Yelp.

Content Marketing Gets Smarter

- Action: Build highly targeted content that is contextually robust and the proper length for your specific type of addiction treatment center.

Use of Voice Search Continues to Grow

- Action: Write content for voice search that answers questions, utilizes longer tail keywords and phrases, and speaks to your niche.
- Action: Optimize your listing for voice search to take advantage of local search traffic.
- Action: Apply basic chatbots to streamline the client experience.

The Importance of Personalization

- Action: Personalize your client nurturing funnel(s) for better conversion and ROI.
- Action: Create personalized content based on geographic locations as well as your client demographics. Apply automation technologies for streaming personalized client journeys.

An Increased Emphasis on Client Engagement

- Action: Consider moving beyond analytics to user experience tools that record and review client sessions across devices. Also add heatmaps, form analytics, and conversion funnels to improve your overall client engagement.



DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS

FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTERS

For 14 years National Positions has been at the forefront of the digital marketing industry. We focus on combining the worlds of technology, data analysis, and creative design into our digital marketing strategies. Our data and know-how alone give us the edge required to effectively help our clients beat the competition. We focus our strategies on driving more clients to your facility, nurturing your lead pipeline, and helping convert your clients more rapidly. We look forward to helping your addiction treatment facility reach new heights in 2021 and beyond.

Contact Us for More Information:



877-866-6699



www.nationalpositions.com



Get in touch



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