

5 Ways to Fuel Massive Growth in 2015



2: Marketing



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Shifting from Broad Strokes to Micro-Targeted: The Year of the Consumer

Next year will usher in a smarter, more well-informed and resourceful consumer who is empowered with information at their fingertips, little more than a click away on their mobile device and within fractions of a second. **To be effective, marketing will have to be as engaging and as social as their target audiences and quality content will reign again as king. Social media, marketing automation, inbound marketing and mobile are the star players in the 2015 Marketing playbook.** Ipsos notes that 61 percent of global internet users research products online, and the statistical importance is further weighted by Forrester's prediction of more than half of the dollars spent in U.S. retail will be influenced online by 2016.

"2015 is going to experience a tectonic shift across industries and market sectors from a dependence upon outbound marketing and cold-calling sales to a new appreciation for inbound marketing and a pull in the ability to capture people who are looking for a service and or product," says Vistage speaker Andrea Simon, Ph.D., Principal/Founder of Simon Associates Management Consultants (SAMC). She notes that the average cost for leads through inbound marketing is 61 percent lower than outbound, and that the average website conversion rate more than doubles with inbound marketing.

"The question is," she contends, "how can businesses provide the type of non-intrusive, credible, on-demand marketing strategies so that those people who are looking for their services or products are attracted to their website and social media? How can we provide them with the type of information and education that will help convert them; and, how do we go about closing the sale?" Simon says, **"It's less about pushing for sales, and more about finding those who are looking, and helping them make the right decision to choose your business for their solution."**

"Social media is becoming an essential component of strategy, says Vistage speaker Max Carey, one of the nation's leading sales and marketing consulting experts. "It is not a strategy itself, but rather a driver of strategy. It is necessary and mandatory; and, if you're not in it, you will be left behind in some way." As founder and Chairman of CRD (Corporate Resource Development), Carey advises his clients to embrace five principles of the "New Normal:"

- 1 Social media is no longer just about friends, family and funny posts; it is now a proven and powerful resource in commerce.
- 2 Confirmation and recommendation from peers and thought-leaders are received with value and authority over traditional advertising.
- 3 Internet and social media marketing is the favorite pony in the race with global brands like Coca-Cola shifting 65 percent of its traditional marketing spend over to Internet and interaction-based vehicles.
- 4 Success with social media requires consistent engagement, responsiveness and relationship-building more than just monitoring.
- 5 Marketing strategies are positioned to yield the greatest ROI when integrated across-the-board and in multiple marketing and social media platforms, with consistency in messaging and branding.

Five Principles of the “New Normal”

#1	Internet and social media have transitioned from a novelty to a dominant mainstream business and commerce connectivity platform.
#2	Consumers and buyers of all products and services are proving they believe, trust and value endorsements from fellow users and thought leaders rather than messaging from advertisers and commercials.
#3	The smartest and most agile marketers in the world are aggressively shifting their spend from traditional advertising and PR vehicles to internet-based profiling, dialog and interaction (example: COCA-COLA = 65%).
#4	Market leader presence and impact in social media requires strategy and tactics driving 24/7 activity in three dimensions: monitoring, assessing, pro-active strategic responses and engagement.
#5	Outcomes are optimized and monetized when enterprise-wide positioning strategies are introduced and reinforced through a coherent framework and mosaic of integrated, multi-channel social media campaigns.

Source: Max Carey

2015 Marketing Must Check List

- ✓ **Optimize your online experience.** Search Engine Optimize your website not just with keywords, but also with Google's newly launched Hummingbird. In its first update to its entire algorithm since 2010, Hummingbird searches more than just keywords, it looks at the quality in relevancy with the phrase search query. If you haven't already, Simon says, "Now is the right time to take a good look at a Google Analytics scrub to see how well your site is scoring."
- ✓ **Use social media to build your brand's presence and credibility with its target audience.** Carey recommends interacting with the "20% Rule," posts should reflect equal parts in the categories of inspiration; humor; value-added content, things they wouldn't know, intellectual capital; re-tweets or shares of other people who had smart things to say; and call to action and limited time offers.
- ✓ **Narrow your focus to reach your true target market.** Carey states, "In 2015 you've got to go from a wide-net-thinking to the exact opposite, a laser-focused 'who are the best buyers and who can best value what we have?' "
- ✓ **Make sure your site is mobile-friendly.** "Responsive design websites are critical," Simon affirms, "With 35 percent of searches taking place on mobile platforms, your website has to change in shape and form as it goes from a desktop, to a tablet, to a smartphone."

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