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# How To Create A Digital Marketing Strategy: Eight Steps To Laser Focus Your Plan



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for [Forbes Coaches Council](#) **COUNCIL POST** | Membership (fee-based)

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Digital marketing continues to grow in importance. People are spending more time online, and marketing budgets continue to shift toward digital. With so many opportunities in digital marketing, it is easy to get into execution mode and just start doing. However, investing in your strategy is one of the best ways to grow your digital return on investment. A clear strategy reduces waste, adds focus to your efforts and builds on what is already working.

Here's how to create a solid digital marketing strategy:

### **1. Explore the landscape and analyze your results.**

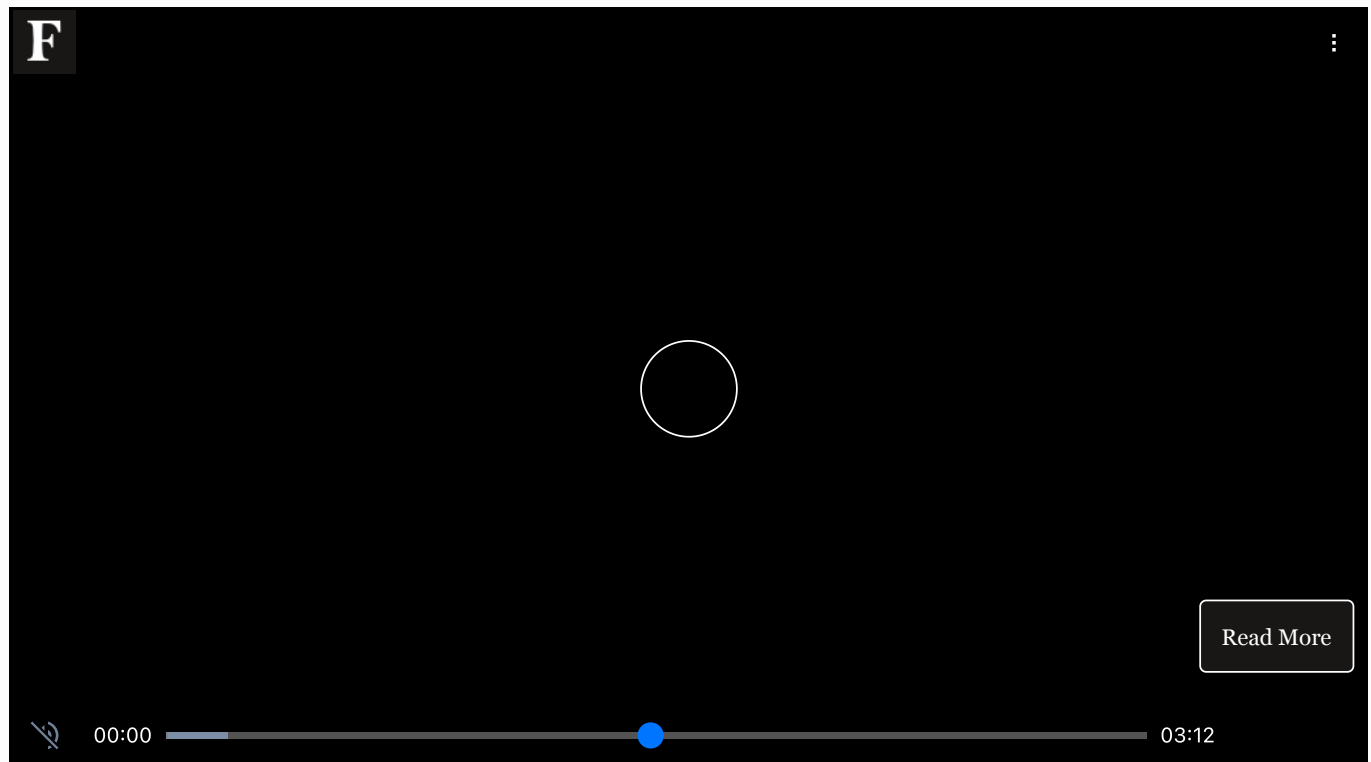
A solid strategy starts by analyzing and examining. This gives you a clear idea of your starting point and how you stack up against your competitors and a deeper understanding of your customers.

- Analyze your performance. Start by evaluating your performance over the last year. Dive into analytics to determine what worked and didn't work and why.
- Evaluate your competitors. Spend some time looking at your competitors' digital presence. The great thing about digital marketing is that it is easy to see what your competitors are doing because it is all public. Use competitive research tools like [SpyFu](#) to get a free analysis of their strategy.
- Get to know your customers. [Facebook Audience Insights](#) is a free tool by Facebook that you can use to uncover details about your audience size, demographics, behaviors and interests. [Google Trends](#) is another free tool to see topics people search for and search trends over time.

## 2. Map out your strategy.

Build a clear strategy based on what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it. The GSOT strategy framework stands for goals, strategies, objectives and tactics and will help you align your plan.

- Goals are what you want to achieve on a high level. For example, it could be to grow sales by 5% or generate 200 signups for an event.
- Strategy is the approach you'll use to achieve your goals. This is usually defined by the [stages of the marketing funnel](#) — you can choose to focus on awareness, interest, desire and action.



- Objectives are measurable numbers that link to your goal. For example, if I want to grow sales by 5% this year, I may have an objective of establishing 200 leads or reaching 400 people.
- Tactics align with your objectives. For example, if I need 200 leads, I may use a landing page with a webinar and social media to entice prospective new clients.

Setting a clear strategy will help you focus your efforts on the areas that are most likely to drive business growth. In digital marketing, there is no shortage of what you *could* do; the challenge is deciding what you *should* do.

## 3. Define your target audience.

In digital marketing, you have the opportunity to execute campaigns with very precise targeting. Go beyond traditional demographic targeting and be as specific as possible. Create [buyer personas](#) for your ideal customer to really get to know who they are.

## 4. Build your content strategy.

Based on your marketing objectives and your target audience, map out a content plan. This should identify the main topics or buckets of content to include in your execution.

Here are five ways to get content inspiration:

- Go back to step one and look for ideas from your competition and customer analysis.
- Check out [Answer the Public](#) to see the questions that people are asking in search engines.
- Search hashtags on Instagram to see what is trending. Instagram is highly visual, so it is a great source of inspirational content.
- Look at [Google Search suggestions](#). This shows what people are searching for related to your category.
- Explore Pinterest, which is full of viral, visual, highly shared content.

## **5. Choose your channels and tactics.**

Once you know the content that resonates with your audience, choose the channels that are most likely to give you the best results.

Consider all the potential digital channels, tools and tactics that you could use. Then prioritize based on the strategy you created in step two. Think about how each channel contributes to meeting your objective and goal.

## **6. Set key performance indicators and benchmarks.**

Too often, businesses start executing but struggle to answer the question of whether they are really getting results. Each activity that you invest in should have a clear KPI, which is your measure of success. Next, set benchmarks. Your benchmark is what you want to achieve. For example, with email marketing, my KPI could be my email open rate, and my benchmark could be reaching 25% or better.

## **7. Execute with best practices.**

Often the devil is in the details. If you miss executional steps you may find that you aren't getting the results you expect. Take some time to make sure that you are using best practices. Digital marketing changes frequently, and something that worked on last year may require tweaking to work now. Keep in mind that it is better to do a few things well than many things poorly.

## **8. Analyze and adjust.**

One of the things that makes digital marketing so powerful is the ability to pivot and adjust. You don't have to create a set plan and stick to it. For example, if an ad isn't delivering results, pause it and try new creative. If your website isn't converting visitors, run an A/B comparison test with different calls to action. For example, you can test a "learn more" call to action against "sign up now" to see what performs best.

It can be easy to focus on tactics with digital marketing — you likely get pitched new ideas or tools every week. The key to growing your results is to build a clear plan and stay focused. A laser-focused strategy means that you clearly know how each part of your plan is building toward your objectives and driving your business forward.

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By [Krista Neher](#) **COUNCIL POST** | Membership (fee-based) Krista Neher is the CEO of [Boot Camp Digital](#), a 6X best-selling author, international speaker & recognized digital marketing thought-leader. Read Krista Neher's full executive profile [here](#).

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