



Digital Marketing Blueprint

# Foundation for an Art Gallery Online Strategy

# Introduction

---

Digital marketing is a vast world of technology and strategies, which changes and evolves so fast it is difficult for even the experts to keep up. As a gallery owner, you wear many hats, and I'm guessing marketing can often be very confusing and frustrating.

I want to give you some guidance on how to build a strong foundation for all your digital marketing efforts upon which to build. If you are confused about prioritizing digital marketing strategies or if your gallery is a step behind, this checklist will help guide you through the most important digital marketing activities that will have the most significant impact on an art gallery business.

I hope that once the foundation is built well, much of the confusion and frustration you might feel will be elevated.

# What you will learn from this guide

I put this guide together for those involved in marketing a fine-art gallery and promoting their artists to lay the groundwork for reaching more art collectors with persuasive messaging and ultimately generate more gallery sales.

By focusing on the six most impactful elements of digital marketing for an art gallery business strategy outlined here, you will be able to:

1. Use your gallery's value proposition online as a more compelling marketing hook.
2. Make your email newsletters a more robust and engaging sales and marketing tool.
3. Ensure your gallery's website is ranked high in search engine indexes and is a valuable resource for visitors.
4. Increase the effectiveness of your social media efforts.
5. Measure the metrics that enable you to adjust strategically in the future.
6. Organize and effectively integrate your marketing message across all your online channels by creating a strategic content calendar.

# How to use this guide

I have intentionally not tried to cover absolutely everything in the digital marketing landscape, because I want you to master the elements that are currently the most effective for reaching your unique target market.

We will go through the six critical elements of your gallery's digital foundation to fine-tune what you probably already have in place, such as your website and gallery newsletters. The goal will be to improve your prospect's online experience, strengthen the gallery's overall sales and marketing messages and attract more qualified art buyers to your gallery.

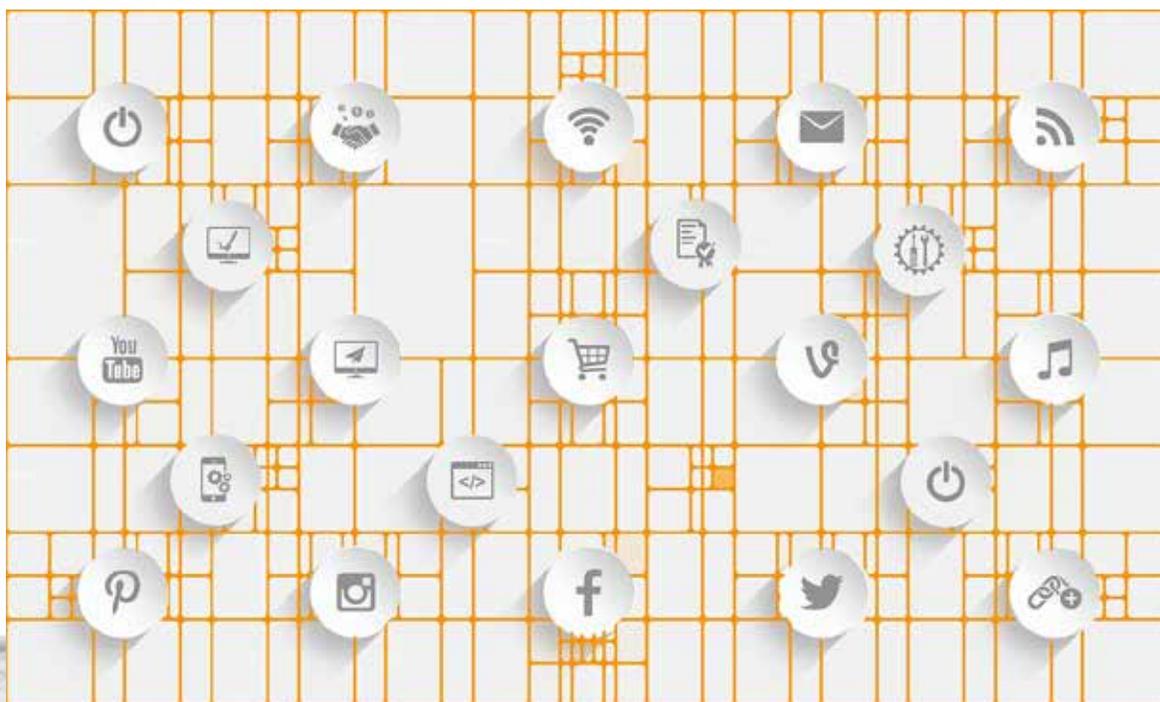
Many companies have entire departments dedicated to digital marketing. I'm betting your gallery is a team of 2-6 people who are also responsible for many different aspects of the business. Let me take some pressure off your shoulders. You do not have to do it all.

Ahh.... Better?

Read through the entire guide to get a sense of what is needed to establish a solid foundation for your digital marketing. Then, go back and tackle each of the five elements, one at a time.

The strategy for each section is listed out in simple bullet points of actionable items. Check each one off as you go, and before you know it, you will have made tremendous strides forward in the competitive landscape of today's art world.

Let's jump in!



# Value Proposition & Tagline

---

Having a strong value proposition that resonates with your ideal prospective art collector is this first place to start. It will be at the core of all your other marketing efforts. A value proposition, regardless of industry, does three essential things.

1. Speaks directly to the buyer's motivations.
2. Solves a problem or meets a specific need.
3. Defines how your business is different or better than others.

It is challenging for contemporary art galleries to differentiate themselves as most galleries worldwide focus on this sector of the art market. This is particularly true for art galleries that specialize in local or regional artists serving a collector base in small

markets. Re-examining your gallery's value proposition could help give your art business a competitive edge.

The principal goal here is to create a value proposition that both attracts collectors to your gallery and assures them that collecting art from your gallery's artists will provide the benefits they require and aligns with their priorities for collecting.

## **Strategy**

- Research your top gallery competitors that are targeting the same collectors. How does their value propositions differ from your gallery? How can you stand out?
- Brainstorm different ideas with gallery staff capture your gallery's value proposition into an easy to remember tagline. Write down four or five versions that sum up your gallery's program, uniqueness, and speaks to your client's motivations.

Here are some examples for inspiration

- Art that enhances your life and legacy.
- Providing the best of regional fine art that creates beauty in the lives of those who collect it.
- Connecting collectors to thoughtful beauty and inspiration

Now put the selected value statement to work.  
Incorporate it in the following places.

- Website: Home and About pages
- All social media profiles
- Boilerplate at the bottom of your email newsletter
- Art sales platform profiles
- Schedule monthly social media posts that communicate elements of your value proposition

The great thing about a strong value proposition and tagline as a marketing tool is that you only need to revisit it every few years. You want to ensure it still reflects all the value your gallery business offers and still accurately supports your current gallery program.

A tagline is a powerful way for businesses to speak to how their value is parallel with their target market's needs or desires. However, art galleries rarely use them. Adopting this strategy in your digital marketing will help give you a competitive edge making it easier for a prospect to remember your gallery over your competitors.



# Email Marketing

---

Email newsletters are a vital marketing tool your gallery business uses to communicate with clients and prospects. As technology continues to evolve, so does how email can be used to inspire your recipients. Because of this, I have outlined several relevant strategies in this section for your gallery business to consider as part of your email marketing activities.

The most important action your art gallery business can take is to consider the contact database and email marketing provider you currently use. You need the ability to segment your list for personalized communications, combining educational and entertainment value, along with a sales message.

Your newsletters must also convey more than just the artist's view. They are an essential opportunity to communicate the gallery's perspective as the expert of your art market and show you understand your client's wants and needs.

## **Strategy**

### List Management

Review your contact list and apply any needed tags.

For example, can you use tags to sort by

- Clients
- Hot leads
- Artist interest
- Inactive subscribers
- Industry affiliates, such as interior designers or other galleries,
- Lead source, such as your website, referral or e-commerce site like Artsy or ArtCloud

If not, put a plan in place to start making your contact list more powerful by tagging those on your list for segmentation and personalized marketing. This simple act will allow you to forge relationships with new leads that your staff can take from curious to collector.

□ Create automated email sequences to nurture different categories of subscribers, such as new subscribers to your list, industry affiliates, and re-engagement of inactives. Learn more about how to create an automated email sequence here. [Strategy to Cultivate Relationships with Mailing List Subscribers](#)

□ Implement a re-engagement strategy for inactive newsletter subscribers to keep your list clean. It is smart to try to renew the interest of subscribers who have not opened a gallery email in the last six months before removing them altogether from your list if they remain inactive. Keeping your email lists clean from inactives helps your list's overall deliverability rate. Learn more about how to create a strategy for your gallery here. [Finding New Art Collectors Hiding In Plain Sight.](#)

## Email Construction

- Include multiple links back to your website where your list can find more information about gallery news. OK – Sounds like a no-brainer. – Right? I see a lot of gallery newsletters with no links back to their website. Please don't be one of them.
  
- Add your new value tagline to your email newsletter template and email signature. You need to repeat that message every chance you get, and the newsletter is a perfect place to do just that.
  
- Strengthen your messages. Ensure the content included in your newsletter speaks to your target art buyer's needs and wants, not just a sales message or event invitation. How does your message enrich their lives? How is a body of work or an exhibition relevant to your subscriber's interests and the world in which they live?

□ Always include a clear and very visual call to action (CTA), such as RSVP for an event, click to view new work, download a piece of content, watch a video, read a blog post, schedule a private viewing, or purchase artwork, etc. Be creative about what action you want your readers to take.

### Email list building

□ Establish a lead generation strategy to continuously build your email list with new, qualified prospective collectors. Don't just ask people to sign up for your mailing list. Ask them to sign up for something specific and valuable, such as an informative PDF about how to care for art or what to consider when buying artworks from emerging artists. Or they could sign up for a unique experience with an artist or to win something from the gallery. Whatever fits with your gallery program or services. Regularly give your social media followers a reason to click and sign up. Not all will be on your mailing list.

# Measuring Results

Essential metrics to track to determine how effective your email marketing is with your list are:

- Open rate – An enticing subject line does the trick.
- Click through rate – A clear call to action link drives this metric
- Conversions – Once on your website, conversions might include an event RSVP, filling out an appointment form, following you on social media, downloading a show catalog, or buying an artwork.
- Bounce rate – You may have lost these people because their email changed.

The big question is, are you looking at these metrics? I would recommend taking a close look at how your emails performed three or four times a year.

The numbers don't lie. They will provide valuable insight into where you need to tweak your newsletters to be a more robust sales and marketing tool.

# Website & SEO

---

Your art gallery's website is the most vital of all your digital marketing assets because you control it. Your email provider or social media platform can make changes that affect how you use them, be acquired, or go out of business. (remember Google +)

Your website is also the go-to place for prospective buyers and artists, affiliate partners, and journalists to learn more about you, and often their first impression of your gallery is made on your website. For people to find your website, you need good SEO.

Let's spend some significant time here on this website and SEO section. The strategies I will recommend here are based on best practices, the latest requirements by search engines, and the most common missed opportunities I see on art gallery websites every single day.

## Page Elements

□ Not enough copy - Many gallery websites strive to be minimalistic to allow the artwork to be the star. Aesthetically this is great, but not including enough text can mean your website is less informative for both visitors and search engines.

- Ensure each page has at least 100 words on the page to be optimized for search engines to understand what your page is about. The Home and Artist portfolio pages can often be images only, and these are probably your most important pages. Your text needs to be keyword-rich, especially on these pages.

□ Too much copy - Format-text heavy pages, such as About page, Exhibition, or Artist Biography pages, to be simple to read with a quick scan. Use bullets and headers to format the copy to make your essential information pop. Also, for bio pages, include the gallery's perspective on the artist. This makes for a more engaging read than just a CV and artist statement.

□ Ensure links to your social media profiles, newsletter signup, and e-commerce sites stand out on all the pages of your website. Don't bury them on a contact page only, or place tiny icons in the footer that are too easy to overlook.



□ Begin collecting and adding client and artist testimonials to your website. Prospective new buyers will want to know what you are like to work with and that they can trust you. Testimonials support your gallery's credibility, expertise, and quality of service.

□ Create an easy way for site visitors to refer your gallery or share a work of art with their contacts. This is a way for you to tap into influencers that could help grow your business, and it provides another way for people to engage with your gallery.

## SEO

- Many art gallery websites are still not mobile-responsive. Sites indexed in search engines will be rewarded with higher rankings for mobile-responsive websites. That means your gallery's site could be invisible in search results if it is not formatted for mobile viewing. That's not good marketing.
  
- Secure your site. Another thing that could seriously affect your SEO is not having a security certificate that takes URL from http to https. Speak with your hosting company about how to make this happen. To learn more about this, check out this Gallery Fuel article. [How a Secure Website Can Help Your Gallery Business](#)
  
- Link building is important for good SEO. Look for opportunities to link internally within your website connecting relevant artists, exhibitions, and blog pages. Linking externally on other websites to drive traffic back to your site, such as press, social media, and online sales platforms is also part of a link building strategy.

□ Audit how keywords are used in the following essential metadata of your site to ensure it is well optimized for search engines.

### Page Titles Tags

- Page URL
- Page Descriptions
- Image ALT Tags
- Headers (H1 & H2 tags)
- Body Copy

## Strategy

### Blog

□ Start blogging consistently. A blog is an opportunity to educate your site visitors and social media followers about your artists and gallery program. Having a blog on your website also tells search engine crawlers that the site is always adding valuable content. A blog is key to a solid digital marketing strategy and will help your gallery's index rankings rise.

- Dos and don'ts for an art gallery blog.
  - Don't write in "artspeak". You are writing for buyers, not artists. Speaking plainly helps your audience relate to the core message. Write in a style that is fun and interesting to read. Your blog is not a place to post press releases. It is an opportunity to share the gallery's perspective as a passionate expert in your field.
  - Do allow readers to comment. Comments are a perfect opportunity to start a dialogue about your blog topic. Be sure to set your notifications to be alerted when a comment is made so that you can respond promptly. I also recommend you approve comments before making public, but don't shy away from posting negative comments. They allow you to address the complaint and turn the situation around to positive.

- Do write about a variety of topics that includes some that are not about art for sale. Occasionally, highlight something in your community or a gallery staff member. You can also talk about trends in the art market that might interest your readers or invite a guest blogger. Mix it up to help retain interest and grow your blogs following.
- Don't give up on blogging if you don't generate loads of clicks and comments after the first few posts. It will take time to build momentum, but it will prove to be a valuable tool nurturing young collectors and connoisseurs to be loyal patrons.

## **Measuring Results**

I recommend analyzing all your marketing statistics quarterly and documenting them. By doing this, you will see trends and be able to make strategic decisions on how to make improvements where needed.

Watch the trends for the following metrics to see which numbers are going up or down.

- Number of Conversions – These include contact forms submitted, newsletter signups, event RSVPs and purchases if you sell directly on your website.
- Number of sessions – Low numbers mean that people aren't visiting your website.
- Time on site - If visitors are coming to your website, but not staying very long, that could suggest that you have a content quality problem.
- Organic search acquisition – If this number is low, it could mean that visitors aren't finding your gallery's site on Google and Bing.

As with tracking your email marketing, don't obsess over the numbers, but be aware of them.

# Social Media

---

Approach your social media strategy like you do when curating a show in the gallery. Your pages and feeds need to tell many different stories from many different perspectives. They also need to encourage conversation and action in an authentic way.

Engagement is what social media platforms are rewarding by organically including page posts in follower's feeds. The more engagement you create, the more likely your posts will be seen.

## Strategy

□ Define your goals for each platform your gallery uses. For example, what you post on LinkedIn may be different from your Facebook page. Facebook is great for driving traffic to your website, while Instagram presents your art like eye candy.

□ Promote your social media pages on other marketing channels by giving a purpose for someone to follow your gallery on a particular social platform. Make it clear what the benefit is, for them, to follow you on Instagram, and how the benefits might be different on Facebook.

□ Place a Facebook pixel code on your website. A pixel code is a way for you to retarget those who have visited your website with Facebook advertising. Even if you have resisted running Facebook ads, still place the code, as it takes time to build up useable data. You will have to pay to play in the future like it or not. You will be so glad you have the pixel data. For more information on this, check out this Gallery Fuel article. [How can using a Facebook pixel help your art gallery marketing?](#)

□ I rarely see a gallery post on social media promoting gallery services such as event space for rent, framing, or provide consulting services. If you offer your clients services beyond selling art, talk about it – often.

□ Post variety. Examine your feeds to determine if your social media presence has become monotonous to followers who use social media for educational, engaging and, entertaining content. If all your posts are related to exhibitions, people will become blind to them. No one likes a social media page that is Me, Me, Me, all the time.

## **Measuring Results**

Start regularly tracking social media metrics so you have a better understanding of what you are doing well and upon which you can improve. Use both Google Analytics and the Insights that the social media platform provides to understand the key metrics. If you use a social media scheduler, such as Hootsuite or MeetEdgar, they also provide valuable information on the results of your efforts.

Here are the big ones to watch.

- Tracking engagement for various types of posts
- How consistently you post
- New followers and if they were driven to your social media via your website, an ad, or newsletter.
- Which posts and platforms generate the most traffic back to your website?

If you feel like all the time you put into social media marketing is just going into the unknown void, then start tracking. Patterns will reveal themselves that will enable you to work smarter and yield more profitable results.



# Content Calendar

---

Digital marketing has so many moving parts that a simple content calendar must be in your toolbox. It helps you plan and organizes all the messages you want your fans and followers to know about your gallery and artists.

Using a content calendar enables you to seamlessly implement integrated marketing campaigns that align the message you're sharing on all your marketing channels, with the content that works best for each channel. The result is a trustworthy online experience for viewers and potential buyers.

Without a calendar, it is too easy to get off track, be redundant, and forget to share an essential type of information that could make a difference to your revenue.

# Strategy

□ The easiest way to create a content calendar is to use an electronic calendar or spreadsheet. I recommend going electronic because things will change, and you want to be able to reflect those quickly and easily. A written version will get messy in a hurry. You can also share an electronic calendar more easily with staff and artists. Some great tools are a simple Google calendar or spreadsheet, but if you have multiple people creating content, a program like Monday or Trello is fantastic.

□ Using your exhibition calendar as a guide, schedule content for social media, blog posts, gallery website and email newsletters as far in advance as possible. Six months is a good goal. When you begin to plan for an upcoming show, you will know exactly what content needs to be created, how it will be used and who is accountable.

Fresh news will always come up that you want to share with gallery followers and subscribers. Be sure to take advantage of these opportunities, but also add them to your calendar. This will enable you to see the big picture of what the gallery is communicating and ensure there is an interesting variety to keep people coming back for more.

Let's talk about content diversity.

□ To keep your subscribers looking forward to what your gallery is sharing, strive for 70% educational or entertaining focused content and the other 30% promotional. This will help establish you as a source of value vs. always selling. Your 70% is an excellent soft-selling technique, by the way.

□ Define categories for the content you want to produce.

For example, yours might include:

- Event promotion
- Artist stories
- Featured artwork
- Gallery services or news
- Installation images / sold pieces
- Gallery value & mission
- Industry or community news
- Just for fun

The content you create for your gallery's digital marketing should be a mix of different types, such as long-form written content, like your blog, and visuals, both images, and video. Note on your calendar the category and type. The reason for this is that people have different preferences for how they prefer to consume content. Offering a variety of ways to enjoy your content will help you capture the attention of as many prospects as possible. That's what it's all about, right?

As you add new things to your content calendar, ask yourself:

- Why are you creating a piece of content?
- Where will you use it?
- How is the message relevant to your audience?

□ I encourage you to play with all the different tools out there to help create amazingly cool content for various marketing channels. Some of the tools are free or very inexpensive and do not require you to be a trained graphic designer. Check out the [Alternative Fuel](#) page for a few tools I really like.



# Looking Forward into the Digital Future

---

The digital marketing elements covered above are, in my view, the foundation of good digital marketing and are the most impactful to your gallery business. But as I said in the beginning, it is not my goal to leave you feeling overwhelmed. I appreciate the fact that you have a whole bunch of tasks that need your attention throughout a typical week. These are things I want you to focus on and master first.

Your job as a digital marketer will not end here. With your foundation built strong, staying consistent, informative, and entertaining – positive results will follow. Results such as higher website traffic, better quality leads, an increase in the dialog you create about art, and of course, more red dots around the gallery. Love those red dots!!!!

Many of the things discussed in this blueprint are covered in more detail on [GalleryFuel.com](https://www.galleryfuel.com).

There is a lot of member-only information and resources on the site. If you found this blueprint valuable and are serious about growing your gallery through digital marketing and other areas of the business, consider becoming a member.

## **Who am I?**

I'm the founder of Gallery Fuel, and I help small & mid-market fine-art galleries fuel their businesses through publishing sales and marketing articles and tools specifically for running an art gallery business.



Meeting the ever-changing expectations of your artists and clients is harder than it used to be in the art gallery business. I understand that drawing foot traffic to the

gallery is more challenging, art fairs and rent are hurting the financial health of your business, and art collectors have more options than ever to buy art.

Sales and marketing may not be your strong point in business, but you know they are crucial for long-term success. Gallery Fuel can help you think outside the box and work smarter.

You don't have to do it alone and hope you are doing the right things for your business. I also work one-on-one with gallery professionals who want ongoing coaching for larger projects or single intensive sessions for more immediate business solutions.



Fueling Fine Art Dealer Business