

15 essential skills all digital marketing hires must have

By [Sco Gerber](#) on March 8, 2016



Credit: Ellagrin/Getty Images

Today's digital marketing experts must have a diverse skill set, including a sophisticated grasp of available media channels, the ability to identify up-and-coming opportunities, on top of having the basic skills of a brilliant marketer. What's more, they have to possess a balance of critical and creative thinking skills in order to drive measurable success for their company.

That's why I asked 15 members of [Young Entrepreneur Council \(YEC\)](#) what they look for when hiring digital marketers. Their best answers are below.

1. Paid social media advertising expertise



A new digital marketing hire should be well-versed in paid social media advertising, especially through Facebook or a similar social platform that our company uses regularly. They need to be able to understand and implement Facebook analytics and insights, create "lookalike" and custom audiences, experiment and test creative campaign and images, and be secure in their knowledge of the overall social media landscape. There are many budget-saving opportunities within the social media advertising space, so we want to make sure that our digital marketing talent knows the ins and outs of this popular and easy-to-implement marketing space.

— Miles Jennings, [Recruiter.com](https://www.recruiter.com)

2. Sales skills



We've hired many digital marketers over the years, both outsourced and in-house. What we've found is that people who have sold successfully are much better marketers. They know how to engage with people and turn them into sales opportunities. While your digital marketers may not be closing deals directly, they need to know how to sell or they'll be wasting your valuable marketing dollars without generating qualified lead opportunities for your sales team.

— [Mark Cenicola, BannerView.com](#)

3. Specific marketing channel expertise



I see so many marketers who extol the virtues of every conceivable marketing channel: email, SEO, SEM, social, etc. And many channels might work for you, but the key to a successful marketing strategy is focusing on a few channels and using them really well. Often that means understanding the dynamics of that marketing channel deeply and leveraging those dynamics for your specific company. For example, in helping local businesses, Pinterest is less interesting (although it's one of the best drivers of ecommerce traffic). I'd much rather focus on the intricate tactics of local SEO to get a client to No. 1 on Google, Maps and Yelp.

— [Trevor Sumner](#), [LocalVox](#)

4. The ability to think objectively



Inbound marketing is a key skill in driving lead generation. While many marketers can come up with an initial innovative engagement strategy or CPC campaign, what intrigues me more is how they examine the incoming data and create a robust drip marketing campaign. Great automation on these campaigns is not about sending the same email to the entire flock that the campaign gathers. It's about personal, well-written communication that varies depending on the actions performed seven emails deep into the campaign. That's a lot of variation, and requires an analytical mindset and strategic thinking. Exceptional marketing happens when the art of communication expands upon the fundamental science of conversion.

— Eran Eyal, [Springleap](#)

6. A mix of creativity and analytical abilities



Digital marketing requires both creative thinking and analytical thinking, so we look for a candidate capable of and excited about both. Many new candidates want to focus purely on one or the other, but it's important to bring "art and science" to each digital program. Digital marketing allows us to be very measurable — even for beautiful creative campaigns — using analytics to inform future strategies.

— [Kayla Wagner Faires, Revel Interactive](#)

7. Good copy and visual storytelling abilities



Digital media is a copy- and visual-driven medium unlike any other before it. Our social heart is won over (or double clicked on) by copy that is relevant and visuals that pull on our emotional strings. The native understanding and ability to manipulate those two elements is critical in today's digital marketing landscape.

— [Alex Frias, Track Marketing Group](#)

8. A likable personality



Relationship building is such a huge component of digital marketing, and a likable personality can go a long way. With so many people trying to connect with publishers, bloggers, journalists and influencers, someone with a great personality will always stand out and command attention. If you are being pitched by two similar people and one person is the equivalent to talking to a brick wall and the other person is outgoing and pleasant, who are you going to give your time to? The same applies to maintaining relationships — having a likable personality plays such a huge role, yet it's often overlooked.

— [Jonathan Long, Market Domination Media](#)

9. An understanding of WordPress



With so many platforms now built on WordPress, it is a vital technical tool to add to your toolbox. If you want to create and manage a blog or even a website, WordPress has become the go-to platform for digital marketers. It also helps to continually educate yourself on new plug-ins and functionality because WordPress is always offering something new and useful that speeds up content production.

— [Angela Ruth, Due.com](#)

10. Self-promotion savvy



If you're telling me that you have a strong understanding of social media and leveraging brands, then it should be very easy for you to do the same with your own. My interviewees are their own first project, and I use information I can find on them to make my final decision. Something should come up when I search their names, preferably on all the same platforms that I want to use for my clients. Messaging and vis-a-vis skills should be consistent across most platforms, and some obvious care should be put into the presentation and expansion of each one.

— [Adam Steele, The Magistrate](#)

11. Understanding of brevity



It doesn't matter how good your product is if you can't communicate your value proposition to potential customers in fewer than 140 characters. Digital marketers must be efficient and effective with minimal messaging.

— [Nicholas Haase, Loot!](#)

12. The ability to analyze quantifiable metrics



Now, more than ever, being able to quantify the value of investing in marketing and advertising is vital. The battle for supremacy in the marketplace is not won in whole percentage points any longer. It's about making the right choices and moving the needle slightly forward at every opportunity. Digital marketing consultants need to possess the competencies and the general knowledge required to provide actionable metrics, and prove their value with real data. Gone are the days of guessing whether or not a campaign was effective based on simple sales numbers. In-page tracking, coupled with analytics and metrics software are the tools of the day for marketers, and we expect any new consultants or team members to be able to leverage those tools to ensure accuracy and efficacy.

— [Blair Thomas, EMerchantBroker](#)

13. Listening skills



As a digital marketer, our ability to promote our services through words, images, video and social media are essential. Digital marketing also provides an opportunity for its specialists to listen to various groups of people, from clients to consumers, in new ways. Through social media and analytical tools, we can listen to our consumers' thoughts on a product, relevant issue or our own services. When I hire a digital marketer, I'll see if they've sought to listen to consumer and client needs and create a solution from their own observations or insights.

— [Shalyn Dever](#), [Chatter Buzz](#).

14. Agility



At least once a month a new platform pushes its way into relevancy, or a major platform adjusts its algorithm. If you're/they're operating on a methodology devised without flexibility, and/or aren't the type of person to be able to react appropriately, you and your business will fall behind the curve and lose ground fast.

— Mickey Meyer, JASH

15. Basic design skills



Being able to communicate a message properly is extremely important. However, digital marketing involves more than just words. A large part of digital marketing is about visual appearance. Anyone who calls themselves a digital marketer should have at least some basic knowledge of HTML, CSS or Photoshop.

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