

FUTURE FORWARD MARKETING



EVOLVE & ADAPT

STRATEGY TOOLKIT FOR 2025

As a strategic marketing consultancy working with clients across industries, Evolve & Adapt has identified marketing trends to drive growth and innovation in 2025.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), **social commerce**, and **short-form video** will be powerful tools for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) this year.

These tools can be harnessed to streamline operations, enhance customer experiences, and increase brand awareness and traffic, leading to revenue growth.





AI Tools Are Not Just for Big Companies

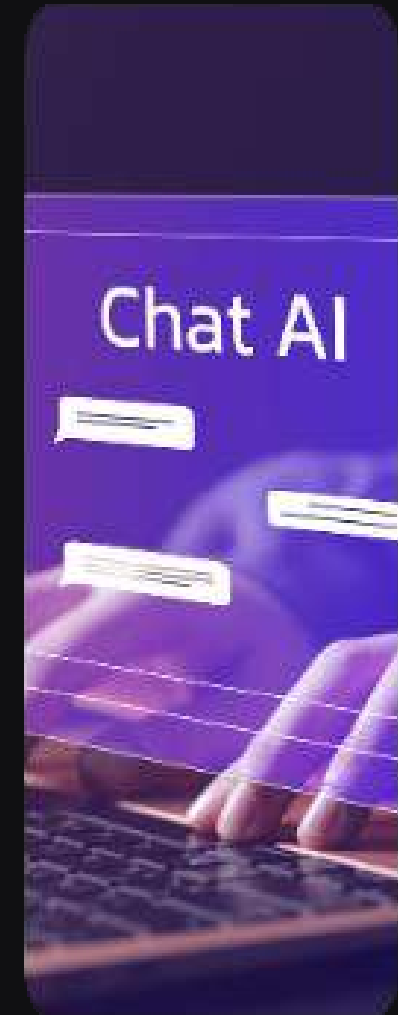
AI is no longer reserved for tech giants. A [Forbes](#) survey found that 72% of businesses have adopted AI in at least one function, a sharp rise from the previous year. In 2025, AI technologies are set to become even more accessible for small businesses, driving growth and improving customer experiences.

At sophisticated level, AI can power personalised marketing by analysing customer data to uncover patterns and preferences as well as allow businesses to forecast trends and anticipate customer behaviour through predictive analysis.



However, SMEs can utilise free AI tools in day-to-day marketing efforts:

- In content marketing, AI-powered tools like [ChatGPT](#) and [Gemini](#) can streamline content creation and optimisation. These writing assistants can generate high-quality blog posts, social media content, and product descriptions, saving time and effort. Beyond content generation, they can also be utilised to analyse performance metrics, offering insights to enhance SEO and user engagement.
- AI-powered chatbots like [Tawk.to](#) can also help with streamlining customer service and engagement, allowing SMEs to handle common queries efficiently, freeing up time for more complex tasks.



- For SMEs looking to create appealing visuals without a design team, tools like [Canva](#) and [OpenArt.ai](#) offer excellent freemium options. They both can generate unique images using AI, perfect for creating social media posts, website banners, or promotional visuals. Once the images are generated, Canva can be used for further customisation and editing, allowing businesses to design professional presentation decks and marketing collateral with ease.
- Finally, when it comes to email marketing, [Mailchimp](#) offers a robust freemium plan that integrates AI capabilities for email marketing. It can help SMEs to craft personalised email campaigns, segment audiences, and analyse performance metrics.



While AI offers immense potential, it's essential to approach its implementation strategically. Small businesses should start by identifying specific areas where AI can add the most value. Begin with simple tasks like automating social media posting or analysing customer feedback. As the business gains experience and confidence, they can explore more advanced applications.

AI is a powerful tool that can level the playing field for small businesses. By embracing these technologies, small businesses can enhance their marketing efforts, improve customer experiences, and drive sustainable growth. As AI evolves, small businesses must stay informed and adapt to the changing technological landscape.





Leveraging Social Commerce for Business Success

Social commerce, where social media meets e-commerce, is reshaping the retail industry. In 2023, the global social commerce market was valued at \$914.3 billion and is expected to reach \$6.2 trillion by 2030. For small businesses, this presents a significant opportunity to engage customers and drive sales through implementing strategic social media use.

Creating a strong social media presence is essential for success in social commerce. For B2B social commerce, LinkedIn is a powerful platform, with 89% of B2B marketing professionals using it to generate leads and 62% finding it effective.



In the B2C space, platforms like Facebook Marketplace appeal to Gen X, while Instagram and TikTok marketplace resonate more with Millennials and Gen Z. Notably, TikTok has seen a surge in popularity, especially among younger demographics.

A recent study by Mintel found that 47% of U.S. consumers purchased via social media last year, and 58% expressed interest in future purchases.

To harness this trend, businesses should focus on consistently sharing engaging content, running interactive contests, and offering exclusive deals tailored to their audience on each platform.

One of the most impactful tactics is live shopping, where brands showcase products and interact with customers in real-time on platforms like Instagram Live, Facebook Live, and TikTok Live.





By understanding the specific preferences of each platform's audience, businesses can craft tailored pitches, and decide which platform works best for their product or service, boosting engagement and sales.

E-Commerce Platforms such as Shopee (13.2 million monthly web visits) and Lazada (6 million monthly web visits) also offer integrated robust live streaming capabilities, with companies reporting conversion rates up to 30% during live shopping events, nearly 10 times higher than conventional e-commerce. This makes live shopping a compelling option for small businesses looking to stand out.



Finally, influencer marketing remains a key strategy in social commerce, helping businesses reach new audiences and build credibility.

Collaborating with micro-influencers (10k - 100k followers) or nano-influencers (1k - 10k followers) offers a cost-effective way to gain authentic exposure.

Research from Matter Communications found that 81% of consumers trust influencer recommendations, making them more likely to purchase recommended products.



The Effectiveness of Short-Form Video

In recent years, short-form video content has become an essential tool for marketers worldwide. Its effectiveness in capturing and engaging audiences is undeniable, particularly in social media marketing and digital advertising.

Short-form content (under 30 seconds) can convey complex messages in a concise and easily digestible format, making them ideal for capturing the attention of today's short-attention-span consumers.

Furthermore, the ability to incorporate sound, motion, and emotion into short-form formats creates a more immersive and memorable viewing experience.





On social media platforms, videos and animations consistently outperform static content in terms of engagement and reach.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have popularised short-form video content, encouraging brands to create bite-sized, visually captivating clips that resonate with their target audiences.

These platforms' algorithms prioritise engaging content, making it easier for short-form video content to gain traction and go viral.



In digital advertising, video ads have proven to be highly effective in driving brand awareness, increasing click-through rates, and generating conversions.

Video ads can be tailored to specific platforms and audience segments, ensuring maximum impact. Additionally, the rise of programmatic advertising has made it easier for marketers to target their video ads to the right people at the right time.

Brands that embrace short-form video formats and leverage their potential for creativity and engagement will be well-positioned to succeed in the ever-evolving digital landscape.



Looking ahead, proactive planning and a forward-thinking approach are crucial for SMEs to thrive in 2025.

By adopting AI, social commerce and short-form content strategies, businesses can enhance their operations and gain a competitive edge.

We share two strategic tools in this toolkit, designed to help B2B and B2C businesses effectively plan and use technology for improved brand awareness, lead generation, and sales conversion.

Here's to your future success. Happy hustling!

J C Sum
Strategy Consultant





STRATEGY BEFORE TACTICS



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MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, having a reliable strategic framework is essential for assessing long-term feasibility, viability, and profitability. It is crucial for businesses to utilise a tool that not only guides strategy but also adapts to the dynamic shifts of the digital economy.

Traditionally, the "Marketing Mix" was a popular framework, coined by Neil Borden in 1949 and later simplified into the "4Ps of Marketing" by E. Jerome McCarthy in the 1960s. The model focused on Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, providing a foundational guide for marketing strategy.

However, McCarthy's 4Ps do not fully address the complexities of today's rapidly evolving digital landscape – but it was never designed for it, nor was it intended as a fundamental business strategy.

A new tool is needed.

MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

Evolve & Adapt has developed a strategy framework that concisely represents how marketing forms the foundation of business strategy.

This model is called the **Marketing Inverted Pyramid** and was first described in “Evolve, Adapt or Collapse”. It concisely represents how marketing forms the foundation of business strategy.

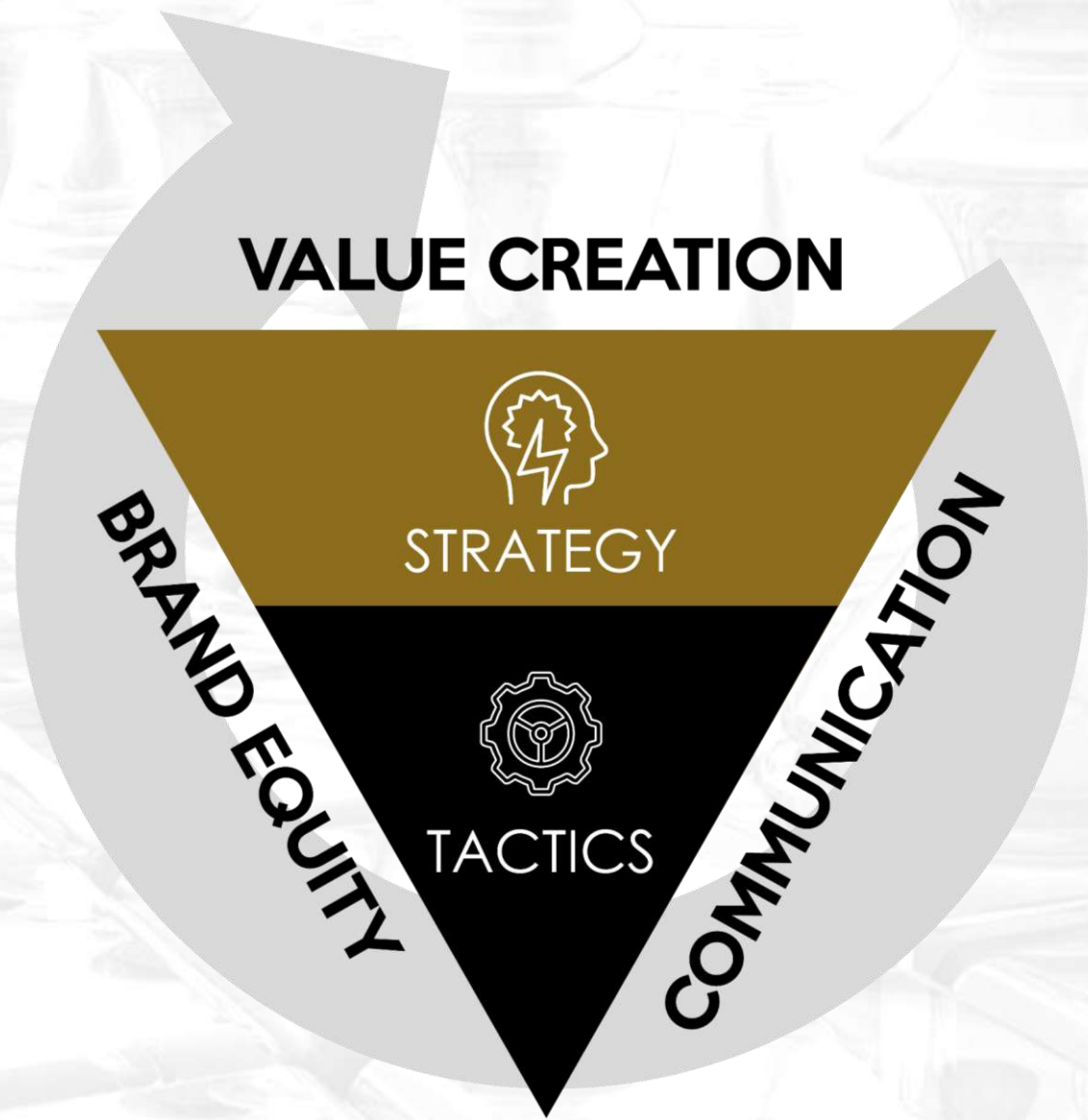
While the individual concepts are by no means original, it is the particular way the framework is put together that is innovative and useful in understanding how different aspects of marketing drive the strategy of a business, and, in turn, tactics.

Three sides of an upside-down pyramid represent the Marketing Inverted Pyramid. Each side represents one aspect of marketing, namely **Value Creation**, **Communication** and **Brand Equity**.



#1

MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID



#1

MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

Each aspect represents one stage of the marketing process that lays the foundation of the business.

All businesses start with value creation; specifically, understanding the market needs and creating value in the form of a product or service that solves a problem or fulfils a need.

Communication is the aspect of marketing that includes promotional efforts to expose the product, service or brand to the marketplace. While both traditional and digital marketing are equally important, the current state of the market has seen the rise in the popularity and effectiveness of digital marketing.

Brand equity is the value of a brand that is determined by customer perception of and experiences with the brand. Consistent delivery of good value and communication helps build the brand equity of the business.



MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

Brand equity is strengthened when more value is created (innovation) and more communication (engagement) is put behind the new value created. This, in turn, reinforces the strength of the brand even more. The brand is further strengthened when a strong positioning strategy is crafted and executed well.

This is how the three sides of the Marketing Inverted Pyramid work in succession and feedback to form an infinite cycle, which guides strategy and tactics.

After understanding the basic strategy framework, the next step is to apply it to your business. Think how your business performs in each aspect of the inverted pyramid. List down all the variables and factors that make up each side of the inverted pyramid. Then assess each factor with brutal honesty.

You can use the rating system described on the next page to help with this analysis.



MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

Using the rating system below, objectively score your business for different factors on each side of the inverted pyramid: from low to high, on a scale of 0 – 3.



VALUE CREATION

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE VALUE A BUSINESS BRINGS TO THE MARKET

RATING

Market Appeal and Demand	0, 1, 2 or 3
Benefits to the Market	0, 1, 2 or 3
Significance of Competitive Differences	0, 1, 2 or 3
Depth of Resources (Expertise, Funding, Manpower, Equipment etc.)	0, 1, 2 or 3
Competency and Effectiveness of Operational Management	0, 1, 2 or 3
Competency and Effectiveness of Business Management	0, 1, 2 or 3

MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID



COMMUNICATION

EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

RATING

Effectiveness of Marketing Strategy (Target Market/Customer, Messaging, Offer and Promotional Material)	0, 1, 2 or 3
Effectiveness of Inbound Marketing	0, 1, 2 or 3
Effectiveness of Outbound Marketing	0, 1, 2 or 3

BRAND EQUITY

EFFECTIVENESS OF POSITIONING & BRANDING STRATEGY

RATING

Effectiveness of Positioning Strategy	0, 1, 2 or 3
Effectiveness of Communicating Position	0, 1, 2 or 3
Brand Perception in Target Market	0, 1, 2 or 3

MARKETING INVERTED PYRAMID

After you have scored every factor, add up all the scores for a total.

OVERALL RATING OF BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS

TOTAL RATING SCORE

GRADE

0 - 12

Weak

13 - 24

Average

25 - 36

Strong

Compare your total score with the grades above to see where your business currently stands. Use this framework to identify your strengths and weaknesses and make adjustments as needed.

Your scores for each side of the inverted pyramid will help guide your business and marketing strategy planning, which, in turn, will help you determine which marketing tactics you should employ.

**THE WINNING MOVE
IS PLANNED BEFORE
THE GAME STARTS**



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

#2

While the previously discussed Marketing Inverted Pyramid offers a big-picture approach to assessing and planning your business, a marketing funnel is a very useful tool to understand the theoretical stages of a customer journey when interacting with a brand and purchasing a good or service.

Also often referred to as the “customer funnel”, “purchase funnel”, “sales funnel”, or “conversion funnel”, the marketing funnel is a great model to use when thinking about where you should implement marketing tactics for your business.

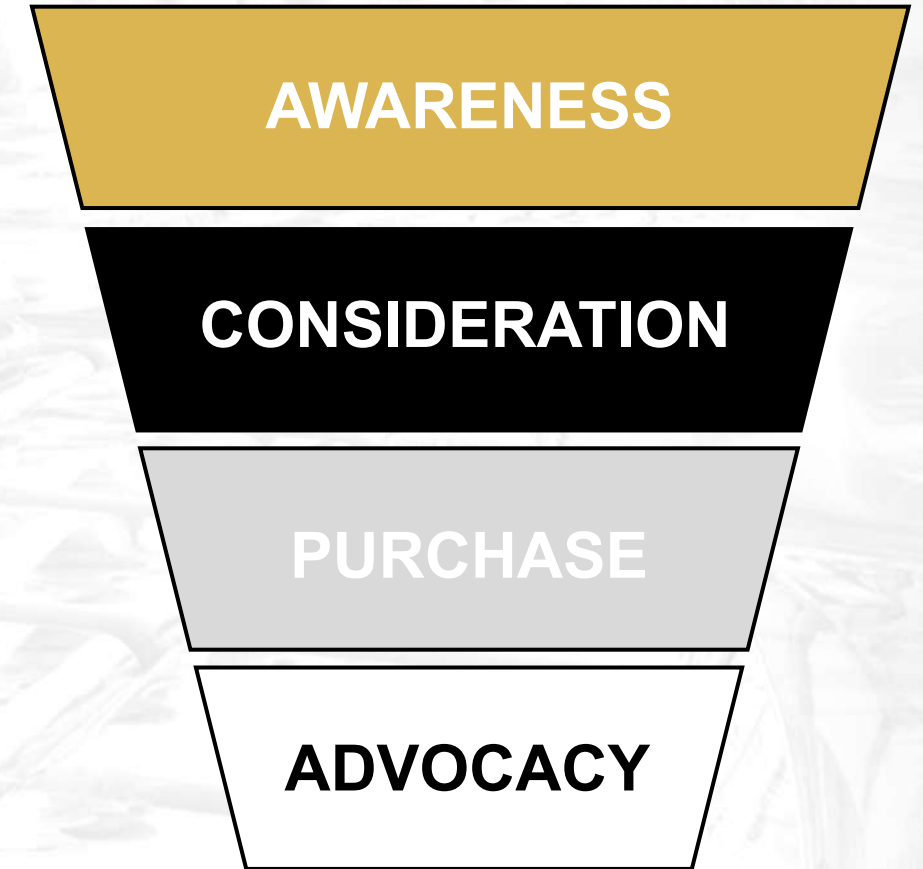


NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

While there have been several variations and even reinventions to consider new technologies and changes in consumer purchase behaviour, the primary 4-stage funnel is still highly relevant for marketers to understand how consumers interact with their brand.

Regardless of the nature or set-up of a business, the most basic customer journey sees the customer go through four stages: awareness, consideration, purchase and advocacy.

The traditional marketing funnel is often depicted as shown on the right.



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

While the traditional marketing funnel captures the theoretical stages of the customer journey, it may be too simplistic a representation for modern marketing.

The developed world is currently divided into roughly two halves – digital natives and digital immigrants. A digital native is someone raised in a digital, media-saturated world. A digital immigrant is an individual introduced to digital technology as an adult. Both types of people have vastly different learning requirements and think and process information fundamentally differently.

Digital immigrants may not find it easy to understand the complex interactions of digital marketing channels and online touchpoints. There can often be difficulty in communicating marketing plans across the digital divide, between digital natives and immigrants.



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

#2

To bridge this gap, Evolve & Adapt, designed a new modified marketing funnel for today's ever-evolving digital economy. This funnel better illustrates the customer journey and highlights the hybrid nature of modern marketing that consists of traditional (offline) and digital (online) marketing.

Key differences in the new marketing funnel include:

Hybrid Marketing is Factored in

The funnel is divided vertically in half so that both traditional marketing touchpoints and digital marketing touchpoints are considered. The fact is while the business landscape continues to transform digitally, a significant portion of business operations and activity still take place offline.



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

#2

For example, in the awareness stage, on the traditional marketing side, these lead channels can include marketing efforts like word of mouth, referrals, newspaper, magazine, television or radio advertisement, event participation and flyers.

On the digital marketing side, the consumers might become aware of a brand through a Google search, a photo posted on Instagram by someone they follow, social media influencer endorsements, or a targeted email sent to them through an email list.

Time Spent in Each Stage is Factored in

The time a customer spends on each stage of the customer journey is not equal.

For example, very little time is spent on the awareness and purchase stages. It takes a short time for a customer to be exposed and aware of a brand.



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

#2

The actual purchasing of a product or service can be completed very fast. However, customers will spend considerable time on the consideration and advocacy stages of the journey.

In the consideration stage, on the traditional marketing side, a customer might spend time speaking with different sales representatives, visiting different stores to compare products or going through stacks of product literature.

On the digital marketing side, the customer may be gathering as much information as she can by scouring your website to read product descriptions, watching demo videos, looking for online reviews, following you on social media, asking friends or family for opinions, or even turning to AI tools like Gemini or ChatGPT to quickly get it to summarise and compare your product against your competitors

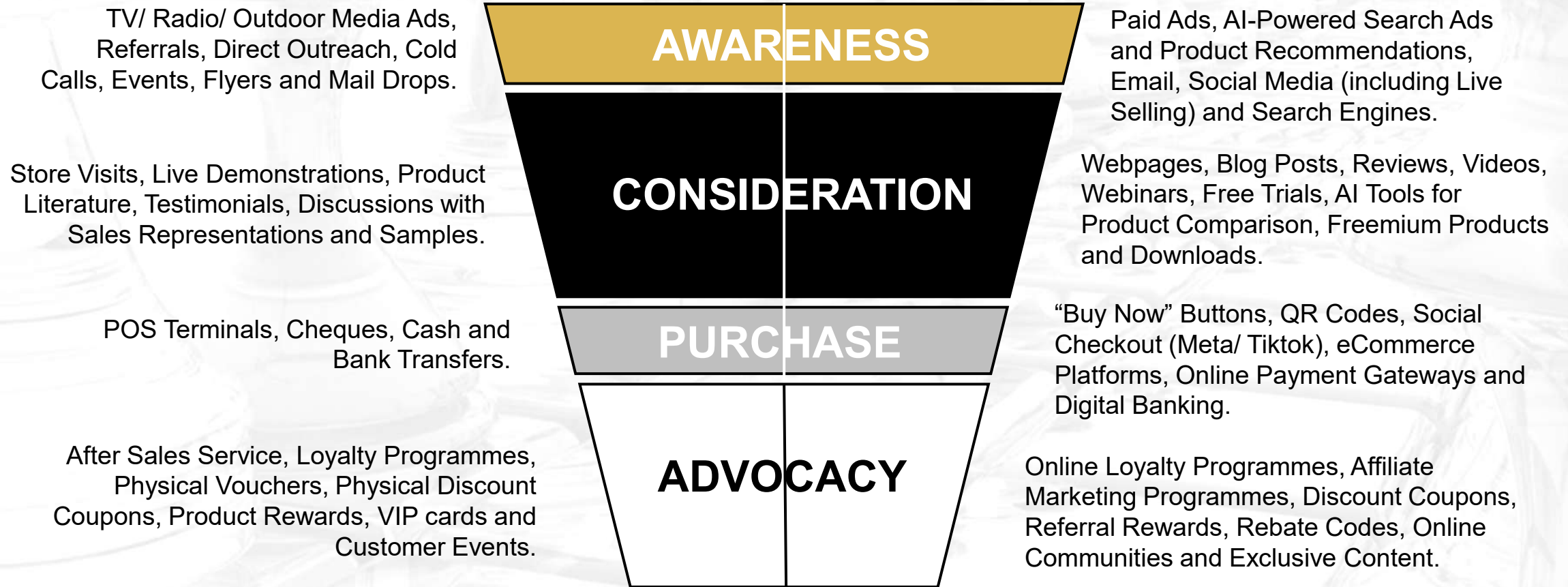
This difference in time spent on each stage is reflected in the new funnel.



NEW MARKETING FUNNEL

Traditional Marketing Channels (Offline)

Digital Marketing Channels (Online)



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CONTACT US FOR AI-ENABLED STRATEGIC MARKETING



It is time for you to **make your move!**

Sit down, learn the tools shared in this strategy toolkit and apply them to your business as soon as possible. Prepare your business strategically and stay one step ahead of your competition.

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

If you would like professional advice from a strategic marketing management consultant, Evolve & Adapt can help you bring your business to the next level in this ever-evolving market.

Learn more about us in the next few pages and contact us for a free non-obligatory consulting call.

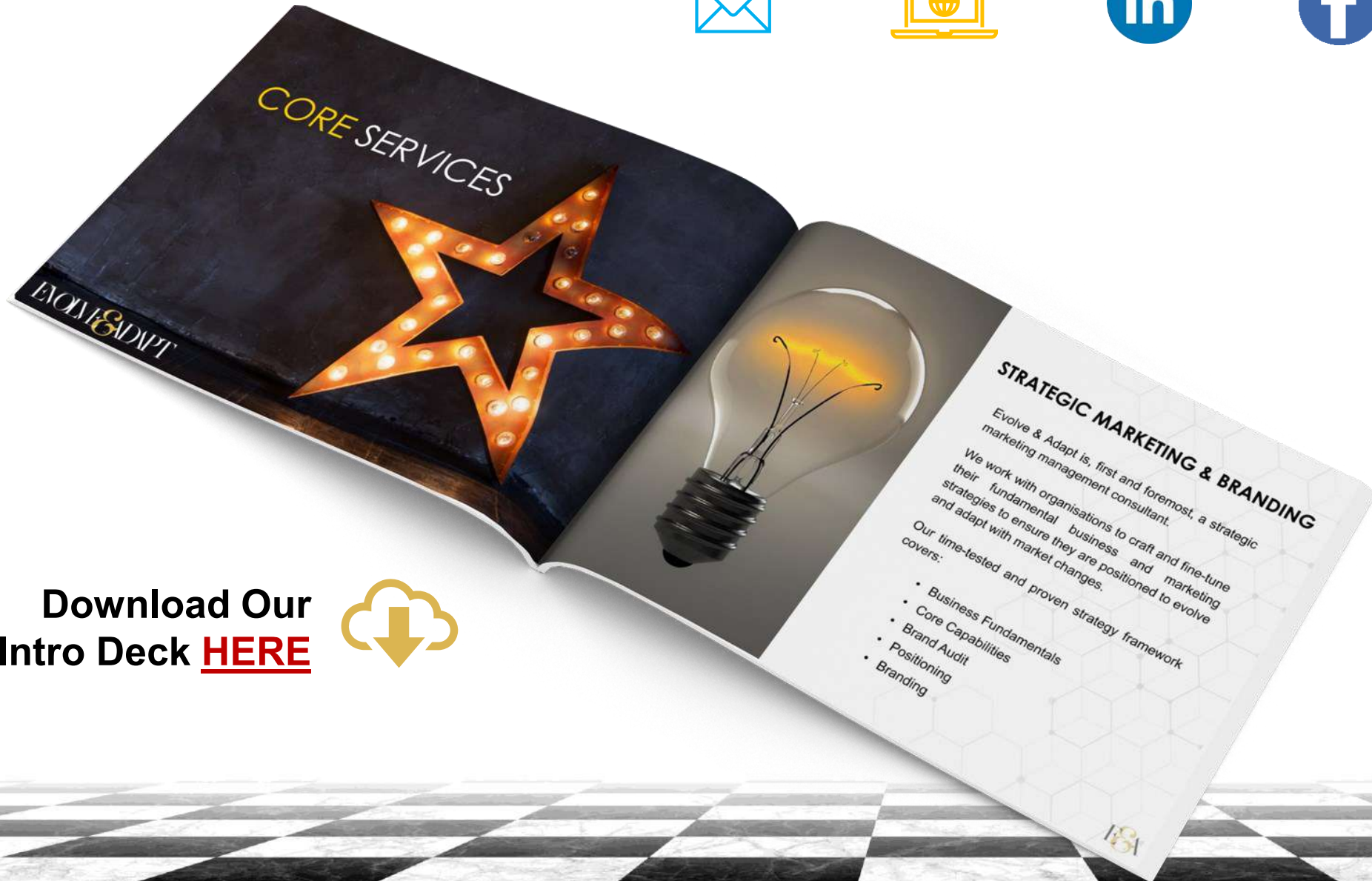


Evolve & Adapt is an award-winning certified management consultant (TR 43:2015) that leverages digital technology for:

- Strategic Marketing Consulting
- Business Strategy
- Branding Consulting
- Digital Marketing

We utilise AI tools to complement our proven experience and expertise by super-charging our market research, consumer behaviour analysis, content development, personalised advertising and data analytics.





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Intro Deck [HERE](#)

