

## **2020 Vision:**

8 Questions Every  
Strategic MarComm Exec  
Should Ask

**AMPLIFY** YOUR BRAND



# 8 QUESTIONS

## EVERY STRATEGIC MARCOMM EXEC SHOULD ASK

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Where Does Integration Happen?

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How Can Big Data Analysis Inform My Strategic Plan?

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Why Isn't Anyone Reading My Content?

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Can Social Really Help My Bottom Line?

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You Mean Visual Content Is More than a Pretty Layout?

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Isn't Video an Expensive Luxury?

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Is the Media Ignoring Me?

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Which Trending Technologies Are Defining the Future?

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# STRATEGIC **INTEGRATED** COMMUNICATIONS

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In the last ten years, technology has changed all aspects of business, none more significantly than customer engagement – changing all the rules of strategic marketing and communications. While new technologies and approaches make these communications seem more direct, the nuances and intangibles are much more complex.

To be successful, businesses now more than ever need to take a strategic, integrated communications approach that not only ensures consistency, but most importantly, demonstrates industry leadership. As we turn to the next decade, the unprecedented rate of industry change we've seen in the last one doesn't promise to slow down. We've created this quick reference guide to help inform your thought process and planning as you navigate this exciting but volatile environment.

# WHERE DOES **INTEGRATION** HAPPEN?

## EXPERT INSIGHT

Act as a team! Silo'd initiatives dilute your brand. Cohesive, integrated efforts strengthen it.

**Consistency builds a brand.** Using a silo'd approach that pushes disparate messages not only creates confusion but dilutes your brand over time.

Start by defining your assets – internal resources, brand assets, thought leaders, programs and campaigns in play.



Clarify where your audiences reside. What channels and tactics do you need to put your message where your audience wants to consume it?



Then, create a phased approach that evolves as the market and your business change.

**Integrated marketing ensures consistency** – of strategy, of brand experience, of message, of story. It builds market understanding of your business and value proposition, both tangible and intrinsic.



### EXPERT INSIGHT

Think tangentially. If search analytics show a specific short- or long-tail keyword is highly used, try word or phrase variations that convey the same idea, but may be more search-unique.

# HOW CAN **BIG DATA ANALYSIS** INFORM MY STRATEGIC PLAN?

Decision-making driven by Big Data is now the most critical (yet currently least understood) aspect of all integrated marketing initiatives. The informed analysis of disparate data sets across initiatives now provide marketers with unprecedented insights that can be leveraged across public relations, creative design, digital marketing and content strategy.

For example, at W2 Communications, when our digital marketing team conducts a strategic search analysis on a client's long or short-tail keyword bundle, those results are then given to our content development team for consideration on how best to integrate those phrases into our copy.

Those same results are shared with our web team to inform site-wide and page-centric SEO techniques (development of topic headers, image alt tags, etc.); while our video producers can insert phrases into scripts, and our visual designers can use them across collateral and infographics.

Then, we use Google Analytics and Data Studio customizations to monitor and measure the efficacy of all related initiatives.

# WHY ISN'T ANYONE READING MY CONTENT?

The right words matter – yet so much business content is full of buzzwords, jargon, or too much “me-centric” information. **Content needs to resonate with the reader** – that means talking about their problems, pain points and issues, not how great your solutions are.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

All of your content - text, images, social, or whatever - should be keyword-relevant and tagged!

Take the time and effort to learn what your readers care about. Stakeholder research is critical to informing actionable end-to-end communication strategies and messaging that to reflect your unique brand value in the context of customer needs.

Armed with that substantive insight, [create a cohesive content marketing strategy](#) that incorporates diverse content – long- and short-form narratives, infographics, podcasts or videos.

You also need to [say something different](#) – look at what others in your space are saying. Then, address a new challenge, offer a unique perspective, or even call out flaws in traditional approaches. That will get the reader's attention.

[Innovative approaches to strategic search analysis](#), the right keywords and SEO will make sure your intended audience finds your content. And make sure you write it well! Be original, creative, to the point and focused on the industry problems you solve.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

Subject Matter Experts and Big Thinkers within your firm can make great social media personalities and brand ambassadors.

# CAN **SOCIAL** REALLY HELP MY BOTTOM LINE?

Social media has redefined the communications industry.

Many businesses' social initiatives struggle to balance self-promotion and sales with customer engagement, problem-solving and providing their expert insights. How do you tap this resource to favor your bottom line while retaining credibility?

It's a sensitive feat that can be easily managed with a combination of paid and organic social media marketing.

Use organic social to deliver a drip feed of content that is relevant to your community and build continual engagement. Grow a following by participating in the market conversation.



Then, think of paid social as your amplifier, enabling you to quickly build an audience or drive interest in a particular event or issue. Audience targeting, whether by region, industry, socio-economic status or something else, allows you to laser-focus in a way traditional communications couldn't.



# YOU MEAN **VISUAL CONTENT** IS MORE THAN A PRETTY LAYOUT?

The old saying still rings true – **a picture is worth a thousand words**. It also helps to simplify and humanize the technically complex products and services that many companies are selling.

Engaging images get attention. Visual storytelling resonates and attracts new audiences, and its tonality can quickly set the perfect ambiance for your conversation with your customers. These compelling visuals come in two common forms: static images including infographics or photography, and animations.

Done thoughtfully, a well-crafted infographic can demonstrate a full solution to a customer pain point. When an interactive experience is what's called for, animations take viewers on an engaging journey that brings ideas to life, increases engagement, and improves SEO and conversion rates.







## ISN'T **VIDEO** AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY?

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If a picture is worth a thousand words, then, as the saying goes, video is worth a million.

The camera creates a visceral connection to a brand. That's particularly important when selling complex technical products or services. Video can reach through the medium and establish a deeper sense of the value being offered. True videography is the craftsmanship that comes with capturing light, story and authentic emotion across a narrative arc in a visually compelling way.

As video has increased in importance, its cost, ironically, has continued to decrease. Many would be surprised at how little a high-quality production can cost. You can also repurpose a single video across many channels: YouTube, the company website, partner websites, TV advertising or re-edited for social media snippets.



# IS THE **MEDIA** IGNORING ME?

The media is probably one of the most misunderstood assets in a strategic marketing communications program. In an era where companies are using social media to drive their narrative and control their message, **the media still serves as an important collaborator.**

The media needs to be viewed as a partner that has its own agenda and its own measurement of success. They do not succeed by telling your story. They succeed by providing their audience (your customers) with stories that are valuable to them.

The key to successful media relationships is relevance and mutual respect. It's not just about what you are selling, but what problems customers are grappling with today, what they will need to deal with tomorrow, and what stories reporters want to tell about that.

## **EXPERT INSIGHT**

Winning media programs initiate multiple activities & campaigns that emphasize your unique perspectives, thought leadership and market position.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

Watch out for 'shiny new object' syndrome! Emerging marketing technologies can be fun and exciting. Be sure to explore them, then adopt those that will be most helpful to meeting your business goals and customer preferences.

# WHICH TRENDING TECHNOLOGIES ARE DEFINING THE FUTURE?

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Even with the breadth and diversity of today's content delivery channels, savvy marketers must embrace developing and experiential technologies.

Once considered science fiction, advances in the cost-effective production of 360-degree video, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) can now create an immersive brand storytelling previously thought impossible.

These solutions allow marketers to actually invite their audience directly into their brand story, engaging their senses in new and impactful ways, while still maintaining control over their experience. The intrinsic human need for connection can often best be served by the most cutting-edge technologies.

There's a lot that already has and soon will be coming at us, and quickly. Marketers have to acknowledge and be ready to adopt the changing mechanisms through which the market wants to consume content.



# HOW WILL ALL OF THIS HELP YOUR **BOTTOM LINE?**

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We noted earlier that any communication effort needs to support business goals - from building a brand to generating leads. An integrated, strategic program is an imperative in a market drowning in ideas, competition and a whole lot of noise.

Data and analytics should be used to inform your strategic plan, and also to measure and adjust tactics as they are implemented.

The MarComm landscape has changed radically over the last decade, and the new technologies coming our way in the 2020s will change it even more. Silo'd thinking and behaviors no longer work; efforts need to be integrated to succeed. When choosing marketing partners, make sure they understand where and how integration needs to be done, and how to maximize the many capabilities and tools available today and tomorrow.

At W2 Communications, we are all-in with this exciting and dynamic communications landscape. Our mission is to provide clients with the guidance and expertise they need to navigate this rapidly changing ecosystem and make their brand shine.







# ABOUT **W2 COMMUNICATIONS**

W2 Communications is a strategic, integrated marketing communications firm serving clients on the leading-edge. We build differentiating campaigns across a breadth of technology, government and retail markets, blending the latest tools and approaches with senior-level expertise and deep market knowledge. From strategy to execution, we create the messaging and story that drive your most strategic outputs, from clear positioning to market engagement.



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