

10 Digital Marketing Priorities

In this session, organised by the **Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Tipperary** as part of Enterprise Week, **Evan Mangan** from The Marketing Crowd delivered a comprehensive overview titled "**10 Digital Marketing Priorities for Your Business in 2026**". Evan explained that the course was designed to provide a "helicopter view" of how various digital marketing elements fit together, rather than a deep dive into any single topic.

Priority 1: The Big Picture Strategy

Evan began by outlining a **six-step approach** to digital marketing that businesses should follow to be effective in 2026.

- **Step 1: Master Three Core Skills.** Evan said businesses must become comfortable with **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** for tailored advice and creative tasks, **video editing** to reach audiences on social media, and **Canva** for professional graphic design.
- **Step 2: Establish a Sales Environment.** Evan emphasised that a website remains the centre of digital marketing because it serves as the primary sales environment where products and services are explained in detail.
- **Step 3: Engage and Convert.** It is not enough to have a website; it must be set up to "plug the holes in the bucket" so that visitors are converted into inquiries or sales.
- **Step 4 & 5: Drive Traffic via Search and Social.** Evan said that while social media is important for interest, **search engine traffic** is far more valuable because it captures users with high intent.
- **Step 6: Paid Ads and Email Marketing.** Finally, Evan noted that businesses should use paid advertising and email marketing to maintain control over their audience reach.

Priority 2: The Five Levels of AI Integration

Evan spent significant time on AI, noting that it is one of the most important tools for moving a business forward. He compared **ChatGPT** and **Google Gemini**, noting that Gemini has recently surpassed ChatGPT in many benchmarks and offers several powerful features for free that ChatGPT charges for. Evan described **five levels** of AI usage:

1. **Fast Models:** Simple prompts using basic logic.
2. **Personalisation:** Providing the AI with detailed custom instructions (about half an A4 page) about the business.
3. **Thinking Models:** Using reasoning models (like Gemini's "thinking" mode) for more considered business advice.
4. **Deep Research:** Using tools to generate 15–25 page reports on a business or industry to provide the AI with massive context.
5. **Gems/Projects:** Creating permanent AI "experts" that have read the deep research reports and provide laser-tailored advice every time they are consulted.

Evan also demonstrated **visual AI tools**, such as Gemini's "**Nana Banana**" (the internal code name for its image tool), which can change product colours, erase people from photos, or place products into new settings like a breakfast table.

Priority 3: The Language of Video

Evan said that social media marketing in 2026 is essentially **video marketing**. He identified three specific types of videos businesses should produce:

1. **Clips set to music:** Short (max 15 seconds), fast-paced clips for visually interesting products or locations.
2. **Voice-over videos:** Clips edited together with the owner's voice explaining a service or offering tips.
3. **Talking to the camera:** Essential for service-based businesses (solicitors, coaches) to build trust and "bring themselves to life".

Evan stressed the importance of the "**3-second hook**" to prevent users from swiping past and to satisfy platform algorithms. He recommended the **Edits app** by Meta as a powerful, 100% free alternative to CapCut.

Priority 4 & 5: Website Engagement and Conversion

Evan noted that the average website conversion rate is only **2-3%**. To improve this, he suggested several tactics to "engage" and "convert" visitors:

- **Loading Speed:** Evan said that if a page takes more than 4 seconds to load, 40% of visitors leave. He recommended using **GTMetrix** to test speed.
- **Resonant Headlines:** Instead of "Welcome to our site," headlines should address the top three things customers are looking for.
- **Credibility Builders:** Evan suggested including stats (e.g., "delivered 25,000 hours of lessons") or media coverage logos to establish trust quickly.
- **Scarcity and Urgency:** Short-term offers and real scarcity (e.g., "only 5 places left") are more effective than month-long promotions.
- **Testimonials:** Evan said reviews are crucial for reassurance and recommended **Trustindex.io** to pull reviews from Google and Facebook onto a website.

Priority 6, 7 & 8: Dominating Search (Local, Organic, and AI)

Evan explained that search is evolving into three distinct areas:

1. **Google Business Profile (GBP):** This is the "map result" at the top of local searches. Evan said businesses must be **relevant**, have a **comprehensive profile**, and high **review counts** to appear in the top three.
2. **Organic SEO:** To appear in the 10 blue links below the map, businesses must focus on **Meta Titles**, headlines, and having a dedicated page for every specific search term they want to rank for.
3. **AI Mode:** Evan demonstrated Google's new **AI Mode**, which synthesises information to recommend businesses directly. He said that to be recommended by an AI, a business needs a high-quality reputation (reviews and PR) and a website page that clearly outlines the criteria the AI is looking for.

Priority 9 & 10: Social Media Realities and Email Marketing

Evan warned that **Facebook organic reach** has plummeted to approximately **5%** for many businesses. He said that while Instagram and TikTok offer better reach, businesses are essentially at the mercy of algorithms that treat them as "liabilities" if their content is boring.

Because of this lack of control, Evan said **email marketing** is more important than ever. He recommended using platforms like **MailerLite** to build a list and using "lead magnets" (like a 10% discount or a free guide) to turn website visitors into subscribers.

Action Point List for Participants

- [] **Audit Website Speed:** Run your website through **GTMetrix.com**. If it takes longer than 4 seconds to load, speak to your developer about resizing images or updating code.
- [] **Optimise Your Google Business Profile:** Ensure you have filled in all 10 possible categories, added a keyword-rich description, and uploaded recent photos and videos.
- [] **Implement a Review Strategy:** Use the "Ask for reviews" link from your GBP. Send a personalised email to previous customers explaining how much reviews help your local business.
- [] **Create Specific Search Pages:** If you want to be found for a specific service (e.g., "Dog-friendly hotel"), create a dedicated page on your website for that topic rather than just mentioning it on the homepage.
- [] **Test AI "Deep Research":** Use Google Gemini to conduct "Deep Research" on your business and your industry. Save these reports as PDFs.
- [] **Set Up an AI "Gem" or "Project":** Upload your deep research reports to a Gemini Gem or ChatGPT Project. Give it the custom instruction to "Always act as an expert digital marketing consultant for [Your Business Name]".
- [] **Experiment with the Edits App:** Download the **Edits app** by Meta. Practise making a 15-second video using "lots of little clips" (each 2 seconds long) set to music.
- [] **Refresh Website Headlines:** Ask your AI Gem to identify the "top 3 things customers look for" in your service. Use those insights to rewrite your homepage headline to be more resonant.
- [] **Launch an Email Sign-up Incentive:** Create a "lead magnet" (e.g., a PDF guide or a discount code) and place a sign-up form prominently on your website to begin building your own database.
- [] **Monitor AI Recommendations:** Go to Google AI Mode or Perplexity and ask, "Who are the best [Your Profession] in [Your Area]?" If you aren't listed, ask the AI what criteria it used and update your website to reflect those qualities.

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