

Five Key Marketing Trends for Advisors in 2013

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After taking a lengthy break from blogging last year, I'm renewing my focus on writing in 2013. I hope you enjoy this first of many articles coming this year.

It is a new year and time to experiment with fresh marketing ideas. Keeping up with trends isn't just a way to tell your colleagues you are on the cutting edge of marketing. You need to understand how consumers are changing and how you can keep your message delivery relevant. If your marketing is getting stale, here are five marketing trends for 2013.

Mobile-friendly marketing

By 2015, more Americans will access the Internet through mobile devices than through PCs.¹ For this reason, there will be more focus on mobile-friendly marketing in 2013. For advisors, this will come in the form of mobile-friendly websites.

Some advisors will opt for websites that are compatible for viewing with a mobile device, while some will choose a separate dedicated mobile website that provides easy links to contact information (email and phone) and directions or a map to the office.

Another trend among web designers is responsive design. Responsive websites resize and adapt for optimal viewing no matter what device you use – from mobile phones to desktop computers.

Advisors will also be looking for more ways to market through mobile apps. While advisors have limited options right now, there is no doubt that more vendors will begin releasing mobile apps to help advisors market, such as those currently being offered by [Boulevard R](#) and [eMoney](#).

Video marketing

Video marketing for financial advisors has been gaining popularity over the last several years and shows no sign of plateauing anytime soon. Advisors are trading in lengthy written explanations about strategies, philosophies and concepts for short videos. Video

¹ <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2392856,00.asp>



accounts for more than 50% of Internet traffic and that number is only expected to increase in the future.²

In addition to the videos advisors already use from vendors (e.g., [eMoney](#)) or third-party content providers (e.g., [Forefield](#)), we'll begin to see more professionally produced videos starring advisors themselves as video production costs continue to fall. And of course, we'll continue to see video blogs created using consumer-grade video cameras, smartphones and webcams. We'll also see more "interview style" videos where two people at different locations are recorded having a conversation through a platform like Google+ Hangouts (see Bill Winterberg's [FPPad OnAir](#) for an example).

Personalization

In the era of inexpensive prepackaged content, stock photos, templates and automation, there is a driving need for personalization in marketing. More and more firms, both inside and outside the financial services industry, are looking for ways to make a personal connection through digital channels such as websites. One way I see this is being translated is that advisors are trading in stock photos for original photos of their office, staff or community to show a more realistic representation of their firm.

Bios are another area where firms are adding personalization. Instead of a summary of professional achievements, some advisors are using bios to paint a more complete picture with personal stories, beliefs and insights, and also using humor. (An example of a creative bio from outside of the financial services industry can be found [here](#).)

Finally, there is the growing trend of "smart content" on websites. Smart content changes based on custom parameters such as geographic location, previous visits to the website, previous interaction on the website or stage in the sales cycle. Being able to customize and dynamically change content based on what is already known about a prospect or client results in a more personalized experience.

TED-style presentations

The information age has fundamentally changed the amount, density and speed at which we consume information. Consumers are more distracted and have shorter attention spans than ever.

To overcome this, there is a trend of shorter presentations with more digestible bites, which I refer to as TED-style presentations. If you aren't familiar with [TED Talks](#), they are short live presentations (18 minutes max) that are posted online where people share "ideas worth spreading." This concept of several short presentations instead of one long workshop is gaining popularity and is sure to be a continuing trend in 2013.

² <http://www.fierceonlinevideo.com/story/cisco-sees-near-doubling-online-video-users-2016/2012-06-05>



Social SEO

Search engines like Google are continuously improving the way they determine the ranking of web content. Since online interaction between a business and a consumer is difficult to fake, search engines are now putting more weight on social media in their search algorithms. This is known as social SEO.

As further proof that social SEO is a very real trend, Google recently launched Author Rank (see [Understanding Google's Author Rank and How to Use it in Your Content Marketing](#)) which stresses the importance on content created by a single author. This trend is going to result in advisors using Google+ more, which has been slow to gain mass adoption. Advisors who are serious about their SEO strategy will need to create content on a consistent basis and build a strong social network that interacts with and shares this content.

Recently, an excellent article, [10½ Ways to Take Advantage of "Social SEO."](#) in *Forbes* discussed how you can use social SEO in your marketing strategy. With such importance being placed on social media, it will be a mandatory strategy for advisors who want to be ranked highly by search engines.

Technology continues to change the landscape of financial advisor marketing. Not only does it offer new tools to reach a prospect or a client, but it changes the way consumers hear your marketing message. While you don't have to be on the cutting edge of marketing to be successful, understanding the trends will help you adapt your strategy to the ever-changing marketplace. Hopefully, at least one of these five marketing trends will spark an interest and reinvigorate some of your old campaigns for 2013.

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