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GREAT MARKETING MINDS ON:

[VOICE]



...HOW DO I SAY THIS?

Voice search is vast, complex, and can be downright daunting as a conversation topic. So we thought we'd pass the mic (or speaker, as it were) to some of our good friends who spend their days steeped in all things digital marketing and voice search.

Here's a list of the many *Great Marketing Minds* who have generously contributed to this eBook. Many thanks to them all for taking the time to give us their perspectives on what voice search means to them — today, tomorrow, and years down the road.



JAY BAER
President
Convince & Convert



GREG GIFFORD
Vice President of Search
DealerOn



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Marketing Consultant
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MARK SCHAEFER
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ANDREW SHOTLAND
CEO & Founder
Local SEO Guide



MATHEW SWEZEY
Marketing Insights
Salesforce

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE VOICE ASSISTANT AND WHY?

Greg Gifford, DealerOn

Definitely Google Home. We've got a few set up, and they're awesome — the kids love asking random questions. It's cool to find out about temperature and traffic, but the best thing is having them tied into lights so we can turn lights on and off, or even change colors, with voice commands.

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

Alexa. It was the first one I bought. Technically, I've used Siri quite a bit longer, but early Siri was quite a bit less useful than early Alexa.

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights

Can I pick two? Hands down Alexa if I'm home or at my desk. I have the devices all through the house. But if I'm on the go, then Google all the way — I'm an Android user.

Brendan King, Vendasta

Google Home. I am a Google guy and it works seamlessly between my phone and TV screens via Chromecast. It recognizes my voice, knows my schedule, and connects to Google Music and Google Play. It also endlessly amuses my kids and grandkids.

Robert Rose, Content Marketing Institute

After trying all of them, Alexa is the one I'm most using. Siri doesn't really seem to understand me that well, but then again that's the story of my life. Google doesn't get my taste in music, but is definitely the best for helping me translate words into Spanish. My favorite is most likely the one I'm using at the time because most of my voice commands at this point are related to using the one that's contextual to where I've put it.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing

Alexa, because it can understand my mumbled requests from 15 feet away. Also, I have Echo devices in multiple rooms of my house, so that pretty much makes it the required favorite.

Andrew Shotland, Local SEO Guide

My dog. He comes when you call him and doesn't respond with "I'm sorry Andrew, I can't respond to you right now. Please try again later."

My favorite voice assistant is Siri because she's always there for me in the car, riding shotgun, ready to send a voice activated text or navigate me to my next location point.

WENDY WEINSTEIN KARP

Marketing Consultant
W2K Consulting



DOES YOUR ANSWER DIFFER IF YOU'RE AT HOME? ON YOUR SMARTPHONE? IN YOUR CAR?

Mark Schaefer,
Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Yes. Siri is definitely what I use on the road, and I use Alexa at home.

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

If I was in my car it would be Siri, but I often find my southern drawl is no match her AI just yet.

Greg Gifford, DealerOn

Outside of the home, I don't use a voice assistant much, if at all...

Wendy Weinstein Karp,
W2K Consulting

At home, I'm still faithful to Siri. We understand each other at this point.

Andrew Shotland,
Local SEO Guide

At home we use Alexa exclusively for listening to music in the shower. We don't have a voice assistant device in the main areas of our home as we have a hard enough time keeping our kids from spending too much time with electronic devices as it is. Since I have an iPhone, I mainly use Siri which works well enough for driving directions and making phone calls. I'll sometimes use OK Google if I am searching my email on the way to the airport and can't remember which airline I am using — which happened this morning. Not the safest way to drive though.

Robert Rose,
Content Marketing Institute

Yes, definitely. The car is almost exclusively Siri because my vehicle is paired with my phone, and it's just habit for me. At home, we have a Google device in our kitchen, and I have two Alexa devices throughout the house. So, it may be that I'm habitually using the one that is most appropriate for the room that I'm currently in.



Yes. If I'm on the move, I use Siri on my iPhone.

LEE ODDEN
CEO
TopRank Marketing

TopRank
Marketing
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WHAT QUESTION DO YOU FIND YOURSELF ASKING YOUR VOICE ASSISTANT(S) MOST OFTEN?

Mark Schaefer,
Schaefer Marketing Solutions

I use it to call a number, send a text or email, take notes, send information to a file, weather, sports scores, check the news...

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

I travel so much, I'm constantly asking for weather forecasts at my next destination.

Daniel Lemin,
Convince & Convert

When's my next meeting?

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

I used to ask for directions a lot, but half the time it couldn't understand me, so I'd have to type it in. It's just quicker for me to type, even with my fat fingers.

Robert Rose,
Content Marketing Institute

In order, it's probably: asking for the weather forecast for the city I'm traveling to next, directions to something while I'm in that city, requesting a particular kind of music, and then various searches for settling kitchen table bets (like "What is the capital of Nepal?" ...It's Kathmandu, if you're curious).



With Alexa it's not questions. It's "Play this music," or "Set a timer." Google gets real questions, like "Where is the closest drug store?"

REBECCA LIEB
Co-Founder & Analyst
Kaleido Insights



WHAT’S THE STRANGEST QUESTION YOU’VE EVER ASKED YOUR VOICE ASSISTANT?

Robert Rose,
Content Marketing Institute
“How many actors have played Batman on TV or film?”
(13, if you’re curious. Google did not know the answer.)

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert
“Who directed the film *Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang*?”

Wendy Weinstein Karp,
W2K Consulting
“What are the people of Guam called?” (Answer: Guamanians)

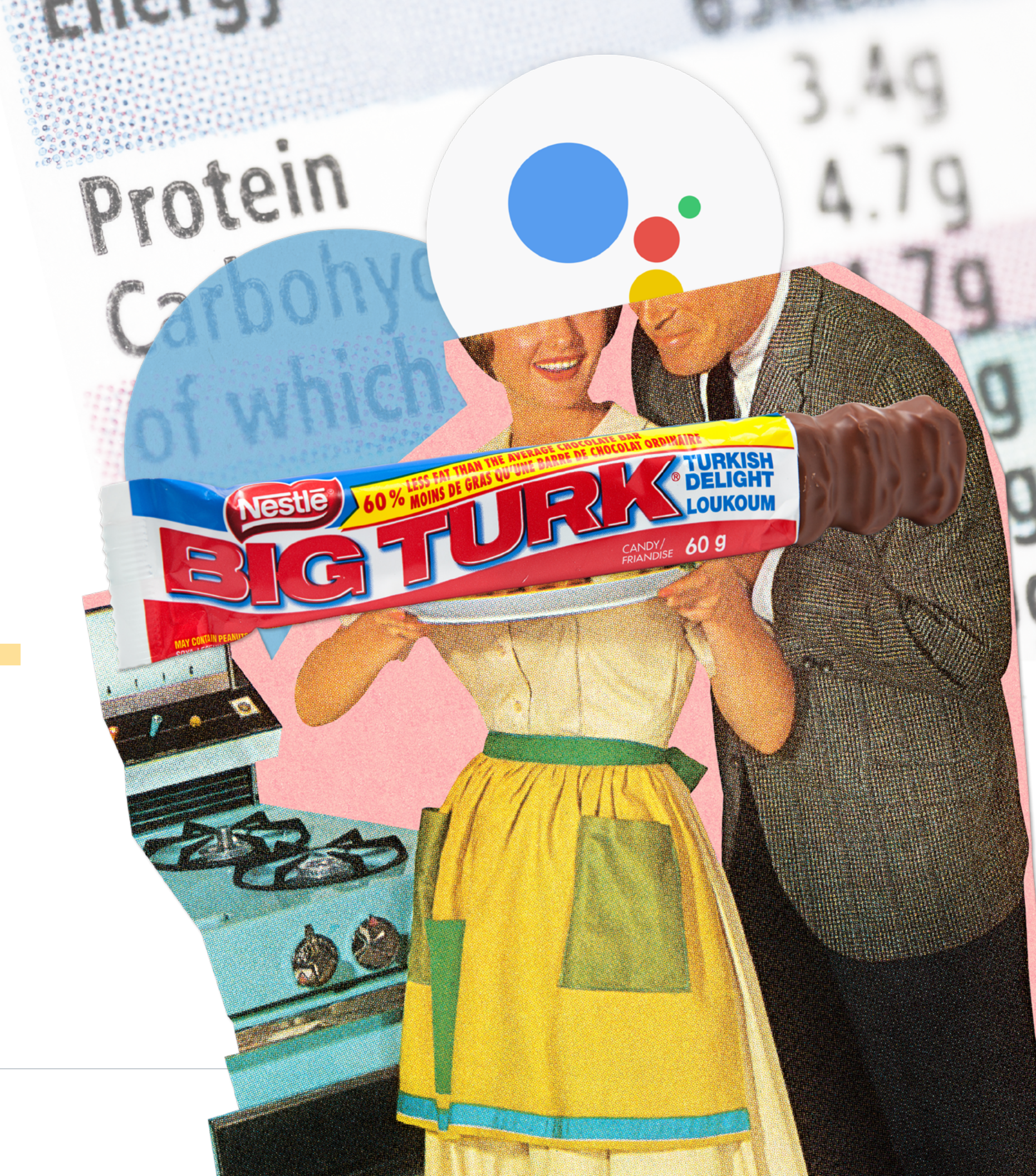
Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights
“Alexa, where are my keys?”

Daniel Lemin,
Convince & Convert
Alexa, as it turns out, does not walk dogs.



“Ok Google, how many carbs are in a Big Turk?”

BRENDAN KING
Co-Founder & CEO
Vendasta



DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SKILL (ALEXA)/ACTION (GOOGLE) THAT YOU USE FREQUENTLY? WHY?

Wendy Weinstein Karp,
W2K Consulting

"Siri play _____ by _____." This is to educate my children about real music from back in the day.

Mark Schaefer,
Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Frankly I am behind on my at-home skills. I look at the weekly email of Alexa skills and then forget to use them.

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

I have a friend who's got Alexa, and just telling it to "play some 'tunes'" is pretty rad.

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

I'm a bit boring and prosaic in this respect. I ask for the flash news briefing every day.

Robert Rose,
Content Marketing Institute

The wine pairing skill on Alexa is a fun one that we sometimes try.

Andrew Shotland,
Local SEO Guide

Music. That's pretty much it.

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights

99% of my interactions are either asking Alexa to play NPR or stop playing NPR. I listen to public radio all day (read: junkie) but love to be able to turn it off if the phone rings or I have a scheduled call.



GREG GIFFORD

Vice President of Search
DealerOn

DEALERON

I love using If This Then That (IFTTT) to program custom responses from Google. My almost-five-year-old little girl hasn't yet figured out that we're programming responses. So it's a hilarious joke when we ask something like, "Hey Google, is it Penny's bed time?" and Google answers with a funny response.



DO YOU SEE YOUR USE OF VOICE SEARCH INCREASING, DECREASING, OR REMAINING THE SAME OVER THE COMING YEAR?



I imagine it will increase since many of our clients are curious about how it will affect SEO, and I'll have to keep up with the latest instant answer for every damn query on the planet.

ANDREW SHOTLAND

CEO & Founder
Local SEO Guide

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

I see it increasing for sure! I'm just a Luddite, but I have hopes voice will make my (all) lives easier in the very near future.

**Daniel Lemin,
Convince & Convert**

It's increased, no doubt about it. Part of it is learning new habits, but the platforms themselves have become so much more useful that it becomes a snowball.

**Wendy Weinstein Karp,
W2K Consulting**

I see my usage increasing over the next year, and into the future, as I begin to automatically think voice-first and increase the presence of digital assistants in my world.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing
Increasing significantly.

**Mark Schaefer,
Schaefer Marketing Solutions**
Increasing every month.

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

Increasing dramatically. And on a related front, my use of voice input for emails, texts, etc. is going way up as well. Dictation, for the win!

Brendan King, Vendasta

Increasing — there is no going back.



BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A BRAND LOOKING TO REACH CONSUMERS VIA VOICE SEARCH?



Mark Schaefer

Voice is the new search. It's no longer AN answer, it's THE answer — so figure out how to become part of the ecosystem.

MARK SCHAEFER

Executive Director

Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

Make sure your data is complete, both structured and unstructured. Most voice queries — especially on mobile — are VERY specific.

Wendy Weinstein Karp, W2K Consulting

Write your website copy in human speak and answer the questions proactively that a person would actually ask a voice assistant. And don't forget to claim your Google My Business page!

Brendan King, Vendasta

Identify what is most important to your brand and make sure you own it. With voice search, there are fewer choices. Where you can, develop and narrow your scope to the niches you dominate. Provide rich data, and help people *do* things where possible.

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

Understand the experience consumers are after, and the limitations of voice. Voice is only going to go so far until they are going to want to use a site or app. You should look to do user interviews before diving into voice to make sure you understand the differences in the questions they ask, and what outcomes they want. If your customers aren't using voice to ask the questions relevant to your experience, then it doesn't matter yet.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing

Empathize with how customers might be best served in a voice context — and then use content to become the best answer for whatever your brand is most useful for.

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights

Be helpful. Or entertaining. But don't interrupt!

Andrew Shotland, Local SEO Guide

For the most part, you should be answering questions in an authoritative way on your site to try to appear in Google's Instant Answers/Featured Snippets, in Google properties like Google My Business, and make sure your information is up to date on Apple's systems such as Apple Maps and the App Store. If you have a compelling brand or consumer proposition, you should probably invest in an Alexa Skill to try to get a foothold on that platform. We work with a few larger, well-known brands that are doing well with their Skills, but it's only because people have heard of the brand that they are willing to connect their account via Alexa and use it to buy things. A no-name brand would have a harder time with this.

IF A VOICE ASSISTANT GIVES YOU AN INCORRECT ANSWER ABOUT A BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL, MENU OR EVENT, WHO DO YOU INSTINCTIVELY BLAME — THE VOICE ASSISTANT, THE BUSINESS ITSELF OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Robert Rose,
Content Marketing Institute

It depends. If it's content based (e.g., store hours, menu unavailability, event information) then I blame the business. If it's more contextual (e.g., wrong directions to a correct address) then I blame the assistant.

Andrew Shotland,
Local SEO Guide

Their SEO consultant.

Mark Schaefer, Schaefer Marketing Solutions

This might seem strange and perhaps is an insight — it would never occur to me that, if Siri understands me, I would get an incorrect answer.

Daniel Lemin,
Convince & Convert

The human instinct is to blame the messenger, but I realize voice assistants are only as good as their backup band.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing

The voice assistant. Or the food in my mouth that I should have swallowed before talking.



Currently, I blame the voice assistant. That's because not a lot of businesses are optimizing for voice. Once a lot of businesses begin nailing this experience, it will set the bar and change the notion of blame.

MATHEW SWEEZEY

Marketing Insights
Salesforce



WHAT DO YOU WISH YOUR VOICE ASSISTANT COULD DO THAT IT CAN'T TODAY?



Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing
Automatically translate whatever I say into another language, using my own voice.

Greg Gifford, DealerOn
I'm big on the home automation front, so it'd be awesome if it had some insight into what's in our refrigerator or pantry – so we could ask “Hey Google, how much milk do we have?” and it could tell us if we've got plenty or we're almost out. I would also love to be able to tie more devices together, so I could tell Google to show the video feed from our Nest cam on our TV.

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce
Understand. We have a long way to go before we reach NLU, the technology is only about 90% of the way there with Natural Language Processing, and then we are still many more years away from Understanding. Once we reach full NLU, the doors will open up to greater adoption of voice, and require us to rethink all customer journeys and experiences.

Daniel Lemin, Convince & Convert
Give me more seamless experiences. For example, if I set a reminder about a friend's birthday, I'd love if Alexa would ask me “Would you like to send a gift?” then help me select something.

Andrew Shotland, Local SEO Guide
Read my mind so I don't have to speak to it.

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights
Find my keys. Or my misplaced phone. Another great function would be as an intercom. I'd love to be able to “page” my husband, for example, if he's upstairs and I'm in the basement. “Alexa, tell Robert to bring down the [thing]. Or, “Alexa, tell Robert it's time to leave for dinner.”

Set my Fantasy Football lineup.

JAY BAER
President
Convince & Convert



IF YOU COULD NAME A NEW, ALL-POWERFUL VOICE ASSISTANT, WHAT WOULD THAT NAME BE?



Greg Gifford, DealerOn

Giff-bot 5000.

Daniel Lemin, Convince & Convert

Alt. It means “everything” in Norwegian.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing

Melosa.

Wendy Weinstein Karp, W2K Consulting:

Franklin — in recognition of the original techie, Ben Franklin! He always had an answer to every query, and a solution to every problem. Why are they all female, after all?

Mark Schaefer, Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Mark. Naturally.

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights

Hal?

What I’ve renamed my Alexa... it’s “Computer.” I’m a Star Trek nerd.

ROBERT ROSE

Chief Strategy Advisor
Content Marketing Institute



ANY OTHER BURNING THOUGHTS ABOUT VOICE ASSISTANTS OR VOICE SEARCH?



DANIEL LEMIN

Head of Consulting
Convince & Convert



Voice search and voice assistants are not *all or nothing* for even the most advanced consumer. Voice fills a role in their day, and their use of technology. Brands need to use voice to create companion experiences and utility that augment how consumers interact with their brand.

Jay Baer, Convince & Convert

One of the challenges I see is that assistants can do SO MUCH more than we typically know, or try. I get an email every week from Amazon about new Alexa features, but I don't read it very closely. Aligning capabilities with consumers' knowledge of those capabilities is a problem in the market right now. It's sort of a, "If a tree falls in the forest, and Alexa doesn't tell you it made a sound... did it?" kind of problem.

**Mark Schaefer,
Schaefer Marketing Solutions**

I would like my voice assistant to have a personality in a way that it becomes a friend. When it screws up, it learns to do better.

Lee Odden, TopRank Marketing

What about informing voice search results in part by what other people with similar interests have engaged with via voice? Will search results ever be annotated with information like, "33 of your friends have also purchased this product, or visited this restaurant?"

Rebecca Lieb, Kaleido Insights

It's no question that voice will be a dominant interface very, very soon. This is one area in which technological advances are being made faster than human behavior can adapt.

Mathew Sweezey, Salesforce

I'm not as bullish on voice as everyone else. I think we're missing the idea that humans have five senses (six if you see ghosts). We must realize it is natural to use multiple inputs and outputs, not just a single form. That is a human experience.

Brendan King, Vendasta

I used to use a pen. Then a keyboard and mouse. More and more, my finger — and now my voice. It won't be long before voice dominates. Unless, of course, I can just think it one day.

**Andrew Shotland,
Local SEO Guide**

I'll have to ask Siri. Hold on...

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS:



JAY BAER
President
Convince & Convert

Jay Baer has created five multi-million dollar companies, and was recently inducted into the Word of Mouth Marketing Hall of Fame. He is the President of Convince & Convert, a consulting firm that helps the world’s most iconic brands like The United Nations, Nike, 3M, and Oracle use technology to gain an unfair competitive advantage. A New York Times best-selling author of five books, Jay is also the host of the acclaimed Social Pros podcast.



GREG GIFFORD
Vice President of Search
DealerOn

Greg Gifford is the Vice President of Search at DealerOn, a software company that provides websites and online marketing to new car dealers all over the country. He’s got over 16 years of online marketing and web design experience, and he speaks internationally at both automotive and SEO conferences, teaching thousands of small business owners and marketers how to get their sites to show up higher in local search rankings.



WENDY WEINSTEIN KARP
Marketing Consultant
W2K Consulting

Wendy Weinstein Karp is a marketing consultant who has spent 30 years in food and beverage, and the on-premise restaurant sector. In her last corporate assignment she was the Director of Global Marketing for The San Pellegrino Beverage Group. She currently outsources CMO thinking and implementation for clients and is an owner of PLATES Restaurant in Larchmont, NY. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania.



BRENDAN KING
Co-Founder & CEO
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Brendan King, co-founder and CEO of Vendasta, is the innovative force of the company. Responsible for providing the vision, thought leadership and business strategy, it is Brendan’s ability to focus on the big picture while maintaining quality on the finest details that facilitates Vendasta’s success.



DANIEL LEMIN
Head of Consulting
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Daniel Lemin is a startup co-founder, marketing advisor, and co-author of the new book, *Talk Triggers*, with Jay Baer.



REBECCA LIEB
Co-Founder & Analyst
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Rebecca Lieb is an expert in content strategy, content marketing, and digital marketing innovation. She has published a significant body of original research — including work on the topics of content marketing, content strategy and converged media — and has also served as a strategic advisor and corporate trainer to a wide range of brands.

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LEE ODDEN

CEO
TopRank Marketing

Lee Odden is a digital marketing strategist, author, international keynote speaker and CEO of TopRank Marketing, a digital marketing agency serving major B2B brands that include SAP, Dell and LinkedIn. Lee has evangelized a customer centric approach to integrated marketing by writing over 1.4 million words at toprankblog.com. He's also given over 200 presentations about content, search, social and influencer marketing in 17 different countries and continues to lead marketing innovation and strategic development at his agency.



ROBERT ROSE

Chief Strategy Advisor
Content Marketing Institute

Robert Rose is Founder of The Content Advisory, the education and consulting group with the Content Marketing Institute. For more than 20 years, Robert has been helping marketers to tell their story more effectively. Over the last five years, he has worked with more than 500 companies, including 15 of the Fortune 100.



MARK SCHAEFER

Executive Director
Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Mark Schaefer is a globally-recognized author, speaker, podcaster, and business consultant who blogs at grow — one of the top five marketing blogs of the world. He teaches graduate marketing classes at Rutgers University and has written six best-selling books including *The Tao of Twitter* (the best-selling book on Twitter in the world) and *The Content Code*, named by INC magazine as one of the top five marketing books of the year, and his new book *KNOWN: The handbook for building and unleashing your personal brand in the digital age*.



ANDREW SHOTLAND

CEO & Founder
Local SEO Guide

Andrew Shotland is the Founder & CEO of www.localseoguide.com, a leading search consultancy with a specialty in SEO for multi-location businesses, enterprise-level search marketing, and corporate training. He was a founding member of NBC's Internet group and a former GM of NBC.com. He helped start Insider Pages, a pioneering local-social search engine, which was acquired by CitySearch in 2006.



MATHEW SWEZEY

Marketing Insights
Salesforce

Mathew Sweezy is Principal of Marketing Insights for Salesforce.com, and is regarded as one of the top minds on the future of marketing. His work is often cited in leading publications such as Mashable, VentureBeat, PCWorld, CMO.com, Information Week, Forbes, and Huffington Post. Mathew also authors columns for multiple publications, including Moz, Mashable, and DemandGen Report, and is the author of *Marketing Automation for Dummies*, the first practical guide to marketing automation.

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