



6- week Digital Marketing Programme – week 3

Note: An AI colleague produced this summary of the course 😊

This detailed summary covers the topics addressed by Evan during Week 3 of the 6-Week Digital Marketing Programme, organized by the Local Enterprise Office Clare. The session focused on utilizing Canva for creating graphics and strategies for maximizing website enquiries and sales.

Detailed Summary of Digital Marketing Program (Week 3)

Part I: Canva for Marketing Graphics

Evan introduced Canva as a graphic design tool primarily intended for non-graphic designers, business owners, and other non-professionals. Canva is considered an easy-to-use alternative to complex and expensive software like Photoshop.

Key Facts about Canva:

- **Adoption:** Canva currently has 220 million users.
- **Cost:** Approximately 70% of Canva's features are available for free. The paid "Pro" version (costing around €12 a month) provides premium elements (indicated by a crown icon) and advanced tools.
- **Access:** Users must log in via Canva.com. All designs are saved centrally on the Canva server, allowing access from any device.
- **Functionality:** Canva is described as a "Swiss Army knife", capable of designing social media images, presentations (better than PowerPoint), marketing emails, video edits, documents (CVs, invoices), and print materials. It is also possible to create a simple website in Canva, although Evan noted it is generally "not good enough for a small business" due to poor SEO features.

Designing in Canva: Evan demonstrated three primary ways to design content: starting from scratch, customizing one of the over 100,000 professional templates, or utilizing Canva's AI (which was not covered in detail).

1. **Canvas Sizing:** Evan emphasized using specific dimensions for social media consistency, recommending the **Instagram post 4x5** size for posts across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. For full-screen content, like Instagram Stories or Reels, the portrait size (1080x1920 pixels) is necessary.

2. **Image Handling (From Scratch):** To use a personal image, participants must first upload it to the Canva library. Once on the canvas, an image can be set as the background by right-clicking it. Evan noted that by double-clicking a background image, users can adjust which part of the photo is visible within the canvas borders.
 3. **Adding Text (Four Methods):**
 - **Method 1 (Basic):** Use simple "Heading" or "Subheading" text boxes.
 - **Method 2 (Search Fonts):** Use the "Search Fonts and Combinations" feature to find professionally styled font pairings related to keywords like "sale" or "Christmas".
 - **Method 3 (Font Combinations):** Scroll down through non-topic-specific "Font Combinations" curated by graphic designers.
 - **Method 4 (Graphics/Elements):** Add static or animated text-based "graphics" found under the 'Elements' menu.
 4. **Animation and File Type:** Adding animation to text or using animated graphics automatically converts the final download file type to a video (MP4) rather than a standard image file (PNG or JPEG).
 5. **Colours and Branding:**
 - **Background Colours:** The background colour menu appears when the canvas is clicked. Solid colours can be chosen using defaults, a search box, the colour chooser tool, or hex codes. Gradients (one colour graduating into another) are available and often used by major brands to look "slicker".
 - **Brand Colours (Free Workaround):** For users on the free version, the brand colour can be uploaded as an image (the logo) onto the canvas, which allows Canva to extract the colour automatically for use in backgrounds and text.
 - **Brand Kit (Paid Feature):** Paid users can permanently save brand logos and colours in a "Brand Kit" for consistent use.
 6. **Removing Backgrounds (BG Remover):**
 - **Paid Users:** Can use the built-in "BG Remover" feature (a paid option).
 - **Free Users:** Must use a separate free website, such as **remove.bg**, to upload an image, remove the background, download the transparent file, and then re-upload it to Canva. This technique is useful for products, staff photos, and especially logos with unwanted white backgrounds.
 7. **Templates:** Templates allow users to instantly leverage professionally designed layouts. Evan recommended not limiting searches to one's own industry (e.g., a menswear shop looking at jewellery templates) but rather selecting a template based purely on liking its layout, which can then be completely customized with personal photos, text, and colours.
 8. **Canva Mobile App:** The app has the same full functionality as the desktop version, but the process of designing is 3 to 4 times slower. Its primary use is efficiently downloading finished designs to the phone for easy posting to social media platforms.
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Part II: Website Marketing and Conversion

After the coffee break, Evan covered strategies for maximizing website conversions (inquiries and sales), noting that 53% of the class planned to get a website.

1. Acquiring a Website: Evan outlined two main pathways for acquiring a website:

- **Hiring a Local Web Designer:** Evan advised choosing a designer based on four factors: (1) their own high ranking in Google search results (e.g., page 1 or top half of page 2 for terms like "Web Design Kerry"), (2) their reputation for providing excellent ongoing customer service, (3) liking their designs, and (4) price (recommended mid-range over the cheapest, which often lacks SEO). He also suggested insisting the site be built on **WordPress** for its ease of update and future-proofing through millions of available "plugins".
- **DIY Web Builder Platforms:** Affordable alternatives include Wix, Squarespace (€20/month, hosting included), and Shopify (€30/month for e-commerce). These use pre-designed, editable templates and allow users to quickly test the market on a low budget.

2. Conversion Psychology and Tactics: The core challenge is that online visitors often compare businesses, and they are typically only in the "browsing stage" (up to 80% of traffic). Conversion rates (sales/inquiries per 100 visitors) are typically low (1-3%). Therefore, the website must actively engage visitors before attempting to convert them.

Tactics to Increase Engagement:

Goal	Tactic	Explanation
Prevent Abandonment	Page Speed Optimization	If a page takes longer than 4 seconds to load, 40% of people abandon it. Sites must load quickly (LCP under 1.2 seconds). Use GTmetrix.com to check site speed.
Immediate Resonance	Compelling Headlines	Headlines must immediately resonate and clearly convey what the business offers. AI tools (like Gemini or ChatGPT) can be used to write expert-level headlines that incorporate key customer <i>needs</i> or <i>triggers to purchase</i> .
Build Credibility/Trust	Trust Signals	Include "As Featured In" banners (media coverage). Use metrics/numbers (e.g., "Over 25,000 hours of lessons given") to quantify experience and establish establishment.
Show Establishment	Showcase Physical Location	Businesses with physical shops should use photos of the premises/office to reassure online visitors about credibility and returns/contactability.
Establish Expertise	Maintain a Blog/Video Content	A blog section (which can host written articles or embedded videos) establishes expertise, style, and trust, and helps pull in traffic via SEO for niche searches (e.g., "counselling for

bereavement Kerry"). Videos increase engagement by 400–700%.

Encourage Browsing	Internal Links	Use numerous prominent image links and text links throughout the pages to prompt visitors to browse deeper into the site, especially crucial for mobile users where the main menu is hidden.
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Tactics to Increase Conversion:

Goal	Tactic	Explanation
Entice Action	Special Offers	Offers are proven to generate more sales. Use AI to brainstorm offers specific to the industry.
Create Urgency	Limited Time Offers	Use short-term offers ("ends this Wednesday") rather than long-term sales, as urgency concentrates the visitor's mind and prompts action.
Apply Pressure	Scarcity	Techniques like notifying visitors how many others are viewing an item, or stating "only one more available at this price," increase the chances of immediate purchase (e.g., Booking.com).
Provide Reassurance	Testimonials	Testimonials are essential for overcoming visitor hesitation. Use reviews pulled directly from the Google profile and pepper them around the website (e.g., on the contact page). Tools like Trustindex.io can help integrate these reviews.

Action Point List for Participants

Based on the information provided by Evan, participants should focus on the following actions:

Canva Actions

1. **Sign Up for Canva:** Go to Canva.com and create a free account to begin designing.
2. **Practice Design Basics:** Practice uploading images and logos to your Canva library and setting images as the canvas background.
3. **Create Professional Text:** Explore the "Search Fonts and Combinations" and "Font Combinations" sections to find professional text styles for marketing images.
4. **Use Free BG Removal (If not paying):** If you are on the free version of Canva, practice using an external tool like **remove.bg** to create transparent versions of your product photos and logos before uploading them to Canva for use on coloured backgrounds.
5. **Utilize Templates:** Search the Templates library using broad keywords (not just your industry) to find layouts you like, and customize them completely with your own branding, photos, and text.
6. **Download the App:** Install the Canva app on your phone for easy synchronization and downloading of finished designs, enabling quick social media posting.

Website Marketing & Conversion Actions

1. **Check Page Speed:** Use GTmetrix.com to test the loading speed of your key web pages (especially the homepage and product pages) to ensure the Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) is under 1.2 seconds, thereby avoiding visitor frustration.
2. **Optimize Headlines:** Use AI tools (like ChatGPT or Gemini) as a copywriter to brainstorm compelling headlines that incorporate the three main customer *triggers to purchase* for each product or service page.
3. **Ensure Scannable Content:** Rewrite key body text to focus on short, scannable bullet points rather than long paragraphs, highlighting the most important benefits (triggers to purchase).
4. **Brainstorm Video Ideas:** Ask AI to generate 10 video ideas suitable for your specific business type (e.g., guest house, counsellor) that could be placed on your website to increase engagement and trust.
5. **Establish Trust Signals:** Identify specific metrics (e.g., hours taught, customers served) or media coverage ("As Featured In") and display these prominently on your website to establish credibility quickly.
6. **Integrate Testimonials:** Ensure your website prominently displays testimonials, ideally pulling them from your Google profile, as third-party validation significantly boosts conversion.
7. **Explore Offers:** Consider running time-limited special offers (e.g., lasting only a few days) to test conversion rates and prompt browsing visitors into immediate action.