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10 Trends for Online Marketers in 2012


 BY JOHN ARNOLD | December 28, 2011 | [Comment](#)
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Because I'm on a lot of airplanes, I've noticed that marketing trends are a lot like air travel. Some trends are ready for takeoff while others need time for more passengers to get on board.

This list features my top 10 marketing trends, with advice to help you determine if the trend is "ready for takeoff" and worthy of your time and money now, or "still boarding" and better for you to just test out.

1. Deals and Rewards

Ready for takeoff.

This will be a year of bargain hunting because the economy is still recovering and consumers have more price-checking tools at their fingertips.

So use your marketing to attract shoppers with unbeatable deals. Then seek profits by generating repeat sales and referrals from your new customers. Also, be ready to respond with instant price reductions or other incentives when shoppers use mobile devices to compare retailers' prices.

2. Mobile Pull Marketing

Ready for takeoff.

Mobile pull marketing means giving consumers ways to interact with your advertising over mobile devices, and pulling them closer to a purchase decision.

To use mobile pull marketing, combine a call-to-action with traditional advertising. For example, ask customers to retrieve a coupon by texting a keyword to a short code or by taking a picture of the coupon in a print publication.

Related: [How to Use Mobile to Reach Holiday Bargain Hunters](#)

3. Mobile Push Marketing

Still boarding.

Mobile push marketing means sending promotional messages through texts and voice calls.

It's still relatively expensive for small businesses to become bulk senders of texts and voice calls. Instead, invest in your email list. Emails are much less expensive than texts and can contain unlimited content.

4. Three-Screen Marketing

Still boarding.

In 2012 and beyond, expect attention to your advertising to shift as people in front of televisions frequently -- and simultaneously -- reach for two additional screens: tablets and smartphones.

Next year, advertise on television screens and invite viewers to pick up one of the other two screens to get involved in your promotion. Advertise on the portable tablet screen with emails, videos and social media. And advertise on the mobile phone screen using loyalty apps that track purchases or promotions that involve the phone at the physical point of sale.

5. Local Online Marketing

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Ready for takeoff.

If you want to reach prospective customers in Denver, for example, would you consider advertising in the *Los Angeles Times*? You would if you realize that the publisher can display your local advertising to Denver residents who find the article in an Internet search.

So try some locally-targeted ads in national publications in 2012 and make sure they contain locally-relevant messages.

6. Proximity Marketing

Still boarding.

Services such as [ShopKick](#) and [Foursquare](#) let people opt in to receive promotions on their mobile phones from nearby vendors. Consumers can allow the use of location detection technology on their phones or check in to a physical location with their phones.

Many people are still warming to the idea of enabling location detection on their phones. Still, testing proximity marketing in 2012 could help prepare you to reach tech-savvy shoppers in the years to come.

7. Social Earned Media

Ready for takeoff.

If you have enough customers to have a business, then some are probably reviewing and chatting about you online. To get a positive review or referral, you have to earn it. That's why it's known as "social earned media."

Use a social-media monitoring tools such as [Trackur](#) or [Google Alerts](#) to find out what people are saying when they mention your company or products. Then, get involved in the conversation and politely ask customers to rate and share their opinions of your business.

Related: [Six Steps for Dealing with Social Media Detractors](#)

8. Social CRM

Ready for takeoff.

A CRM (customer relationship management) database is usually used to track people's purchasing behavior. But don't forget that your customers share other information about their lives that you can monitor on social media sites.

Take time each week in 2012 to monitor customers and record any useful information in your database. For example, if you notice customers talking about summer vacation plans on Facebook, then it might be a great time to offer a promotion involving summer vacations.

9. Globalization

Still boarding.

Thanks largely to rapidly expanding mobile Internet access, more people will go online in 2012 than ever before. Language translation technology such as [WordLens](#) also is making it easier for people to read a website, email or advertisement in their own language.

To make your online business more global, first see which countries you are already attracting visitors from and use them as a test audience. Then, create some products or services that meet the needs of your international audience and use the test results to expand to other countries.

10. Everywhere Commerce

Still boarding.

Paying with a plastic credit card is probably going to go away someday, but not yet. Still, 2012 will offer consumers many more payment options.

Get your point of sale ready by accepting payments through PayPal or by enabling [Google Wallet](#) or a proprietary point-of-sale option.

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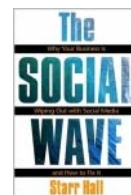
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John Arnold is a Boulder, Colo.-based consultant, speaker and trainer specializing in marketing advice for small businesses. He is the author of three marketing books in the 'For Dummies' series including Web Marketing All-In-One Desk Reference and Mobile Marketing for Dummies. Follow him on Twitter: @ArnoldMarketing



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