

# Digital Marketing Trends Leading into 2019

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As 2018 comes to a close, a savvy marketer will be looking ahead to the upcoming year and developing a digital marketing strategy to stay ahead of the competition and boost brand awareness.

With so many changes that occurred at the end of 2018, it's important to revamp your strategy and account for current trends, strategies, and technologies to maximize your efforts. Here are the biggest digital marketing trends leading into 2019:

## Topic Clusters

Search engines are now favoring clusters of content that surround a particular topic, as opposed to keywords. If you want to stay at the top of the search rankings, you need to develop these content clusters that link to one another.

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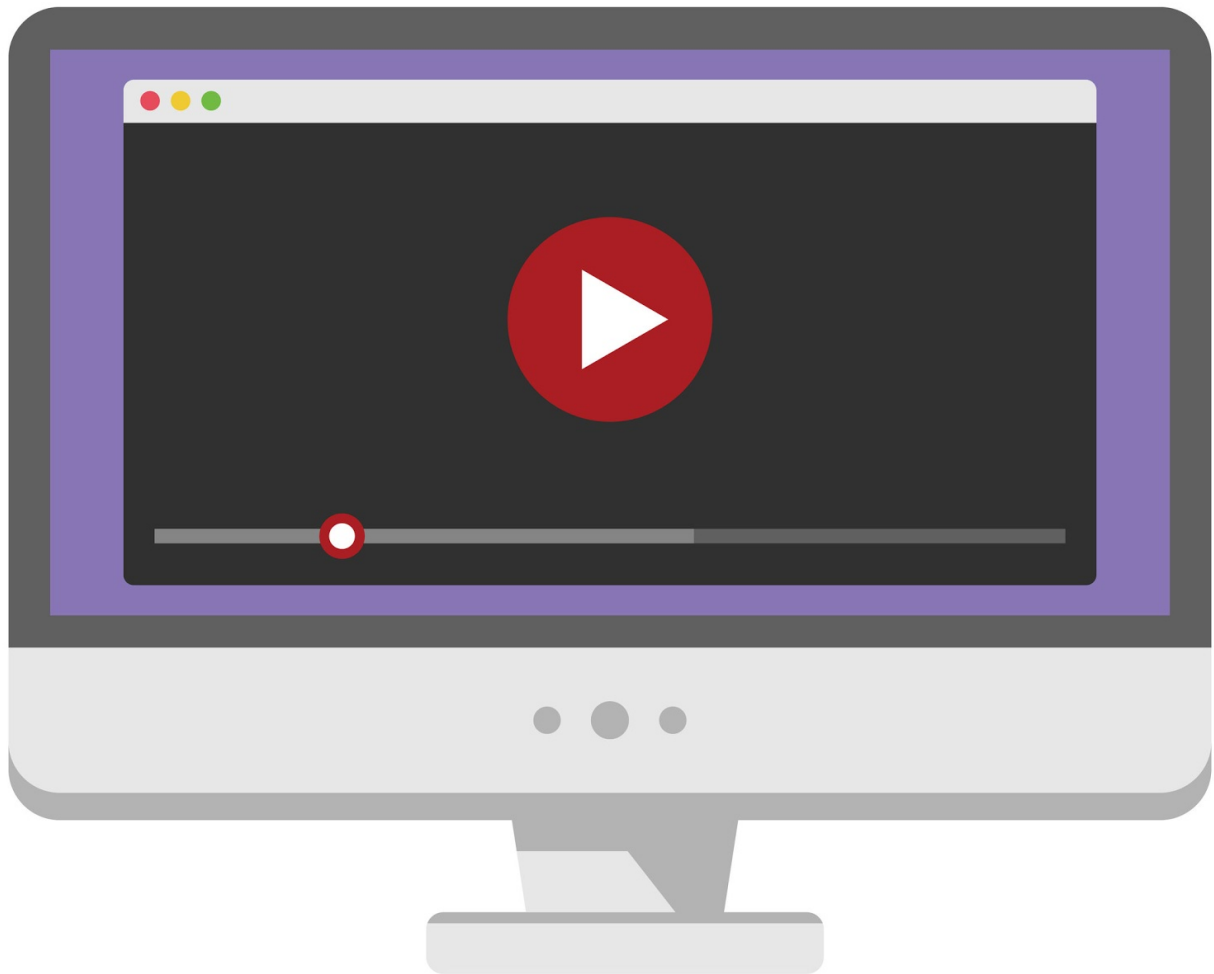
To do this effectively, you need a broad topic outline that covers the most pertinent subcategories. Then, the surrounding content should have specific, long-tail keywords that connect back to the original outline with the same keyword.

This boosts your overall performance since any page performing well will result in the entire cluster performing well. This moves you further and further up the rankings.

In addition, choosing topics in which you have proven subject matter expertise or knowledge will give you an even better ranking, since search engines are now prioritizing the value and relevance to the user.

## Shorter Video Ads

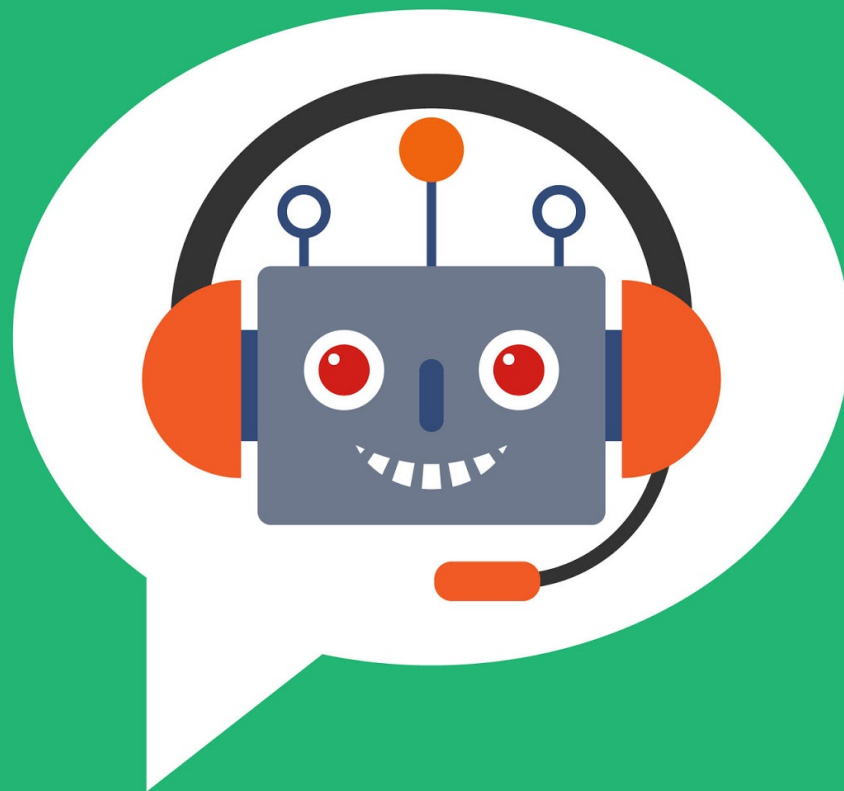
Internet users have much shorter attention spans than they once did, so it's possible to lose a viewer with a long video that would've worked a few years ago. Audiences tend to engage with shorter ads, such as under 10 seconds, so you're also getting more for your efforts.



Businesses are more likely to use shorter video ads in the coming year, so you want to work these into your strategy to ensure you stay with the current trends.

## Chatbots

Chatbots are becoming more popular, due to their ability to address basic customer service needs and help businesses interact with more customers. Chatbots also create two-way communication between your audience and your business, which improves your customer satisfaction and your response time to messages. Both of these aspects will boost your search engine ranking.



## CHATBOT

Chatbots have a reputation for providing negative user experience, leading many businesses to hesitate to include them in their marketing strategy. Overall, however, customers are pleased with the use of chatbots and the ability to access information 24/7, so there's no reason to hold back on this trend.

Chatbots also operate in Facebook messenger often, which has a click-through rate of 80 percent. This offers incredible potential for how a chatbot can lead to more sales for your business.

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## Blockchain

Blockchain is quickly becoming a necessity for most industries, but one of its most overlooked potentials is in marketing.

With the poor attention span of many internet users, it's more difficult to draw attention from content and keep your audience engaged. Blockchain can be used to incentivize customers to watch advertisements and engage in some way, whether it's sharing, tagging, liking or commenting, through a Basic Attention Token (BAT). This technology breaks up the monopoly of digital ads to trade on the value of online attention and engagement and reward the audience that's willing to interact.

## Influencer Marketing

Social media influencers are achieving more influence in recent years, gaining significant followings on multiple social media platforms. Social media isn't new, of course, but its reach is continuing to grow. Positioning yourself with the right social media influencer can make all the difference.

In the past, businesses were able to have influencers endorse products openly, but consumers are becoming more aware and are less receptive to this marketing tactic. Because of this, a subtle approach is needed to gain the benefits of a social media influencer.

Businesses with successful social media influence develop mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with influencers, so both receive more organic endorsements. These relationships not only provide you with a steady outlet for your promotions, but it also makes influencers less likely to abandon your brand.

## Transparency

Fields like advertising, marketing and sales have a negative connotation, with the belief that these representatives are only out for their own interests, using deceptive and aggressive tactics to get sales.

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As a result, consumers are more skeptical and reluctant, as well as being more difficult to impress. The easy access to reviews and testimonials also gives them more information about a product or service's strengths, and more importantly, its weaknesses.

Now, businesses are addressing this issue with transparency, openly admitting its own shortcomings, faults and negative feedback to show loyalty and dedication to customers. They're also encouraging two-way communication on a public forum to not only build more trust with a specific customer but also to show their efforts to other potential customers.

## Mobile Optimization

Though it may seem obvious, mobile optimization is one of the most important aspects of your digital marketing strategy to address in 2019. Though many businesses already work toward mobile-friendly sites, more and more users are switching to mobile. Google is even prioritizing mobile-friendly sites in search rankings.

With so many users going mobile, you can't afford to lose a follower because of poor optimization. Small issues, such as links too close together, a poor zoom function or text that's too small can be all it takes for a customer to abandon your site and move on to the next.

Be sure to [check your site's mobile user experience](#) and make any adjustments you need to create a flawless user experience.

## Voice Search

Voice search is on the rise, thanks to personal assistance devices like Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant and Apple's Siri. Nearly one-third of the 3.5 billion searches performed each day are voice searches, which use natural human speech patterns to determine the searcher's intent.

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If you think you can use the same strategy for voice search, however, think again. Voice search differs from a desktop or mobile search in that you get fewer results. If you want to be one of the sites that comes up, you need to tailor your SEO strategy for voice search.

Voice recognition technology is only expected to improve and become more popular as well, which has the potential to disrupt marketing altogether. User experience and SEO have been the main focus of most marketing campaigns, but these aspects become irrelevant with a short search and no search results screen.

While there's no clear answer to tailoring your strategy for voice search, a bit of brainstorming to understand the nuances of the human voice. How users tend to phrase voice searches and what types of phrases are prioritized is worth your effort.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence has become a hot topic in marketing recently, and though many are still unsure of its applications and limitations, it's starting to find its place in marketing campaigns.

A widely implemented form of AI is chatbots, which improve customer service with lower costs and fewer resources. They're also quicker than humans and offer targeted, personalized services to any customer at any time.

On a larger scale, the same capabilities of AI that make chatbots so effective can be applied to many aspects of marketing, such as forecasting, personalization, segmentation, and data analysis. The possibilities are truly endless, so it's best to get on board before AI takes the marketing world by storm.

## Final Thoughts

Marketing trends come and go, some of which reshape the industry and others that may just fade into the background. If you want to be successful in your marketing efforts year after year, it's important to be able to identify the upcoming digital marketing trends and stay ahead of the competition.