



MEDTECH DIGITAL MARKETING SURVEY 2017



Marketing professionals in the MedTech sector have it tough when it comes to generating sales, leads and building brand awareness. Working in such a niche industry, marketers face a slew of challenges – from tight budgets, time and resource constraints and lack of management support to regulatory compliance issues.

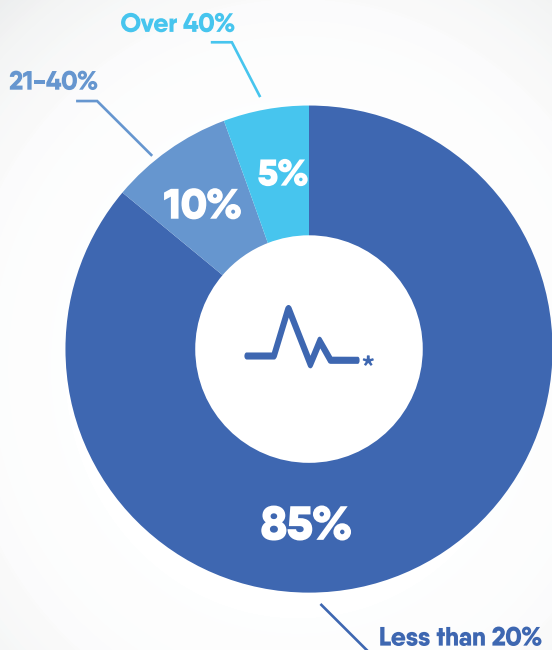
As a supplier of digital marketing solutions to the MedTech industry in Ireland, we wanted to uncover these pitfalls and shed light on some industry insights that will help you to improve your digital strategy, and most of all, return on investments.

In October 2017, we reached out to MedTech marketers based in Ireland and asked them some questions on their digital marketing habits.

**Here's what we
learned from the
96 respondents.**



What percentage of your Marketing budget was spent on Digital Marketing in 2017?



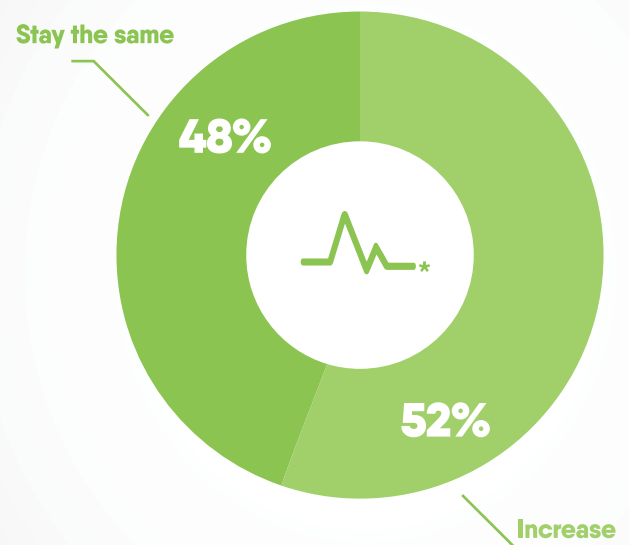
'Less than 20%' being spent on digital is quite a low figure given that Google and to a lesser extent, social media platforms are primary information sources for many patients and Healthcare Providers (HCPs).

A recent CMO Spend Survey by Gartner showed that '68% of companies keep a separate budget for digital marketing, which comprises of 1/4 of the total marketing budget, on average' with B2C digital spending usually higher than in B2B.



Our research suggests that there is considerable opportunity for conservative MedTech companies to still get ahead of international competitors by taking advantage of all the tactics the fragmented digital landscape currently offers.

What change will you make to your Digital Marketing spend in 2018 and why?



From the perspective of staying abreast of market dynamics, it's reassuring to see that 52% of MedTech marketers are starting to see the impact of clear digital strategies and intend on increasing their budgets in 2018.

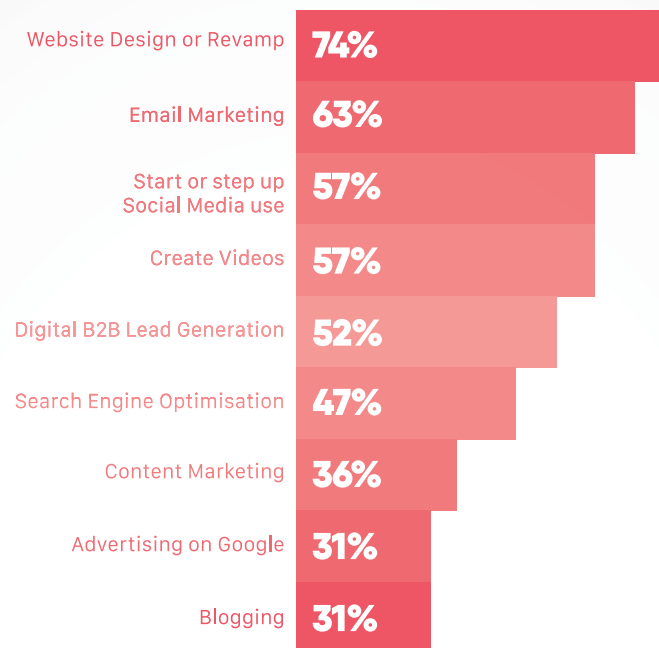
The comments from respondents, appear to concur with Forrester's 2017 research showing that '68% of B2B buyers prefer to research online on their own, up from 53% in 2015'.



"We're changing our company structure and this is being led by our sales and marketing teams who place an ever-growing emphasis on digital activity in order to consistently communicate better with HCPs in our different geographic markets" - Galway-based Respondent

"We're gradually shifting away from traditional exhibitions in order to showcase our full range online" - EMEA-focused device manufacturer

Which Digital activities are you planning over the next 12 months?



74% of MedTech marketing pros are planning to improve their digital presence by revamping their website.

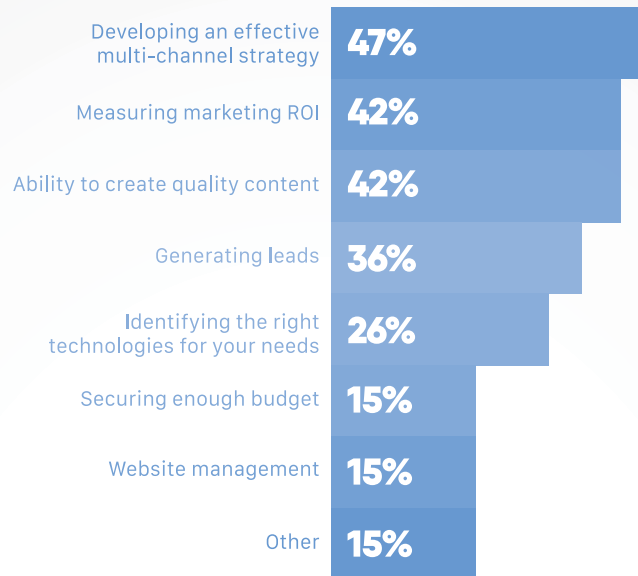
As the MedTech industry becomes more digital-oriented, an understandable mistake we've seen on several occasions over the years is that significant budgets are often invested in beautiful mobile-friendly websites but relatively little budget is conserved by marketing departments to invest in the far more expensive visitor-attracting measures from digital channels which deliver increased brand exposure, awareness and sales. A beautiful website with negligible visitor numbers doesn't help sales.

Many respondents said that they would start to reach customers by email (63%) as well as step up their social media use (57.8%). Others added that they intend on working on search engine optimisation (SEO), content and Google Adwords.



"In the coming year, we're planning an overhaul of our current company website. With that, we hope to engage our customers through email campaigns and social media use." APAC Marketing Lead

Which aspect of Digital Marketing does your company struggle most with?



The main challenges faced by the MedTech sector when it comes to digital marketing are similar to those in other industries. Getting the correct blend between old and new tactics both online and offline while keeping the peace between sales and marketing functions is rarely simple and 47% of respondents confirm this.

Measurement of marketing ROI success is difficult from an offline perspective with regular qualitative research acting as a 'best guess' of effectiveness but if approximately 80% of MedTech marketing budgets are spent offline, then KPIs need to be developed to ensure that when people exposed to offline marketing subsequently visit a company or its products online, that this data is captured. Various digital attribution models such as linear or time-decay can thus be used to track marketing performance over time.

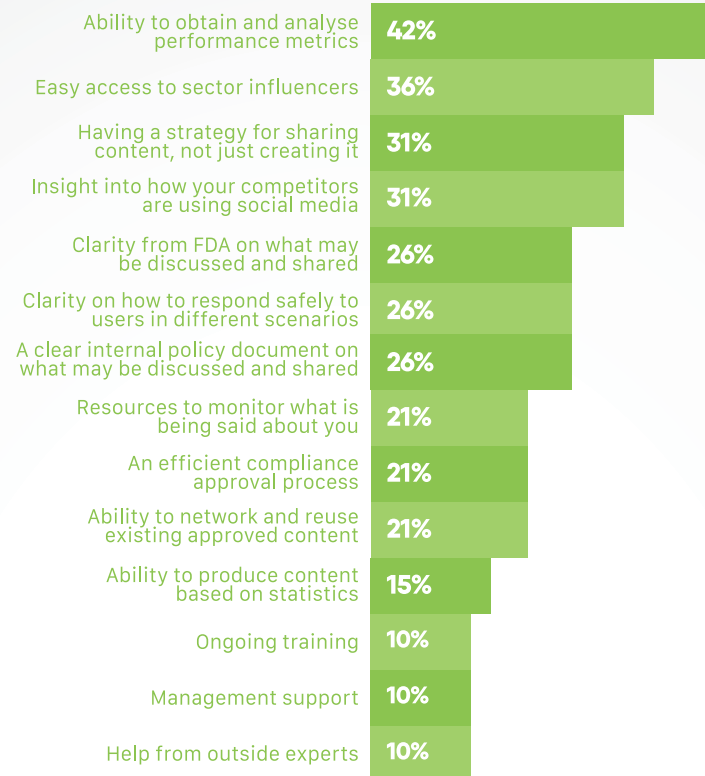
If marketing works well and sales are booming at a company, management is rarely slow to provide more budget to grow this. It's revealing that while 42% struggle to measure marketing ROI, only 15% of marketers can't get enough budget. This suggests that management often realises they've no choice but to agree to their marketers' budget requests but are immensely frustrated at the lack of ROI measurement available.

The finding that 42% of people struggle to produce quality content doesn't surprise us and is something we see regularly. The unfortunate truth is that with good editorial processes and systems and given that budgets are apparently not a massive concern, this challenge can be very easily overcome through the use of experienced third parties. Marketers and executives usually face the content challenge with the question, "how can external people be experts in our area?" but a better question is, "who can help us efficiently capture and document the expertise in the heads of our time-poor senior people".



"The most difficult part about marketing [our company] online is knowing how to engage customers on all platforms. We're unsure of where to focus our efforts." Dublin-based respondent

Which of the following would make Social Media more attractive to your company?



Social media is a huge issue for many global MedTech companies for compliance reasons. Marketers usually accept they should be doing social as that's where patients and customers are online but have complete sympathy for their legal colleagues' position and inclination towards total risk-avoidance.

Our research highlighted several common challenges but a clear and considered digital strategy would help to overcome many of these.

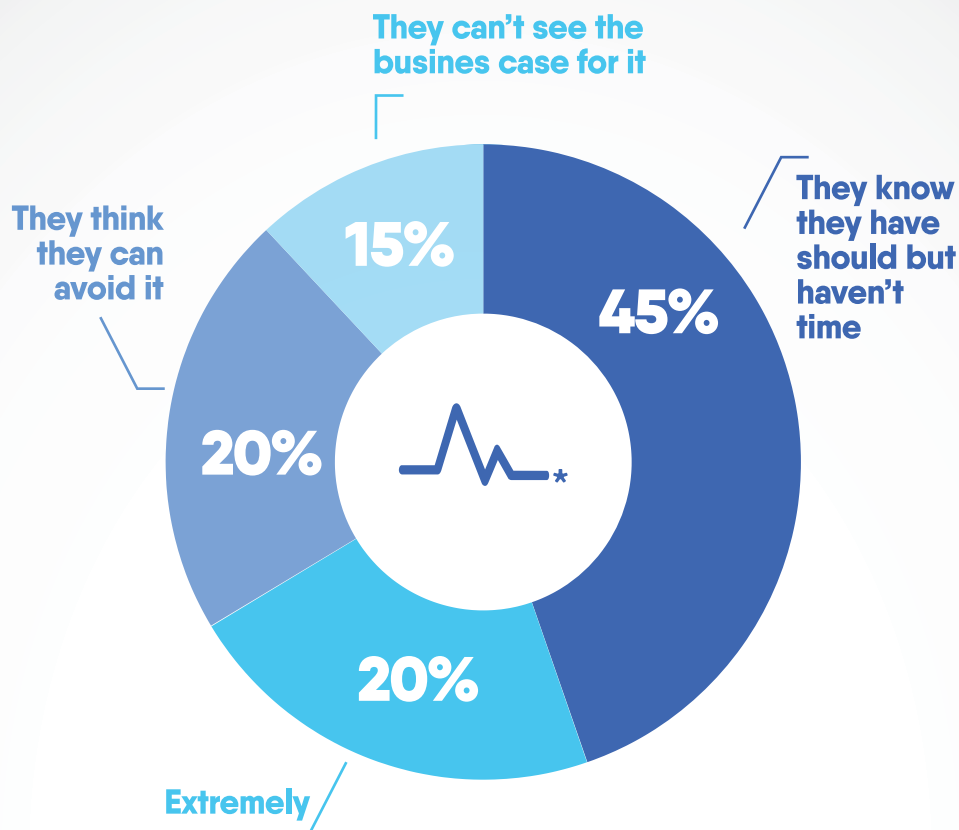
From the 44% of respondents struggling with performance metrics (easy to manage once clear KPIs are in place and methodically tracked over time) to 33% of users wanting to know how competitors are using social media (get a digital / social landscape audit done), many of the challenges around social media appear to be issues caused by a lack of knowledge regarding how to avoid potential social media landmines.

While lack of clarity from the FDA is outside an organisation's control, creating and applying best in class social media guidelines, community and crisis management policies etc goes 99.9% of the way to avoiding anything that resembles risk across multiple jurisdictions. Once such policies, systems and procedures are in place, multilingual social media channels lose their capacity to generate fear among Medtech marketers and compliance professionals.



"Social media in my industry is, rightly, full of red tape and regulations - however it makes it very difficult to get the go-ahead on digital campaigns from from superiors." - Cork-based Marketing Director (EMEA)

How engaged is your senior management in Digital Marketing?



45% of respondents said their management know digital marketing is strategically vital for brand reputation and making sales, but can't find the time to dedicate to it. Once a company's digital infrastructure is correctly setup and configured, digital is extremely measurable, scalable and most importantly comprehensible.

The problem is usually getting to this point such that senior management can get a one page summary showing the impact and ROI of various digital channels via an intelligent attribution model which takes account of all sales and marketing channels for that company.

Often it comes down to the call of senior managers working with marketers to decide if a digital marketing plan will go ahead. Only 15.2% of managers fail to see the brand and sales enhancing value of digital marketing, which is encouraging to see.

20% of respondents said their management believe they can avoid it which might have been true in the past depending on the nature of the business but marketing is changing fast. Interestingly, another 20% are completely comfortable with pushing ahead using digital channels.



"Many senior staff have little experience with digital marketing and are reluctant to get on board with it. It makes it an uphill battle trying to secure space in the budget!" - Senior marketing executive in Dublin



Key Takeaways

- MedTech marketing professionals based in Ireland frequently lack the support and resources to get their digital marketing strategy off the ground
- Budget is rarely an issue but proving marketing Return on Investment is.
- 42% of companies struggle to produce quality content which is disappointing as with the right editorial processes and systems, this need not be the case.
- Social media is a huge challenge for MedTech given the risk-avoidance and compliance issues involved. While 57% are planning to increase their usage of this digital channel, many issues such as performance monitoring, competitor analysis and community management are not as unassailable as they appear to be to many of our respondents.
- 75% plan to revamp their website in 2018 which is progressive but concerning as our fear for these companies based on experience is that when sites are revamped, there's rarely much marketing budget left to increase visitor traffic levels without which a website can't help sales in the short-medium term.



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