



Week 3 – Canva and website sales

Digital Marketing Programme Summary:

This summary covers the third week of the digital marketing programme delivered by **Evan** on behalf of the Local Enterprise Office Longford, focusing on visual design using **Canva** and strategies for **website marketing**.

Introduction and Programme Context

Evan welcomed the participants to week 3 of the programme, noting that previous sessions had covered **AI** (ChatGPT and Gemini) and **Google Search/SEO**. He explained that the day's session was divided into two main parts: mastering **Canva** for professional-looking graphics before the break, and **website marketing** tactics to generate inquiries and sales afterward. **Evan** highlighted that **80% of people judge a business immediately** based on the quality of its marketing materials, making high-quality design essential for social media engagement.

Part 1: Mastering Canva for Non-Designers

Evan described **Canva** as the premier tool for those who are not professional graphic designers but want their work to look as if a professional was involved. While professional tools like Photoshop are complicated and expensive, **Evan** noted that **Canva** is largely free, with about 70% of its features available at no cost.

Platform Basics and Accessibility

- **The Pro Version:** **Evan** explained that the paid version costs **€12 per month** and provides access to premium elements marked with a small crown icon.
- **Account Setup:** To begin, users must create a free account using an email address or a Gmail sign-in.
- **Three Ways to Design:** **Evan** identified three primary workflows in **Canva**: starting from a blank canvas (**Your Designs**), using one of the **100,000+ templates**, or utilizing **Canva AI** to generate content from prompts.

Dimensions and Sizing for Social Media

Evan emphasized that users do not need to remember specific pixel dimensions because **Canva** provides pre-sized templates.

- **The "Golden" Size:** He recommended using the **Instagram Post 4x5** format, as it is slightly taller than it is wide and works perfectly on **Facebook and LinkedIn** as well,.
- **Stories and Portraits:** For **Instagram Stories**, **Evan** pointed out the **9x16 portrait** size, which fills the entire screen.
- **Profile Graphics:** He also mentioned that specific templates exist for **LinkedIn profile banners**, which are short and wide.

Canva Practical Techniques (Exercises 1-3)

Evan walked through several exercises to demonstrate the fundamentals of the platform:

- **Managing Images:** He showed how to **upload files** from a computer to the **Canva cloud library**. To make an image fit perfectly, **Evan** said the best method is to right-click the image and select **"Set image as background"**.
- **Text and Font Combinations:** Instead of using basic headings that look like PowerPoint, **Evan** suggested using **font combinations**. These are groups of fonts curated by professional designers that users can manipulate by changing the words and colors,.
- **Animation for Video:** To make content stand out, particularly in Stories, **Evan** demonstrated how to **animate text** using effects like "burst" or "stump". He noted that once any element moves, the file must be downloaded as an **MP4 video** rather than a static JPEG or PNG.
- **Elements and Graphics:** **Evan** explained that the **"Elements"** tab contains millions of graphics. He showed how to use filters to find **free or animated graphics** and how to search for specific themes like "Black Friday" or "Christmas".

Advanced Design Features

- **Background Removal:** For **Canva Pro** users, **Evan** demonstrated the one-click **BG Remover** tool. For those on the free version, he recommended an external site, **remove.bg**, as a workaround to create transparent images.
 - **Shadows and Depth:** To make logos or products "pop" off the screen and look **3D**, **Evan** showed how to add **shadows** through the "Edit Image" menu.
 - **Brand Kits:** He explained that **Pro** users can save their **brand colors and logos** in a "Brand Kit" for easy access. Free users can achieve a similar result by placing their logo on a canvas and letting **Canva extract the "photo colors"** automatically.
 - **Transparency:** **Evan** suggested making shapes **semi-transparent** (e.g., 50%) when placing text over an image to ensure the design doesn't look "plunked" on.
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Part 2: Website Marketing and Sales Generation

After the break, **Evan** shifted focus to how a website acts as the **sales environment** at the center of all digital marketing. He argued that while social media and Google drive traffic, the website's job is to **engage and convert** that traffic.

The Reality of Online Conversions

Evan provided important statistics to manage expectations:

- **Conversion Rates:** A typical conversion rate (people who buy or inquire) is only **2-3%**.
- **The 80% Rule:** Approximately **80% of visitors** land on a site when they are just browsing or researching and are not yet ready to purchase.
- **Competition:** Because most people look at **3 to 4 search results** on Google, **Evan** noted that users are constantly comparing businesses based on trust and quality.

Strategies for Increasing Engagement

To prevent visitors from leaving immediately, **Evan** outlined several psychological and technical triggers:

- **Speed is Critical:** **Evan** said that if a page takes more than **4 seconds** to load, a business will lose **40% of its visitors**. He recommended aiming for a load time under **1.2 seconds**.
- **Security (HTTPS):** He warned that an "Insecure" warning (HTTP instead of HTTPS) will scare off potential customers.
- **Resonating Headlines:** **Evan** emphasized that a headline must immediately tell the visitor they are in the right place. He showed how to use **AI** to brainstorm headlines that address the specific needs of customers (e.g., "washable" for dog sofas or "flattering fit" for mother-of-the-bride dresses).
- **Scannable Content:** Since people only read about **20% of text**, **Evan** advised using **bullet points** and short sentences to make content easy to scan.
- **Video Power:** Including a video on a landing page can increase engagement by **300% to 700%**.

Building Trust and Credibility

Evan explained that we are all in the "**trust business**". He suggested several ways to build instant authority:

- **Media Coverage:** Using a banner that says "**As Featured In**" with logos from newspapers or radio stations builds massive subliminal trust.
- **Expert Statistics:** He suggested using metrics, such as "**25,000 hours of lessons delivered**" or the number of years in business, to establish credibility.
- **Internal Linking:** **Evan** encouraged the use of **text links and image links** within the page to tempt users to browse further rather than leaving after reading one section.

Conversion and "Pulling People Out of Inertia"

To turn an engaged visitor into a buyer, **Evan** suggested:

- **Limited-Time Offers:** **Evan** said that short-term, urgent offers (e.g., a 72-hour flash sale) are more effective than long-term discounts because they force a decision.
 - **Scarcity:** Real scarcity, such as "**only 5 spaces left**," naturally encourages people to act before a product is gone.
 - **Automated Testimonials:** **Evan** recommended a tool called **Trustindex.io**, which automatically pulls Google or Facebook reviews onto a website to provide social proof.
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Action Point List for Participants

- **Create/Audit Canva Account:** Set up a free account and explore the "Your Designs" vs. "Templates" sections.
- **Set Up a Brand Kit (or Workaround):** If using Pro, upload your logo and colors. If on the free version, use the "Photo Colors" extraction method for your logo.
- **Redesign Social Graphics:** Replace basic text headings with professional "**font combinations**" found in the Text tab.
- **Experiment with Animation:** Create an Instagram Story (9x16) and animate at least one piece of text to see how it converts into an MP4 video.
- **Test Website Speed:** Use gtmetrics.com to check your site's LCP (Largest Contentful Paint). Aim for under **1.2 seconds**.
- **Check Security:** Ensure your website URL begins with **HTTPS** and that you have a valid SSL certificate.
- **Rewrite Main Headlines:** Use **AI (ChatGPT or Gemini)** to brainstorm five new headlines for your core products based on the "3 main things" your customers value.
- **Audit for Scannability:** Break up large walls of text on your website into **bullet points** and short paragraphs.
- **Gather Trust Assets:** Collect logos of media outlets you've appeared in and identify one "credibility statistic" (e.g., years of experience or customers served) for your homepage.
- **Install Social Proof:** Sign up for a trial of **Trustindex.io** (or a similar tool) to begin pulling your Google reviews directly onto your website's testimonials or contact page.

This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊