

POST-PANDEMIC MARKETING TRENDS FOR ACCOUNTING FIRMS

Marketing is ever evolving, and the pace has only accelerated in the post-corona era. *Anna Stella*, CEO at global marketing outsourcing agency BBSA, shares her top five trends for busy accounting firms that are dedicated to growth and determined to thrive in a new landscape

1. Accounting firms have (finally) started to merge business with tech – but are not tapping its full potential

One of the fastest-growing marketing verticals is marketing technology, or martech, which is being utilised to win and retain clients in multiple marketing activities at an ever-increasing rate.

BDO and accountancy firm Warc estimate that UK and North American brands are currently allocating 26% of their marketing budget to martech, with a total global spend of over \$121.5bn. A recent McKinsey survey showed that just 14% of small accounting firms have however adopted smart tech, including automation and AI.

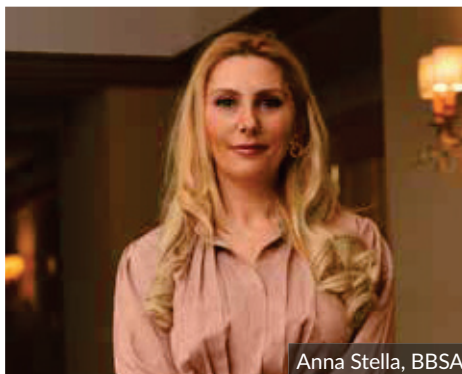
While small accounting firms have gradually shifted and embraced digital marketing to win new clients, they are still falling behind and not reaping its full benefits, which adds up to lost opportunities for growth.

2. Outsourcing – faster and better productivity

With marketing growing in complexity, a distinct need for multi-channel activities and personalisation has become more evident in recent years. As a result, marketing strategies and activities have not only become more multifaceted but also more varied, and the process of winning new clients for small companies has become more complicated.

Small accounting firms are struggling in having dedicated marketing talent in-house and therefore more and more companies have started outsourcing their activities to marketing agencies.

In outsourcing their marketing, small accounting firms get an instant advantage over their competitors as they obtain immediate access to well-qualified and skilled talent while simultaneously migrating



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a significant business function from their workflow. The result enables companies to focus more on their core activities, with marketing tasks left to the experts.

3. Content marketing requires the right content

Content is key, and successful content consists of two principles: firstly, putting into words what your client wants to read, and secondly, assuring that the timing of your content is in season. Content has a purpose, it must portray the credibility and trust synonymous with the business credo, creating confidence in their integrity.

Content can literally be seen everywhere. However, writing content has one challenge: it has to be continually fresh and relevant to clients. Your clients want your content to be useful, fitting, appropriate and brief.

Flyers and brochures, the 'old school' marketing strategies, are no longer current and applicable. Thought leadership, case studies, and video are the keywords ranking the top spot trends, showing that accounting firm clients want expertise and real-life examples in their marketing activities.

4. Omnichannel – a digital tomorrow

In a recent study by McKinsey, business-to-business (B2B) clients were shown to have

a minimum of six interactions on various marketing channels before purchasing.

Discerning accounting firm new clients will search for your company information before signing up with your business. Clients might Google your business, read through your social accounts and e-news, visit your website – all of this before even giving you a call.

Customers need and expect brand consistency across the numerous marketing channels they utilise; consistency is what fundamentally improves brand recognition and builds trust.

Consequently, the focus of accounting firms' needs is in revising a consolidated brand experience, enabling a consequent flow across all media channels and ensuring there are no inconsistencies or areas where communication is not optimised.

5. Social responsibility – a company priority

Companies are always on the lookout for activities that can give them the edge, differentiating them from the competitors, by taking a stand with social responsibility.

There are accounting companies that have birthed, built and forged their brands by leading by example in sustainability and the fires of the climate change battle, getting two for the price of one: aiding and supporting the environment while their business is recognised by clients and wider society for its good deeds.

We can no longer deny or excuse the fact that our climate goals cannot be met or fulfilled without a paradigm shift in sustainability; and as working alongside eco-influencers and content creators, you can inspire your clients and employees to leave a greener footprint, make an eco-difference and be the change that leaves a legacy for generations to come. ■