

# FIVE MARKETING INSIGHTS STRAIGHT FROM SILICON VALLEY



SOURCE **BRAND** SOLUTIONS

# HOW DID SOURCE BRAND SOLUTIONS END UP IN SILICON VALLEY?



*By David Heisler Photography*

President Jay Allred, Digital Services Manager David Yoder, Platform Director Zac Hister and Engagement & Solutions Editor Brittany Schock attended the third live seminar of the Facebook Local News Membership Accelerator at Facebook's headquarters in January 2019 with individuals from 17 other newsrooms. Speaking is Tim Griggs, an Independent Consultant & Advisor. Standing against the right wall is David Grant, Program Manager with the Facebook Journalism Project.

Source Brand Solutions (SBS) is part of the same company as three Ohio news outlets: [Richland Source](#), [Ashland Source](#) and [Knox Pages](#). We run the marketing campaigns for these newsrooms on an ongoing basis. In 2018, Richland Source was selected to be one of 17 newsrooms to participate in a [Local News Membership Accelerator within the Facebook Journalism Project](#).

SBS and newsroom participants worked daily for five months to improve the [Source membership](#) program. We participated in weekly coaching sessions and attended four live seminars with the other accelerator newsrooms. The third seminar was at Facebook's headquarters. We are still applying the lessons learned to the Source membership program as well as the marketing strategy we create for ourselves and other clients.

We want to share five key takeaways from our experience that any organization can apply to its marketing plan right away. Like you, we care about results. If you follow our lead, you'll be able to reach more individuals within your target market.

# #1: CHOOSE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY



*By David Heisler Photography*

Engagement & Solutions Editor Brittany Schock presented on the progress Source Media Properties made with growing membership in a few short months.

Having the right software programs will help your business run smoothly and enable your team to respond to the needs of customers. Depending on your business model, you'll need at least one and maybe multiple software programs.

You'll need a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software that can securely store the information of your customers and prospects. The more data you collect from your customers, the better you'll be able to retarget them on Facebook and other platforms. Some CRM's have features to let you schedule and send emails to your lists and collect payments. If not, you can use a separate email management system and payment processor. You should use an event registration software if it's relevant to your business. Eventbrite integrates seamlessly with Facebook. Project management software allows your entire team to assign and organize tasks. You can use [Zapier](#) or create customized code that allows your programs to integrate with one another.

The right software programs make all the difference in gaining and retaining customers. Many programs allow you to do a trial so you can determine if it will work for your organization before making a purchase. We started with just a CRM early on in our agency history, but we've added project management software, event registration software, and an e-commerce site for advertising packages. As we've scaled, these additional programs have saved us time and frustration.

# #2: MAKE DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS

Occupancy:  
81 Persons



*By David Heisler Photography*

Platform Director Zac Hister shared how Source Brand Solutions used the lessons learned during the accelerator to develop marketing strategies resulting in Source membership growth.

There are so many data sources at your fingertips, but which ones should you use and how should they inform your decisions? Let's look at your options for website, email and social media analytics.

## Website

At minimum you should gather data on your website visitors, and we recommend Google Analytics. You can view your site activity live, understand the demographics and segmentation of your audience, calculate unique visitors and more. Our Google Analytics guide offers [step-by-step instructions](#) for the set up and navigation of this tool. Use this data to understand your site visitors and adjust your marketing campaigns to reach more of the segments of people you are already attracting.

[Installing a Facebook pixel](#) on your website will allow you to measure cross-device conversions, optimize delivery to people likely to take action, and create custom Facebook audiences from website visitors in Ads Manager. Other social media platform pixels are available to install on your website, but start with the Facebook pixel as more research exists on its effectiveness across multiple industries.

# #2: MAKE DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS CONT.



*By David Heisler Photography*

David Grant, Program Manager with the Facebook Journalism Project, coached our team to success through weekly calls during the Local News Membership Accelerator.

## Email

You'll want to analyze your email marketing campaigns as well. User-friendly systems like Constant Contact and Mailchimp allow you to see your email open rate and click rate as well as unique click-throughs and what percentage of clicks a specific link yielded. You can also run subject line A/B testing. More robust email marketing systems allow you to view detailed analytics that are focused on conversion. Source Brand Solutions advises businesses on the best email marketing system for them and runs email campaigns on their behalf.

## Social Media

Each social network provides an analytics toolkit for you to view reach, engagements and more. You can publish and analyze all of your social platforms from one dashboard using a third-party tool. These metrics will show you which posts your audience engages with the most, and you can use the data to adjust your social media plan.

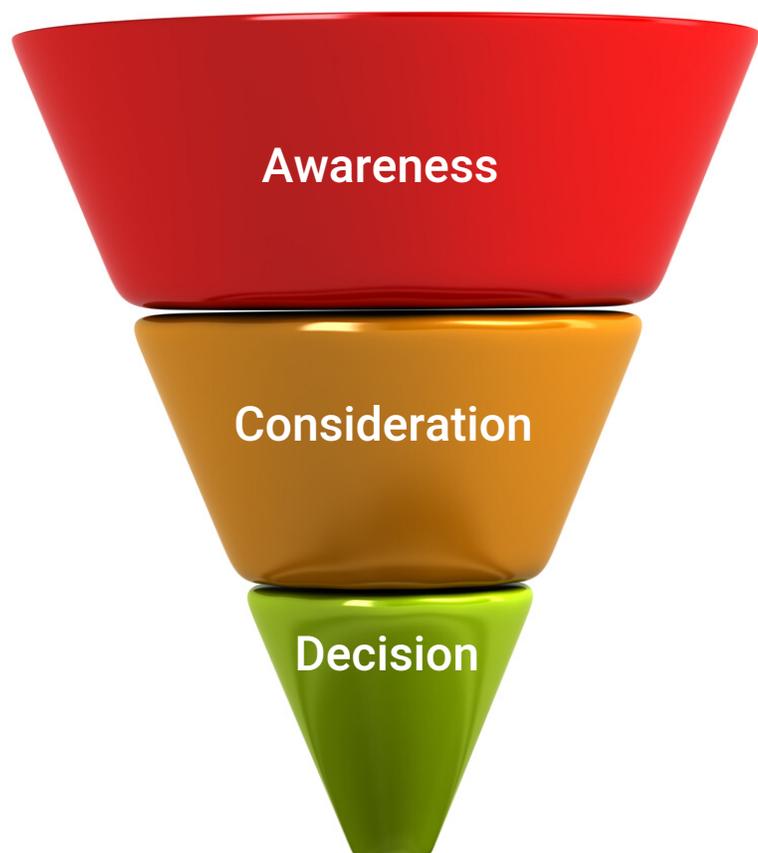
# #3: USE A FUNNEL APPROACH

Sales funnels enable your company to develop a relationship with your potential customers just as you would in any friendship or romance. You don't want to scare your prospects by asking for a sale too early, just as you shouldn't get engaged on your second date.

A funnel strategically guides your prospect through a journey of getting to know your brand and then asks them to make a commitment. Facebook encourages the funnel approach and offers several different [advertising bid strategies](#) to help you find and retarget the right people. We suggest setting up a different funnel for each product or service category within your business.

At the top of the funnel, the goal is to make people in your target audience aware that you exist. At this stage you can purchase digital ads and grow your organic social media following to increase brand awareness.

Once someone knows you exist, they move to the middle of the funnel. You can begin to educate them about how your products and services can solve their problems better than any other company. Meanwhile, they are considering whether to purchase from you or your competitor.



# #3: USE A FUNNEL APPROACH CONT.



*By David Heisler Photography*

Digital Services Manager David Yoder and Engagement & Solutions Editor Brittany Schock were key in ensuring every employee within the company reviewed the accelerator lessons learned and participated in growing Source membership.

We suggest collecting email addresses and creating an automated email sequence that familiarizes them with your company and helps them make a purchasing decision. You can retarget Facebook ads to individuals that visit your website or to those that gave you their email address.

Prospects become customers when they make a purchase. You should offer a great experience, stay in touch, and cross-sell and upsell to them. Make them feel appreciated by thanking them on Facebook and other platforms. Reshare and comment back to them, and show your audience how a particular customer used your product or service.

You should devote relatively equal attention to your prospects and customers at each stage in your funnels. However, **customers that are the most engaged and enthusiastic about your company should be your focus.** These are your whales. They will help you drive revenue by promoting your brand and you can test new ideas with them. You should continue to provide value back to your whales in the form of special access, savings, etc.

# #4: OBSESS OVER USER EXPERIENCE



*By David Heisler Photography*

Individuals from 17 different newsrooms gathered at Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park, California, for the third Local News Membership Accelerator seminar in January 2019.

You spend significant time and money to drive people to visit your website. You don't want to lose them when they arrive at your site. Instead, their experience should be enjoyable. You should obsess over the small details on your site that will impact the user experience. A combination of things need to happen for you to make people curious enough to take the next step and make a purchase.

Your website design including the layout, font and style choices should make a prospective customer feel positive about your company. Think about your site speed and navigation. Users should be able to clearly navigate your site and complete their searches. Making a purchase should require as few clicks as possible, and you should offer a frictionless checkout process.

Your point of sale (POS) system should be a good fit for your customers and your business. Many options exist such as allowing customers to check out with a major credit card or using a comprehensive system such as Square, Shopify or WooCommerce. Revisit each page of your site regularly and make changes as needed. Source Brand Solutions can help you weave together a positive user experience and focus on what sells.

# #5: MAXIMIZE RETURN ACROSS THE DEMAND CURVE



*By David Heisler Photography*

President Jay Allred continues to lead our company in applying the Local News Membership Accelerator lessons learned.

Marketing is not just about promoting your business. It's also about developing quality products and then pricing and distributing them effectively. You need to figure out how to convert prospects into customers and customers into repeat customers with the right offers at the right time.

Think about your pricing model. Is it outdated? Does it rely too much on discounts? We recommend doing competitor research and taking a close look at where your prices land compared to similar companies. Would packages and bundles help you sell more and save your customers time? Source Brand Solutions recently created a [WooCommerce shop](#) with advertising packages. It allows customers to skip the step of meeting with an account executive and check out with a credit card if they want to get started quickly.

We applied [Agile thinking](#) during our time in the accelerator program. It helped us to innovate and make changes to the Source membership program quickly. We already fostered an entrepreneurial culture, but Agile increased our speed and ability to bring new aspects of our program to market. We embraced the principle of iteration by trying ideas, getting customer feedback and then abandoning the idea if needed.



*By David Heisler Photography*

Local News Membership Accelerator participants communicate on an ongoing basis to share ideas, best practices and results.

Our Local News Membership Accelerator wrapped in 2019, but we continue to apply the lessons learned. Overall, we recommend embracing a spirit of collaboration and iteration. Form teams to complete projects that fully embrace Agile thinking and don't overthink the details.

You have to try new ideas and let your customers help you understand how to focus your marketing efforts. Just continually put out ideas, test them and abandon them if needed. Repeat this process until you find a message that works for you.

We took a long time trying to figure out how to be fast. But once we did, we accelerated. You have to be willing to do the work, but don't let the quest for A+ work get in the way of solid B work. If you're a small business, don't try to emulate what you see on TV. You have the ability to reach the right people using these digital marketing principles while staying within your marketing budget.

If you want to be confident that you're investing in marketing that works, [we're available to offer guidance.](#)

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