THE MODERN MARKETER’S GUIDE TO DIGITAL MARKETING

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A Note to the modern marketer

Learn to be creative

Learn to adapt

Surround-yourself with smart people

Don’t rely on any one channel alone

Build loyal fans on your own property

Build your plans and campaigns on solid data

Create content for a highly targeted audience

Invest your time and effort towards long-term goals

Train and mentor others

Ignore the haters. Be open minded about the criticism

Don’t ever complain - in online or offline mode
The Modern Marketer’s Guide to Digital Marketing

- Keep your cool in critical situations
- Have long-term objectives but be flexible with short-term strategies
- Cut the emotion out of decisions
- Be empathetic
- Show the way and then get out of it
- Don’t be a hypocrite
- Be ready to break the rules
- Be a good communicator
- Take ownership of your mistakes
- Challenge Checklist
- Thank You
The world as we know it has changed in the last 10 years – for digital marketers as much as anyone else. When I started my career in 2002 things were different. Now, there are plenty of tools and channels. Take any element in a digital marketer’s toolkit – platform, strategy, tools, technological support, perspective or skill – everything’s gotten a facelift. The role of a digital marketer has evolved and expanded and no modern digital marketer can escape that.

It’s a mad rush in the marketing world and you’ve got to stay in shape! I’ve found a few ways to keep pace. That’s what I’m sharing with you. I’m going to follow this up with a detailed step-by-step guide so stay tuned.

Suresh Babu is the Founder and CEO of Web Marketing Academy (WMA), Bangalore which offers certification courses in digital marketing. The institute trains students, professionals & corporate personnel.
Learn to be creative
Learn to be creative

Want to be a modern digital marketer? Learn to be creative. Be it video, images, text, being creative is one of the challenging task for any marketer. It’s 2018 and we have all the tools, apps to create content. Creative in content on the other hand is tough. Successful campaigns are creative. Not everyone is creative however we can learn how to be creative.

Resources for you:

- INC Magazine – 25 ways to be creative
- Creativity Post– Resources for creativity
- Netflix Abstract - An original Netflix series on Art of design

Challenge:

✓ Try 5 creative ways to be creative today
✓ Watch episode 6 Paula Scher: Graphic Design in Netflix Abstract
Learn to adapt
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Adapt to the latest trends. Don’t be afraid to try the newest marketing tools and platforms. Never mind if you fail in your initial attempts; learn from your mistakes and correct the course. Find a way to use latest trending platforms to your and your customers’ advantage.

Resources for you:

- **Anchor.fm** – A fast and cool way to record audio from your phone. #VoiceSearch #podcast
- **Code Academy** – Coding is an integral part of Digital marketing today, Learn a simple code in an interactively for free.

Challenge:

- ✓ Install Anchor and record your first audio or a podcast.
- ✓ Anchor allows you to publish your podcast. Publish your podcast to itunes.
- ✓ Build a simple Facebook messenger chat bot using code academy.
Surround yourself with smart people
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As someone real smart said, if you’re the smartest in your company, move out. Associating with smart people has an induction effect – some of their skills and energy rubs off on you and you find greater momentum for your ideas and thoughts. It’s synergetic, bouncing ideas off a group of smart people who’re not afraid to experiment, be bizarre or just plain, silly. At the same time, there’s a method in the madness!

Learn from the smartest people around the world as well through videos, podcasts, blogs, webinars, workshops, and more. That’s the gold of the internet age – no boundaries to learning.

Resources for you:

- **Startup Saturday** – A part of Headstart Network, the event is held on the second Saturday of every month, across Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai.
- **OME community** – An online marketing enthusiast’s group started by me; that has some networking and upskilling events every month.
- Events around **Social Media Day** and **Social Media Week (SMW)** – held across cities in India and the world.

**Challenge:**

✓ **Register for an upcoming event.**
✓ **Talk to some of the speakers.**
✓ **Talk to other people attending the event. You never know how connections work out!**
Don’t rely on any one channel alone
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Never ever put all your eggs in one basket. And don’t get too comfortable. What’s working today may break tomorrow. Keep an open mind and jump onto newest platforms used by your target audience. If it works for them, you need to ramp up as well. At the same time, let go of what’s not getting you any ROI. Use multiple marketing channels to get your customer’s attention. Use email, social, mobile – whatever it takes to deliver value, build loyalty and achieve your business objectives.

Resources for you:

- Run email marketing campaigns – MailChimp
- Experiment on social media – Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat
- Explore new and trending platforms
- Mobile marketing – Check out Google’s The Mobile Playbook

Challenge:

✓ Build your own email list.
✓ Start working on a newsletter.
✓ Build a content calendar for all your marketing channels.
5. Build loyal fans on your own property
Build loyal fans on your own property

Keep in mind that there’s a difference between a rented place and home. You got great engagement going on your Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram … (the list could get endless) social pages? That’s great. But they’re rented places at the mercy of the landlords.

Your website/blog is your home. That’s where you need to focus – get the visitors there, convert leads, engage, nurture, retain and delight – all on your website.

Resources for you:

- Create landing pages that convert on your website – Unbounce
- Mobile Friendly Test to analyze the mobile usability of your website and improve on it.
- PageSpeed Insights to check the web performance of your website on mobile and desktop.

Challenge:

✓ Run ads to generate more traffic to your website, blog and other resources.
✓ Create effective landing pages to improve lead generation on your website.
✓ Test your website on desktop and mobile devices.
✓ Get into Google Analytics and analyze your website usage.
✓ Build a content calendar to be a consistent content publisher.
Build your plans and campaigns on solid data
Embrace web analytics as your best friend. No digital marketer is any good till he or she has grasped the true essence of analytical tools. Web analytics is not clickstream alone, its intelligence delivered via platforms you need to master and derive sense from.

Your marketing campaigns will help you achieve business objectives better if you understand the driving forces on your website, the behavior of your customers, the acquisition patterns on online and offline campaigns, and of course, the end ROI – cost versus revenue – all of which will come from digital analytics.

Resources for you:

- Google Analytics – for your website and other digital assets.
- Facebook Insights – to understand your Facebook audience.
- Twitter Analytics – to discover content that engages people.
- Social media analytics - free and paid.

Challenge:

✓ Look at the analytics data of your website, social media networks, etc.
✓ Check for the most viewed blog post in the last 90 days.
✓ Reconsider your digital marketing strategy based on the user behaviors observed.
✓ Increase or decrease budget, change times of launch, revamp content strategy and content formats – optimize your campaigns based on the analytical results.
✓ Remove channels that do not generate results (assuming you’ve give it adequate time).
Create content for a highly targeted audience
Create content for a highly targeted audience

Not every piece of content needs to serve the whole of your target audience. In fact, if you want higher returns on your content marketing strategy, segment your customers and build content for niche groups.

For example, we run a training academy for digital marketers but we published a blog post on travel advice for people attending events in India. That got a lot of eyeballs and generated traffic to our website, and leads.

Resources for you:

- Answer the public - a great resource for blog post ideas
- YouTube Trends Dashboard - find what videos are trending in countries and specific age groups of viewers.
- Google Trends - find trending topics on the web.

Challenge:

✓ Talk to your customers and find out what their questions are.
✓ Take one question and answer. Create a video, blog post or other form of content.
✓ Use paid mediums (Facebook ads, etc.) to promote engaging content.
Invest your time and effort towards long-term goals
Invest your time and effort towards long-term goals

It’s tempting to take shortcuts to achieve short-term goals. Skip the edit and publish that article on time to meet the weekly goal. Use black hat SEO to get the needed traffic and show the client your effort got results!

STOP!

Taking shortcuts is a waste of time and money. Not to mention, the potential blot on your hard-earned reputation! Why take that risk? Instead, focus on long-term goals, work on a long-term strategy and plan, and then execute the plan meticulously.

Resources for you:

• Study Webmaster Guidelines to ensure you do not violate any, accidentally or intentionally.
• Google Search Console – to ensure your SEO efforts are working.
• Specific resources to improve ranking of content on specific platforms – YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram etc.

Challenge:

✓ Optimize your content across your website, social media to improve ranking organically.
✓ Do SEO for your videos, audio, slide-share.
9 Train and mentor others
Train and mentor others

We like to think we’re indispensable but a true leader is one who can make his team function just as well in his absence. Train others to take on responsibilities and execute tasks with complete ownership. Be a support and guide but don’t hand hold.

Resources for you:

- [Linkedin post](#) – Read up on how mentoring impacts both student and teacher.
- Read up on [how to be a good mentor](#).
- Talk to your own mentors.

Challenge:

✓ Spend 10-15 minutes a week to mentor, train your friend or colleague.
✓ Check your Linkedin emails. Sometimes people just need guidance.
✓ Follow up.
10. Ignore the haters. Be open minded about the criticism.
Ignore the haters.
Be open minded about the criticism

In the age of social networking, haters and trolls find it only too easy to be spiteful and negative. Ignore it. This is the negative side of the internet. Don’t give it attention and focus on the positives.

If you receive negative feedback and criticism, analyze it objectively. If there is a grain of truth in the criticism, accept your mistake, address the problem, improve and keep going forward.

Resources for you:

- Social listening tools to hear what’s being said about your brand – TweetDeck, Google Alerts, Icerocket, Social Mention.
- Find places to promote your content – Buzzsumo.

Challenge:

- Search for your brand name using the above mentioned tools.
- Search on relevant industry keywords.
- Respond to good and bad comments – with bad being more important.
- Incorporate learning from negative comments.
Don’t ever complain - in online or offline mode
Don’t ever complain - in online or offline mode

Never mind how disappointed, angry or hurt you are, don’t let it out as a grouse – on online or offline media. Present your case calmly and in a positive manner, whether it’s to your senior or junior. Complaining is finger pointing. That’s negative. It creates a perception of your character.

Be the problem solver or the problem manager, never the grouse. If it’s excess work that’s bothering you, find a way to increase productivity.

Resources for you:

- Use social media tools to schedule posts - Hootsuite, Buffer, etc.
- Use collaboration tools such as Evernote, Trello, Slack, DropBox, Google Calendar, etc. to increase efficiency.

Challenge:

✓ Find a tool to help – Google Calendar, Evernote, Trello
✓ Set up tasks on the tool and test for a week. Measure the impact.
✓ Delegate tasks where your expertise is not required.
12 Keep your cool in critical situations
Unpredictable things can and will happen. The Wi-Fi network, during your workshop, won’t work. The mike you requested won’t be available. This is the perfect time for you NOT to hit the panic button.

Recently, we had arranged for a conference at a large company. About 100 people were expected to arrive. At the last minute, the company could not make the conference room available. The presenters were at a loss. When they called, I asked them to look at the nearest hotels and find space. Meanwhile, take the few people who had arrived out for coffee and get them to network.

When you panic, your brain freezes. A critical situation is the worst time for that to happen!

**_resources for you:**
- Observe and learn from your mentors.
- Find what works for your mental peace – yoga, music, meditation, walking, etc.
- Read books, watch videos, study how crisis is managed across corporate.

**Challenge:**
- Next time, something unpredictable happens, resolve to manage it.
- Anticipate things that can go wrong and have a Plan B.
- Take a deep breath and focus all your energy on working out a solution.
Have long-term objectives but be flexible with short-term strategies
Have long-term objectives but be flexible with short-term strategies

My long-term plan for the year was to evangelize digital marketing and get more students on board. I had considered a number of strategies to achieve these goals. We had a plan set out.

Three months back, I got onto Live streaming. Before I knew it, live streaming became the channel for me to spread awareness about digital marketing – which in turn brought more students into WMA as well. We also began podcasting actively, something we hadn’t really considered at the beginning of the year.

Our long-term objective remains unchanged but our short-term strategies have been readjusted. And that’s fine!

Resources for you:

- Build a marketing plan – Should a marketing plan be fixed or flexible?
- Keep tabs on what’s hot in digital marketing – MarketingLand, Digital India Podcast (by staff and students at WMA), CMO.com, Mashable, MarketingTech.

Challenge:

✓ On a chart map out your long term and short term goals.
✓ Write all the steps to achieve the short-term goals – daily, weekly, monthly.
✓ Build a path showing how your short-term goal will help you reach long-term objectives.
✓ Revise short-term goals every month based on outcome.
14 Cut the emotion out of decisions
Cut the emotion out of decisions

I know how hard this can be. Sometimes, situations can get really tough. Whenever people get together, tricky situations are bound to arise. You may be riled about something yourself. But how do you deal with it?

My advice: First and foremost, accept your own emotional state. Understand that you need a breather. Where possible, take a timeout. Gather information from multiple sources and analyze the data without emotion. When a timeout is not possible, take a deep breath and be as objective as possible. You’ll get better with experience, no shortcuts here.

**Resources for you:**
- Remember history – how many bad situations could have been avoided if leaders did not get emotional? Why Good Leaders Make Bad Decisions.
- Be emotionally intelligent, not emotional. Read up on How Successful People Stay Calm.
- If you must show anger, focus on the action, not person.

**Challenge:**

✓ Feeling out of temper? Accept it.
✓ Before taking any action, consider its impact on people around you.
✓ Focus on collecting data rather than taking a decision instantly.
✓ Call a group meeting and take a combined decision.
15 Be empathetic
Be empathetic

Never forget the other person’s position. Remember how it feels to sit on the other side of the table. Take off your shoes and put on someone else’s, well, not literally but you get my point. Be a listener, be approachable, be willing to help, and be fair.

In return, you’ll get loyalty, honesty and commitment.

Resources for you:

- Empathy is good for you and your business - Why the Empathetic Leader Is the Best Leader.
- Why Empathy Is The Force That Moves Business Forward
- Encourage empathy with team building activities.

Challenge:

✓ Practice mindfulness - 10 % Happiness app is a good start.
✓ Never make fun of sensitive issues and situations.
✓ Listen to your friend, spouse, peer or child – do this mindfully.
✓ Join communities.
16 Show the way and then get out of it
Show the way and then get out of it

The best way to train others is to get your own hands dirty. Make mistakes, play with concepts, tech or strategies – thrash it out as much as you can. Show your team what is possible, set standards, and then let them get on with it. Don’t micromanage and ruin the innovation that could come out of their professional freedom.

Resources for you:

- Read up on Leadership Tips: Effective Delegation Process – Dale Carnegie blog (world renowned trainer and author)
- Also How to Delegate The Right Tasks To The Right People – Brian Tracy

Challenge:

✓ List out tasks that you can delegate.
✓ Select people you will delegate tasks to.
✓ Train them on the tasks.
✓ Assign responsibilities, KPIs and expectations.
✓ Give complete ownership but keep the window of guidance open at all times.
✓ Allow scope for innovation and enterprise.
Don’t be a hypocrite
Don’t be a hypocrite

Don’t preach what you don’t practice. That’s never really worked for anyone in the past but in the age of the millennial generation, it’s the fastest way to lose respect. You’re not perfect so don’t pretend to be. Be yourself, with your shortcomings. That doesn’t mean you don’t work on your weaknesses. You do and you also help others work on theirs. Just don’t patronize.

Resources for you:

- While we have many domestic examples as well, no one has penned them down as entertainingly. Watch: Jon Stewart Blast the Hypocrisy of World Leaders at the Paris Solidarity Rally.
- Read up on Hypocrisy Isn’t Going to Get You There.
- Article - When leaders fail to “walk the talk”: Supervisor undermining and perceptions of leader hypocrisy.

Challenge:

✓ Accept your own weaknesses.
✓ Be mindful of your weakness – catch yourself when you do it and abstain.
✓ Don’t expect others to follow where you can’t lead.
✓ Don’t advise on topics you know nothing about.
Be ready to break the rules
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Rules are made to improve performance, streamline workflows, and enhance productivity. When a rule starts hindering rather than helping, it’s time to let it go. Keep your rules relevant and useful – that’s the key to ensure they’re followed willingly. Revisit rules often.

Resources for you:

- In India, we are often victims of antiquated laws and lawmakers who don’t trouble to keep systems updated with the times.
- Read up: Time to break some rules and I Broke These 6 Business Rules. Why You Should, Too. – rules that should be broken in sales and marketing strategies.

Challenge:

✓ Are all your rules in keeping with the times?
✓ Analyze if rules are helping or hurting your employees or customers?
✓ Are rules leading to bitter customer relationships?
✓ Revisit rules – weed out the pointless.
19 Be a good communicator
Be a good communicator

It is extremely important for marketers to communicate, and communicate well. Never mind whether it is internal or external communication. Never mind the format of the communication - email, meeting, public address, etc., marketers must know how to communicate clearly, succinctly, and comprehensively.

If communication is your weakness, get help. Join a class, find a mentor, read self-help books, practice privately or before friends - do whatever it takes to improve. This is priority.

Resources for you:

- Watch: https://www.ted.com/talks
- Toastmasters Meetups in Bangalore
- One I attended - http://heroicpublic-speaking.com/

Challenge:

✓ Observe people around you who are good communicators.
✓ Keep the listener in perspective when you communicate.
✓ Don’t give too little or too much information.
✓ Record yourself in video. Watch the video analyze your body language, tone, and clarity.
20 Take ownership of your mistakes
Everyone makes mistakes. That’s OK. The important thing is to learn from the mistakes. And to do that, you first need to take ownership of your own errors. It’s embarrassing, excruciatingly so sometimes. But if you want to get back on your feet, there’s no way around it!

Keep in mind mistakes are.

Resources for you:

- Read up: 3 Ways Owning Your Mistakes Will Make You Powerful.
- And Good Employees Make Mistakes. Great Leaders Allow Them To.
- Watch the Howard Schultz, CEO, Starbucks story.

Challenge:

✓ Accept the mistakes you’ve made - a wrong hire, bad customer service, bad decision.

✓ Learn from it. Document it - seeing things in black and white helps.

✓ Do a root cause analysis to find the cause – and improve from there.
Learn to be creative

- Try 5 creative ways to be creative today.
- Watch episode 6 Paula Scher: Graphic Design in Netflix Abstract.

Learn to adapt

- Install Anchor and record your first audio or a podcast.
- Anchor allows you to publish your podcast. Publish your podcast to itunes.
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- Talk to other people attending the event. You never know how connections work out!
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Build your plans and campaigns on solid data

**Challenge 4**
- Build your own email list.
- Start working on a newsletter.
- Build a content calendar for all your marketing channels.

**Challenge 5**
- Run ads to generate more traffic to your website blog and other resources.
- Create effective landing pages to improve lead generation on your website.
- Test your website on desktop and mobile devices.
- Get into Google Analytics and analyze your website usage.
- Build a content calendar to be a consistent content publisher.

**Challenge 6**
- Look at the analytics data of your website, social media networks, etc.
- Check for the most viewed blog post in the last 90 days.
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- Increase or decrease budget, change times of launch, revamp content strategy and content formats – optimize your campaigns based on the analytical results.
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Challenge 10

- Search for your brand name using the above mentioned tools.
- Search on relevant industry keywords.
- Respond to good and bad comments – with bad being more important.
- Incorporate learning from negative comments.

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- Next time, something unpredictable happens, resolve to manage it.
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- Practice mindfulness – 10% Happiness app is a good start
- Never make fun of sensitive issues and situations.
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- Join communities.
Show the way and then get out of it

- Allow scope for innovation and enterprise.
- Give complete ownership but keep the window of guidance open at all times.
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- Select people you will delegate tasks to.
- List out tasks that you can delegate.

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- Record yourself in video. Watch the video analyze your body language, tone, and clarity.

Take ownership of your mistakes

Challenge 20

- Accept the mistakes you’ve made – a wrong hire, bad customer service, bad decision
- Learn from it. Document it – seeing things in black and white helps.
- Do a root cause analysis to find the cause – and improve from there.
Hope these tips prove helpful in your quest to become a modern digital marketer. Make sure you take up the challenges in earnest to bring out that spark in your skills and capabilities.

Good luck!