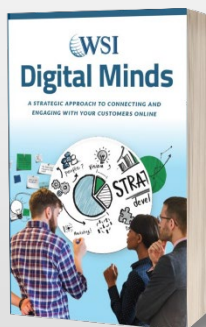




DIGITAL MINDS CHAPTER 4

GENERATING DEMAND FOR YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

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The following is a chapter from WSI's 3rd book, *Digital Minds: A Strategic Approach to Connecting and Engaging with Your Customers Online*. If you'd like to read the book in its entirety you can purchase a copy on Amazon.com here:

<https://bit.ly/wsibook3>

Effective marketing is about sending the right message to the right person at the right moment. In Chapter 2, we discussed how businesses could find their ideal customers—also known as the right people— by using personas. When you use buyer personas in your marketing strategy, it forces you to flesh out what you know about your prospects.

Today, a wide variety of digital advertising platforms and strategies are available for businesses to tap into. The best way to select which channel is most suited for the persona you're trying to reach is to start with *what you know about the prospect*.

Once a business understands and goes through the process of creating real buyer personas, only then can they focus on which digital tactics to use to target those prospect groups.

Target Your Prospects Using What You Know About Them

Think about targeting your prospects by using what you know about them in terms of buying presents for your family members. That weird uncle you see once a year is pretty difficult to shop for because, well, you don't really know him. But what about that family member who you're really close with? You no doubt find the perfect *present* every time because you know and understand them.

Likewise, it's easier and more efficient to target your prospects when you know and understand them.

"But wait, I don't know anything about my prospects!" you might be thinking. That's likely not true. Take a look at Figure 9. We use this process to help our clients realize they know far more about their clients than they thought.

If you have a website and are using Google Analytics to track and measure its performance, then you have data on what your prospects are searching for to find your products or services. This data gives you a view of their *intent*.

You also have data on your existing customers—people who are happily buying your products or services. You can use this data to discover *who they are*: their demographics, what they do, and possibly details about them personally (depending on their social media profile privacy settings). Even if you're only able to glean a little bit about who your current customers are, you'll be able to reverse engineer a clearer picture of what you know about your prospects.



Figure 9: What Do We Know About Our Prospects?

These days, nobody is truly “off the grid” because everybody has a smartphone, which essentially doubles as a tracking device. With geotargeting—a power you can harness by using various advertising platforms and tools—you can also determine where your prospects are located.

Now that you know how you can learn a few things about your prospects, let’s talk about why you should target your prospects based on this information.

Why It’s Important to Target Your Prospects by What You Know About Them

One of the best examples of a company embracing and understanding why it’s important to target prospects by known data is Netflix. The media streaming giant began as a service that rented out the content of other networks and companies. But they also did something smart during this initial period: they collected mass amounts of data on what their customers were watching.

In other words, *they got to know their customers.*

Netflix learned what subscribers loved and what they hated. They discovered which kinds of content viewers binge-watched and what types they were less engaged with. Only then—once they knew much more about their customers—did they begin investing in and creating their own content. Unsurprisingly, Netflix is one of the largest media companies in the world and, to this day, are gathering and using what they know about their customers.

It's not only important to target your prospects by what you know about them, but it's also vital to the success and long-term health of your company.

How to Target Your Prospects Based on What You Know About Them

Once you've gathered information about your prospects, the next step is determining which digital marketing strategies are best suited to turn those prospects into customers.

Targeting Based On Intent

As we discussed earlier, the first step in defining what you know about your prospects is figuring out the reasons behind their actions. With the omnipresence of search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo, we now have more data than ever on what searchers are looking for. And if we know what searchers are looking for, we have that all-important piece of the what-do-we-know-about-our-prospects puzzle: their *intent*. This information is essential because when you know what somebody wants, it's much easier to give it to them.

Targeting based on intent is all about giving people what they want. If a Google user is searching for "sushi near me," it's reasonable to assume this person is interested in eating sushi in the near future. If you're a sushi restaurant and can reach and engage with potential customers who are searching for similar phrases, you are targeting them based on their intent.

Next, we'll discuss some digital marketing tactics that are great at targeting users when you know their intent.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC)

PPC ads are the ads Google serves on search engine results pages (SERPs)—the pages Google shows to users after they complete a Google search. These ads are linked to the words or phrases searchers use, so they appear along with the search results when a particular keyword or phrase is entered into the search engine. This specific form of advertising is especially smart because it places your ad in front of people who are already interested in your industry, service, or product.

When done correctly, PPC ads provide strong, high-quality, bottom-of-the-funnel leads. And because these web visitors are already searching for a related item, the likelihood to convert these leads into sales is high. Simple and straightforward in their design—usually just a set amount of text—PPC ads are easy to use and implement into your marketing strategy.

The other aspect of PPC that makes it an attractive marketing option is the ability to target ads by location. If your products or services are specific to one region or area, PPC allows you to serve your ads to searchers based only in that location. Or, maybe you know one area delivers more customers than any other—you can allocate more of your budget to that location with the highest conversion rate.

The main benefit of targeting your prospects with PPC is its ability to drive an expected amount of targeted traffic for a fixed cost. Understanding the search intent of your buyers or prospects is critical to PPC success. It ensures your fixed budget isn't wasted on people who aren't searching for your products or services. In this way, PPC is an efficient and cost-controlled way to generate demand for your offerings.

Content Marketing

Another excellent tactic for targeting potential customers based on intent is creating content that seeks to answer the questions they're asking. Similar to PPC ads, content marketing helps you get targeted information related to your products or services in front of your ideal customers.

Targeting prospects with content based on their intent is a top of funnel marketing approach. The concept is that when they're not quite ready to make a purchase, they'll find your content and feel better informed to make a decision. Once they're ready to make a purchase—whether it's the next day or 6 weeks later— they'll remember your content and revisit your site with the intent to buy your product or service.

Targeting Based On Who Your Prospects Are

In the introduction of this chapter, we also talked about targeting your prospects based on *who they are*. This process is exactly as it sounds, but of course, it requires obtaining information about your prospective customers.

Here's a quick example of how and why targeting your prospects based on who they are is effective. It's a simple example, but pretend you have a product or service specifically geared toward the persona of women with a high disposable income—a high-end spa, for example. There are instances when you may want to direct your marketing messages to the persona's family members (those looking for a present for their wives, moms or sisters). The reality is, you may want to spend more on targeting your ads directly at your persona (women, aged 25-55, with a high disposable income), as they likely prefer to book their spa services themselves.

The next question is, how do you find out who your prospects are, and what tactics can you use to target them based on this knowledge? Luckily, in our increasingly digital world, there are several ways we can find some basic yet useful information about our prospects. Once you have these details, there are a couple of great tactics that can help you target your prospects by who they are. We'll get into these next.

Facebook

Facebook remains the world's biggest social media platform. As per Facebook's quarterly reports, more than 1.5 billion people log on to Facebook every day.

Facebook's advertising platform targets specific audiences based on their network, their hobbies and interests, and their professions, among other factors. In short, based on *who they are*.

As a result, Facebook ads are tremendously effective at getting your message to your intended audience quickly and effectively.

Facebook is the most significant opportunity for advertising in the social space. Not only can you run remarketing ads on Facebook, but tightly targeted advertisements can be placed to reach specific audiences.

Unlike PPC ads, Facebook does not utilize keyword bids. Instead, they allow the advertiser to reach specific users based on demographic data and user interests. Facebook is notorious for its ability to optimize ad performance by using conversion data. Its ads are designed to help you achieve one of three broad types of campaign objectives:

1. Awareness
2. Consideration
3. Conversion

Here are a few key things to consider when advertising on Facebook:

- **User-generated content wins:** social network users typically see content that looks organic and is mostly created using a smartphone camera. To fit in on Facebook, avoid using creative, which won't feel native to the feed.
- **Ads are easy to ignore:** unlike other advertising platforms, Facebook ads are entirely skippable, whether you're scrolling through your feed or tapping from an Instagram story to the next. In order to be successful, your ad should capture the user's attention within the first 3 seconds.
- **Muted videos are the default:** use subtitles, eye-catching visuals, and product demonstrations to get your message across with or without sound.
- **Users can engage with your ads:** users can interact with your ads through shares, comments, and likes. Ads generating comments and shares usually increase the reach of your post beyond the targeted audiences.

Instagram

In the same vein as Facebook, Instagram allows hyper-targeting on its ad platform. Instagram is a great advertising tool for many industries. Our example of the high-end spa is well-suited to use Instagram's ad

platform to target its specific audience. Picture it: an image of a woman enjoying a luxurious manicure while drinking a glass of champagne. You better believe there's a segment of Instagram users who are looking for *exactly that* scenario at any given moment. Running ads on Instagram allows you to tap into an audience full of people who meet those criteria.

Facebook and Instagram Lookalike Engine

Many who have success with Facebook and Instagram ads attribute it to a tool called the Lookalike Audiences. The segmentation tool, which is available on both social platforms, finds users whose demographics and interests are similar to those of your existing followers and customers. These audiences are created with a few clicks. This function is an extremely powerful targeting tool for efficiently finding high-converting users.

Your buyer personas help you understand how to target your ideal customers. The Facebook Lookalike tool dissects your existing customer base. It finds the commonalities between your customer list and the users on Facebook and Instagram and leverages customer data to connect the dots between your target audience. As a result, you can find highly-qualified users you previously wouldn't have been able to reach. Most importantly, this tool optimizes your media spend and lowers the cost of acquisition in the process.

Targeting Based On What Your Prospects Do

Let's face it: our jobs—what we do—are part of who we are. Our jobs determine who we spend our time with, what products or services we are most familiar with, and even our daily surroundings. It's no surprise, then, that what we do defines what we're interested in buying, too. Here's an example:

Let's say you run a professional coaching consultancy. Most people would probably benefit from professional or life coaching sessions. But that's a vast, general audience that contains many people who don't know what professional coaching is or how it could benefit them.

However, there's a specific subset of people—business owners, to be exact—who likely understand the benefits of professional coaching. If you target prospects based on the fact that they are business owners, you'll have much greater success than if you focus on everybody.

Here are the best ways to target your prospects based on what they do:

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is best suited for business-to-business (B2B) advertising or job opportunities. With a user base of primarily business professionals, this platform is ideal for advertising professional services. Targeting on LinkedIn includes demographic data as well as job function.

The LinkedIn ads platform targets a unique audience—over half a billion active professionals are on the platform (according to LinkedIn’s website). On LinkedIn, your ads target a quality audience in a professional context. That means B2B business!

By combining your targeting criteria, you can reach your B2B buyer personas such as decision-makers, C-level executives, prospective students, small business owners, and more. Advertising on LinkedIn will allow you to:

- Differentiate and increase awareness of your brand, at scale
- Increase followers for your company page
- Reach more professionals, decision-makers, and influencers targeted by specific segments, by job title, seniority, company name, industry, skills, and more
- Attract leads and track conversions with the integrated lead generation forms
- Generate more and better conversations
- Be seen more on high-traffic LinkedIn pages

Targeting Based On Where Your Prospects Are

The fourth way to target your prospects is by where they’re located. Why is this helpful? Let’s go back to our sushi restaurant example and expand on it. We discussed the search phrase “sushi near me.” But in this section, we’re going to discuss location-based search phrases. In the sushi restaurant example, the search phrase would be something like, “best sushi in Toronto.”

Any location-specific business should include a geographic marketing component to their strategy. But there’s an argument for location-based targeting regardless of whether your product or service is location-specific or not. If adding location targeting to your marketing efforts gives you a leg up on your competition, why not take it?

Here are some ways you can target your prospects based on where they are:

Geolocation

By location, we mean geographically but also digitally. The technique of geolocation identifies the user’s device (typically via the user’s opt-in to location services) according to its IP, WiFi, or GPS data. Targeting based on geolocation enables you to serve up your ad messages to your prospects based on their device location.

Geotargeting

When you couple geolocation with geotargeting, you expand your reach to include a user's behavior data and preferences as well as their location. This tactic enables you to set up campaign messages such as "reach users who were near..." and target prospects who are regularly associated with a specific area.

Geofencing

Geofencing also targets a user based on where they are but instead serves ad messages to people as soon as they cross a predefined area. That could be a building, a convention center, a conference area, your store, or your competitor's location.

By building a digital geofence around one or more locations, anybody who "walks" inside those geofenced locations will be targeted by your ads. Since your prospects will see your ads while they're within a designated location, geofencing is typically for the right-here-right-now messages. It is important to note that these ads can be served up to prospects for up to 30 days after leaving the geofenced area.

In order to better understand this technique, let's share an example:

Every year, you attend the biggest conference for your industry. This event generally brings you a large number of leads. Unfortunately, due to a schedule conflict, your business cannot attend the conference this year. Rather than missing out on this business opportunity, you decide to build a digital geofence around the conference venue. You set this up for when the event is taking place so you can display your marketing message to this qualified audience. Anyone who attends the conference will see your ads—both while they're at the event, as well as 30 days after they leave. Your ads drive people to a landing page, and you can capture leads from the event even though you weren't in attendance.

This geofencing technique can be used in other situations as well, such as festivals, sporting events, concerts, and parades.

Targeting Based On What Your Prospects Are Saying

An under-appreciated method of reaching prospects is targeting them based on what they are saying. And where can you find out what your potential customers are saying? Social media, of course!

In today's world, one in which people aren't shy to make their personal opinions, thoughts, needs, and desires public, it's incredibly easy to figure out what your target audience thinks about a wide variety of topics—including what they think about the products or services in your industry.

Here is the best tactic for targeting customers based on what they are saying:

Twitter

The best platform to advertise in a conversation is Twitter. Its advertising benefits companies already active on Twitter.

With hundreds of millions of tweets sent per day, it can be easy for your brand's Twitter marketing to get lost in the noise. The advantages of advertising on this platform are its ability to:

- Promote your account
- Attract more followers
- Target by keyword
- Target people interacting with TV content on Twitter

Twitter ads are one of the best ways to engage with an audience talking about your products or services and even your brand—especially a TV audience interested in your products or services.

Targeting Based On What Your Prospects Are Watching

When you sit down to watch a movie or TV show, do you ever watch something that *doesn't* interest you in some way?

The answer is probably no. And with an abundance of ways to watch a movie or TV show—like on Netflix, for example—it's not surprising that we only watch what we're *really* interested in.

That is precisely why it's a good idea to target prospects based on what they're watching online.

Because it incorporates audio and visual elements that appeal to multiple senses, video ads perform as well as educational tools. Why are they so effective? Customers, especially mobile users, are watching and sharing more and more videos. That is because a video can tell a story better than other content formats. It's more engaging to the senses, so it can convey a large amount of information by showing and telling a story at the same time.

Here's the best way to target prospects based on what they're watching:

YouTube

YouTube is the most popular digital video channel. It is also the second-largest search engine after Google, with billions of monthly active users who upload over half a million hours of video every day.

Since Google owns YouTube, it is no surprise that there is a lot of synergy between PPC ads and video ads. It also isn't surprising that YouTube has become one of the world's biggest ad platforms.

All that aside, there are several reasons why businesses are leveraging video to reach their prospects based on what they watch. Here are just a few:

People like watching videos and video content can more effectively create a connection between your audience and your brand.

- A picture is worth a thousand words. And a video is **worth a thousand pictures**. It can present your business in a way that isn't possible with just text or images.
- Video ads use the same pay-per-click structure as **PPC**—which means you only pay when people watch your video.
- You have **many targeting options**, such as age, gender, location, and interests.
- It works across different devices.

YouTube ads work best when they are short, engaging, and include a call-to-action that viewers can click on. If you are using video ads as part of your digital marketing mix, pay attention to YouTube's built-in analytics. Viewing analytics gives you insights into which of your ads perform best, resulting in adjustments to your campaigns for improved success.

Targeting Prospects Based On Where They Have Surfed

What if we told you that where an internet user searches provide useful knowledge about almost all the information we've talked about thus far? Well, it's true. Your prospects' search behavior can tell you a lot about who they are, what they do, and where they're from.

Think about it in terms of the real, physical world. People go to places they like. If you're a big fan of pizza, you'll go to a pizzeria. If you love movies and plays, you'll go to the theater. The places you frequent in the real world say a lot about you—the same goes for the digital world.

Additionally, marketers know that a prospect needs to see an ad seven times or more before they notice it or even buy. This is known as "The Seven Times Factor." On the internet, this concept is best represented by the ad technique called remarketing.

Remarketing

When it comes to serving up ads to your prospects based on where they have searched online, remarketing is the go-to advertising tool.

As illustrated in Figure 10, remarketing is the process of display ads being served up to people who have already visited your website or landing pages. The goal is to re-engage with your prospects through an ad message that brings them back to your site to take further action.

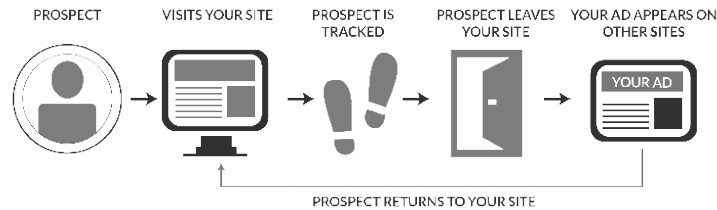


Figure 10: The Remarketing Process

Remarketing has many digital advertising benefits, including:

- **Additional brand awareness:** the more your brand can be in front of your prospects, the more likely they'll think of you and your products or services when it comes to making a purchase.
- **Higher conversion rates and ROI:** generally speaking, remarketing can increase your conversions by 15 to 20%. If you are converting at a higher rate, you'll start seeing a faster return on your digital advertising investment as well.
- **Specific audience targeting:** with remarketing, you can ensure your ads are relevant to your audience. You can set up brand awareness campaigns that display to your general website visitors. Or you can create an offer-specific campaign to those who visited a specific product or service page on your website.
- **Manageable budget:** similar to PPC ads, you can set how often your remarketing ads are displayed and how much you spend. So it is an easy-to-manage advertising tool.

The Key to Generating Demand for Your Products and Services

The most important, and often overlooked, component of generating demand for your products and services, is targeting. The more ways you can target your prospects; the more success you'll have. Whether it's based on who they are, what they do, or where they are, targeting your potential buyers with relevant marketing messages based on what you know about them is smart digital marketing. It is also a strategic approach to getting a leg up on your competition.

Ask yourself: Would you rather sell to a prospect who needs significant convincing, or to somebody who knows your product or service is exactly what they're looking for? If you've read and understood this chapter, you'll choose the latter—every single time.

TIP: How you can target your prospects is changing every day. To keep up with the latest digital advertising trends and tactics, please visit www.wsiworld.com/book-resources.

About the Author

Gabor Markus



Gabor has been a part of the WSI team since 2017 and is based in Geneva, Switzerland (where the World Wide Web was invented back in the '90s.) He is a Business Development expert with 20 years in international digital marketing. In addition to being a WSI Consultant, he is also a lecturer of digital transformation for Bachelor and Executive programs at the University of Applied Science in Geneva. If he had to describe his focus as a Digital Marketing Consultant in a few words, he'd say boosting sales and online reputation for his customers. Through personalized advisory services, he and his team develop solutions from marketing to lead generation to turn leads into actual sales; all with a focus on delivering a strong ROI.

About WSI

For 25 years, WSI has been providing digital marketing services and comprehensive marketing strategies to businesses of all sizes and across various industries. We are the largest network of digital marketing agencies around the world.

We are a full-service digital marketing agency that helps elevate your online brand, generate more leads and sales, and improve your overall marketing ROI. Our Digital Marketing Consultants use their knowledge and expertise to make a difference for businesses all around the world.

We don't believe in the "one-size-fits-all" approach to digital marketing. Instead, we take the time to understand your organization and customers so we can recommend a strategy based on your individual business needs. When you invest in any of WSI's digital marketing solutions, you'll have some of the top minds in the industry, contributing to your goals and vision.

You have a vision for your business. We can help make it happen. Reach out; we're happy to help.

