

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR REDUCED 2021 marketing budget

2021 could be the year of the shrinking marketing budget. When the funds are running down, how do you make the best of what's still around? We asked the leaders of CG Life's marketing disciplines how best to allocate limited budgets in their areas of expertise. Here is their advice to you.

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LARRY KOPLOW ON RESEARCH AND POSITIONING

Associate Creative Director, Copy & Brand Strategy

TAKE A STEP BACK AND ASSESS YOUR OVERALL BRAND STRATEGY.

Review all your communications to help ensure that you are talking to the right audiences in a consistent and meaningful way.

Focus on your customers, both existing and potential. Their needs, pain points and perceptions, and what they think of your brand and your competitors, should be your communications' measure of success.

A systematic review can help you make sure your messages are consistently focused on your customer's needs—why you are different from the competition and why customers should care. Include some of these elements:

- **Communications Assessment:** A deep dive into your existing materials
- **Internal Qualitative Research:** Internal discussions to help define where current communications might be falling short
- **External Qualitative Research:** Discussions with audiences who represent your different targets and regions
- **Competitor Analysis:** A review of competing positions and messaging that your customers are seeing
- **Position Development:** Based on a thorough research analysis, a well-defined position establishes what is unique about your brand, why that uniqueness is relevant, and how it carves out a distinct and ownable competitive advantage
- **Communication Structure:** Often overlooked, this process is an assessment of your brand's core features and activities, ensuring they all ladder up to your position, so you are speaking with one voice regardless of which aspect of your business is being featured



LAWRENCE LEE ON CREATIVE CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

Executive Creative Director

FOCUS ON YOUR KEY AUDIENCES AND MOST QUALIFIED LEADS.

These are your brand loyalists, your reliable repeat customers, your brand advocates. They'll keep coming back because they have an affinity for your brand. Work to really understand their needs and challenges and become their partners in 2021. Strengthen that relationship further by providing new offerings or services, or help them think about your brand or product in a new way to meet their new challenges.

Use audience insights to fine-tune your messaging structure. We're all in a state of flux—industries and customers. Understanding your audience behavior and mindset right now is more critical than ever, and it's going to be different than it's ever been before. Get to the heart of their mindset and behaviors, and use this to establish a new messaging priority that resonates with them.

Base your creative campaign ideas on strong audience insights. The best comedy comes from some sort of human truth, and it's exactly the same with a creative idea: it should come from an audience insight that everyone feels. What drives them, what are their concerns, what solutions you can offer that no one else can? Ideas based in these insights will connect, convince and convert people from browsers to buyers.

Efficiently deploy creative assets. Work with your marketing agency or internal teams to clarify your overall marketing channels so the design team knows how to properly create the final art assets. They should be built from the start with the flexibility to scale them for all media channels, without have to spend extra resources to revise or redo art elements later.



JULIET PRESTON ON MARKETING CONTENT

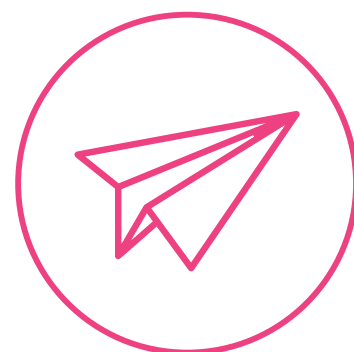
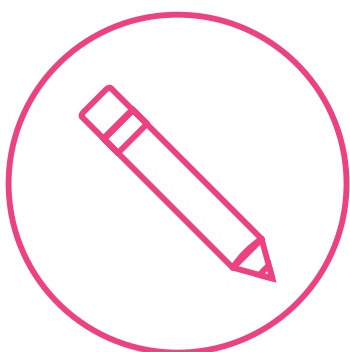
Director of Content

REFRESH! RE-PUBLISH! RE-SHARE!

2020 has forced many marketers into a period of fasting. Budgets were plentiful early in the year, then *BAM* they were cut, leaving us hungry for new resources and campaigns. The solution: clear the cupboard! Instead of longing for a delicious new e-book, turn your focus inwards to what resources you already have. We call it a content audit.

Dig through your case studies, infographics, sales sheets, and PPT slides. What value do they have? What energy can you extract and use to power new initiatives? Is there a blog post you can refresh and re-use in social media? Could you pair it with a graphic developed for a long-ago white paper? Use what you have on hand and do a deep cleanse on the content pieces that no longer serve your business.

The goal for 2021 is not to hibernate or withdraw from new content development; it's about digging deep and becoming the best you. #blessed





BILL RADER ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

Vice President, Public Relations

EVERY COMPANY IS A MEDIA COMPANY.

In today's communications world, you have to be. Stakeholders expect to interact with brands whenever and however they wish, and they want content that is accessible, educational and informative.

Every company now has the digital channels and tools (websites, social media, intranets, blogs, podcasts, video) to be an effective media company. But content that would have generated engagement six or nine months ago, may not get the same response today because the context has changed.

Don't just plug your products. Listen, respond and show leadership. Like Johnson & Johnson, who launched the Road to a Vaccine video program featuring journalist and television personality Lisa Ling, acting as their own media company on a COVID-19 topic of utmost importance.

It's harder now to reach fewer, socially-distanced and quarantined journalists, and media are seeking real news and fresh story angles. Infection prevention was not typically a mainstream news story until COVID-19. One of CG Life's clients, PDI Healthcare, quickly pivoted and created content that was both educational and mediagenic. PDI provided broadcast media with access to experts, product information, and visuals to help them tell the story of protecting frontline healthcare workers and patients in local NBC TV news programs from coast to coast.

Connect your marketing ecosystem: marketing + public relations = greater brand visibility & ROI.

When marketing and public relations don't work together in an integrated fashion, it's an inefficient use of budget. In 2021, make sure they're both aligned to the key priorities of the business. And while each discipline will have unique program elements such as paid or earned media campaigns, goal alignment will ensure the programs effectively reach target audiences in a focused manner through multiple communications channels, thus increasing the program ROI.



ELIE DINER ON SOCIAL MEDIA

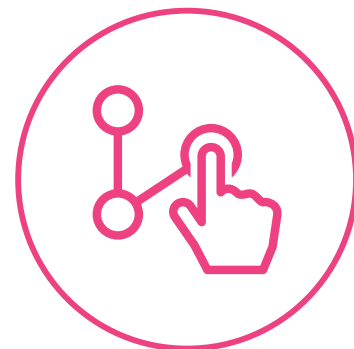
Senior Content Specialist

FOLLOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE'S LEAD ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITH SPARKTORO.

We can't get social in real life, so social media is the next best thing! With reduced 2021 budgets, hypertargeting your audience with paid ads on Twitter and LinkedIn might be too expensive. But what you can do is to make sure you are using the same hashtags, following the same people, and consuming the same content as your target audience.

How? With a powerful new audience research platform called SparkToro. You can collect in-depth details about audiences, based on lots of different queries of the SparkToro database, including what they frequently talk about, a specific social account they follow, and more. You can also compare audiences: if you have a new single-cell sequencing platform that you're trying to market to the pharma or biopharma industry, you can see how your current social followers line up with users who are posting content and talking about pharma and biopharma.

SparkToro gives you 10 free searches a month. So with some careful planning (and no additional cash) you can gain key insights on the audience whose attention you want to capture, and develop a targeted social media strategy.





COLIN SANCHEZ ON PAID SEARCH

Digital Marketing Specialist

CHANGE YOUR STRATEGY BASED ON HOW CUSTOMER NEEDS HAVE CHANGED.

- Are certain products selling more due to shifts in the needs of your customer? If so, dive into keyword research tools and see if that same shift is reflected through search volume trends. Pivoting your PPC (pay-per-click) strategy to get ads in front of the users searching more for in-demand products could result in more customers.
- Examine your lead generation data and see if inquiries are shifting to specific services your business offers due to your customer's needs changing, and make sure you're running ads for those types of services if not already.

Make changes to help improve conversion rates.

- Think about ways you can set your ads apart from competitor ads and make users more likely to purchase or submit a form, such as promotions and promotional language that can help your ads stand out and increase click-through rate and on-page conversion rate.
- Review your search terms, which are exactly what users are searching when your ads are served to them. High performing search terms should be added to your campaign targeting. Conversely, search terms not relevant to your product or service should be added as a negative keyword to prevent your ads from showing for those specific, irrelevant searches.
- See if there are ways to improve the landing page copy and design for your top campaigns and most popular products and services to improve conversion volume without increasing your budget.



JEREMIAH WORTH ON MARKETING AUTOMATION

Vice President, Digital Marketing

MAXIMIZE YOUR MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOLS AND PLATFORMS TO SUPPORT A SALES TEAM THAT DOESN'T GET AROUND LIKE IT USED TO.

Marketing automation platforms, often initially set up for inbound marketing programs, are extending further into the sales organization through a suite of sales enablement tools. Through platforms such as HubSpot, Pardot, and Marketo, you can provide your sales team with the content, context, and timing they need to optimize interactions with potential customers and close more deals, adding structure at a time when new sales processes are being built on the fly.

Automation can make sales pipeline management a more structured, consistent, and efficient process. Use contextual notifications to proactively suggest resources that will resonate with a prospect based on their persona and stage of the buyer's journey. Automate routine database upkeep to ensure contact and account records are progressively enriched and kept accurate, without burdening your sales professionals.

CRM features integrated with marketing automation platforms can give the sales team data-driven insights into the impact their efforts are having. Automation standardizes such sales reporting as the number of product demos delivered, the state of deals won and lost, and how leads are generated through marketing channels. With clear, accurate numbers, you can focus energy on high-performing tactics and then replicate and establish them as best practices. And a refined lead scoring system provides quantitative insights into the true sales potential of leads and removes subjectivity from qualification.

Your sales team can confidently, efficiently, and effectively engage with customers despite limited in-person opportunities—if you fully leverage the value of your technology and personnel investments with marketing automation.



JORDAN NELSON ON PAID MEDIA

Senior Campaign Manager

HERE'S WHERE TO GO WHEN THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO BUT DIGITAL.

2020 forced many companies to embrace and invest in digital marketing tactics. To make the most of your 2021 marketing budget, take a good hard look at what you're trying to accomplish through digital channels next year: that objective will help dictate where you should invest your ad dollars.

If you're still trying to build your brand, awareness and maximum reach will be top priorities in 2021. With everyone in the world reinvesting in their digital strategy, you'll need to be careful with precise targeting and conservative frequency caps to ensure you're reaching exactly the right audience and not inundating them with your message. Find the right data vendor(s) with the right data segments. Explore intent data if you haven't already. Dive into the programmatic possibilities, from custom data segments to new ad formats. Now is the time to try out a new ad format (HTML5, dynamic, video, rich media) to keep your brand fresh through next year.

For businesses prioritizing lead generation and sales, reexamine your search engine marketing strategy to discover how you can enrich your lead database. Invest in email list rentals to drive to gated content on your domain. We've seen that paid search and email are the top two converting tactics on client websites— email showing a conversation rate of roughly 30% for lead gen campaigns, and PPC displaying an on-page conversion rate of around 6%.



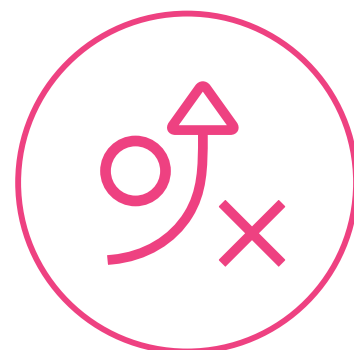
PARMINDER BEDI ON REPORTING AND MEASUREMENT

Senior Digital Advertising Analyst

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW FEATURES IN GOOGLE ANALYTICS.

2020 saw a major shift in Google's offerings as they introduced a new type of platform called Web+App. It combined the old Google Firebase product with features borrowed from their paid model, Google Analytics 360. This will allow free users to have the same type of data flexibility that was previously only available to big-budget enterprises. Marketers can now take their audience segmentation to a new level and simplify marketing decisions by leveraging their own data set. This will also allow for higher integration with other platforms as Google will allow users to assign their own unique ID to each visitor, which will provide more visibility for marketers in the conversion funnel.

Social media platforms offer free analytics. In 2021, no media channel will be more important than the social platforms. As these platforms grow, so will the need for social media performance data and analytics. The good news is that most of these platforms already offer their analytics for free within their Campaign Manager sections, which will allow users to build reports and analyze in a user friendly and intuitive environment. Get a head start on the competition by exploring the analytics offered on these platforms now and get a better understanding of the key metrics that would mean success for your organization.



READY? SET? *re-set.*

We hope these insights from some of CG Life's best brains have changed your perspective on next year's marketing priorities. Remember:

- Reset your communications strategies
- Build creative from audience insights
- Refresh and re-share the content you already have
- Be your own media company, and make your PR pitches fit the changed news environment
- Take advantage of free digital analytical tools
- Precisely target paid search and paid media based on your audience's changing needs and priorities

Need more ideas for meeting 2021 budget challenges? It's what we live for.

These ideas, channels, and strategies could be intriguing, but new to your company. Or you might need help adjusting your brand to the new landscape. As a fully-integrated life science and healthcare marketing agency, CG Life can help you make your budget go a long way. **Contact us through our website at [cglife.com](https://www.cglife.com).**

