

Digital Marketing Survey Results

What Providers Need to Know to Survive Today's Digital World

Introduction

As a leading provider of websites and digital marketing services for HME providers, the team at ARI Network Services is interested in learning more about the successes, failures and continuing challenges that you face as you work to stay competitive in today's increasingly digital home medical equipment retail world.

That's why we teamed up with HomeCare Magazine to survey providers like you to gather some benchmarking data on the digital marketing maturity of the industry.

If you just said to yourself, "I don't sell online, so digital marketing doesn't apply to me," KEEP READING!

You, like many of your HME peers, are missing many opportunities to capture in-store shoppers who stair their buying journey online.

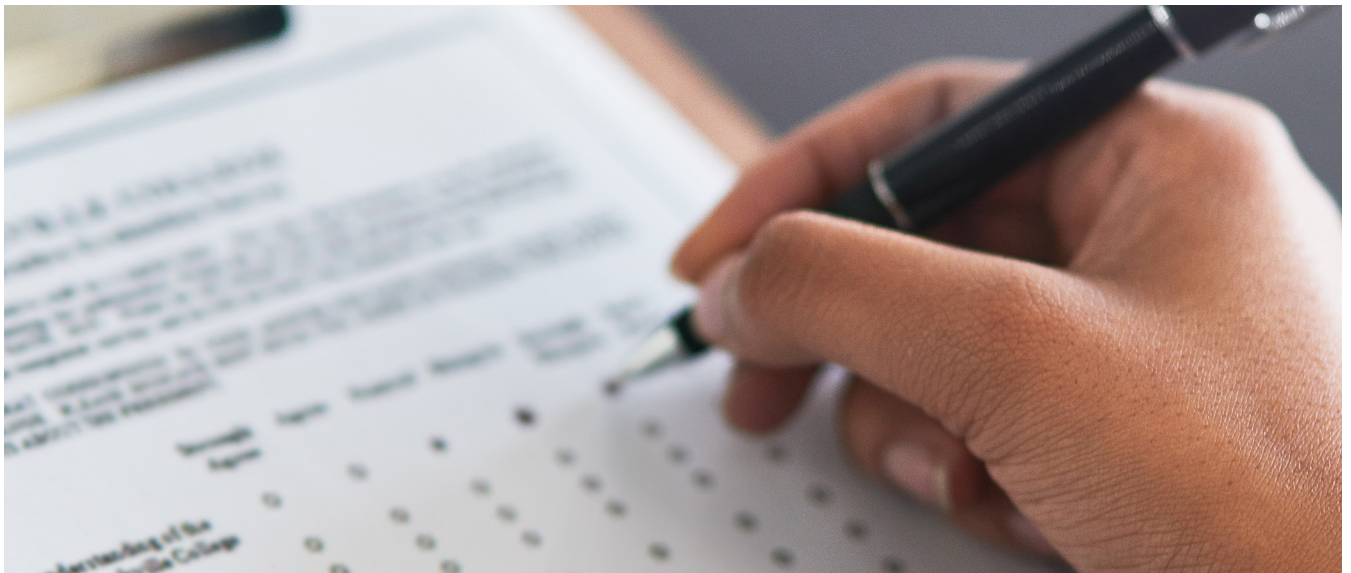


The Results Are In

One hundred ninety five people took our survey, and of that number, 129 indicated that they were a brick-and-mortar HME providers. This sample size has given us a good indication of the state of digital marketing among providers and has allowed us to extrapolate some conclusions about the greater universe of HME providers.

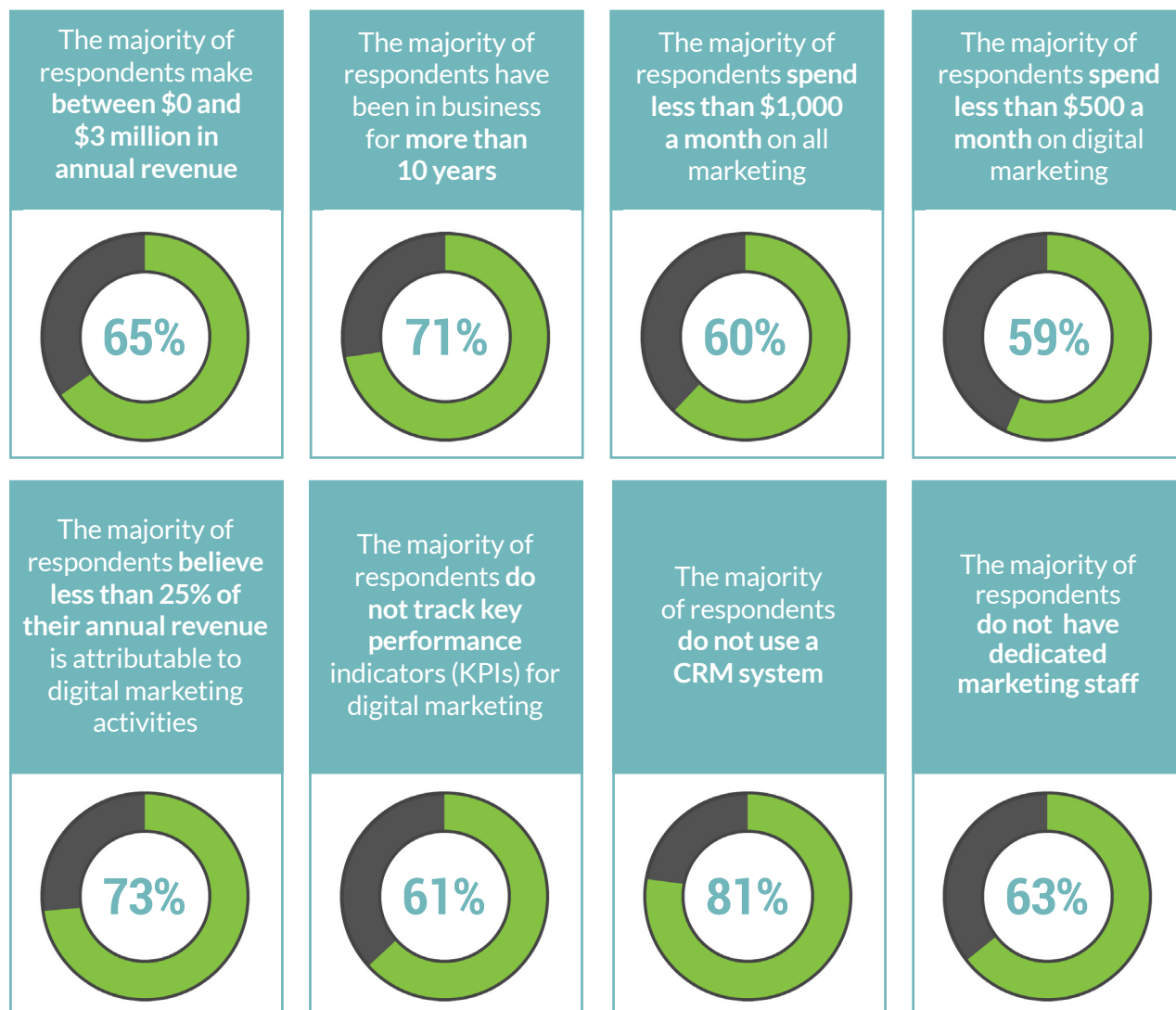
Our biggest takeaway?

HME providers are lagging behind many other brick-and-mortar retail sectors in their marketing maturity. The most profitable retailers show the greatest levels of digital marketing maturity, and there is great opportunity for savvy HME retailers to capitalize on the digital marketing immaturity of their competitors to capture leads and sales both online and in-store.



By the Numbers

Let's start our look at the survey results by offering a snapshot of the responses we received:



Take a moment and think about how your business aligns with these responses from average brick-and-mortar home medical retailers we surveyed. Would you say that this paints an accurate picture of your business?

As we dig into the results a little deeper, we'll offer some advice as to how you can better leverage digital marketing to capitalize of the relative lack of digital sophistication of most brick-and-mortar HME providers.

Put Your Money Where Your Marketing Is

MARKETING BUDGETS

Most businesses with revenue less than \$1 million are spending less than \$1,000 a month on marketing: 52% spend less than \$500 month and 35% spend between \$500 and \$1,000 month.

With Providers who earn between \$1 million and \$3 million in revenue, we begin to see a shift in spending over \$1,000 a month, and at revenue over \$3 million a year, we see 62% of businesses spending more than \$1,000 a month on marketing.

Is \$1,000 a month a magic marketing budget?

Of course not. Depending on the relative size of your business and your business goals, your budgetary needs for marketing could vary widely. However, with more than 87% of customers starting their shopping research online, it is critical for home medical equipment providers to invest in connecting with those shoppers.

Not sure where to start? Use the checklist on the next page to see simple ways to know you're on the right digital path.



If you haven't invested in digital marketing, it's time to get started.
Here's a list of the basics:



A comprehensive, mobile-friendly website



A local search strategy

(This is the new face of SEO.)



A reputation management strategy



An email marketing strategy

(This is tied to your CRM – if you don't have one, invest here first!
I'll touch on this more later.)



A paid search strategy

The good news? With a budget of \$1,000 a month, you absolutely can at least get started with all of these digital marketing musts! **Next – let's talk results and how to measure them.**

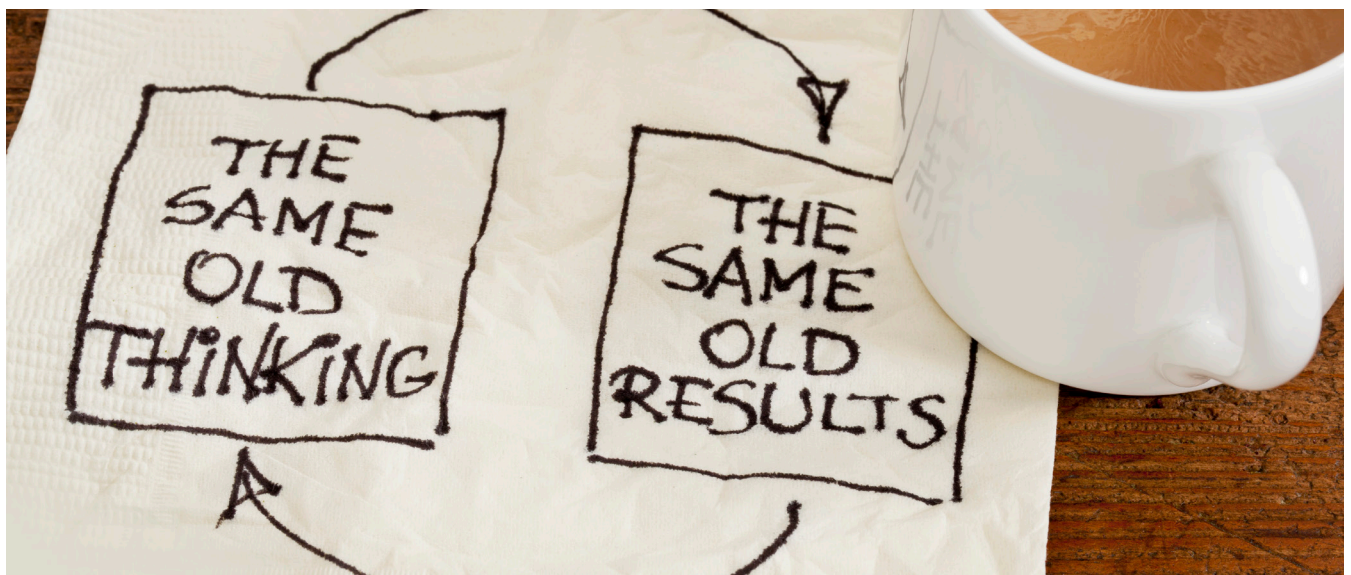
Does Digital Drive Results?

The short answer we heard was a clear, “NO!” 73% of respondents believe that less than 25% of revenue is attributable to digital marketing activities, however, we also learned that 61% of those we surveyed aren’t measuring any marketing KPIs.

Anecdotally, providers aren’t connecting the dots between their digital presence and door swings at their “brick-and-mortar locations. Remember: 87% of shoppers start their research online before they ever visit a store. So whether they’re typing their product category into Google, exploring the dealer locator of a manufacturer’s site or reading online reviews, the content that exists about your store online is informing their shopping decisions.

Anything you do to impact your presence across those online destinations is a form of digital marketing. If you still believe digital doesn't deliver, I encourage you to dig deeper into your own data!






On the whole, HME providers aren’t taking advantage of these critical performance analytics to inform their business decisions. As you’re likely working within an already tight marketing budget, it is absolutely critical to measure your performance to drive digital marketing ROI.



Focus on Driving Conversions

Whether you're measuring a conversion as a completed lead form on the landing page for your email campaign, an inbound call from a paid search ad or an eCommerce sale from your website, you need to know if your investments are actually getting shoppers to take the next step in their buying journey.

We know that conversions, specifically leads are important to you!
We asked survey participants to force rank the following digital marketing initiatives:

-  **GENERATING ONLINE LEADS**
-  **EMAIL MARKETING**
-  **DIGITAL ADVERTISING**
-  **SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)**
-  **SOCIAL MEDIA**



Generating online leads was by far our survey participants' most important digital marketing initiative. Intuitively, providers understand that conversions are the life blood of your business, but most still aren't connecting the dots to measure the performance of their lead generation efforts.

A clear driver for this disconnect is the lack of dedicated marketing staff. 63% of our survey respondents do not have dedicated marketing staff. Marketing – specifically digital marketing – continues to evolve at breakneck speed. You absolutely need someone on your team who can keep up with the trends and ensure your business can be found everywhere today's digital shoppers are looking!

This doesn't have to mean a full-time hire. Digital marketing services providers can be a cost-effective extension of your store's team.

Just be sure that when you're vetting service providers that you work with someone who understands your industry – marketing for the pizza joint across town is much different than marketing a successful home medical equipment store!

Use the right tools for the job

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Finally, one of the areas where we see the most room for improvement was in the use of a CRM system. 81% of respondents said that they aren't using a CRM system (short for Customer Relationship Management).

Your relationships with your customers are at the heart of your business, but as you grow, keeping track of your customers without a formal system is impossible.

Your CRM is the heart of all of your business systems and can be used to track customer profile information, sales history, marketing interactions and much more. As you build this system, you'll have data about your current customers at your fingertips, making targeted digital marketing a possibility. Ever get an email for a birthday discount from one of your favorite retailers? A CRM made that possible!

Want to target CPAP customers? CRM makes it possible. How about targeting a Mother's Day special at people who buy for their moms? CRM will come to the rescue!



Start Building Your Digital Presence Today.

FINAL FINDINGS

Based on this survey, we see a lot of room for digital marketing growth for home medical equipment providers who can start to leverage best practices like some of those we've walked through here.

But watch out!

While the industry on the whole is still in its digital infancy, we did see enough respondents on the growth curve that do 'get it'. The dinosaurs among you need to watch out for the raptors!

Along the way – stay connected with us and our friends at HomeCare Magazine to stay up-to-date with what's going on in your industry and in the wild world of digital marketing.



Want to talk to someone about some of the ideas presented here?
Send us an email – Marketing@arinet.com