

MEASURING MARKETING BEYOND ROI

3 Key Metrics that Drive Long-Term Growth

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01

Measuring Marketing Beyond ROI

Every marketing leader understands the pressure to quantify and justify results. A campaign launches, the reports come in, and the first question is almost always the same:

What was the ROI?

It's a vital question. But if it's the only question you ask, you could be holding yourself back.

When companies evaluate marketing through a strict lens of immediate revenue or same-day conversions, they miss the full story. The most valuable marketing investments—the ones that build trust, shift reputation, and create loyalty—often take months or even years to yield results.

ROI measures the transaction. To build a brand that lasts, it's time to start measuring the relationship.

The Limitations of Traditional ROI

Traditional ROI metrics, like ROAS, CPA, and CPL, share the same underlying logic: **“I spent X and got Y back. Was it worth it?”**

These metrics hold irrefutable value, since it's essential to know what you're spending and what you're earning. But these metrics were also never designed to capture the full picture of brand health.

Click-through-rate doesn't measure the reputation that prompted someone to click your ad instead of a competitor's. Return on Ad Spend doesn't measure the trust that convinced them to hand over their credit card. Cost Per Acquisition doesn't measure the loyalty that could bring that customer back for the next five years.

When organizations focus exclusively on short-term returns, they risk cutting the very initiatives that fuel long-term growth.

Traditional ROI falls short in two key places:

01



Marketing is multi-layered, and attribution can't keep up.

A dollar spent in one channel is rarely a clean 1:1 return from that same channel. In a modern, multi-channel marketing environment, it is nearly impossible to track the complete attribution journey.

For example, a customer might see your video ad on Tuesday, hear a friend mention you on Friday, Google your brand name two weeks later, and find your blog via an organic search result, subscribe to your email list, then convert on an email a few days later. Your analytics will credit the email. The video ad, which started the relationship, shows up in the report as a cost with no return.

02



Optimizing for immediate conversions compromises long-term growth.

When every campaign has to justify itself with a same-week sale, you naturally shift budget toward bottom-of-funnel tactics, like retargeting, discount offers, and branded search.

These tactics capture demand, but they don't create it. This is how you find your brand cycling through the same, worn-out audience and struggling to reach new potential customers. Exhaust that market and you'll run out of people who already wanted to buy from you.

Growing your bottom funnel requires drawing in more people at the top.

Return on Investment vs. Return on Impact

Think about the brands with the biggest marketing budgets on the planet. McDonald's and Coca-Cola pour enormous sums into TV advertising every year, knowing full well they will never tie a specific commercial to a specific transaction.

So why do they do it? These brands are not measuring return on investment at the transaction level. They're measuring **return on impact**—staying top-of-mind, reinforcing what the brand stands for, and making sure that when a purchase moment arrives, they're the default choice.

Leading brands understand something many smaller businesses don't: the sale is the last step in a long chain, and every link in that chain holds value.

You don't need a multi-million-dollar marketing budget to adapt this mindset. Mid-market companies, B2B organizations, and non-profits can all benefit from a funnel-oriented marketing strategy that values the complete customer journey.

Tracking key metrics beyond ROI helps you see that journey. It shifts your attention from individual transactions to the big picture:

Is the business becoming more known, liked, and trusted?



Why Focus on Reputation, Trust, and Lifetime Value?

Building reputation, trust, and loyalty takes time and consistency. These strategies won't result in immediate returns, but they do provide concrete financial advantages.

Trust Shortens the Sales Cycle.

88%

of those surveyed said it was important or a deal breaker to trust the brands they buy or use.

SOURCE: 2025 BRAND TRUST REPORT FROM EDELMAN →

When prospects already know and trust your reputation, you can reduce friction so they move through the “consideration” phase faster.

Reputation Protects Your Margin.

68%

of shoppers have paid more for a brand they trust.

SOURCE: SALSIFY'S 2026 CONSUMER RESEARCH REPORT →

High-trust brands do not have to compete as much on price. Trust provides a price premium that directly insulates your profit margins against discount-heavy competitors.

Loyalty increases word of mouth referrals.

68.5%

of loyalty program customers said they refer friends to the brand to some degree.

SOURCE: ANTAVO'S GLOBAL CUSTOMER LOYALTY REPORT 2026 →

Every referral is a warm lead you didn't pay to acquire.

A solid foundation of reputation and trust makes every future marketing effort less expensive and more effective. Ads convert better when people recognize the name. Emails get opened when people trust the sender. That's the compounding effect ROI reports can't fully capture.



05

3 Key Metrics to Grow and Track Marketing Beyond ROI

Customer relationships grow in stages. First people learn who you are (reputation), then they decide whether to believe you (trust), then they decide if they like you enough to stay long-term (lifetime value). Each one builds on the last.

1 RETURN ON REPUTATION

The goal of reputation is to become known and remembered.

This is where you establish who you are, what you stand for, and your unique value proposition. When someone in your market thinks of your category, do they think of you?

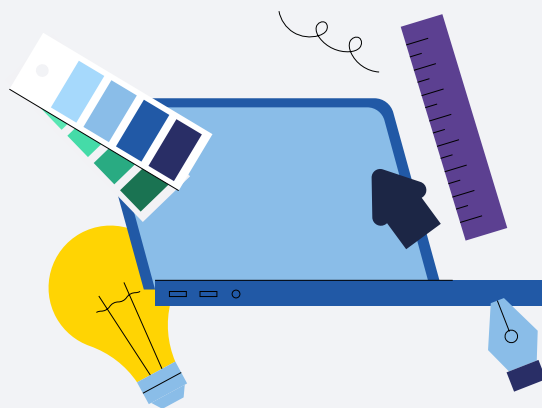
If a prospect doesn't know you exist, they can't consider your products or services when they need them. Reputation ensures you are at the table when the buying decision happens.

How to Build Reputation

01

Invest in real branding.

Develop a cohesive, consistent marketing strategy with a clear message. These efforts should have the same visual identity, voice, and core promise across every touchpoint. Video marketing, billboards, print ads, and digital ads should work as *cumulative, layered* efforts. No single one closes the deal, but together they make you familiar. Familiarity is the core of reputation.



02

Don't over-rely on discounts and promotions.

Discounts attract price-sensitive shoppers who are loyal to the deal, not to you. They'll leave the moment someone undercuts you. Focus on laying the groundwork for long-term trust and loyalty, and understand that leading with price can signal the opposite.



03

Partner with other companies.

Co-marketing expands your reach and establishes you as part of a community. Tag your partners, brag about them publicly, celebrate their wins—and they'll do the same for you. You each inherit a slice of each other's audience and credibility.



How to Track It



Impressions. When you simply want to get your name out, impressions let you estimate how many people have seen your brand. One caveat: while digital channels and modern direct mail (via QR codes and PURLs) are highly trackable, channels like TV, radio, or billboards largely aren't. Don't treat top-of-funnel reach as 'worthless' just because it lacks a click-through rate. Your media partner should be able to provide subscriber or viewership numbers, so estimate reach where you can and accept some fuzziness.



Brand search volume. When people type your brand name into Google, they're not stumbling onto you—they're actively looking for you. Rising branded search means rising reputation.



Followers and subscribers. Watch your number of social followers, email subscribers, YouTube subscribers, and so on. These are people who raised their hand and said, "keep talking to me." Watch the trend line, not the vanity number.

2 RETURN ON TRUST

We are living through a trust recession. With fake news, fake reviews, AI-generated photos, and chatbots claiming to be human, skepticism is at an all-time high, and it touches every interaction your brand has. Which means building genuine trust has never been more valuable, or more rare. People want to do business with *people*. Human connection is the antidote to all that noise.

If reputation makes you known, trust makes you believed. The goal at this stage is to expand on your reputation and become a trusted source. You want to be the brand people see as a resource rather than a solicitor.

That distinction matters more than it sounds. If you offer a promotion to someone who doesn't trust your brand, they'll likely ignore it, no matter how good the deal is. Trust often outweighs the financial incentive—in both directions. It's why your loyal customers ignore competitors' coupons, and why strangers ignore yours.



Trust does not develop overnight. It's a relationship, and relationships take time—especially now, with audiences more skeptical than ever.

This is where many businesses fail. Not because their approach was wrong, but because they gave up three months into a twelve-month process. When you commit to building trust, commit to the timeline that comes with it.

How to Build Trust

01



Lead with value.

Aim to *guide* potential customers, not solicit them. Share advice, inspiration, education, and content that helps people whether or not they'll ever buy from you. This is the heart of content marketing.

02



Stay consistent.

Double down on the cohesive, consistent marketing you built in the reputation stage. Consistency in your message and core values is itself a trust signal, since people trust what's predictable. A brand that says one thing in January and something different in June reads as unreliable, even if both messages were fine on their own.

03



Show social proof.

Tap into referrals, word of mouth, video testimonials, and partnerships. People trust other people far more than they trust brands, so let your customers and partners do the talking. Video testimonials are especially powerful in a world of fake reviews—a real customer telling a real story on camera creates an authentic experience that's difficult to fake.

04



Don't avoid traditional marketing channels.

Some marketers lean away from traditional marketing channels like direct mail, print, and video because they can be more challenging to track. However, they're ideal for building trust! Print ads and direct mail can cut through digital spam because they are tangible, permanent, and inherently feel more legitimate. Meanwhile, authentic, unscripted video formats like “behind the scenes” content or brand origin stories are one of the fastest ways to humanize your brand.

05



Communicate transparently.

Respond to comments and reviews (including the bad ones). Tag people. Show your face and your team. Being visibly present and human, actually speaking as your brand rather than broadcasting at people, is what separates a trusted business from a faceless one.



How to Track It



Engagement. Likes, comments, shares. Impressions tell you people saw you; engagement tells you they cared. Comments and shares are worth far more than likes, since they're active endorsements.



Customer lifetime value trends. Rising CLV is trust made visible: people buying more, more often, for longer.



Customer acquisition cost. As trust grows, CAC should fall. Warm audiences convert more easily than cold ones, and referrals cost you nothing. If your CAC drops while volume holds steady, your trust-building is working.



Advocacy. Positive reviews, testimonials, and word-of-mouth referrals. When customers voluntarily vouch for you, you've crossed from "known" to "trusted."

3 LIFETIME CUSTOMER VALUE

You've become known. You've become trusted.

Now the goal is to maintain and nurture the relationship, because the most expensive customer you'll ever have is the one you have to win twice.

The mindset shift here is to stop chasing the single transaction. One sale is one sale. A loyal customer is a *lifetime* of transactions—plus referrals, reviews, and resistance to competitors. Businesses fixated on ROI tend to celebrate the first purchase as the finish line, when it's actually the starting line.



How to Grow Lifetime Customer Value

01



Keep delivering what earned the customer in the first place.

Consistency doesn't stop at the sale. That means providing quality products and services, but also a smooth experience across every touchpoint: website, storefront, call center, customer service. For B2B companies, it means proactive check-ins and high-value educational content. For non-profits, this means personalized donor stewardship campaigns.

02



Reward loyalty.

Remember when we said to go easy on coupons? *This* is where promotions belong. Now that customers know, like, and trust you, those loyalty programs, exclusive discounts, and member perks encourage repeat sales and make people feel valued rather than targeted.

03



Provide even more value.

A customer who trusts you *wants* to know about the upgrade or the product that solves their next problem. Recommending it isn't pushy—it's helpful. Staying silent just sends them to a competitor.

04



Identify and track churn.

When someone leaves your brand, do you know why? Most businesses don't, since customers rarely announce their departure. Collect feedback systematically, watch for warning signs (declining usage, lapsed purchase cycles), and proactively fix the cause of what drove them away. Every churned customer you understand is a dozen future churns you can prevent.

05



Personalize.

Use your customer data to build highly personalized experiences for the people on your list. Rather than a generic email blast to everyone, tailor your communication based on their past behavior. Birthday, anniversary, or account milestone emails are common examples, but it could also include offering a discount specific to someone's favorite food or service.

06

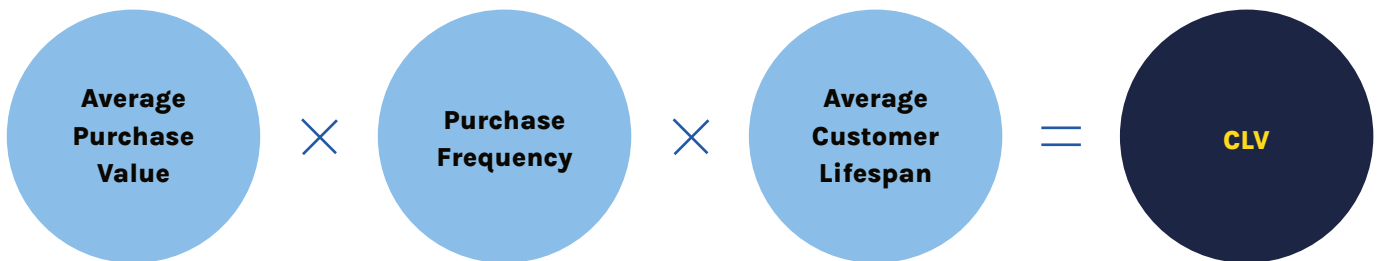


Align internally.

Marketing can't build lifetime value in a vacuum. If marketing promises a trusted, premium experience, but the customer service team fails to follow through, that customer trust and budding loyalty will be quickly eroded.

How to Track It

Pull three numbers from your CMS or sales records: **average purchase value**, **purchase frequency**, and **average customer lifespan**. Then use this formula:



A customer who spends \$50 per order, four times a year, for five years is worth \$1,000—a number that should completely reframe what you're willing to spend to acquire and keep them.

Alongside CLV, track the health of the relationship:

Satisfaction scores: An NPS survey (“How likely are you to recommend us?”) or similar tools like Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) and Customer Effort Score (CES). These are your early-warning system—satisfaction drops *before* churn shows up in revenue.

Churn rate: The percentage of customers you lose over a given period, and whether that number is trending up or down.



Final Thoughts

You can't expect overnight results from campaigns designed to improve reputation, trust, or loyalty. If you measure them with tools designed for immediate results, they'll always look like failures. That's not a flaw in the strategy; it's a flaw in the measurement.

Where most businesses fall short is when they give up too soon. Building customer relationships takes time and consistency. Stay true to your brand message and values, even when the monthly dashboard tempts you to chase something flashier. Track impressions and branded search to know you're being seen. Track engagement and acquisition costs to know you're being *believed*. Track lifetime value and churn to know you're being chosen again and again.

Because when a customer knows you, likes you, and trusts you, they think of you first.

That's the return that never shows up in an ROI column, and it's the one that builds businesses that last.



Ready to Build Something That Lasts?

Reputation, trust, and loyalty aren't built by one campaign—they're built by a consistent, cohesive brand strategy executed over time.

Lorraine Gregory Communications is an integrated marketing agency with in-house digital, creative, print, mail, and video production capabilities. We can build and execute your marketing strategy seamlessly across every channel, then support every stage of your customer's journey.

Our services include:



Reputation.

High-level brand strategy with dynamic video marketing and targeted advertising to make you known and remembered.



Trust.

Authentic storytelling, educational content, and tangible direct mail campaigns that prove your legitimacy and position you as a trusted resource.



Loyalty.

Personalized lifecycle marketing, Variable Data Printing (VDP) and targeted digital communications to keep your brand top-of-mind long after the first sale.

If you're ready to start building a long-term marketing strategy with impact beyond ROI, reach out and let's talk.

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