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In order to help you achieve your marketing goals, the Digital Marketing Institute has developed 3i principles to focus on when planning your [digital marketing strategy](#).

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The goal is to get you thinking about the end-to-end digital process your organization needs to go through in order to [adopt your strategy](#):

#1 Initiate

The initiation process is about going back to basics, by focusing on what the customer wants from the digital journey you are setting up.

You want to start with what the customer is actually doing and work backwards towards your strategy. What are the key pillars that you need to think about?



What will add value to your organisation and customer experience? This is expressed through the use of [customer research](#); to understand how your customer would like to be talked to.

You can use consumer research, past data collected from your campaigns and dedicated research ordered specifically for your company. Research the key roadblock your strategy needs to overcome in order to efficiently reach the audience.

By starting with the customer and translating customer view and insights into a tangible digital strategy you increase [your chance of achieving your goals](#).

#2 Iterate

The iteration process is about how to iterate that strategy your created and pilot it in order to confirm it efficiency.

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The iteration phase is focused on developing your strategy by proceeding to in-market testing.

It allows you to understand in real time how your [customers answer to your strategy](#), content, creatives.

You can then take this information to get a real life understanding on how the audience would respond to the actual campaigns you are about to push.

The benefits of the iteration phase is that, by testing on small groups of representative individuals, you can interrupt and optimize your strategy based on success and failure.

[In addition after testing](#), you have the ability to reach out to the customer and ask for feedback.

This is expressed through beta testing your new content platforms or A/B testing your campaigns creatives and content by targeting small sets of your audience.

You can conduct focus groups around your strategy and assets to get real time feedback and understand the sentiments towards your message choice.

This applies across time, as you can use your learning throughout and after each campaigns to continually get insights from your online engagement with your customers and acting upon the results.

#3 Integrate

The integration process is focused on involving and integrating other digital channels coherently.

Once you have tested the strength of your message and creatives, it is time to spread it across all your [digital assets](#).

You want to make sure you have the buy in of your organization to move on with your strategy.

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The integration stage is focused on two parts: selling your strategy and getting approval from the business organization to move forward, and then integrate your findings and strategy across the different channels.

In order to achieve the first part, you can rely on the data uncovered during the initiation phase and apply the findings to relate to the broader business goals

and challenges by showcasing how your strategy solves for the business.

Additionally, if you plan on using new channels or testing new digital marketing software you want to think about how these integrate into the existing processes and organization of your team.

When thinking through your digital marketing strategy, beyond the message and the creative, you need to know where they will live.

Research can help you make informed decision about what channels should be prioritized, especially working within the limit of a budget, marketers need to chose the channels that will cost effectively help reach the set objectives.

The most common [digital channels](#) are the following and will be developed more in-depth in the coming slides:

- Email & Marketing Automation
- Website Optimization
- Social Media Marketing
- Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC)
- Organic Search
- Display Advertising
- Content marketing

When considering channels or touch points (as they can be called), there are three inputs that should come to mind:

1.**Data:** Data driven decisions can be valuable for performance marketing involving precise performance goals such as conversion, lead generation or click through rate (CTR).

The more robust and stable the data that is based on a large panel, past campaigns and independent research, the more credible the channel will be.

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2.**Consumer Insights:** Consumer driven decision focuses on the actual consumer adoption of specific channels, receptivity and general media usage to meet the audience where they actually are and what channels resonate most with them.

A channel might not perform in terms of ROI but can be heavily adopted by the audience, ensuring visibility as opposed to conversion.

3.**Communication Needs:** This decision model is based on what each channel's role in the buyer's journey is.

Deciding for channels also means selecting the correct channels that are likely to reach the target audience at a specific stage of the funnel and move them to the next.

Each media can have an impact on the buyer's journey and these should be taken in consideration when developing the marketing strategy.

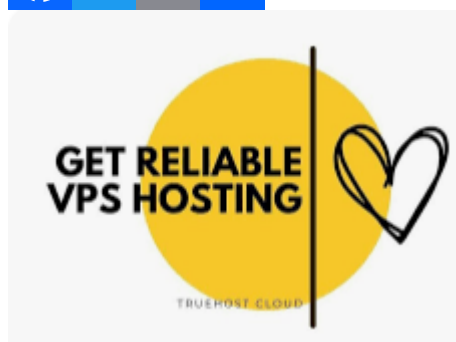
Depending on the need of the campaign, one of these considerations should inform the channels choice by providing the most relevant impact to the campaign.

Action Point

PS: I know you might agree with some of the points raised in this article or disagree with some of the issues raised.

Please share your thoughts on the topic discussed. We would appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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