


The image features a stylized mountain landscape with green and blue mountains and evergreen trees. In the foreground, there is a wooden signpost. On the left side of the signpost is a wooden shield-shaped frame containing a compass. The main part of the signpost is a large, rounded red sign with white text and two icons: a wrench and a person with a brain. The text reads: "The 10 Hard and Soft Skills for the 2020 Marketer".

The 10 Hard and Soft Skills for the 2020 Marketer

2020 will no doubt be another year of rapid change and evolution – new platforms, new trends, new work cultures, and new ways of working will impact every business and every marketer behind it.

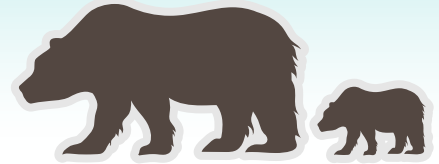
Equip yourself for success in this ever-evolving marketing landscape by mastering the top digital marketing skills and combining them with key interpersonal qualities to help you produce better results and win the confidence of your leadership team.





1: Firm-Grasp of Data-Driven Content Strategies

It's the truth, content is indeed king. According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising. To be successful in content marketing, use customer data to uncover the audience, topic, channels, and influencer insights that will ultimately inform a successful content strategy. A proper data-driven approach to your content strategy can help you avoid wasting resources by connecting you with the right audiences in the right places at the right time. As such, be sure to incorporate data-driven analysis to design your content strategies to align with modern buying practices and behavior. This will allow you to develop the correct end-to-end offerings that generate awareness, drive consideration, and secure buying decisions.



Key statistics -

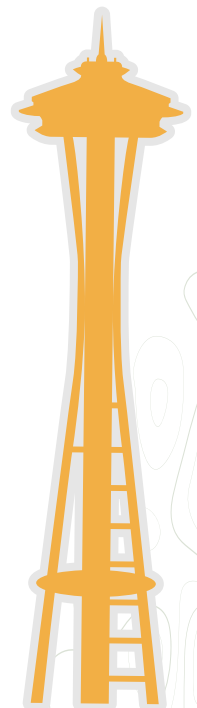
- **70%** of the buyer's journey is complete before a buyer even reaches out to sales.¹
- Audience relevance is number one when it comes to content effectiveness at **58%**.¹
- Marketers who prioritize blogging efforts are **13x** more likely to see positive ROI.¹

Tools to use: **BuzzSumo**  **EVERNOTE** **Quora**  **Storify**  **salesforce** **pardot**



2: Adopt a GROWTH MINDSET

News alert, you are not all-knowing! The baseline of all relationships—personal and professional—is rooted in one's ability to give and receive. Open-mindedness, or maintaining a growth mindset, will undoubtedly lead to growth. From the intern to the CEO, the process of growing is fueled by a willingness to change, learn and adapt. There will always be a fixed mindset (AKA nay-sayers) in the mix, and while your idea, process or approach may very well be the right course of action, truly listening to challenging opinions will foster stronger interpersonal relationships over time. Three fundamental practices to deploying a growth mindset in the workplace include viewing challenges as opportunities, acknowledging your own flaws, and generally being appreciative of opinions regardless of whether they are communicated from the mail room or the C-suite.





3: Mastery of Social Media Platforms



There is no denying the immense power and reach of Social Media. Social media marketing drives targeted web traffic, boosts your website's SEO rankings, and helps you better engage and understand your audience. However social media marketing is an evolving practice, so you need to know what platforms are performing best for your business and why. New social media platforms can manipulate the media landscape and new channels can offer greater ROI, so you need to adapt to the fluctuations of popularity. For example, in 2019 Instagram hit 1 billion monthly active users, cementing it as the 5th largest social media channel. However, TikTok is rapidly catching up, now believed to have over 350 million monthly active users.

From the rise of TikTok to the growth of video, modern marketers need to stay abreast of trends in order to master the social media landscape. It's important for you to review and make sense of platform analytics and data and translate those findings to dream up new content for the proper vehicles.

Key statistics -

- **500 million** people use Instagram every day.¹
- The average Instagram user **spends 53 minutes** on the app per day.¹
- Linked In has over **500 million users**.²
- **66%** of TikTok's users are under 30.⁶

Popular platforms to use:

LinkedIn	facebook
<i>Instagram</i>	<i>Pinterest</i>
twitter	TikTok



4: Perform with COURAGE & HUMILITY

As a modern marketer, caffeine may be essential to your daily rigor, but are you courageous and humble too? Often courage is derived from self-esteem and, when embraced in a business setting, courage yields to confidence, consensus- building, and a variety of organic leadership qualities (great!). However, when confidence evolves to arrogance, you will likely encounter interpersonal problems (not so great). So, we love the idea of off-setting courage with

healthy doses of humility. Being humble ensures confidence doesn't give way to arrogance. Similarly, humility makes you more approachable and more "human". Combined with an open mindset, courage and humility will serve as the foundation for healthy relationships with peers, staff and your leadership teams alike.





5: Command Over Voice Search and SEO

SEO will continue to play a critical, albeit evolving, role in your digital marketing strategy. In 2020, Gartner predicts that 30% of Internet searches will be activated through voice and won't require a keypad or touchscreen. Over time, this shift to voice search will profoundly change SEO strategy and tactics and the skills necessary to implement them. Google controls more than 90% of both paid and organic search. As such, understanding updates to its search algorithm is critical in staying on top of how search is changing. You need to understand what these algorithm updates mean for your SEO, content, and mobile strategies. Learn the impact of Google's search algorithm update that now aligns with the modern trend toward voice search and uses a website's mobile page first (as opposed to a desktop version of a page) for indexing and ranking.



Key statistics -

- More than **66 million** Americans now own a smart speaker.³
- **65%** of users aged 25-49-year speak to their voice-enabled devices at least once a day.³
- **55%** of households are expected to own smart speaker devices by 2022.³

Tools to use:



6: Have an attitude of APPRECIATION & GRATITUDE

As a manager, when your team or agency is burning it at both ends, are you communicating appreciation and gratitude? Some of you recall the realities of working 6 days and 60 hours as the bare minimum. And although that schedule is sometimes required, current day expectations are different for generations that have grown up with work/life balance, tele-commuting, and work smart/play hard initiatives. Also, technology has enabled global workforces to be productive 24/7/365. So, when structuring roles and regular work schedule commitments, it's important to recognize that appreciation and gratitude will go a long way—especially when an "irregular" all-nighter is required. With periodic injections of public and private "thanks" and schedule flexibility, teams will respect leadership groups with a one-for-all, all-for-one sentiment which directly contributes to organizational culture and team happiness





7: Fluency of Digital Marketing Analytics

What gets measured, gets done. The goal of digital marketing analytics is to reveal the performance and ROI of all your digital marketing channels and activities beyond just web traffic. This effort includes social media, email marketing, blogs, SEO, and so on. Digital marketing analytics can tell you how each channel performs relative to the others, track customers throughout the buyer's journey, and even attribute specific marketing activities to revenue. And with the wide number of marketing technology solutions available, you can now track analytics on almost anything you want done while armed with the most informed and insightful information.



However, the true power of analytics comes into play when you can easily tie the effect of multiple channels' performances and how it impacts your business bottom line. Learn to prioritize the data that reflects people's behavior and know how to use analytics to advance your business objectives. Being fluent in digital marketing analytics will give you the insight you need to turn unstructured data into informed decisions that support the growth of your bottom line. That means having the business acumen to know which analytics are meaningful and actionable instead of being lost in the data.

Key statistics -

- Marketers who deploy 5 or more tools are **39%** more likely to see improvement in the overall performance of their marketing programs.⁴
- **66%** of marketing data is used to better focus on targeting offers, messages and content.⁴

Popular platforms to use:

Hootsuite

HubSpot

Google

facebook IQ

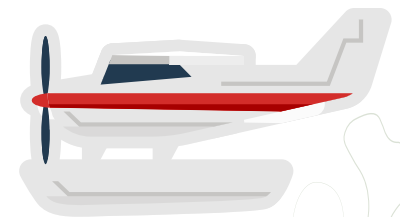
MOZ

AdEspresso



8: Display EMPATHY & COMPASSION

It's important to remember that the story we tell in our minds is different from the story playing in the minds of others. Empathy means being aware of the feelings and thinking of others and understanding their needs. It doesn't mean you have to agree with their point of view, but it means that you're willing to understand and appreciate it. It is only through listening intently to others that you can begin to understand these differences. When you listen, you learn, and when you learn you gain insight.

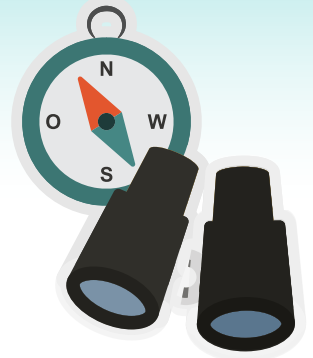


Listening and responding skills outranked all others in producing the most successful leaders, according to a recent study of more than 15,000 leaders in 18 countries. As society evolves, more and more companies are working to inject empathy into their businesses to help managers become better leaders.



9: Clear Vision toward AI-driven Personalization

Smart robots are here to stay so learn to love them. IDC predicts that spending on artificial intelligence systems will increase from \$19 billion in 2018 to \$52 billion in 2021. This investment will be spread across many business functions, but marketing will get its fair share. As AI-based marketing solutions get smarter every day you can harness them to create more awesome customer experiences because AI helps you understand customers at a more granular level, enabling even greater personalization. This skill will be increasingly important as you develop highly personalized content and campaigns that align with micro-audience personas.



Key statistics -

- A Harvard Business Review study found that companies using AI were able to increase their leads by more than **50%**, reduce call time by **60-70%**, and realize cost reductions of **40-60%**.
- **80%** of B2B marketing executives predict AI will revolutionize their industry in 2020.⁵

Tools to use:



10: Practice PROVOCATION and PATIENCE



"If you want to succeed and make an impact in your chosen field of creativity, your ambition should be to awaken, to disturb, to command, to instigate and, most importantly, to provoke."

- The legendary designer George Lois

If you want to be more distinctive, create more powerful emotional connections and impact your audience behavior more significantly, don't settle for the tried and true and instead find your audience provocation. Breaking through the clutter (provocation) is a marketing requirement, but being patient over time, trusting your strategy, and staying true to your brand and not deviating or succumbing to outside pressure will ultimately lead to successful outcomes.



So much to know and so much to learn. But take heart, as the marketing landscape continues to evolve and expand, so will the professional rise of the curious, self-starting, and growth-minded marketers who can successfully combine the use of smart technologies with genuine human kindness.

Visit www.MeritMile.com to learn more about how we can complement and future-proof your marketing skill sets.



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Sources

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