

4 Digital Marketing Trends to Watch for in 2017

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Source: National Jeweler

Truer now more than ever, change is a-coming, and not just in the social and political landscapes either. The digital realm is moving quicker than ever, and staying out of the know for even a few months could leave your business in the proverbial dust.

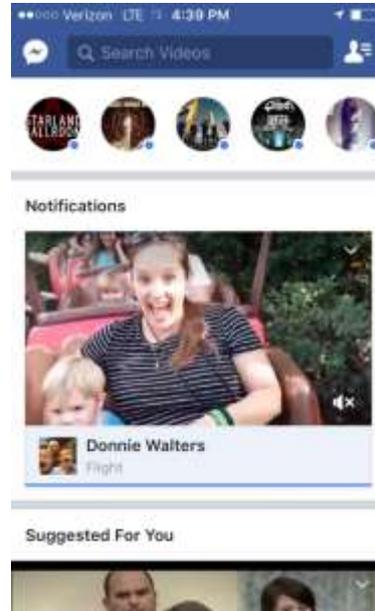
It might seem nearly impossible at times with how fast the online world moves, but it is our job as (good) jewelers to stay ahead of marketing trends. Start off the new year right by following along with this list of digital marketing updates that are sure to shake things up in 2017.

The Proliferation of Live Content

In early 2016, Facebook made a huge bet on live video and made its new live capabilities the focal point of the platform this year. CEO Mark Zuckerberg believes that Facebook Live “is a big shift in how we communicate, and it’s going to create new opportunities for people to come together.”

The major shift in communication that Zuckerberg is pushing for has yet to occur, but expect to see more people and businesses going live in 2017. The live feature, to a large extent, levels the playing field in terms of production quality and provides you with a built-in audience. Additionally, live content gives you a valuable opportunity to give your customers the chance to put a friendly face to your business.

In the last month of 2016, Facebook-owned Instagram also rolled out a live-stream option for its “Stories” feature. This is an excellent opportunity for jewelers to take advantage of an aesthetic-based platform like Instagram.



Facebook also recently doubled down on their live content push by sending more notifications to users when pages go live, and they have even included an entire feed of live video.

Users of the Instagram platform should expect to see similar types of notifications shortly.

Action Item: Plan and execute one live stream for your business in the first quarter of 2017.

All Mobile Everything

The shift from desktop to mobile has been going on for years, but it is only going to accelerate moving forward.

A May study by Hitwise indicates that almost 60 percent of online searches are now performed on mobile devices. Depending on which demographics you target with your jewelry, this number may skew slightly higher or lower. How can you better position your business for the shift toward mobile?

First and foremost, make sure you have a responsive web design that is optimized for use on mobile devices. Google will rank your site better in searches if it passes the mobile test.

Take advantage of mobile buying options on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

And, customize your content for mobile-only social platforms. Users expect content tailored to the mobile experience on platforms like Snapchat and Instagram.

In a recent announcement, Google looks to be further expediting the mobile shift. The search engine has stated that it will soon begin to flip its search index to more accurately reflect the rising percentage of mobile searches. This means that mobile results will now be prioritized in searches over desktop results.

If you want to rank higher in search pages, you will need to have some degree of mobile presence.

Action Item: Take some time to examine how well your site looks and performs on mobile devices. Consider looking into responsive designs from Squarespace or WordPress.

Shifts in Paid Advertising

If you still are doing your online ads like it’s 2006, there is a good chance you’re not doing so hot.

Gone are the days of blanketing websites with incessant pop-up and banner ads. If pop-ups on your site make the content less accessible for users, Google is going to start taking that into account in your search rankings. Google wants to ensure positive

user experiences for its top search results and ads deemed as inconvenient may eventually lower your performance.

Given this, 2017 will see an even further shift to more personalized forms of online ads such as native advertisements.

Native ads are a form of marketing where the format of the ad is designed to closely match the look and feel of the user experience where it's found.

These types of advertisements work so well because consumers don't perceive them to be as disruptive as traditional ads. Here are a few examples of different kinds of native ads, along with reasons why they are effective.

Below is one of the most popular forms of native advertising where the ad content mirrors a normal article you might find on the site.



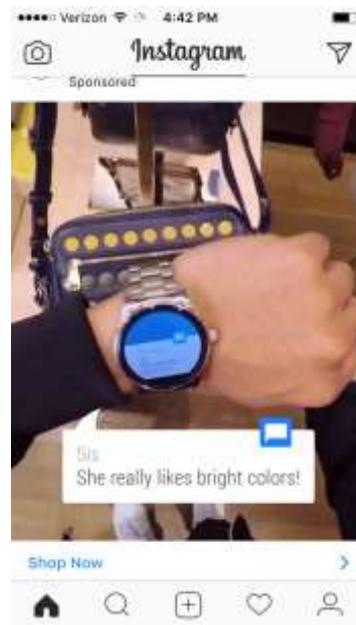
Action Item: Examine your current paid ads and see what you can do better. If you haven't started running online ads, consider doing some initial experimenting.

The Convergence of E-commerce & Social Media

Social media has become increasingly intertwined with e-commerce in recent years and now is the time to take advantage

of this trend.

All the major platforms, from Facebook to Pinterest, are incorporating more direct selling methods for advertisers. With "Buyable Pins," Pinterest has morphed from a "wish list of stuff I think is super-cute" to a legitimate online shopping platform.



Additionally, Instagram now gives pages the option to add "Buy Now" links to their ads. This is a huge addition to a platform that was previously very difficult to connect to tangible ROI.

Thanks to some awesome research by Shopify, we can even tell you which platform to focus on first in your social ecommerce strategy. With respect to the jewelry industry specifically, a stunning 92 percent of all online orders that came through social media belong to Facebook.

Similar to Instagram, Facebook allows for "Buy Now" icons on their in-feed advertisements, and the platform has unique carousel

ads that enable you to showcase multiple products in one post.

Social selling is especially easy for jewelers because they sell visually appealing products that pop out of a user's news feed. Even if you are a small boutique store, Facebook's targeting allows you to be very specific about who will see your ads. The platform makes it possible to put your jewelry in front of the very people whom you think would be most interested in purchasing it.

Action Item: Plan and execute one sales-focused ad on Facebook or Instagram in the first quarter of 2017.

In order to properly summarize, let's take a quick look at a few statistics published by Pew Research in December 2016.
 --Seventy-nine percent of all consumers have purchased something online.
 --Seventy-seven percent of millennials have made a purchase from their smartphone.
 --Sixty-three percent of shoppers younger than 30 use their phone in stores to check online reviews of a product.

Clearly, maintaining an online presence is vital. The most important thing to consider when looking at these numbers is that these trends are only going to become more prevalent in coming years.

Now is the time to examine the digital marketing trends that are shaping 2017 and beyond. If you don't have any kind of digital marketing strategy in place, it is never too late to start. Use this article as a jumping-off point and get off to a great start for the new year.