

DIGITAL CREDENTIAL
MARKETING STRATEGY GUIDE



FOREWORD

Thank you for downloading the Accredible Digital Credential Marketing Strategy guide. In this guide we explore how to use digital credentials to engage with the target market, convey value to potential candidates, and increase online visibility.

Who we are: Accredible is an industry-leading digital credentialing platform. Founded in 2013, Accredible believes that everyone should be able to prove their credibility with ease regardless of who you are, where you live, or how you gained your knowledge.

Our experience serving millions of credentials globally has enabled us to understand and meet the needs of organizations undergoing digital transformation. As one of the longest-serving digital credentialing platforms, our insight into the space is unique and unrivalled. We provide actionable guidance at every step from research and evaluation, through to launch, growth, and development. Our knowledge informs the best practices for organizations to start, scale, and succeed in digital credentialing.

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Who is this guide for?

This guide provides actionable advice for any organization looking to maximize the value gained through digital credentials. The information provided in this guide is applicable at any stage of the credentialing journey, whether the organization is just getting started or already issuing digital credentials.

How to use this guide

This guide supports organizations looking to use digital credentials in their marketing strategy and will help identify fresh marketing opportunities. Use the information included in this guide to:

- Increase online visibility
- Impact brand recognition
- Encourage recipient social sharing
- Engage with target audiences

MARKETING PLAN

“If we build it, they will come” may have worked for organizations in the past but with growing competition around education and training, it is not enough simply to exist and expect growth. Building a marketing plan is a great first step but it can often feel like there are a million ways to get it wrong and only a handful of ways to get it right.

Quality marketing often goes unnoticed because the individual doesn’t feel like they are being marketed to and this is achieved naturally with digital credentials. Creating a marketing strategy around digital credentials involves identifying where and how digital credentials can be used and encouraging that use.

As part of the overarching marketing plan, the organization will have identified their target audience, where they are engaged, and what the main business goals are. The marketing strategy involves the granular details of what channels are going to be used, the allocated budget, and how the organization is going to achieve their goals. The key channels for utilizing digital credentials as part of the marketing strategy include:



Email



Social Media



Events



Online

Throughout this guide we will explore each of these channels to show how organizations can take advantage of the recipient experience as part of a successful marketing strategy.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email is one of the most popular forms of digital communication, with approximately 319.6 billion emails sent every day and soon expected to exceed 350 billion. Email marketing achieves one of the highest ROI across various marketing channels. DMA research found that for every \$1 spent on email marketing, the expected ROI was \$35. Digital credentials are delivered by email as standard, making this the first step of the recipient experience and a cost-effective channel to use as part of the marketing strategy.

4.03

billion email users in 2020
Statista, 2020

319.6

billion emails sent everyday in Q1 2020
Statista, 2021

\$35 ROI

for every \$1 spent
Data & Marketing Association 2020

To improve open and engagement rate for email marketing strategies, utilize the following features to make emails more attractive to recipients.

Incite Action

The credential delivery email serves as a virtual pat-on-the-back for the recipient. For the issuer, the email provides an opportunity to lead the recipient to engage with their new credential. Use a large call to action (CTA) button that takes the recipient directly to their credential page. Once on the credential page the recipient can easily verify their award and share their achievement to their preferred social media platform or embed online using the buttons provided. To increase the percentage of recipients sharing on receipt, provide an additional CTA with the direction ‘Share to Target Platform’.

Personalize Emails



139 %

increase in click-through rate
Bluecore, 2019



26 %

increase in open rate
Campaign Monitor, 2019



6x

as many transactions
Experian, 2013

A study carried out by Experian found that personalized emails are more likely to receive engagement than non-personalized emails. The Accredible platform supports custom email attributes in the subject and body of the delivery email. This ensures email personalization is automated using enrolled recipient details and increases the likelihood of engagement.

EMAIL MARKETING

Follow-Up

We've established that email inboxes are busy places. A follow-up email will ensure recipients don't miss out on celebrating in the moment with their credential. Utilize automatic follow-up emails to maximize email open rates and ensure recipients can use their achievement straight away. 80% of email driven transactions occur between the sixth and twelfth email follow-up.

Promote Trust

Custom SMTP settings allow organizations to change the sender email to one from the organization's own domain. This is effective for increasing open rates by ensuring trust while improving visibility for the organization name. The Accredible platform offers increased levels of email customization as part of the Plus and Premium plans.

Ensure Access

It isn't enough to just ensure emails are personalized and look the part, they need to be accessible. According to Litmus, approximately 41.9% of all emails are opened on a mobile device and if the email wasn't mobile optimized - 42.3% of readers deleted it immediately. The Accredible platform is designed to ensure accessibility but emails created outside the platform should be triple checked for smart device compatibility.

Drive Traffic

Part of a quality content marketing strategy is authoritative, trustworthy content that assists recipients in using and understanding the value of their digital credentials. We will explore this in greater detail in the **Content Marketing section**, however the delivery email serves as an avenue to drive traffic to well-researched content that will guide and inform recipients.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email Marketing Checklist

Use the following checklist to create a tailored email marketing strategy using digital credentials.

Yes/No/Comments

Is email personalization correctly placed in the email subject and body?

Does the email appear correctly on mobile devices?

Has the subject line been written, proofed, and approved?

Has the sender email been agreed and SMTP settings updated?

Has the email content been written, proofed, and approved?

What is the main call to action (CTA)?

Is there a secondary CTA?

Have all links been checked and agreed?

Will a follow-up email be sent if the recipient doesn't open the first email?

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media has rapidly become one of the leading marketing channels. As of Q1 2021, there are 4.2 billion active users on social media, spending on average 2.25 hours a day across various platforms. This is a huge opportunity that organizations need to take advantage of. Social media sharing is made easy using the Accredible platform. Recipients can share in one click and there is no need to handover control of the social account.

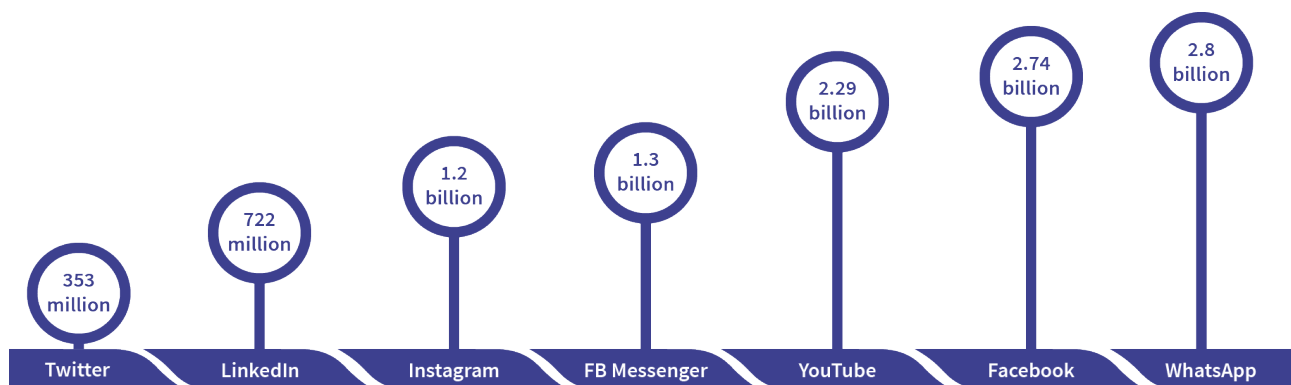


Using social media effectively doesn't mean setting up a profile and forgetting about it. Social profiles need to be maintained and followers need engagement. Follow the advice below to ensure your social profiles are ready to serve recipients and support business goals.

Focus Platform

If the organization is just getting started in social media, it's wise to begin on one platform and start growing the account before splitting focus elsewhere. Use the organization's existing target audience research to identify the social media channels that recipients prefer to use. Don't just go off 'gut feeling', there are plenty of informative social media statistics available that should inform the decision.

Top performing social media platforms by user count as of Jan 2021



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

If the organization is on or expanding into multiple social media accounts, consider a centralized social media tool that makes management simple. To increase the likelihood of recipients sharing their credential to preferred social media platforms, include a secondary CTA in the delivery email. This helps to reduce the steps taken to share their credential and allows the organization to encourage sharing to a preferred platform.

Active Accounts

Just like an empty, dimly lit bricks and mortar business appears closed, social profiles that are lacking in information are unlikely to grow. Ensure that social profiles are completed in full with relevant and up-to-date company information and branding imagery. Create a posting strategy that isn't solely based on 'selling' to ensure accounts are active and new visitors can see what the organization is currently up to and talking about.

Engage Mentions

Nobody likes to be ignored, especially customers and followers that are trying to reach out via social media. Monitor social media mentions, both tagged and untagged, to ensure the organization is always present in the conversation. This isn't jumping on an opportunity to sell or promote. This is a way to open the door to further discussion and show social media users the organization is actively helping and engaging with their followers.

Visible Channels

According to GWI, in Q3 2020 44.8% of internet users used social media platforms to find brand information. If organizations aren't actively promoting and providing links to their social media, they will fail to take advantage of this opportunity. Ensure links are added to email signatures, marketing websites, and any other digital marketing material to make it easy for customers to find social media profiles and engage with the organization online.

Track Engagements

Social media works best with a strategy in place that works towards a set goal or number of goals. This involves tracking the growth of profiles and the level of engagement against different post types. Set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) and track follower numbers and engagement levels, adjusting the strategy accordingly as data is collected. A common example of a SMART social media goal is to grow a focused social media profile by x number of followers by the end of Q1. The Accredible platform offers built-in analytics to make tracking social shares easy and is included as standard across all plans.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social Media Marketing Checklist

Use the following checklist to create a tailored social media marketing strategy using digital credentials.

Yes/No/Comments

Is there a targeted social platform in the current marketing strategy?

Has a secondary CTA been used in the delivery email to drive shares to the target platform?

Have the organization's social profiles been completed in full?

Branding & imagery

Company information

Links to courses/programs/training/careers pages

Custom URL

Are social media profiles in use and active?

Is the organization engaging social mentions?

Are social media platforms being promoted?
e.g. in email signatures, on the issuer website

How are social shares and engagement currently being tracked?

Are there social media goals in place?

EVENT & TRADE SHOW MARKETING

Events and trade shows had to majorly readjust in 2020 due to the global pandemic and going forward, we should expect to see a hybrid mix of both in-person and virtual events. That doesn't mean that events and trade shows are no longer an effective marketing channel. Infact, virtual events appear to have increased the engagement between attendees and organizations - 80.2% of marketers reported their virtual event had a much greater reach in 2020.



Bizzabo, 2021

Digital event credentials are used to support event and trade show marketing with the benefit of encouraging engagement and increasing visibility.

Award Participation

The most common use of digital event credentials is to reward attendees for their time and level of participation. This includes issuing badges for attendees, event sponsors, speakers, and volunteers. Digital event badges replace the traditional lanyard and provide benefits such as greater freedom of design and improved sustainability. They are easily shared across social media, used to access post-event training, or added to a LinkedIn profile to represent experience and interest in an industry.

Gamify Attendance

For multiple day events, encouraging attendees to commit to the full length can be a challenge. Gamifying the attendance using digital event badges awarded on each day, culminating in a digital certificate to represent full attendance is a great way to increase engagement. This is supported by a survey by TalentLMS, in which 89% of respondents felt they would be more productive if gamification was better utilized.

EVENT & TRADE SHOW MARKETING

Motivate Communication

Digital credentials aren't restricted for use in recognizing attendance but can be used to motivate post-event communication. Follow-up with attendees after the event has taken place with an offer for a digital credential if they can provide evidence or a statement on how they have applied knowledge gained from the event. This is a great way to gain attendee data on what was the most engaging part of the event, which is used to inform future events.

Promote Social Sharing

Shareability is a key benefit of digital credentials and a great way to increase visibility of an event. Digital credentials provide a low-friction route to social media engagement with one-click sharing directly from the credential page. Engaged visitors that click from the social post through to the credential page will find all the relevant information and links they need to enroll in future events.

[VIEW
CASE STUDY](#)

The leading provider of modern business education, **brunchwork**, ran in-person workshops for six years until the pandemic pushed their business online. Read the case study to discover how they were able to adapt their popular events into online education and increase visibility using digital credentials

EVENT & TRADE SHOW MARKETING

Event Marketing Checklist

Use the following checklist to create a tailored event marketing strategy using digital credentials.

Yes/No/Comments

Are digital credentials going to be offered for participation?

What level of participation are digital credentials going to recognize?
e.g. attendee, speaker, sponsor

Will digital credentials be offered for evidence of post-event applied knowledge?

Will multiple credentials be used to reward multiple day attendance?

Have digital event badges been designed?

Do digital event badges need to integrate with event software?

Has the credential page been planned and designed?

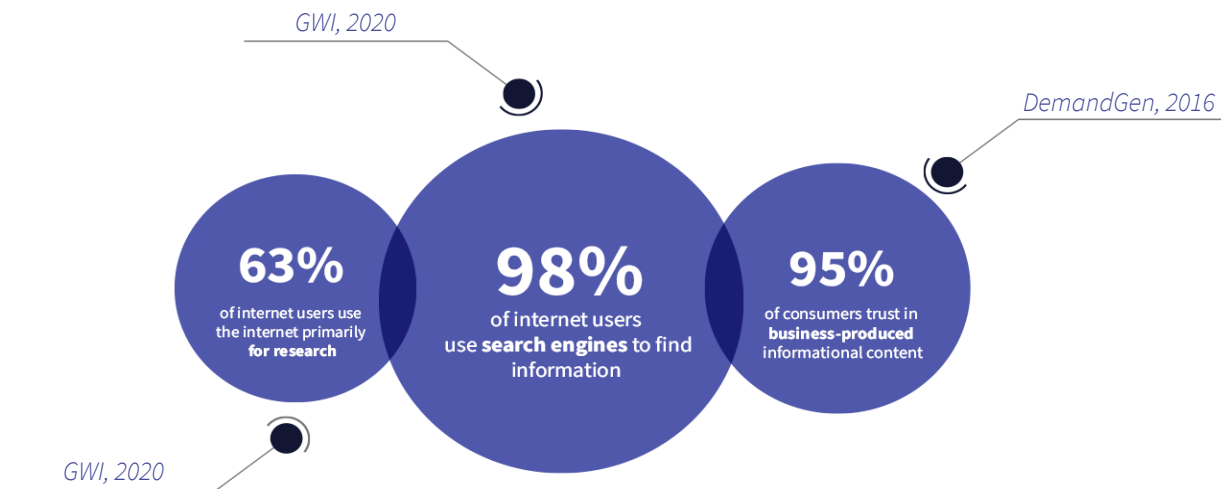
Has the credential and credential page copy been written, proofed, and approved?

What links will be used on the credential page?

Have links been checked?

CONTENT MARKETING

Convey the value of digital credentials to recipients from launch with a targeted content marketing strategy. Two-thirds of internet users are primarily online to find information and if organizations aren't satisfying recipient queries, they are missing out on valuable traffic. There are two main opportunities for content marketing using digital credentials - on the issuers marketing website and the credential page.



Organizations that aren't providing informational content around their courses and digital credentials fail to be recognized as an authoritative source of information. Use the following recommendations to plan a supporting content marketing strategy that will inform and guide recipients.

Marketing Material

One of the most common questions around digital credentials is 'What is the value in digital credentials?' and it is the first thing your recipients are likely to ask. We recommend building a central source of information that will provide recipients guidance on:

- How to use their digital credentials
- Where and how to share or embed digital credentials
- What the value of the organization's credentials are (i.e. employment, reputability)
- What opportunities the credential has provided other recipients

CONTENT MARKETING

Drive traffic to this page as a starting point for newly issued credentials using the credential delivery email. A more detailed FAQ page for digital credentials is another useful resource for recipients and a way to promote the value of the organization's certifications.

[VIEW EXAMPLE](#)

Saylor Academy has an excellent example of digital credential marketing material they use to inform recipients. On this page recipients can view a live credential example, learn what the digital certificate is, the features of their credential and how to use it.

Credential Page

The credential page is where a recipient's credential is hosted. Organizations have the freedom to add course, brand, and enrollment information on this page and link back to their course or training offering. For associations, this is used for the recognition of membership with space for detail about the association, what they do, and how interested parties can get involved. The credential page is where engaged visitors that click through a social post or embed arrive. Use this opportunity to promote the offering to the target audience and make it easy for them to find a way to enroll themselves.

Branding & White Labelling

Most credentialing platforms issue credentials under their own branding as standard. Accredible is the only enterprise-ready credentialing platform that offers additional branding and white label packages. The add-on packages provide issuers with total control over the appearance of their delivery email and credential page.

The Branding Package enables issuers to:

- Provide a vanity URL for the recipient website
- Put their own logo on the recipient website navbar and footer
- Customize the header and footer of recipient emails, including logos, sender address, and links
- Let users see a branded version of the credential wallet, showing only credentials issued by the organization

CONTENT MARKETING

White Labelling provides additional control, enabling issuers to:

- Add links to and style the navbar to match the issuer website
- Completely customize the page footer to match the issuer website
- Customize the page styling to match the look/feel of the issuer website, including: fonts colors, and spacing

White labelling also includes all of the features in the branding package including white labelled domain and increased email customization.

Consistent branding is an important part of establishing and promoting trust between issuers, recipients, and engaged visitors. Assure recipients that credentials are delivered by the organization and use a seamless branded experience to convey value and provide a sense of security.

CONTENT MARKETING

Content Marketing Checklist

Use the following checklist to create a tailored content marketing strategy using digital credentials.

Yes/No/Comments

Has marketing material been planned?
e.g. central information page and supporting FAQ

Has marketing copy been written, proofed, and approved?

Will a press release be written?

Has the press release been written, proofed, and approved?

Has the credential page been planned?

Is information about the credential and the organization included?

Is there a link to the enrollment for the credential?
e.g. courses, training, membership

Is there a link to the issuer website?

Has the credential page copy been written, proofed and approved?

Is additional branding being used?

Is white labelling being used?

IN SUMMARY

Digital marketing is often one of the greatest challenges faced by organizations. Using digital credentials provides organic avenues of marketing that build trust and establish authority with the target audience.

Authentic digital marketing happens when recipients are encouraged to share and embed their credentials. Planning an efficient marketing strategy around digital credentials is necessary to ensure this process is frictionless and supports a seamless recipient experience.

Take the first step to increasing online visibility with digital credentials and **book a demo with our sales team.**



Accredible

Accredible is the industry-leading digital credentialing platform that securely issues, manages, tracks, and verifies millions of high-stakes credentials across the globe. Accredible integrates with leading learning software including Canvas, D2L Brightspace, Kajabi, Kryterion Webassessor, Moodle, Thinkific, and more. Over 1,900 leading universities, associations, and technology companies such as Google, Skillsoft, Slack, the Association of Corporate Treasurers, Chartered Banker Institute, University of Cambridge, AMPP, Hootsuite, IEEE, Cengage, MIT, Rutgers, INSEAD, IAPP, UC Berkeley, AMBA, and The Digital Marketing Institute rely on Accredible to create, deliver and manage digital certificates and open badges. Learn more at accreditable.com

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