



2024

MARKETING GUIDE

FOR THE BUILDING &
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

ASSESS, PRIORITIZE, DEPLOY, MEASURE

As someone charged with developing a marketing plan and budget for your building products brand, you are undoubtedly facing a host of challenges – new opportunities, shifting priorities, ever-changing customer needs and wants, rapidly emerging digital marketing technologies, and finite financial resources. In a hyper-digital world where everyone who matters to you begins their buying journey online, where do you start?

Here are 10 critical steps to take:

1. REDISCOVER YOUR CUSTOMER

Your customers have experienced significant disruption over the past few years – from the pandemic, to supply chains, to the continual worry about a recession. Use the second half of 2023 to focus on them. Develop a method for gathering their current sentiment, their perceptions of your brand, their market conditions, their confidence, and how they expect to invest in your brand in the coming year.

This can be completed via formal research using a third-party research firm or through an organized qualitative approach done by the brand or the brand's agency. Consider the creation and activation of a customer council to amplify the voice of your customer and formalize their ability to contribute.

At BLD Marketing, we offer a suite of planning tools to accomplish this task. We conduct qualitative analysis with both internal stakeholders and external customers. We also organize and moderate customer council sessions for this purpose.

2. PRIORITIZE YOUR CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

The market – both residential and commercial – is in a constant state of flux. Understand where opportunities for growth in specific segments exist and prioritize those with campaign-specific efforts.

Utilize existing forecasting resources such as the [AIA Consensus Construction Forecast](#), the [FMI Corp Quarterly NA Engineering & Construction Outlook](#), and the [U.S. Census Monthly Construction Spending](#) data.

Mapping the category opportunities against your own brand's performance sales data provides a priority-based approach. Such an exercise illuminates where the category segments are rich and where your brand is strong.



3. EVALUATE YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING ECOSYSTEM

Rate how well each component of your digital marketing is performing and identify gaps. This includes everything from your website and landing pages to your SEO, paid advertising, content strategy, social media, eMarketing/automation, and CRM. What kind of engagement levels are you seeing? How can you improve them? Is your program carefully integrated and optimized to drive leads that can translate into sales?

It's important to avoid becoming overwhelmed by this process. Digital marketing is fluid and continually changing, which means there are always opportunities for improvement and optimization. Once the analysis is complete, prioritize what needs attention and resources in 2024, and develop a realistic action plan, budget, and timeline to achieve it in the coming year.

4. ESTABLISH AN ATTRIBUTION MINDSET TO MEASURE ROI

Start with the basics. Set KPIs for all activities, and ensure all digital activity possesses tracking codes for thorough measurement. Map out a desired digital journey for your prospects to ensure there is a natural and measurable flow from first contact to last. Utilize a digital platform like [HubSpot](#) to manage the process for tracking, reporting, and optimization.

Once the campaign is turned on, it's important to stay vigilant, as moving to a digital-first approach can't be a "set it and forget it" endeavor. It needs to be tended to regularly, analyzing data, assessing what is working best and optimizing toward those efforts.

And remember to have patience. Once a change for optimization is implemented, give it time to gain traction before evaluating its impact.



Search



5. BUILD THE GOOGLE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Google's technology is deep and broad in terms of targeting, capability, and reach. Embrace it as the foundational component to the overall paid marketing investment. Google allows users to consolidate, manage, and track a package of digital advertising drivers such as SEM and display ads offering keyword-based targeting, which optimizes the target profiling and even creates the best suggested ads for you.

6. EMBRACE GOOGLE'S MOVE TO GA4

Since Google is finalizing its transition from Universal Analytics to new GA4 in July 2023, you have no choice but to accept the new rules of engagement. The biggest change with GA4 is its emphasis on event-driven activity versus session-based metrics. This places a premium on engagement and conversion. The idea is to create a stronger overall user experience on a brand's website by offering a number of opportunities to engage, educate, and build conviction across the purchase journey. This means marketers need to take a different view on setting up KPIs and developing content for websites. Brands that best emphasize engagement opportunities such as downloads, video views, and form fills as a series of conversions will drive the greatest success.

7. ACTIVATE AN "ALWAYS ON" FOUNDATIONAL LEVEL

Marketing is no longer a year-to-year effort. In a digital world, it requires perpetual investment, which means there should always be a foundational marketing effort that is activated and in motion. If your organization still manages marketing budgets on an annual basis, work this methodology into the current budget year and account for a transition to the next. Getting this sold through the organization is critical. Maintaining an evergreen marketing program that includes elements such as the Google Performance framework and/or a content marketing and social media effort allows for adding more complementary initiatives as budgets increase and markets change. Those additions include everything from paid media partnerships to tradeshow and sponsorships.



8. FORMULATE A POSITION ON AI

Craft an AI policy as it relates to marketing, communication, and your organization. Seek ways to utilize AI in a prudent, mindful manner. Initially, learn how AI will impact your business and how your customers will use it. Next, begin ideating opportunities for your brand to find AI solutions to help your customers become more efficient. Third, begin adopting AI technology in a controlled, test-and-learn approach. Like any new technology, it's usually best to identify a champion on your team to own it. Always remember: AI is meant to be a tool, not a crutch.

9. DEPLOY A NIMBLE, TEST-AND-LEARN APPROACH

Digital marketing is quite fluid. New channels, technologies, and platforms emerge constantly. Find a proper balance between what is proven, what has potential, and what are emerging opportunities. A good rule of thumb is to follow a 60/35/5 rule for those three stages. Invest 60% into what is proven; 35% into newly tested efforts demonstrating potential; and 5% into new, emerging opportunities,

10. VISUALIZE & FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE REPORTING

With a fully integrated, performance-based digital marketing ecosystem there is plenty of data to measure. Prioritize what is most important as primary KPIs and metrics, and tell a compelling story around that data. Connect the performance data to the established marketing and business objectives, and visualize the story in a digestible, inviting manner.

And most importantly, merchandise results to the C-Suite, the organization, and your customer base.

BLD is a results-based, data-driven, full-service strategic marketing firm exclusively serving the commercial and residential building materials category. Our fully integrated services help clients build and optimize a vibrant digital marketing ecosystem to ignite fast and attributable growth.



Want more industry insight? Check out our blog at bld-marketing.com/blog