

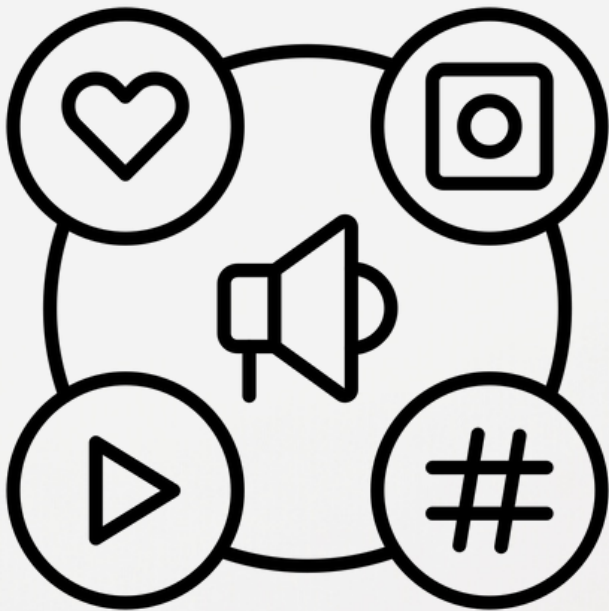
# Building Your Art Gallery's Marketing Foundation

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STRATEGY AND  
BEST PRACTICES

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# Introduction

So much has changed in the way an art gallery's sales and marketing strategies are managed. The pandemic kicked digital marketing into high gear and left many gallery marketers feeling overwhelmed and not knowing what to prioritize.


I want to help you build a strong foundation and best practices for your digital marketing efforts through this checklist.

I have been working in marketing for over 25 years, including market analysis, competitive intelligence, strategic planning, design, digital marketing, and advertising. I can tell you I had an entire team 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 gallery management.

Digital marketing is a vast world of technology and strategies that changes and evolves so fast that it is difficult for even experts to keep up with. As a gallery owner, you wear many hats, and I'm guessing marketing today can often feel very confusing and frustrating for you at times. Let's fix that right now.

I put this guide together for gallery professionals passionate about accelerating their artists' careers and sales online but do not have a solid strategic marketing background.

**Use this checklist to help you ensure your gallery's marketing plan is comprehensive and functioning for maximum return.**



# What you will get out of using this guide

By focusing on the five most impactful elements of digital marketing for an art gallery business and embracing the strategies 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. **Organize and effectively integrate your marketing message across all your online channels by creating a powerful yet simple content calendar.**

How will you know if your efforts are paying off in these five areas?

We will also cover measurements to track progress and make adjustments if needed. You want to Measure the metrics that enable you to adjust strategically in the future.

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# How to use this guide

I have intentionally not covered 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.

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.





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# Value Proposition and Tagline

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# Value Proposition and Tagline

Having a solid value proposition that resonates with your ideal prospective art collector is the first place to start. It will be at the core of all your other marketing efforts.

**A value proposition, regardless of industry, does three critical 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 many galleries worldwide focus on similar art categories. This is particularly true for art galleries specializing in local or regional artists serving a collector base in smaller markets. Re-examining your gallery's value proposition could help give you a competitive edge.

The essential goals here are to create a value proposition that attracts collectors to your gallery and assures them that collecting art from your gallery's artists will provide the benefits they require and align with their priorities for collecting.

# Value Proposition and Tagline



## STRATEGY

- Do some research on your top gallery competitors targeting the same collectors. How do their value propositions differ from your gallery? How can you make yours stand out?
- Brainstorm different ideas with gallery staff to break that value proposition into an easy-to-remember tagline. Write down four or five versions that sum up your gallery's program uniqueness and speak 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.
  - The oldest and most trusted contemporary art source in [city].
- Now put the selected value statement to work. Place your clean and clear value statement in these places online.
    - 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 to ensure it still -

- Accurately reflects all the value your gallery business offers your clients (collectors and artists) and...
- Supports your current gallery program.

A tagline is a powerful way for businesses to communicate 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 prospects to remember your gallery over your competitors.



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# Email Marketing

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# Email Marketing

Even in the days of Instagram, direct messages, and chat-bots, email is still a vital component of your gallery's marketing mix. As technology continues to evolve, so does how email can inspire your recipients.

In this section, I have outlined many relevant strategies for your gallery business to consider within your email marketing activities. The most crucial action your gallery business can take to ensure your newsletters remain effective is considering the contact database and email marketing provider you currently use.

Segmenting your list for personalized communications combining educational and entertainment value along with the gallery's sales message will help improve your open and click-through rates.

**Email marketing is such a vast topic. If you want more detailed strategy information, check out [Gallery Fuel's Email Marketing Roadmap](#).**

- Actionable ideas to grow and maintain your email list
- Steps for creating an email marketing strategy that will help your gallery reach its business goals
- Ways for nurturing new gallery subscribers to improve loyalty and engagement
- How to optimize the structure and readability of your email for the best reader experience readers.

# Email Marketing



## STRATEGY

- Review your contact list. Continuous and diligent list maintenance is vital. Put a plan in place to start making your contact list more powerful and your email marketing more personalized by tagging for segmentation. This simple act will allow you to forge relationships with new leads that your staff can take from curious to collector.

**Here are some suggested database tags that might make sense for your list.**

- Client
- Emerging Collector
- Seasoned Collector
- Prospect – Cold
- Prospect – Warm
- Prospect – Hot
- Inactive
- Lead Source – Website contact form
- Lead Source – Gallery Event
- Lead Source – referral
- Lead Source – Social Media
- Out of town
- Local
- Vendor

- Include multiple links back to your website where your list can find more information about gallery news. OK - You may be saying, "Duh... That's a no-brainer.", but 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.
- Ensure the content reflects your target audience's needs and wants, not just a sales message or event invitation. How does what you are communicating enrich their lives? Don't forget to include the gallery's voice along with your artists.
- Always include a clear call to action (CTA), such as RSVP for an event, clicking to view new work, downloading a piece of content, watching a video, reading a blog post, scheduling a private viewing, or purchasing artwork. Be creative about what action you want your readers to take. Avoid using "Inquire" or "Contact the gallery" exclusively.

# Email Marketing



## STRATEGY (continued)

- Examine all the entry points to your gallery's mailing list. Where are gaps or missed opportunities to entice people to sign up? A lead generation strategy goes beyond having a button on your website to continuously build your email list with new, qualified prospective collectors.
- Make your signup form focus on the benefits of joining the mailing list. What's the value for site visitors handing over their email addresses to you.? It's a good idea also to set some expectations for how often and what kind of information you will be emailing them.
- Once on your list, create a luxury experience and stellar first impression to stand out and ensure future emails get opened and engaged with. Create an automated email sequence to be welcoming and nurture those new relationships through a buyer's journey.
- Try to keep the days you send newsletters and post on social media consistent. It's easier for you to plan and helps to set your follower's expectations. You should be emailing your mailing list at least twice a month and posting on social media four or five times a week. Test what days get you the most engagement.
- Establish a re-engagement strategy for inactive newsletter subscribers to keep your list clean. It is important to either renew the interest of subscribers who have not opened a gallery email in a while before removing them altogether from your list.

**The best way to keep gallery subscribers active is to ensure you are nurturing the people on your list by sending them information they actually want.**

**Review all the emails you sent last year to your list as a whole. How much do they vary? What percentage of emails was something other than an invitation to visit the gallery for a show or highlighting new artworks?**

**Keep your audience surprised and delighted with your email communications.**

# Email Marketing



## MEASURING RESULTS

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

### Email success indicators include:

- **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 a contact form, following you on social media, downloading a show catalog, or buying an artwork.
- **Bounce rate** – You have lost these people forever. Remove them.

Your email service provider has all this reporting. The big question is, are you looking at these metrics? Many will tell you that you need to analyze these stats after every email and do A-B testing, which you can. But I would recommend taking a close look at how your emails performed during your quarterly business reviews.

The numbers don't lie. They will tell you how and where you need to tweak your newsletters to be more powerful.

Email marketing is so important to your gallery's bottom line. Don't cross your fingers and hope for the best. Get the foundation strong and understand what is unique to your email subscribers and gallery business.





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# Website & SEO

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# Website & SEO

An effective website is where all your other digital marketing should come back to. It is your billboard and storefront on the Internet. It is the go-to place for prospective buyers and artists, affiliate partners, and journalists

Today, the gallery sector finally has fantastic tools for building a gallery website with software that provides user-friendly interfaces, built-in contact management databases, inventory management, and email marketing capabilities. Your gallery may use one designed specifically for running a gallery, such as Artlogic, ArtCloud, Veevart, Artsystems, or Managed artwork that can really streamline your business processes.

These tools may be powerful for certain aspects of your business but limit your digital marketing abilities in others. Once you complete the strategies listed in this guide, you will better understand your current and future website needs to adopt other tools for a more significant competitive edge.

I will spend significant time here on the website and SEO section. The strategies I will recommend 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.



## STRATEGY

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### Page Formatting

- Many gallery websites strive to be clean and 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 trying to make a buying decision and search engines. Each page should also have at least 100 words to be crawlable by search engines. Artist portfolio pages can often be images only. Add a few keyword-rich lines about the artist on these pages to help search engines rank your site and put the artwork in context for viewers.
- A gallery home page can often be very stylish but frequently lacks content. This page should constantly change with new images, blog headlines, and exhibition news. This is an important page for SEO. You should keep it fresh with your most important message of the time.
- Format text-heavy pages, such as About and Blog post pages or Artist Biography pages, to be simple to read with a quick scan. Use bullets and headers within the copy to make your essential information pop. Also, I think it is essential to include the gallery's perspective on the artist for bio pages. This makes for a more engaging read than just a CV and artist statement and adds credibility to the artist's collectability.

### SEO Priorities

- 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 website could be invisible in search results if it is not formatted for mobile viewing. That's not good marketing.
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## STRATEGY (continued)

- We all know keywords are vital for SEO and increasing organic traffic to your gallery's website. Look at how keywords are used in the following sections of your website to ensure it is well optimized for search engines.
  - **Page Titles Tags**
  - **Page URL**
  - **Page Descriptions**
  - **Image ALT Tags**
  - **Headers**
  - **Body Copy**
- Other things that could penalize your website by search engines are being slow to load and not having a SSL security certificate (http vs https). Speak with your hosting company about how to make this happen.
- 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 crawler that your site is full of helpful content with keywords and could help your index rankings.

### Engagement and Influencers

- Ensure links to your social media profiles and e-commerce sites are easy to find on all the pages of your website. Placing links in the footer is a way of accomplishing this. I still see many art gallery websites with no links to other places where they have an online presence.
- Begin collecting and adding client testimonials to your website and create a way for site visitors to refer to your gallery and/or share a work of art with their friends and contacts. These are ways to tap into influencers that could help grow your business, and it provides another way for people to engage with your gallery.
- Add calls to action to make it crystal clear what the next possible step might be given where a visitor is on your website. These could include adding links to a contact page, a calendar app to schedule a call, or a page to learn more about payment plans and return policies. Add bold RSVP buttons for events or download a fact sheet about a work of art.



## STRATEGY (continued)

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### Audit Your Website Annually

- Confirm contact details are still correct, such as phone numbers and addresses, directions, etc. Phone numbers should be tap-to-call for mobile users.
- Test all contact forms to ensure they are working correctly and the thank you page still has the best message.
- Ensure all social icons are linked to the gallery's active social platforms.
- Confirm all site CRM integrations are connected and functioning correctly.
- Ensure all images have keywords in the alt tags and are optimized for the web.
- Audit your vital on-page keywords such as headers, body copy, title tags, and meta descriptions on each page on your site, especially artist pages.
- Conduct a speed test for mobile and desktop. Optimize to improve if needed.
- Check pages load properly on mobile and render with correct formatting.
- Is your SSL certificate up-to-date and working properly?
- Maximize Google Analytics tracking and set up your website goals.
- To collect better data about performance, set up Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster tools.
- Is your XML Sitemap submitted and accurate to assist search engines?
- Submit your website for re-indexing after these improvements have been made to speed up search engines' ability to index your site correctly.



## STRATEGY (continued)

### Measuring Results

Your art gallery's website is the most essential element of all your digital marketing effort. You cannot measure its effectiveness unless you track your goals.

I want to go over a few important statistics to be familiar with to understand if your website is working for your business. Don't worry about your gallery's website numbers vs. averages. Just keep an eye on which numbers are going up or down. You want them going up.

- Number of Conversions – These include contact forms, newsletter signups, event RSVPs and purchases if you sell directly on your website.
- The number of sessions – Low numbers mean that people aren't seeing 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 is low, it could mean that visitors aren't finding your gallery's site effectively on Google and Bing.

Like tracking your email marketing, don't obsess over the numbers, but be aware of them. Make tracking part of your quarterly review process. You can prioritize improvements and investments for the following quarter goals.



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# Social Media

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# Social Media

Your gallery's social media strategy should align with your goals for your overall business and those that you have for your artists. Be very clear about what you want to accomplish from each platform you set up a presence on for digital marketing. Typical goals Gallery Fuel members talk about for social media include:

- **Increase brand awareness of both the gallery and the artists on their roster**
- **To attract new art collectors increase engagement with their ideal art buyers**
- **Grow their mailing list**
- **Create a dialog about artwork being shown**
- **Boost gallery foot traffic**
- **Sell art in new markets online**

Approach your social media strategy like you do when curating a show in the gallery. Plan in advance your key messages, stories you want to tell, a pathway to sales, and, of course, the diversity of visuals.

I believe it is always helpful to align your message with what you're sending in your gallery newsletters and featuring on your website. Not everyone will open your emails or see all your social media posts. Repeating messages is a good thing for digital marketing, and social media is the perfect forum to do so.

Your social media 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 followers' feeds. The more engagement you create, the more likely your posts will be seen. Platforms also like you to use their particular features. So experiment.



## STRATEGY

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- Define your goals for each platform your gallery uses. Don't pressure yourself to be on all social media platforms. Consider the demographics each attracts and how they fit into your ideal collector persona. For example, what you post on LinkedIn may be different from your Facebook or Instagram page.
- A content calendar is a must. You can't be really effective with your social media unless you have a plan that aligns with your goals. More on that below.
- To be effective, you must post consistently, several times a week. I see many galleries with weeks between their posts. They are likely wasting their time. Experiment with posting on different days and times to learn what works best for your audience. It could be evenings or weekends, or maybe your followers are early birds. If creating social content so frequently feels daunting, pick one platform and really master it.
- Create a consistent process for posts centered around big gallery events such as openings and events. Your plan needs to include a variety of posts types. In addition to creating an event invitation on social media, this means thinking about posts that talk about the curatorial theme, highlighting individual works and their stories, images with the pieces installed, videos of the artists, etc.
- Plan in three sections; leading up to the event, while the show is up, and after it closes. Put all your post on the calendar. Using a consistent strategy for these important events will have a more significant impact in the long run.
- As discussed above in your email newsletters, include a call to action in more posts. It's best to spell it out as people scan social media. It would be best if you were clear that taking action has benefits. Never use a "baiting" CTA, such as asking your follower to like or comment. Facebook is cracking down on this tactic.

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



## STRATEGY (continued)

- Post variety. Experiment with live video and stories. Post surveys to get feedback and images from artists' studios. Examine your feeds to determine if your social media presence has become monotonous to followers. Create anticipation by sharing a grand variety of educational, engaging, and entertaining information. Also, post things unrelated to your gallery, such as things affecting your community, causes you are passionate about, etc. No one likes a social media page that is Me, Me, Me, all the time.
- Don't forget to cross-promote across your marketing channels. Regularly post on social media about the benefits of joining your mailing list. Promote following you on social media with your email subscribers. Communicating the benefits to your fans is essential for this strategy.

### Measuring Results

Start regularly tracking social media metrics to understand better what you are doing well and what you can improve upon. 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 Later, 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 do 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, start tracking. Patterns will reveal themselves to enable you to work smarter and yield more profitable results.



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# Content Calendar

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# Content Calendar

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

**There are so many benefits of incorporating a content calendar into your gallery's digital marketing plan:**

- Planning, creating, and scheduling your gallery's content in advance will help you stay consistent and help you identify any significant gaps in your messaging. More on that later.
- This tool helps free up time to focus on more business-critical things, like client relationships or sales follow-ups.
- With important content messaging planned and scheduled, you'll have more flexibility
- to create spur-of-the-moment news and "gallery life" stories.
- Advance planning also helps ensure diverse content creation to amplify your message and attract new art buyers.
- A planned calendar makes collaborating with staff, partnerships, and artists much easier.

Without a calendar, it is too easy to get off track, be redundant and forget to share important information that could make a difference in your revenue bottom line.

The easiest way to create a content calendar is to use an electronic calendar or spreadsheet. I say electronic because you want to be able to reflect changes in a clean way. A written version will get messy in a hurry. You can also share an electronic calendar more easily with staff and artists.

# Content Calendar



## STRATEGY

- Choose a format that works best for you and your team that contributes to content, including artists and vendors. Electronic or paper – doesn't matter. The best format is whatever you will actually use.
- Begin with your significant selling events, such as shows and fairs that will require many marketing messages before and after the event.
- Include on the calendar social media posts, newsletters, save the dates, invitations, blog posts, etc.
- As you get more granular with content planning, you will see ways to repurpose content across different marketing channels. For example, if you write a longer blog post on your gallery's website, that post might be repurposed for complementary social media posts and newsletter content for that month. The same goes for curatorial writing about your exhibitions.
- I recommend you meet with your team regularly and update your gallery's calendar every month. With this tool, you'll save yourself valuable time and energy. It's a more thoughtful way to work than just winging it.

A content calendar is meant to ebb and flow as things arise. Nothing is set in stone, but it does light the path for your art gallery's sales and marketing opportunities.





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# Looking Forward

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# Looking Forward

The digital marketing elements covered in this checklist 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 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.

Below I just want to mention a few other elements in the digital marketing landscape that you should be familiar with to start thinking about how you can incorporate some of these things into your art gallery marketing plan in the future.

## Influencer Marketing

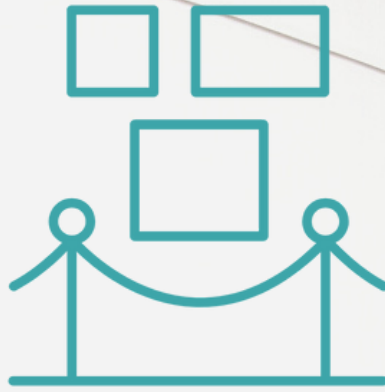
Influencer marketing has become the new buzzword in the marketing world. For an art gallery, it goes beyond having a celebrity champion tweeting about your gallery. It involves an integrated approach to marketing that includes your staff, artists, collectors, and even your vendors.

Use every connection your art gallery has at its disposal to spread a consistent message from various viewpoints. Coordinate with appropriate influencers to enhance your messaging within your digital landscape.

## Marketing Automation

This is an exciting new way to stay in front of your prospective art collectors by creating a digital customer journey, if you will. By creating a path for new leads to opt-in to your email list, get to know you and your artists, fall in love with a work of art, make an acquisition and then keep them engaged with your art gallery.

Creating and setting up takes some thought and time, but the result can provide a truly unique experience for your new collector leads.



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# Summary

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# Summary

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

By putting your gallery's value to work by speaking directly to what motivates your target market's desires and sets your gallery apart from the competition will set the tone for your email newsletters, website, and social media pages.

Regularly track the key metrics of your digital marketing efforts outlined here to identify patterns of what yields the best results and understand where you need to experiment with new ideas. Using a thoughtful content calendar will really help your digital marketing messages stay laser-focused and comprehensive.

Tackle one of the six digital marketing foundation points at a time. I don't want you to feel overwhelmed, or all your efforts may fall apart.

Many of the things discussed in this checklist are covered in more detail on [GalleryFuel.com](https://www.galleryfuel.com). While many of the tools and courses are for members only, I invite you to explore the free content to see if becoming a member could help Fuel your gallery's sale, marketing, and operational success.

If you have specific questions, email me at [publisher@galleryfuel.com](mailto:publisher@galleryfuel.com). I'm here to help Fuel your gallery business, and I'm so excited to see what you accomplish for your gallery business and artists' careers.

# Thank you

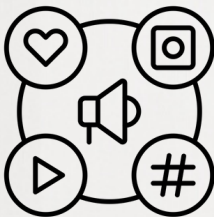


## NEED PERSONALIZED HELP?

I know you face new challenges every day that might be unique to your gallery business. If you feel working together one-on-one would benefit you in overcoming some of those challenges, I invite you to explore my Art Gallery Business Advisory Services.

### Programs

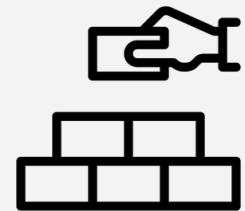
#### MARKETING PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE



#### SALES PROCESS DEVELOPMENT



#### GALLERY BUSINESS FOUNDATIONS



Sessions are tailored to your needs and goals.

Go to [GalleryFuel.com](http://GalleryFuel.com) to learn more about the advisory services programs and schedule a call to see if we are a good fit.

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# FUEL FOR RUNNING AN ART GALLERY BUSINESS



[www.galleryfuel.com](http://www.galleryfuel.com)

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THANK  
YOU