

1. Who is your client, and what is their current digital marketing strategy?

My client is Carl's Frozen Custard. Carl's has been a popular attraction for the citizens of Fredericksburg since 1947, and as a recognized historic landmark, many tourists visit it as well. Therefore, their current digital marketing strategies are targeted at anyone who lives here or who may be visiting. Though this is a broad target market, it's effective because Carl's is exclusively in Fredericksburg, so location is a key area of segmentation.

Carl's has a website that links to its Facebook account and TripAdvisor page, and the business also has an Instagram account. Their website appears at the top of the Google search results page, meaning that it has strong search engine optimization. The website's homepage includes a brief outline of their history, the menu, and information about hours and location. The homepage is primarily meant to build awareness for the company, and as consumers go deeper into the site or click on the linked accounts, they can see more specific information that leads them down the marketing funnel. For example, images on the site that show ice cream make consumers interested and images that show prices help consumers consider the products. Their social media marketing on Facebook and Instagram targets these same parts of the funnel in similar ways, with posts that provide information for those who may not be aware of Carl's or who may just be gaining interest. Their TripAdvisor page also provides a lot of the same basic information, in addition to utilizing online customer reviews. These reviews help consumers further down the funnel evaluate how Carl's compares to competitors and if they should purchase from it.

2. What do you recommend the client do in the next 2 years in terms of their digital marketing strategy?

My recommendation has four parts: social media/website marketing, social media advertising, display advertising, and email marketing.

- Social Media/Website Marketing

The current way that Carl's uses its website and social media accounts could be improved. The website is aesthetically outdated, which may turn potential consumers away from this valuable source of information. The photos it includes could be helpful channels to move consumers down the marketing funnel, but they aren't organized in a way that grabs attention. Additionally, the website does not link to its Instagram account, which would increase its search engine optimization and solidify Carl's digital brand. The site also encourages looking at online reviews, but it does nothing to ensure consumers that the reviews are real. Therefore, the website could be improved by being organized in a more appealing way, linking to the Instagram account, and listing/ensuring real online reviews.

Carl's uses Facebook and Instagram to reach consumers, but their usage could be improved by following trends, using hashtags, and posting more frequently. These accounts primarily target those who may be in the awareness and interest parts of the funnel, but those who follow the accounts are likely frequent customers or people with strong interest who need more information. It's good to have some posts with the purpose of building awareness, but it may be helpful to also have more specific information for those who care about pricing, customer reviews, hours, etc. An example of this could be story posts each night that warn when they are almost out of ice cream so that local followers feel motivated to purchase before they close. Posts leading up to their final day open for the season could be motivating as well.

- Social Media Advertising

Especially with an improved social media presence, advertisements on social media platforms that link to Carl's accounts or website could be helpful. These advertisements could target people who have tagged Fredericksburg as their location in a post, people who follow Fredericksburg businesses, and people who follow other ice cream stores. The use of social media advertisements would help potential consumers who may not be aware of Carl's learn about the business and become interested.

- Display Advertising

I suggest the use of display advertisements for the same reasons I suggested social media advertisements. Both types of advertisements help people who may be likely to purchase from Carl's become aware of the business so that they eventually go to the website or social media accounts and get pushed down the marketing funnel. Like social media advertisements, display advertisements can target those who have looked up Fredericksburg, looked up local businesses, and looked up other ice cream stores. The advertisements would link to Carl's website and would appear on other websites that are relevant to Fredericksburg.

- Email Marketing

Email marketing is the simplest element that can be added to Carl's digital marketing strategy. I suggest that Carl's displays some sort of way for customers to get added to an email list while they're at the register. Since their menu never changes, the main types of emails they could send to previous customers include reminders about when they open and close for the season or any sort of deal they may be offering to the "loyal customers" receiving the email. Email marketing is an effective way for Carl's to target people who have already made it all through the funnel and encourage them to purchase again. People who have already purchased

from Carl's may not care about the other forms of digital marketing explained above, so they may miss important information, or they may benefit from further incentives to purchase again.

3. How should your client integrate traditional advertising with digital marketing?

Carl's closes each year from November to February, so it is important to make consumers aware of this. Posters around downtown Fredericksburg that point out the opening/closing dates could build excitement or encourage locals to make one more trip to Carl's for the year. While I also suggested these reminders for social media posts, fliers could draw the attention of people who are already near Carl's and probably have been there or at least seen it before. Additionally, posters throughout UMW's campus may attract college students who may be new to the area.

Based on customer reviews on TripAdvisor, many people hear about Carl's through word-of-mouth referrals. The business should encourage customers to "tell their friends", which can be done through posters on the stand, verbal suggestions from the employees, or even discounts for a proven referral. They encourage customers to leave reviews on TripAdvisor, but people may trust people they know in real life versus someone who left an online review. Further, because some tourists also stop at Carl's, local radio shows could spread positive feedback about the business to people driving by Fredericksburg.

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