

A hand holding a stack of Amazon Prime boxes against a colorful sky background. The text is overlaid on the image.

5 WAYS TO SHOW OFF YOUR BRAND



Tips & Strategies to give your brand color and voice

A man in a white jacket and sunglasses is carrying a woman on his back. The woman has long, light-colored hair. The scene is lit with blue and orange light, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The text "GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC" is overlaid on the image.

GENUINE
AND AUTHENTIC

SUCCESSFUL MARKETING STARTS WITH AUTHENTICITY

Andrew J. Young

Living in today's era of constant technological development and speedy diffusion of information and news is exciting. For marketers, the tools and platforms technology has built to spread our messages have offered a thrilling, never-ending ride. Technology is constantly changing and there are (too?) many ways to reach consumers. The individual and team whose responsibility is to market a brand, product - or both - have a challenging task.

Years ago there were only a few platforms that could assist marketers: Print (billboard, brochures, direct mail) and radio/television. A "few" of the platforms and tools available to us today: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, re-targeting, Amazon, traditional radio, audio streaming platforms (Spotify, Pandora), iOS and Android Apps, Google Ads, organic search results, television, online television (Hulu, Netflix) and influencer marketing. In the amount of time it takes to simply finish this piece predicting the valuable platforms of "today," more platforms have probably already been created.

As a brand/product/organization/company, where do you begin? Where do you start? What's valuable? What isn't valuable?

THE CHALLENGE: ALL MARKETING PLATFORMS ARE VALUABLE.

The solution: Find and discover the platforms/strategies that allow your brand/product to be authentic and genuine and then dedicate yourselves to what you can realistically commit to doing within those platforms and strategies.

Team Abovo is a marketing and design agency located in the small metropolis of Fargo, North Dakota. We're fortunate to represent different types of industries and

FIND AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT ALLOW YOUR BRAND TO BE GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC

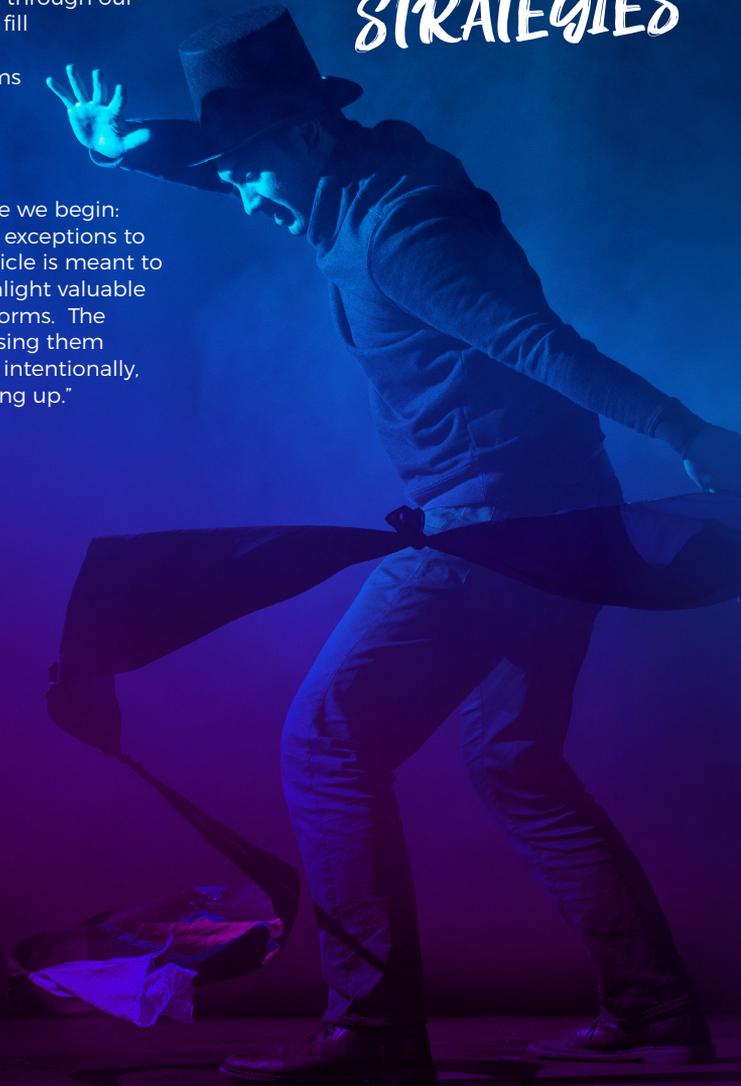
companies around the United States, each who use a variety of strategies and platforms. Having these opportunities have allowed us to build a knowledge base and arsenal of marketing skills. Our experiences have taught us the benefits of each, the disadvantages they may hold

and have given us insight on what strategies and platforms are best for different industries and their target audiences.

ABOVO'S TOP 5 MARKETING TIPS AND STRATEGIES

We're going to give you pieces of the skills and knowledge we've developed through our experiences and fill you in on the valuable platforms and strategies your brand should consider implementing.

Disclaimer before we begin: There are always exceptions to the rule. This article is meant to - generally - highlight valuable spaces and platforms. The advantage lies using them strategically and intentionally, not simply "signing up."



#1 SPEND TIME THINKING OF WAYS TO GET PEOPLE TO SPEND TIME ON YOUR WEBSITE

You've heard "content is king" over and over and you're sick of hearing how you should start "blogging." These strategies and ideas are wildly ambiguous statements that don't offer action items to make sense of or truly accomplish. Our advice: Form strategies and ideas to get people to your site and, even more importantly, keep them around (even for a few minutes) once they are there. One of the largest factors search-engine-giant Google uses to define websites they think people will enjoy is how "accurate" the site is. To help define this, a number of factors and data are pulled. One of these factors includes the amount of time someone is spending on your site. If visitors are spending substantial time on your site, they

IF VISITORS ARE SPENDING SUBSTANTIAL TIME ON YOUR SITE, THEY ARE ENJOYING WHAT THEY'RE CONSUMING

are probably enjoying what they're consuming; and, finding it useful. If this is true, then your site must be "accurate."

Take a moment and reflect on these two questions:

1. What could you do to get your friends, neighbors and potential customers to your website?

Write down three specific things. Note: Basic, simple and something you could do tomorrow is ideal.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

2. What's something additional those people see/read/do/experience once they are on your site that would keep them there longer?

Write down three specific things:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

Now, do that. ^ The importance of following up with these is the same whether you're an online store/brand or brick-and-mortar (or both).

82% OF CONSUMERS USE SMARTPHONES WHILE IN-STORE TO AID IN THEIR BUYING DECISION

If you're only brick-and-mortar, consider this: 88% of US consumers research products online before buying in-store (Fraser, 2018). Additionally, 82% of consumers are using smartphones while in-store to aid in their buying decision (Forbes, 2018).

If you're a local company who thinks large online companies (like retail giant Amazon) are taking over the world, consider this: 97% of consumers are researching their purchases online before deciding to buy local versus online (Kalil). Give them a reason to buy local, from you.

And, if you're only an online store, you have the audience for great traffic (re-read above). Take advantage of the mass amounts of consumers using the Internet and capture them. Give them every reason you can to buy from you; online; now.

DON'T SELL



BE HONEST
GENUINE
AND USEFUL

#2 GIVE USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION (DON'T SELL)

Consumers are smarter than ever. We already know massive amounts of consumers are doing massive amounts of research online before buying. They truly value self-discovering products that best work for their lives; they do not value “being sold” or filled with sales gimmicks attempting to trick them into buying a product that won’t solve their true needs. Consumers want to know how you can make their lives better. Give them what they want. Tell them every way your product or service can benefit their life. Explain ways you can give them more time for their friends/family or how they can enhance their time with the ones important to them. But, be honest, genuine and useful. Do this with things like great articles layered with text, visuals, graphics and video; engaging pieces of product information; high-quality product photographs; testimonials; and reviews from other customers with similar lifestyles.

#3 SEND SOME DIRECT MAIL THAT STANDS OUT AND IS “PERSONAL”

Direct mail is back! In 2017, for every \$167 a brand spent on direct mail, an average of \$2,095 in sales was generated (Compu-Mail, 2017). E-commerce (and places

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like Amazon) have re-defined the relationship we as consumers have with our mailboxes. Gone are the days we hardly ever see them; use them; check them. Now, with the shipping-speediness we require and the frequency of orders online, it's quite natural for consumers to connect with their mailboxes regularly. In fact, 36% of people under the age of 30 look forward to checking their mailboxes every day (Pulcinella, 2017).

Consider using direct mail to capture the physical attention of your customers or potential customers.

The key to success for direct mail: You must stand out and you must be personal. 95% of consumers between the age of 18-29 have a positive response to receiving personalized cards and letters (Pulcinella, 2017). Don't even think about sending generic postcards or legal-size generic envelopes. They'll get thrown, tossed and

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disregarded. Think of a creative way to stand out in a pile of mail. The opportunities are endless and it doesn't have to be expensive. Some ideas from projects we've worked on:

1. We worked with a health clinic to create a mailer that had a first-aid kit inside of it. Not only did it stand out but it gave the customer something they could utilize in their daily life (and the kit was branded!).

2. We worked with a jeweler to elevate a holiday promotion program they launch via mail annually. We did this by modifying the size of the card which allowed it to stick out from standard pieces of mail and offered the customer an incentive to come into the store via a fun coupon attached with a small piece of glue.

The coupon was easy to remove and because they were printed separately, our client could use the coupon for other giveaways.

3. We worked with a nonprofit organization to elevate their annual report. We designed their 20-page report and developed a strategy to get their donors to open it: We put a pull-out poster inside (which we photographed and designed)! We advertised this with text on a small tab on the front cover saying "Pull Out Poster Inside!"

Each business and brand is different. Each offers fun and creative ways to engage with your customer and audience in a very personalized and special way. Get creative and personal with direct mail and utilize this platform before drones take over; it's one of the only physical ways we can connect with our audience and consumers in today's digital era.

#4 UTILIZE SPOTIFY

It wasn't too long ago we heard the buzz words "radio is dying" and "no one listens to radio anymore!" Whether or not you agreed or disagreed now seems irrelevant as radio is currently experiencing a resurgence due to the streaming (Internet) technology that's hit the music industry. In 2017, streaming revenues made up 65% of the music industry's revenue. Additionally, 41% of U.S. adults age 18-49 report to listen to internet radio/streaming services (Spotify, Pandora, etc.) (Statista, 2017).

Streaming services and internet radio are becoming huge platforms for consumers while they're at work, for leisure time and in while in their vehicles. The most powerful and incredible thing, for us as marketers, is their ability to target listeners that traditional radio had no way of offering. Streaming

THE MOST POWERFUL AND INCREDIBLE THING, FOR US AS MARKETERS, IS THE ABILITY TO TARGET LISTENERS THAT TRADITIONAL RADIO HAD NO WAY OF OFFERING.

services, like Pandora and Spotify, require a listener to have a [free or paid] profile. In that profile, the data of gender, age and location they are in are all gathered. As marketers, we are then able

to purchase ads and choose which of those categories and the criteria within them we will target. Additionally, our ads are only delivered when the listener has their device on and streaming. The ability to target and capture their attention on these platforms is impressive and the results we've captured with other clients has been unparalleled.

If your company is considering or already advertising on radio, Spotify (and Pandora) are platforms to consider. If you're beginning, they are much less expensive than traditional radio ad buys and they offer analytics

and insight. If you are already doing radio, these platforms can be a great addition as they are approachable in price and will offer you insight into the consumers and audiences listening to your ads. If you need help launching ads on platforms like these, we're happy to assist. Our team holds the talent and skills to take this type of project from beginning to end with our capabilities to produce/compose music (if you don't have any), write your script, record the voiceover for your ad (we have a studio in our office!) and buy the ad. We're fortunate to be a recognized agency on Spotify and they have made a backend for buying, placing and monitoring ads available to us.

41% OF U.S. ADULTS AGE 18-49 REPORT TO LISTEN TO INTERNET RADIO/STREAMING SERVICES

A man in a dark shirt and pants is shown in profile, shouting with his mouth wide open. He is holding a black electric guitar that is on fire. The background is a mix of blue and red smoke. The text "DEMAND THEIR ATTENTION" is overlaid in the center.

DEMAND
THEIR ATTENTION

VIVID AND DETAILED

#5 HIGH-QUALITY AND GENUINE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR YOUR PRODUCTS, BRAND AND TEAM MEMBERS MAKES A DIFFERENCE AND IS REQUIRED

Cell phones, now more than ever, take great photos. We get it and we love using this technology in our personal lives, too. Though they seem great, cell-phone-photos do not yet offer the opportunity and quality to represent your brand and products. Specifically in regards to using them within your marketing campaigns and design. Disclaimer: With the exception of Instagram in some industries. Photos from cell phones have limitations in printing, editing and exposure. You might be thinking, "Customers don't care and can't see the difference." Below, we have put two headshots and ask you, "Can you see the difference?" They were taken seconds apart. One was with a iPhone 6 and one with a Nikon D500 with 50mm 1.4f Lens. Which is which?

Check if you were right, answers are at the bottom of the next page.



Research and studies highlight consumers, very much-so, notice a difference in image quality and it affects their buying decisions. We've gathered some of the important pieces of consumer reports for you:

1. 67% of consumers say the quality of the product/brand image is "very important" in selecting and purchasing (Bullas).
2. Articles and blogs with relevant images have 94% more views than articles/blogs without (Bullas).

**ARTICLES AND BLOGS WITH
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Action items for you to execute and/or note:

1. Use high-quality, images of your business and team on places like Google instead of your logo.
2. High-resolution, professional images are the priority. Followed by cell-phone-photos, followed by stock images (basically, avoid stock images at any cost).
3. Spend money on hiring a photographer (or us) to help

3. "The Effect of Mere Touch and Perceived Ownership," a journal and research study issued by UCLA (Dr. Suzanne B. Shu) found that, "When the imagery of an object [your products] was vivid and detailed, it increased their perceived ownership of the product" (Shu, 2009).

4. Stock images suck and aren't authentic (subjective opinion of Team Abovo). One of the images below is Jack, a young, friendly, charming Account Manager within our team. The other is a generic stock photo found on countless other websites (but it only cost \$29 for us to license!). Which one is which?

Could you spot the difference? Answers are at the bottom of the page.



you get great photos and plan multiple uses for them (get the best "bang for your buck" as possible!).

4. If you're issuing a press release, always include images with it.
5. If you sell products online, they must be complemented with high-quality photographs that are vivid in detail.

A. Taken with the Nikon B. Taken with the phone
1. This is a stock photo. 2. This is Jack.

ONWARD WE GO

Re-thinking, redoing or even making small changes to the marketing behind your brand and products is

difficult. The list of tips, platforms and marketing strategies we could give you could go on and on. You wish someone had a magic wand they could wave that will execute every marketing strategy for you. As we were forming our "Top 5" pieces of advice and

strategy to give you, we knew they would all be rooted in the foundational principle of being genuine and authentic. The brands and companies that can

accomplish these two feelings (with any platform/strategy) will be the brands and companies

that adapt to the changing needs and requirements of tomorrow's consumer. Consumers are smart. They're doing their research and they are reading what other smart consumers are saying about you.

IF YOU PROVIDE A GREAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE AND HAVE FUN TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT IT, SALES AND SUCCESS WILL BE YOUR BYPRODUCT.

If you provide a great product or service and have a really fun time telling people about it; authenticity, sales and success will be your byproduct.

CHEERS,
Team Abovo



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