

GUIDESERIES

The Kenshoo Guide to Search and Social Intersections

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS GUIDE:

- ▶ The importance of push and pull marketing
- ▶ 4 key reasons to integrate search and social advertising
- ▶ How search and social complement each other
- ▶ What this cross-channel integration looks like
- ▶ The challenges (and solutions) of integration
- ▶ How the rest of the marketing plan will benefit from the synergy
- ▶ Marketer's perspective on search and social intersections



Table of Contents

The Importance of Cross-Channel Marketing	3
The Potent Relationship of Push and Pull Marketing	4
4 Key Reasons Why Search and Social Should Be the Next Channels You Integrate	6
Consumers trust and spend time with Search and Social.6
Search and Social make up more than 50% of most digital marketing budgets.7
Search and Social work better together.7
Search and Social are already influencing each other.8
Search and Social Complement Each Other	9
The Similarities9
The Differences	10
What Does Search and Social Integration Look Like?	11
Examples of search signals for social	11
Examples of social signals for search	12
Cross-channel technologies.	12
Integration Challenges & Solutions	13
Adding Value to the Rest of the Marketing Plan	15
Driving program objectives	15
Assisting other marketing channels	16
Paving the way for Omni-channel Marketing	16
Marketer's Perspective	17
Closing Thoughts	18

The Importance of Cross-Channel Marketing

Generally, when marketers are asked about the importance of cross-channel coordination, most believe that it is absolutely crucial to the success of their marketing organization and overall business. *In an Alterian study on this issue, 9 out of 10 marketers stated that cross-channel coordination is either “vital” or “extremely vital” for marketing campaigns.*

There seems to be some intrinsic understanding by all marketers that 1 + 1 can equal 3. By and large, there’s a belief that, if you can harness the combined power of your channels, you will be able to accomplish new and wonderful things.

Cross-channel marketing by nature is customer-centric and focuses on how the right media mix can impact and influence consumers to take action. Marketing organizations that are siloed are somewhat beholden to allocate resources according to their set infrastructure and aren’t nimble enough to shift when needed to best take advantage of markets that are constantly in fluctuation.

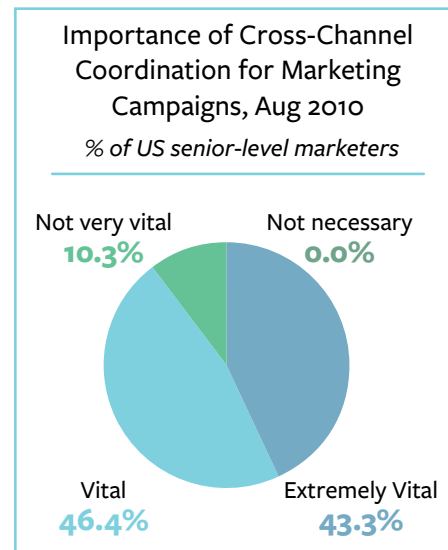
Ironically, “synergy” is often regarded as an overused buzzword, yet marketers often speak confidently of this concept without using the term.

Unfortunately, most marketing organizations still operate in channel silos. Even though they desire more cross-channel operations, the legacy approach, entrenched infrastructure, and overbooked daily calendars prevail in pushing this priority down the queue month after month, year after year.

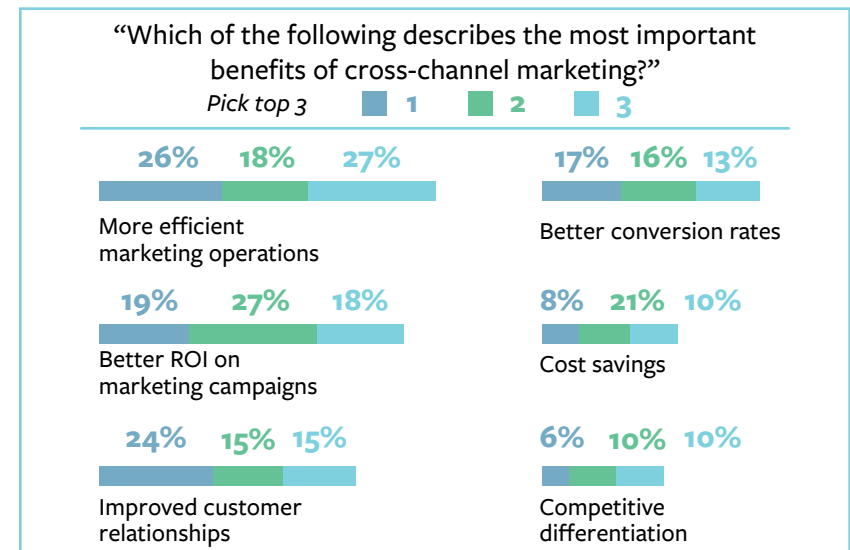
As digital marketing enters its third decade and captures more of the overall media plan, cross-channel marketing emerges as a necessity rather than a luxury.

Success and failure may depend on it.

Within this Guide, we will explore why integrating search and social advertising is the right place to start for marketers, describe how search and social integration could work, and offer solutions for common challenges to cross-channel operations and optimization.



Source: Alterian “Engaging Times Summit”
www.emarketer.com
August 2010



Source: A Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper Commissioned By ExactTarget
The Key To Successful Cross-Channel Marketing
Sophisticated Cross-Channel Marketers Show Us That Technology Matters Most
October 2012



The Potent Relationship of Push and Pull Marketing

Digital marketing can be generally classified into two categories:

- ▶ **Pull marketing**, which is coupled to content that people **actively** request, such as search engine results, location listings, etc.
- ▶ **Push marketing**, which is shown to people as they **passively** consume web content and engage with other digital assets.

The strength of pull marketing is that it can deliver highly relevant advertising to consumers based on what they are interested in at that precise moment. For example, search engine marketing (SEM) requires consumers to search on specific keywords related to an advertiser in order to trigger that marketer's ads to appear. These ads also have relevant messaging that makes them very useful to consumers – sometimes even more useful than the organic (free) links on the page.

There's a lot of inherent power when reaching consumers with highly relevant advertising as they pull information towards them. People are much more inclined to engage with marketing messaging at this time.

Search engine networks and marketers work together to match ads based on very strong intent signals provided by consumers while researching and discovering content online. By using signals such as the keyword that was queried, device type used, time of day, or location of the consumer, SEM has become one of the best performing ad channels in the history of modern advertising.

Push marketing is the traditional marketing model that consumers have come to expect offline with television, radio,

print, and billboard ads, as well as online in the form of most banners, online video ads, etc. Although pull marketing has the advantage of getting in front of active, interested consumers while they're hunting for information, advertisers are limited to only reaching consumers during very narrow windows of opportunity.

Push marketing has tremendous (almost infinite) scale and helps build awareness and interest with consumers while they are engaged in the majority of the time they spend online.

The key to push marketing is to work with quality publishers that promote strong consumer engagement, offer highly visible ad inventory, and provide deep data targeting options. Social networks provide this ideal push marketing environment and have become trusted destinations for consumers who return often to interact with their connections and with brands.

Furthermore, the actions taken by consumers on social platforms can be tracked and applied (in an anonymous way) to help increase ad relevancy. Expressed likes and interests, usage habits, and other signals can be used to increase the likelihood that consumers are exposed to marketing messages they might most find appealing.

The Potent Relationship of Push and Pull Marketing

Not Push or Pull but rather Push and Pull

The most successful digital marketers understand that it's the relationship (or more specifically how they leverage the relationship) of their push and pull advertising that can drive the best performance and highest return. Yes, it's important to reach consumers as they are actively engaged during the discovery and research phases of a purchase journey, but it's also important to build awareness and brand equity with passive consumers who are either not ready to buy or haven't even realized they need certain products or services yet.

Push and pull. Pull and push.

The push and pull relationship goes beyond the classic marketing funnel. It's not about using push for the top and pull for the bottom, but rather reaching each individual consumer (at scale) with the right mix of both to impact and influence that person to take a desired action.



Let's examine the following purchase journey of "Bob" who, over the course of three weeks, researched and ultimately purchased a sound bar speaker for his home theater. In this path-to-conversion report, ad clicks are arranged in order of recency with the last ad Bob clicked on June 17th and the first ad click that kicked off his purchase journey at the bottom (June 6th).

Note – this example is a real consumer purchase from a Kenshoo retail client in June 2013.

On June 6th and 9th, Bob clicked social ads that were "pushed" to him for Home Theater Systems. Bob was exposed to these social ads based on targeting to anonymous social network profiles that displayed a strong interest in movies and live music, had previously engaged in home theater content online, and live within a predetermined radius of one of the retailer's local stores.

Over the next week, Bob actively "pulled" Google for home audio related keywords, first on the informative query how to install speakers, then in-wall speakers, and finally on soundbar. It looks as though Bob started his research by considering a do-it-

yourself approach and then realized that buying a sound bar was the right way to go versus installing the in-wall speakers himself. (Maybe Bob's wife, "Amy", reacted poorly to the news that her husband was planning on cutting holes in their living room walls).

Notice that five days (June 12 to 17) passed between Bob's final search engine ad click, which was a very far-down-the-funnel Product Listing Ad, until he finally purchased via a click for a Sound Bars social ad which was retargeted to his anonymous browser based on previous visits to the retailer's site.

Even though he demonstrated a strong intent for sound bars, would Bob have actually purchased from this retailer if not for that last social ad?

This purchase path is a great example of how push and pull marketing channels (specifically search engine marketing and social advertising) were able to drive Bob down the funnel and create a sale. Had this retailer not realized the interplay of these channels and properly deployed ads at each of these key apertures, it very well could have lost the order.

Date	Keyword	Match Type	Auto Target	Channel	Campaign Name
6/17/2013 13:46:59				Social	Sound Bars
6/12/2013 18:37:09			product_type=Home Theater Audio	Google PLA	Home Theatre – Audio
6/12/2013 17:48:02	"soundbar"	Phrase		Google	Home Audio
6/11/2013 0:09:23	[in-wall speakers]	Exact		Google	Audio Installation
6/11/2013 0:05:26	"how to install speakers"	Phrase		Google	Audio Installation
6/9/2013 16:48:37				Social	Home Theatre Systems
6/6/2013 21:33:41				Social	Home Theatre Systems

Kenshoo path-to-conversion report for retail client. June 2013

4 Key Reasons Why Search and Social Should Be the Next Channels You Integrate

It's relatively easy to understand that various advertising channels push and pull to influence consumers and drive action. The hard part is putting together the right mix of strategies and tactics to take advantage of this synergy.

The advanced tracking and measurement capabilities of digital advertising provide an ideal environment for marketers to finally realize this vision. Marketers can analyze multi-touch analytics such as path-to-conversion reports in order to figure out how consumers interact with their advertising and adjust their media mix to take advantage of cross-channel influence.

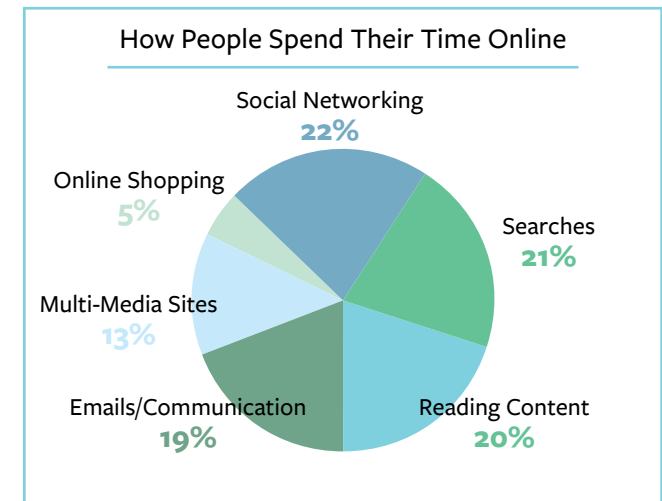
Although marketers may have many channels in their programs, integrating search and social advertising is the best place to start for a few key reasons:

#1 Consumers **trust** and spend time with Search and Social.

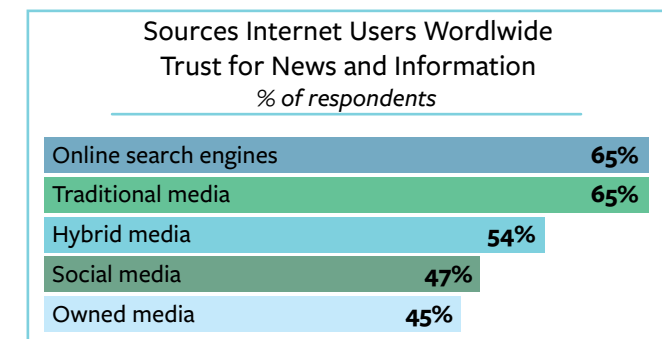
Search engines and social networks have done a great job of building equity and trust with consumers. For marketers trying to reach their target audiences, these two channels provide very strong interaction with consumers.

In terms of time spent globally, “social networking” and “searching” rank as the top two consumer activities online. Search and social can also deliver massive reach. [92% of online adults say they use search engines](#), [73% engage in social media](#), and they are top destinations that consumers use to begin their online sessions.

When global consumers were asked which media they trust to get news from, 65% cited search engines while almost half (47%) said social media.



Source: Go-Gulf.com, February 2012



Source: eMarketer, November 2013

4 Key Reasons Why Search and Social Should Be the Next Channels You Integrate

#2 Search and Social make up *more than 50%* of most digital marketing budgets.

In 2014, U.S. marketers are expected to spend \$16.85 billion on paid search and \$6.23 billion on social media, comprising 54% of the \$42.97 billion in total that is projected to be spent online.

If marketers can truly master the combined power of these two channels, they will have a huge impact on the entirety of their digital marketing programs and resulting outcomes.

US Digital Ad Spending, by Format, 2010 – 2016					
	billions and % change				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Paid Search	\$11.38	\$13.08	\$14.92	\$16.85	\$18.88
Display	\$5.44	\$6.43	\$7.64	\$9.23	\$11.34
Internet video/ rich media	\$3.13	\$4.04	\$5.22	\$6.62	\$8.35
Social media	\$2.49	\$3.42	\$4.61	\$6.23	\$8.22
Classifieds	\$3.24	\$3.40	\$3.54	\$3.64	\$3.71
Internet radio	\$0.27	\$0.30	\$0.33	\$0.37	\$0.40
Podcast	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03
Total	\$25.98	\$30.70	\$36.29	\$42.97	\$50.93

Source: eMarketer, December 2013

#3 Search and Social work *better* together.

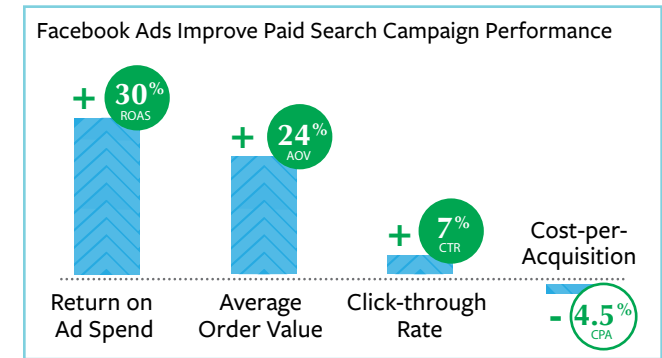
In the GroupM white paper, [The Influenced: Social Media, Search and the Interplay of Consideration and Consumption](#), the impact of social on search was dramatic:

“Consumers exposed to a brand’s influenced social media and paid search programs are 2.8 times more likely to search for that brand’s products compared to users who saw only paid search. The study also showed a 50 percent click-through-rate (CTR) increase in paid search when consumers were exposed to influenced social media and paid search.

This revealed consumers exposed to social media are more likely to click on a brand’s paid search ad as compared to those exposed to the brand’s paid search alone. Among searchers using a brand’s product name in the query, the CTR increased from 4.5 percent to 11.8 percent when users were exposed to both influenced social media and paid search around a brand.”

The recent Kenshoo white paper, [Added Value: Facebook Advertising Boosts Paid Search Performance](#), analyzed a large North American retailer via a paired-market study to measure the value of how search and social work together. During this test, a Control group was exposed only to paid search advertising while a Test group was exposed to both paid search and social advertising.

The Test group’s paid search campaigns performed much better with a 30% high Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) fueled by a 24% higher Average Order Value (AOV). The social advertising campaigns in the Test group also showed positive ROI on their own.



Source: Kenshoo, November 2013

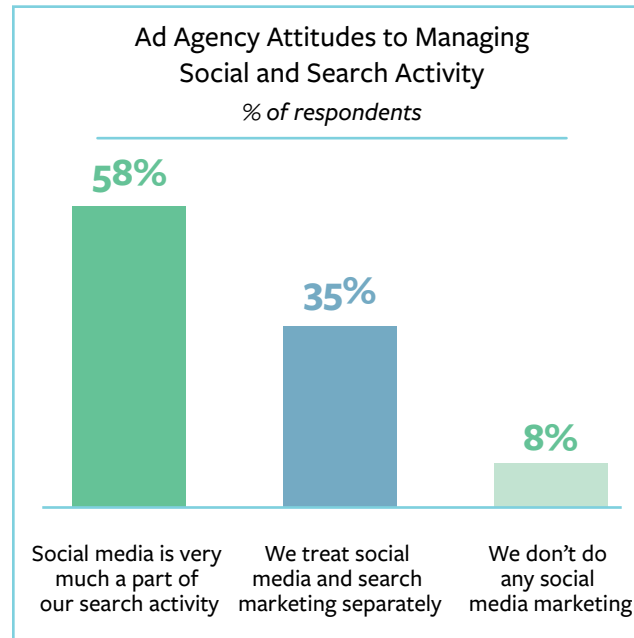
4 Key Reasons Why Search and Social Should Be the Next Channels You Integrate

#4 Search and Social are *already* influencing each other.

Most marketers engaged in online advertising have search and social programs running – some with massive scale at millions or tens of millions of dollars allocated to these two channels.

Like it or not, your search and social advertising efforts are already impacting each other.

When ad agencies were asked about how they currently approach these two channels, a majority reported that social media is very much part of their search activity with only a minority of respondents managing them separately.



Source: Econsultancy/SEMPO, September 2012

It's time for marketers to explore search and social integration.

Certainly, advertisers have a lot to gain by integrating these two channels. They offer the beautiful combination of push and pull marketing that can be used to build awareness, be present when consumers actively seek more information about their products or services, and engage with consumers at every step of the purchase funnel.

At the same time, marketers have a lot to lose by not applying more governance to the way their search and social programs interact. They could be leaving major dollars on the table -- even single digit percentile lifts in performance could mean the difference between success and failure.

Most troubling is that by not actively controlling how these two channels interact, marketers could potentially be working against themselves with mixed messaging, over-exposure, and other harmful side effects. It's important to maintain a consistent brand persona in the marketplace and having siloed channels only increases the chance of incongruity.

In the [State of Search Marketing Report 2013](#) released by SEMPO, two-thirds of marketers (67%) report that integration with social media is a significant trend in the context of paid search.

Clearly, there is enough evidence and potential value of integrating search and social that marketers need to explore this issue fully to see firsthand if there are tangible benefits.

Search and Social Complement Each Other



The digital marketing portfolio has many unique channels and formats such as search, social, email, banners, rich media, online video, mobile, affiliates, retargeting, content marketing, digital-out-home, in-game, wearable devices, and many other options.

However, search and social stick out as being the most complementary in a cross-channel relationship for a variety of reasons.

The Similarities

The close parallels between paid search and social advertising make them highly compatible for integration. They require very similar expertise, tools, and best practices and can often be run by the same teams in a very streamlined manner which equates to better performance and fewer mistakes. In fact, many agencies and internal marketing departments which were once solely focused on SEM are now managing social advertising as well.

In some ways, search and social are so similar that they could be almost managed as one channel.

Self-service, auction-based, Pay-Per-Click (PPC) models.

Not all, but a vast majority of search and social advertising is sold on a self-service, auction basis, and advertisers are only charged when consumers click their ads. This approach was pioneered through paid search, and social advertising has built upon this proven model. The benefit here is that the same expertise and approach needed to manage search properly can also be readily applied to social advertising management. Marketers who manage auction-based, PPC media have spent years honing the art and science of bid management in order to drive the highest return.

Granular approach. The best practice for both paid search and social advertising is to build accounts from the ground up in the most granular way possible. Search marketers can manage millions of keywords individually and social advertisers can amass huge amounts of ads with their own unique targeting and bidding strategy. Search and social marketers have trained their minds that if they maximize each individual element of every campaign, the entire program will perform well.

Targeting options. Both of these channels have numerous settings that allow marketers to have fine control over when and to whom their ads are shown. Dayparting, geotargeting, device targeting, retargeting, and other options are readily available and easy to use in SEM and on social networks. By having so many targeting settings in common, marketers can approach both channels with virtually the same mentality. Just trying to reach Californians on smart phones on Saturdays with a special promotion? No problem.

Real-time optimization. Whereas, with most channels, the job is done once the advertising flight begins, in the case of search and social, the launch of the campaign is just the beginning. Taking a granular approach, constantly optimizing bids, and deploying various targeting options, search and social marketers are able to promote ads and tactics that are working and demote the ones that are not. It's the continuous analysis, testing of hypotheses, and ongoing maintenance that can drive performance much higher than the initial results at that start of the campaign.

Scale in mobile. Search engines and social networks have adapted quickly to the mobile web, and marketers have embraced these two channels as key sources to capture consumer attention. Clicks from mobile devices now represent [28% all paid search activity](#), and Facebook revealed in their Q4 2013 earnings that mobile devices accounted for [63% of their total ad revenue](#).

For marketers engaged in mobile marketing, search and social provide major opportunities to reach consumers across their devices.



Search and Social Complement Each Other

The Differences

While the similarities of search and social highlight why it makes sense to manage them together, it's their differences that truly highlight how potent this combination can be.

The differences between search and social make them stronger because each fills in the gaps where the other is weak. Together they offer marketers a very comprehensive – almost complete – digital marketing portfolio.

Push and pull. As discussed at length in a previous chapter of this Guide, the pull marketing aspect of search and push marketing of social allow marketers to reach customers at all stages of the funnel. Search works tremendously well on its own as consumers actively research online, but advertisers still need a way to deliver their promotions and brand messages to consumers when they're not actively looking for them.

As great as pull marketing is, only advertisers with very small budgets and goals can rely on pull marketing alone to fill their annual media plans. Social advertising, with deep targeting and high site engagement, provides a strong channel for push marketing to stimulate demand and drive direct sales or influence later conversions through pull marketing.

Ad formats. When you aggregate all of the different ways marketers can structure their campaigns within search and social advertising platforms, the overall offering is impressive. With search, marketers have text ads which have evolved over the last decade to include PLAs, dynamic keyword insertion, mobile, retargeting, click-to-call, and a variety of ad extensions that can be customized to be impactful in many situations.

For social advertising, the social networks are constantly innovating and not limited to tiny text ads. Large images, more text, and highly prominent ad placements are commonplace. These ads also offer advanced social functionality to let consumers broadcast them to their network and they can sometimes go viral and take on a life of their own. The ceiling for social ad innovation is incredibly high and this nascent marketing channel is quickly expanding to polls, in-ad games, video, app installs, etc.

Targeting options. This is also listed as a similarity, but there are also unique differences in how marketers can target search and social.

Search advertising is driven by matching ads to consumer queries, while social is fueled by signals such as likes & interests and other social behaviors. Both have their merits. While the keyword is certainly a very powerful signal of intent, social activity can help marketers identify high value customers when exposed to the right messages at the right time.

Post-view tracking. Unlike search ads that are run by the engines and do not allow view (impression) tracking, key social networks offer this functionality. The advantage here is that marketers can track consumers when they view ads without clicking and leverage that data later for advanced insights and retargeting. For example, the purchase journeys of consumers can be analyzed to gauge which combination of messaging helped to influence their final decision – even if there wasn't a click in the path. Because each ad is a combination of headline, image, body text, and call to action, marketers can use view tracking to identify the elements that are working well and iterate new ads based on those insights.

Post-view tracking also allows for better measurement. For example, in a click-only tracking system, a purchase journey of three search clicks may have actually included numerous social ad impressions throughout the consumer's path. When marketers analyze all of the purchase journeys after the campaign, they may find that customers exposed to social advertising (even if they didn't click) converted at a higher rate than those that weren't. It's these types of data insights that can help marketers best understand the proper channel mix when planning their campaigns.

The beautiful thing about search and social integration is that there are enough similarities to allow marketers to manage them together as virtually a single channel, but enough differences that make them complementary to each other and stronger as a unified program.



What Does Search and Social Integration Look Like?

When distilled down, search and social integration is about harnessing signals from one to inform and optimize the other. Data collection and activation can be achieved in various ways, from very high-touch manual methods to deep tech integrations.

Examples of search signals for social

- **Search queries** can be used by marketers to understand which keywords consumers are using to research and discover brand content. These keywords can be used as the core of likes & interest targeting for social advertising.
- **Branded term** search volume can inform marketers how much they should focus their attention on building up consumer awareness in social spheres. If branded term searches drop on the engines, advertisers may move their social strategy to the top of the funnel.
- **Mobile search** spikes may signal that more consumers are researching those products or services on smart phones and tablets. Maybe the winter is ending sooner in a given year and consumers have begun thinking about their summer holidays? This insight could be used to trigger more mobile social advertising.
- **Search ad copy** with the strongest response rates can provide direction for how to message social advertising. Offers and promotions can be tested on the engines and then the best performing elements could be used in social ads. For example, maybe the 20% off works better than the Free Shipping headline in search so it might work well in social too.
- **Search metrics** such as bid price, click-through rate, conversion rates, and impressions are valuable data nuggets that social advertisers can use to prioritize the management of their accounts. If certain search ad groups are performing well but the same products are anemic on social, then it might be worth doing some extra analysis into figuring out why.
- **Search retargeting** has become a very popular way to extend the performance of search onto social platforms. By using inputs such as the keyword, the ad copy, and other key search signals, marketers can retarget those consumers on social networks with highly relevant messaging. Facebook offers [custom audiences](#) and Twitter offers [tailored audiences](#), letting advertisers upload lists of their top customers and directly retarget them. Additionally, on Facebook, these lists can be used to build out “lookalike” lists, opening up the target list to exponentially more consumers. In this instance, customers driven by search marketing efforts can be used as the seed group. See example below.



What Does Search and Social Integration Look Like?

Examples of social signals for search

- **Interests** of top customers can be analyzed for trends that can be used to inform search strategies. For example, an online snowboard retailer may discover that its best customers also tend to like energy drinks and punk rock bands. These insights may translate into potential keyword expansion as well as more spirited and lively text ads that connect better to this audience.
- **Social activity** such as likes, comments, trends, hashtags, retweets, etc. may be great triggers for search marketers to realize a change in the marketplace is occurring. If a celebrity happens to mention a brand at a big fashion show, the social sphere is often the first place this shift is felt. Search marketers can mine activity on their social advertising and react faster than by analyzing search activity alone.
- **Social analytics** such as [Facebook Insights](#) can be a rich source of business intelligence (BI) that marketers can analyze to build data around their connections and best customers.
- **Testing audience response** to new search creative can be a worthwhile tactic to apply to social. Because social networks allow for deep audience targeting, search marketers can create testing campaigns to see how specific demographic groups will react to their latest messaging. For example, a retailer may know that 30-40 year old men, not 20-30 year olds, provide the highest lifetime value to its online store and want to make sure the offers, calls to action, and other elements of its search ads are geared properly to engage this group. Marketers can run short, small budget tests targeted to granular social audiences to vet creative before launching them in their search campaigns.

Cross-channel technologies

Technology solutions that integrate paid search and social advertising offer exciting opportunities for marketers. Using APIs and other tools, search engines and social networks have enabled third-party platforms to bring to market innovations that can work at scale to harness the synergy that manual operations cannot efficiently provide. Whether it's better signal collection, signal activation, or even just more accurate cross-channel measurement, the future is bright for technology in this area.

One of the first areas in which technology has empowered marketers to be able to approach cross-channel is in campaign management. Just as using multiple products within Microsoft Office provides a fast learning curve for those familiar with the suite and interoperability among key features, marketers can benefit from using one suite across search and social. Common tasks related to both channels such as campaign creation, administration, bid optimization, reporting, and data analysis managed through one platform can help save time, reduce mistakes, and maximize performance.

Additionally, multi-touch attribution (MTA) gives marketers the accurate measurement they need to properly manage cross-channel advertising. Without the ability to apply credit to all touch points within the consumer purchase journey, marketers simply cannot know what parts of their campaigns are performing. Without MTA, advertisers may end up allocating more budget to things that actually aren't working well and demote elements of their campaigns that are actually moving the needle. Third-party platforms that incorporate cross-channel tracking and MTA into their bidding algorithms can further capitalize on the synergy in an automated fashion.

As marketers continue to embrace the benefits of integrating their search and social advertising, technology providers build solutions to bridge the gaps.



Go to [Kenshoo.com/Intersections](https://www.kenshoo.com/intersections) to download an experiment you can run to test how social ad promotions impact paid search.

The merits of combining search and social are clear but it can be easier said than done.

In a Zeta Interactive study, only 13% of U.S. online marketers “currently have no challenges” to marketing integration. That means almost 9 out of 10 marketers do have challenges including the following:

Challenge: Organizational structure

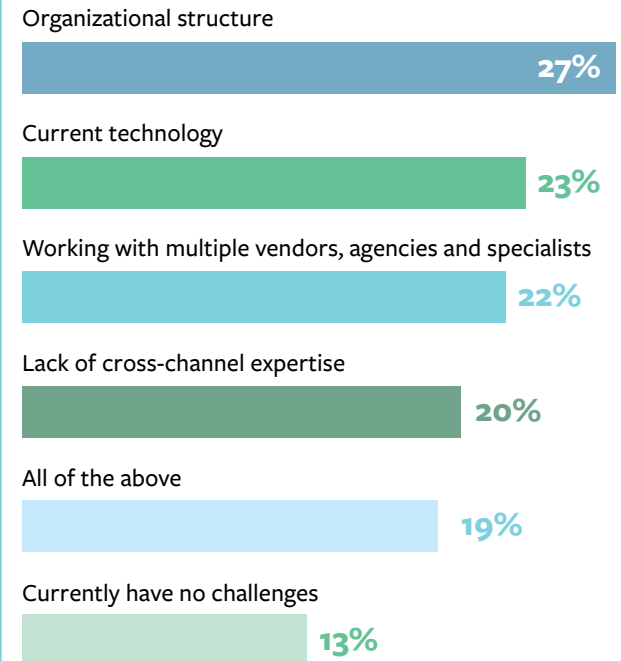
The bigger the company, the bigger this problem org structure can be. Change is hard for people, let alone businesses. New things come with a lot of uncertainty and fear. Will it work? What happens to me if it doesn't? Because of this risk, marketers rarely innovate unless there's a greater risk present to not innovate.

Solutions

- Move slowly. Don't make big, sweeping changes too quickly.
- Sell in the long-term benefits. Focus on the end game but be realistic about how this change may negatively affect things in the short term.
- Set a roadmap. Let everyone see what the change will look like so they can plan ahead.
- Create a cross-channel team. Create new projects that only this team can solve. Get a few wins under your belt to prove to everyone that you're on the right track.

Leading Challenges to Marketing Integration According to US Online Marketers

% of respondents



Source: Zeta Interactive, June 2010

Integration Challenges & Solutions



Integration Challenges & Solutions

Challenge: Current technology

In many instances, marketers must choose between single-point solutions that have bi-directional relationships with other technologies or fully integrated tech suites that may not have the best-in-breed solutions across the board. It's a difficult decision and marketers can have a tough time prioritizing among their needs and determining what is most likely to achieve the desired end outcome.

Solutions

- Make the most out of what you have. Work with your current technology providers to examine how they can or might be able to integrate with the other pieces of your tech stack. They may have deep integrations already in place you can turn on with a flip of a switch.
- Start with the biggest pain points first. Just because you're (re)committed to cross-channel marketing doesn't mean you have to throw out everything you have. If you can identify a few key spots where combining search and social would really move the needle, then begin there.
- Talk the talk and walk the walk. Set a date mandating that all technology contracts under review should focus on cross-channel strength as a key criterion to new partnerships.

Challenge: Working with multiple vendors and agencies

Working with multiple vendors, agencies and specialists. Legacy infrastructure may be the biggest obstacle to cross-channel marketing for any marketing organization. You may also have a bit of headcount redundancy that needs to be addressed which can be a huge concern for any manager. Furthermore, there may be contracts in place with agencies that need to be fulfilled.

Solutions

- Focus on what's best for the business. Ultimately, if doing things the old way means that one day soon you'll have to lay off the team, force you to close stores/branches or even the company, then headcount concerns or hurting a few people's feelings are comparatively trivial.
- Let them help you. Talk to your team and current partners. What's the right path for cross-channel success? They may have some great ideas on how to handle the integration plan that reduces the amount of frustration and mistakes.

Challenge: Lack of cross-channel expertise

If your teams can't handle the integration, then that's a major limitation to what you could be doing. How do you turn to a team of experts and now tell them that they have to be experts on something else too? How do even know if your current staff is capable of taking on a cross-channel program?

Solutions

- Just do it. In the long run, not having expertise is just an obstacle, not a deal-breaker. Think about what you could be losing by not having this integration and compare that to the cost of bringing in fresh talent. In many cases, the opportunity cost lost vastly outweighs a new manager or two.
- It just may be best for your people too. Change is difficult, but it's very possible that by getting the search and social teams cross-trained, it will make them better marketers. They will also have new skills which can build up their career. And, remember, search and social advertising have lots of similarities so it shouldn't be too much of a stretch.



Adding Value to the Rest of the Marketing Plan

Integrating search and social can maximize the total impact of each channel, but the significant, potential value to the overall marketing plan should not be ignored.

Cross-channel marketing empowers advertisers to focus on consumer-centric initiatives versus having to always figure out how to keep feeding the entrenched marketing engine. As messaging, tactics, ad formats, teams, and budgets become aligned, the singular goal of impacting and influencing consumers to a desired action becomes the focus. Instead of running channels, the discussion evolves to how the right mix of media can move the needle in a portfolio approach.

Here are some ways an integrated paid search and social advertising solution could benefit the rest of the marketing plan:

Driving program objectives



Direct Response (DR). The implications of a combined search and social solution are readily apparent for direct response advertisers. Studies have shown that a blended approach drives higher performance metrics than when managed separately. In fact, DR campaigns are already benefitting marketers when the signals from these channels are harnessed to optimize each other.



Branding. Brand building is often confused with building awareness, however, changing the hearts and minds of consumers is a much more involved task than just making sure your brand stays top-of-mind with its target audience. Brand building requires nurturing and care from marketers and common mistakes associated with siloed marketing such as mixed messaging and conflicting promotions can cause confusion and erode trust between brands and consumers.



Awareness. Building awareness around products and services is an important goal for any advertiser. Even the largest, most well-known brands in the world such as McDonalds and Coke have large budgets around this initiative. Integrating search and social can help marketers push their message at scale while also ensuring they are present when online content is pulled by consumers.



Adding Value to the Rest of the Marketing Plan

Assisting other marketing channels



Organic search and social. Paid search and social advertising are perfect compliments to natural search and owned social media. Organic search and social are certainly powerful vehicles to engage fans and followers of brands, but lack the scale that paid media can provide. It's become a best practice to maximize the reach of the organic impact while strategically using paid search and social to amplify the effect.



Mobile. Marketers have learned in a very short time that consumers often reach for their mobile devices when they want to research information. With so much trust and time spent on mobile devices across search engines and social networks, brands looking to capitalize on the mobile trend should look first to these two channels to ensure they can stay in front of consumers in discovery mode. Mobile paid search and mobile social advertising are two of the fastest rising sources of quality, device-specific ad inventory online.



Display. Display has evolved rapidly in the last few years and has moved away from being passive internet billboards to real-time, hyper-targeted, biddable ad units. The data exhaust from search and social campaigns, especially once combined and harnessed into a unified pipe, can be used as a valuable input stream to enhance the relevancy and power of this channel.

Imagine how much stronger a display campaign could be when search and social signals of individual consumers are used to advise bid strategies and customize messages in real-time. For example, a consumer who has recently searched for vacation travel ideas and clicked social ads for reggae music may be a right fit for a Caribbean cruise banner ad.



Offline. For most marketers, connecting offline and online marketing integration is still very much a work in progress. Offline media can do a great job of guiding consumers towards a brand, while the online media can interact and engage with consumers. Through search and social, the impact of offline advertising can be seen via query volume, tweets, and other proxy metrics that indicate offline ad resonance.

Paving the way for Omni-channel Marketing

Another huge benefit to advertisers who can successfully accomplish search and social integration is that it could pave the way for more cross-channel integrations across their marketing organizations.

Legacy approaches and siloed infrastructures are major barriers for marketers to overcome in order to realize the powerful vision of true omni-channel marketing. Some marketers may even feel it's simply impossible to achieve and is an unattainable utopian, unattainable notion.

For the champions of cross-channel marketing, consider how a powerful working model inside your marketing organization could inspire change.

At the end of the day, once integrating search and social has proven results, you'll have the momentum needed to tackle the rest of your portfolio.

Marketer's Perspective



Alex Funk

Senior Director of Global Digital Media Strategy

COVARIO[®]

Alex Funk is the Senior Director of Global Digital Media Strategy at Covario, an award winning search agency and technology firm headquartered in San Diego. Alex, a ten-year online marketing veteran, leads a team of cross functional digital marketers in the areas of search engine marketing, social media, content marketing, user experience design, and analytics.

Developing search and social synergy is not a new concept. To do them correctly requires equal amounts of teamwork and technology to begin gathering the data. This data is the window to truly understand how the two marketing channels interact with one another. Does one channel affect behaviors for another? At the end of the day we are trying to prove validity and a certain ROI for all marketing channels.

Painting a picture that includes more of the complete customer journey across engaging social channels like Facebook and Twitter on to direct response channels like Google and Yahoo/Bing can create both better budgeting for your marketing organization and an improved customer experience for your target audience.

4 tips for digital advertisers to drive search marketing and social media campaign synergy:

#1 - Siloed organizations must begin to work together

As hinted above, just getting teams to talk together is the first step. Understanding goals, timelines, audience messaging, success and failures helps build the foundation. After that, it's all about communication between the teams.

#2 - Develop a measurement framework for both search and social

It sounds easier than it is, but doesn't have to be that hard! The importance of the measurement framework is to track both the front-end awareness metrics and the post-click ROI contributing metrics. This way we can see how much advertising was spent for each channel driving impressions and clicks as well as how many actually converted through either channel.

The easiest way to do this is through technology, and if the technology is doing the work, it should show a conversion path between the two or more channels. This visibility is something that all marketers big or small love to have in their hands.

#3 - Test your hypothesis

What is your hunch about what is going on? Did search volumes spike after a large social media campaign on Facebook or Twitter? You should look to prove or disprove common assumptions with cold hard data.

Set up a test to identify a campaign that is supported from search and social (again communication between the teams paramount here) and let it run for a few weeks. What was the result? Let the numbers tell the story.

#4 - Show that 1+1 can equal 3

Search marketers spend a lot of time writing ad copy and researching keywords for an audience that gives them very little information about themselves other than they want a bikini, a stereo or a new car. Social media platforms are adept at gathering specific demographics and affinity data about the audiences they are engaging with. For example, Facebook can tell you things about a customer way beyond just their age and interests.

Harness the data and use it to write better ad copy and build customized landing pages for paid search and other media channels. Someone who engages on Facebook that you can see purchased later through search or remarketing can tell you a lot more about what audience you should seek out for future campaigns.



Closing Thoughts



Will Martin-Gill

Senior Vice President, Product

One of the favorite parts of my job is having great conversations with leading advertisers and agencies about what's important in the marketplace and where the biggest opportunities lay. It's clear that many of you think there is a lot of opportunity to take search and social each to the next level.

From a Kenshoo perspective, the potential is in more than simply bringing data from different channels together for reporting purposes, which a number of platforms do today. Marketers seeing the most success are ones that are using the learning, data, and signals from one channel to drive and optimize the other.

Search and social are unique in being the channels with the richest data and targeting capabilities to truly capture intent and interaction. The ability to apply insights about what ad copy works, what products/services are selling the most, and what customers are most valuable is yielding significant uplift for a number of our clients.

[eBay Enterprise used our Demand Driven Campaigns solution](#) to easily create Facebook ads based on key search signals for Alex and Ani, yielding a significant uplift in social performance.

[Sears is leveraging Kenshoo](#) to use data on individual search keyword ROIs to optimize its bids on social ads through Facebook Exchange. A large Financial Services client is targeting customers on Facebook that have searched for its best performing keywords. This is significantly increasing exposure to valuable audiences and allowing the team to reach them at a lower cost and with different messages.

We've only begun to scratch the surface of how these two channels can be managed together to significantly increase overall performance. We're excited to continue the conversation with you and please do let us know if you have thoughts and comments!

A white handwritten signature of Will Martin-Gill on a dark teal background.

