



# Digital Marketing Guidebook

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*5 steps to digital success*

# Preface

Thank you for downloading this resource. If you're reading this guidebook, you will be aware of the incredible amount of influence the Internet has on your business. Digitisation disrupts many industries (think of the impact it has had on newspapers, video rental stores, banks, healthcare and the list goes on) and it will continue to reshape the world.

This disruption also changes the skill sets required of modern marketers; however, many organisations and marketers are not prepared for this. As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, business owners, managers and marketers must become agile and able to take on new strategies, roles, technologies and creative directions.

This digital marketing guidebook introduces you to the 5-step digital marketing process. Following this guidebook equips you with the skills you need to develop and execute a leading digital marketing strategy.

The 5-step digital marketing process has been developed by [Dr Timo Dietrich](#) and [Mr Yannick van Hierden](#). It follows the essentials of marketing theory, combined with a practical approach to mastering your digital marketing efforts. The process model can be applied to business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), and government-to-customer (G2C) settings. Whether you work in a small or large organisation, this 5-step process teaches you a stepwise approach to acing your digital marketing.

The 5-step digital marketing process has been taught to thousands of people through our digital marketing and content marketing masterclasses, teaching, in-house consultancy, keynote and workshop deliveries. Ranging from marketing managers to communication managers, from founders to general managers, and from entrepreneurs to academics, professionals from all walks of life apply this process to get more success online.



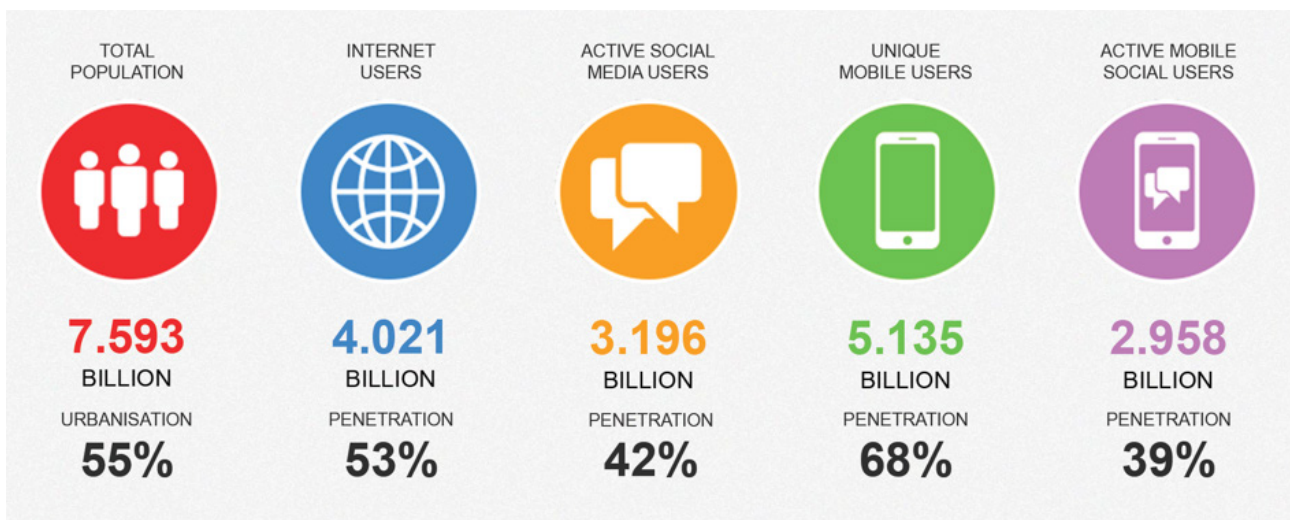
*50% of organisations don't  
have a digital strategy.*



## Why digital matters

There are about 4 billion people with access to the Internet. This means that, with a world population sitting at around 7.6 billion people (see Figure 1), almost half of the world's population are still waiting to get access to the internet.

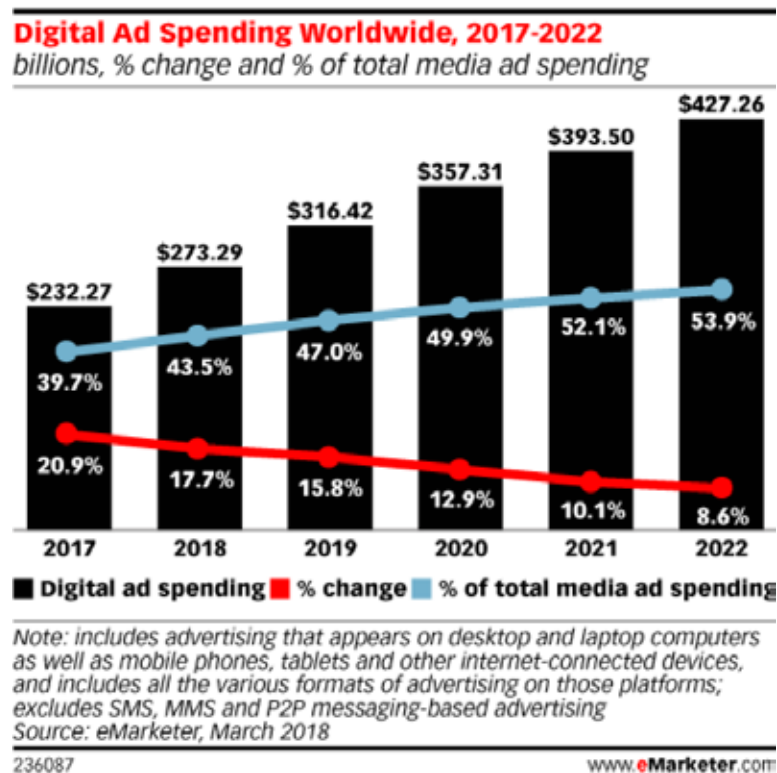
Figure 1: Hootsuite Internet snapshot



Now think of some of the digital native companies (e.g. Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft). In 2018, the four digital giants – Google, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft – made more capital investments (\$77.6 billion in total) than the four largest oil companies – Shell, Exxon, BP and Chevron (\$71.5 billion). These organisations are not competing for national markets, but for the global market. You can begin to appreciate why it is so crucial to these companies to get everyone connected to the internet. Every person on this planet is a potential customer and every digital native wants a piece of that global market.

How does this affect marketing? In 2016, digital ad spend surpassed traditional spend for the first time. Since then we have seen a continuous rise in digital ad spend (see Figure 2). The most logical reason for this is simply that people spend more time on digital channels than on traditional ones, such as TV, radio and newspapers. Also, digital allows you to more effectively target potential and existing customers and serve them more contextually relevant advertising. A heavy mobile phone user touches the device around 5,500 times in a single day, and as people increasingly spend more time on mobile devices it is doubtful that this trend will ever be reversed. In fact, eMarketer’s forecast predicts a shift of viewership from traditional TV to digital channels so much that by 2020, digital’s share of total advertising will near 50 per cent.

Figure 2: Digital spend worldwide



## What this means for businesses

Back in 1999, Seth Godin coined the term “permission marketing”, which centres on the notion of not interrupting customers, but rather asking for permission first and then trying to engage to build a meaningful relationship.

Traditional marketing (before all the digital channels were available), was the era of push media, where companies would saturate the views of customers repetitively using a shotgun approach. TV ads and radio broadcasts are the perfect example because they are short and played repetitively.

When the digital revolution arrived, the number of people exposed to marketing messages increased dramatically. Living in an urban environment, you can get exposed to up to 10,000 messages every day. To cope with this, your brain quickly becomes an expert at filtering content. The important difference

between traditional and digital marketing strategies is that digital marketers can be more targeted in reaching the right customers if the marketing campaign is correctly conceived and implemented. Also, online advertising can be less intrusive than TV ads, for example. More tailored content can be served online, which makes the advertising less annoying in general. However, Internet ads need to be more attention grabbing because there is greater competition from many other messages.

The digital revolution has changed the marketing profession. Innovative businesses (often digital natives) have transformed themselves into becoming helpful assistants in the lives of their customers. This customer centricity, combined with an assistance-oriented culture, has resulted in innovations to product and service development. Organisations need to determine how their product or service can give value to the lives of customers – precisely when the customer wants to hear, or even better, needs to hear – when the customer may not be aware of that need themselves. The question today is:

*How can I better understand my customers across many different channels and touchpoints along their journey so I can have a truly coherent conversation with them?*

*(Lawson, 2018)*

## Why do organisations struggle to get their digital marketing right?

You may be reading this as a company owner, marketing manager, communications officer or someone that is interested in developing their digital marketing skill set.

Because people have different backgrounds and different digital capabilities, you will face unique challenges convincing your team or top management to embrace the digital transformation journey.

The seven most common reasons for failing at digital marketing are:

- Being digitally active without a clear plan
- Lack of objectives and focus on wrong metrics
- Lack of understanding the customer
- Lack of understanding digital channels
- Insufficient or no digital budget
- Silo operation/unclear responsibilities
- Poor integration between online and offline marketing communication

*In the age of a digital world, when a business does not have a strong online presence, in the eyes of the customer, the business does not exist.*

*(Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015)*

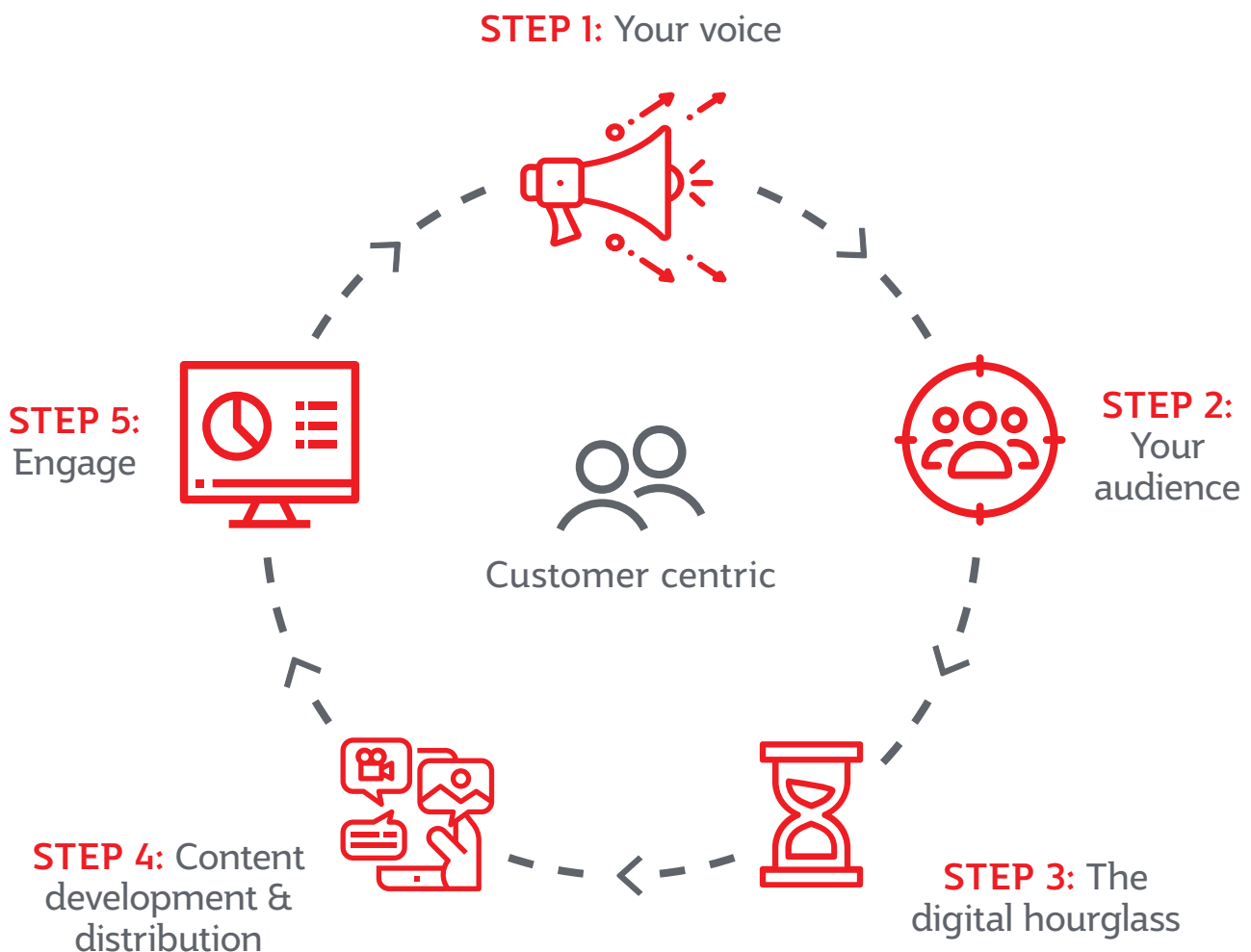


# The 5-step digital marketing process

Many organisations (approximately 50 per cent) don't have a digital strategy in place. To excel, organisations must develop and execute a digital strategy that is continuously monitored and evaluated for optimal effectiveness. But why is a strategy so important?

The 5-step digital marketing process is a step-by-step approach to mastering your digital marketing. It combines strategy with operational tactics and proper execution will deliver wins for your business growth and an improved customer experience (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The 5-step digital marketing process



Each of the following sections will provide you with an overview of each of the five steps.



*The 5-step digital marketing process combines marketing theory with operational tactics in a sequential and integrated way to improve the customer experience and to increase customer lifetime value.*

*(Dietrich, 2019)*



## STEP 1: Your voice

Step 1 is focused on teaching you how to build your brand narrative. This helps you to craft your voice, which is critical to effective communication.

Having a clear voice is essential to tell epic stories people want to listen to. By creating jaw-dropping content you can demonstrate authenticity and set your brand apart from the crowd. Telling stories with a distinct voice enables you to connect with your audience because people connect through stories. Since time immemorial, stories are the primary way to connect with our tribe – today, that’s no different.

To find your voice, you need to analyse qualitative and quantitative research to better understand your organisation, your competition, suppliers, stakeholders and other important external factors. Once you have done your research, conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to identify your key digital challenges and opportunities. To ensure your integrity and authenticity when you engage with your consumers, do a strategic brand narrative exercise. By not attending to the brand narrative exercise, you will most likely communicate with an unclear voice when you are creating content.

In a brand narrative exercise, you describe your identity and image, you identify how you will touch people’s hearts, you identify how you want to be perceived, and you will establish a clear positioning in the minds of your audience. In this exercise, you should walk away with a clear brand essence statement that depicts who you are, what you offer, to whom and how you stand out from the crowd.

*People do business with people – ideally people they like – not with businesses.*

*(van Hierden, 2019)*



## STEP 2: Your audience

Step 2 focuses on understanding your customers. To understand your customers, you build initial segments and enrich these using the persona technique.

Personas are fictitious, specific concrete representations of target users that share common characteristics. The more accurate and real the persona, the easier it is to tailor to the customers' wants and needs.

Creating personas will help you understand who your most important audiences are. If you have not done any segmentation work, start with identifying the most important audience (for example, by understanding who generates the most profit for your business). You can use qualitative and quantitative research methods to build personas and map out their online journeys. This process can be quite resource intensive (time, staff, money) and you need to find a realistic balance to what you can afford. The good news is that you can still build personas with very little time and money.

When creating personas, we recommend you focus on psychographics and behaviour. Psychographics classify people according to attitudes, aspirations, and other psychological criteria, such as knowledge, values, emotions and (cultural) interests. Behaviour is related to habits, hobbies, purchase behaviour (e.g. purchase history, service interactions etc.), media consumption, mobile phone usage and more. When you map out personas, including people's needs and frustrations related to your specific service makes it easier for you to build meaningful and relevant content.

*"Personally, I am very fond of strawberries and cream but I have found for some strange reason fish prefer worms."*

*Dale Carnegie*



### STEP 3: The digital hourglass

In step three, you will map out your audience's online journey, by designing your digital marketing hourglass. The digital hourglass is a representation of each of your persona's buyer journey. This demonstrates how your persona moves from the awareness phase to the conversion, loyalty and ultimately advocacy phase.

Within the digital hourglass there are seven phases (awareness, explore, consider, trial, convert, loyalty, advocacy) for you to consider and will help identify where marketing efforts should be allocated. You also formulate your digital objectives, micro- and macro-conversions, along with other key performance metrics. These phases enable you to measure effectively to see if your marketing efforts are successful. More specifically, you are able to track how your persona is moving through the hourglass. It is important to note that the digital hourglass is in many cases not a linear progression, but rather an iterative journey, with many jumps back and forth. Therefore, it is important that you build communications and tactics that leverage off each other, that is, each prior stage is reinforced throughout the hourglass journey.

*The marketing hourglass enables you to build relevant and measurable objectives to assess the effectiveness of your marketing programs.*

*(Dietrich, 2020)*



## STEP 4: Content development & distribution

The fourth step focuses on transforming your marketing department into an efficient and effective business unit that produces consistent, high-quality content.

While it is possible to just produce content, your content creation efforts will be decidedly stronger if you have worked through steps 1-3. This step will give you the tools and templates that you need to produce consistent, relevant and timely content that resonates with your persona.

In this step, you should determine “what conversation you want to own” and “what you want to be known for”. Create content that solves your persona’s most pressing problems and establish yourself as the authority in your specific industry. When you are recognised as a problem-solver, you earn trust. As a result, people are more likely to do business with you because you’re a credible authority.

Here we take a closer look at the various digital channels that are at a digital marketer’s disposal, such as email marketing, landing pages, social media networks, messenger platforms and influencer marketing. All these require a unique guidebook themselves and therefore we just briefly highlight them here. Furthermore, this step discusses your paid advertising fundamentals and how you can leverage earned media.

*Knowing when your audience is most receptive, those moments when you can really capture someone’s attention or change their mind, and then meeting them there with the right message: that's the next frontier*

*(Lawson, 2018)*



## STEP 5: Engage

Step five focuses on actioning everything that you have worked on in the previous steps. The most important action in this step is to develop an implementation plan that will ensure that all your content pieces across the various channels are deployed.

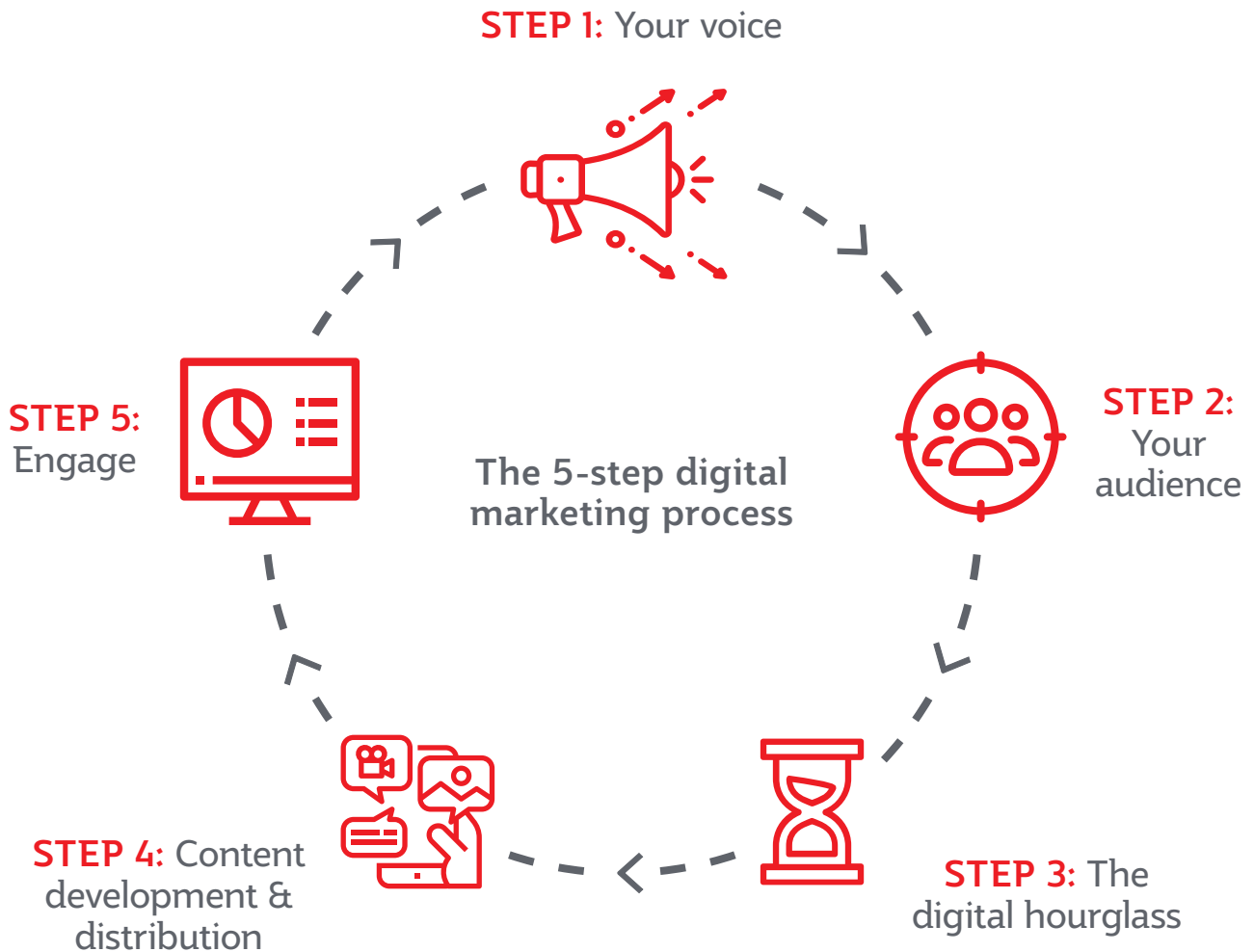
Interaction with your audience is essential. We're not just broadcasting content (anymore). Nowadays, customers expect you to be approachable and want the opportunity to engage in dialogue. Are you using email marketing, social media, SEO, influencers, blogs, customer communities or something else?

It is also the time to review budgets and staffing as well as the marketing technology required to deliver the set objectives. Marketing technology is an essential feature to capturing, nurturing and evaluating the persona's journey through the digital hourglass. The philosophy at this stage is to assume nothing, test everything and let your analysis guide your future decisions.

*If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.*

# Final words

There you have it; five sequential steps to developing a cohesive digital marketing strategy. If you have followed each of the steps and done the work, you are ready to roll!



Make sure you deliver against your plan and make adjustments along the way. You will collect a lot of data and will gain key domain specific knowledge about what works for your business and your audience. These insights are vital and will help you to iterate and learn and ultimately take your business to the next level.

## Want more information or need help?

To learn more about how digital marketing can help your organisation grow and drive innovation, please contact Dr Timo Dietrich at [t.dietrich@griffith.edu.au](mailto:t.dietrich@griffith.edu.au) or Mr Yannick van Hierden at [y.vanhierden@griffith.edu.au](mailto:y.vanhierden@griffith.edu.au).



### Dr Timo Dietrich

Engagement Director Social Marketing @Griffith,  
Senior Lecturer Griffith Business School, Griffith University

Timo is a behavioural architect and expert in building engaging social marketing programs that help our people and planet. He uses a suite of behavioural theories, gamification and co-creation to build, engage and move users from awareness to action and ultimately advocacy. He works with a diverse range of industry partners from the environment, health, technology and finance sector. Timo's research (80+ peer-reviewed publications) produces impact and drives change for the better in Australia and abroad. His work has positively impacted thousands of lives across change projects such as [Blurred Minds](#), [O-it](#), [Hevilapset](#), and [REMI](#) and he has trained more than 1500 professionals and students through his industry masterclasses and university lectures.



### Mr Yannick van Hierden

PhD Candidate Social Marketing @Griffith,  
Founder Ympact Agency

Yannick is a down-to-earth social marketer, empowering people to live happier and healthier lives. He is a PhD candidate at Social Marketing @ Griffith. Yannick is experienced in strategic branding, positioning and digital marketing. He works from an outside-in approach, meaning that he treats people as the centre and starting point of all marketing activities. As a consultant and teacher, he has trained more than 200 professionals to improve their digital marketing skills in the [Digital Marketing Masterclass](#) – Griffith University's most popular one-day masterclass.

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To find out more about how you can apply social marketing to your field of work to make a positive social change, contact [socialmarketing@griffith.edu.au](mailto:socialmarketing@griffith.edu.au) or visit [griffith.edu.au/sm@g](http://griffith.edu.au/sm@g).



