

Digital Marketing Glossary for Boat Dealers

By MRAA Education Staff, with contributions from Tim Schmidt, SVP of Sales, [Octane Marketing](#)

So often you or your team run across digital marketing terms and acronyms like lead conversion, search engine optimization (SEO) and click-through rate (CTR). You're not only expected to understand them, but also act on them and report results related to them. However, not everyone grasps the terminology nor do they have a digital marketing glossary for boat dealers on their desk. Without a clear, shared understanding of each term, confusion and misalignment will slow your progress.

The [2025 MRAA Marine Industry Digital Marketing Report](#), presented by the [MRAA Educational Foundation](#), a survey of a couple hundred boat dealers, revealed the need for basic knowledge. Around 22% of participants said a resource to better understand online terminology and technology would be a helpful tool. At the request of the participants, we created this basic digital marketing glossary for boat dealers to help you understand the language and letters you encounter in meetings, reports and marketing tools. Circulate it to your team to help everyone understand digital marketing better.

Analytics

Data that shows how your digital marketing is performing — including traffic, clicks, leads and conversions. Most often Google Analytics 4 (GA4) is the primary source of this data, and is oftentimes referred to as simply “analytics.”

Application Programming Interface (API)

Software that lets your inventory automatically sync from your DMS or website to platforms like Boat Trader or Facebook Marketplace. API is a general structure used to transfer information at scale. This programming structure can be used to send inventory feeds, send analytics data to a reporting hub, feed inventory into Meta or Google, etc.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Technology that simulates human intelligence — used for automating tasks like writing ads, analyzing trends or managing customer responses. Tools like AIMIE and ChatGPT use AI to assist dealerships.

AIMIE

MRAA's AI-powered chatbot designed to answer questions and guide marine retailers to helpful resources.

Bounce Rate

The percentage of visitors who leave your website after only viewing one page. A high rate may indicate that visitors didn't find what they were looking for.

Branding

The consistent use of logos, colors, voice and messaging to create a memorable identity for your dealership.



Campaign ID (CID)

A unique identifier used to track individual marketing campaigns in tools like Google Analytics, email platforms or CRM systems. Understand which campaign a lead came from so you can measure performance and ROI accurately.

Click-Through Rate (CTR)

The percentage of people who click on a link or ad out of everyone who sees it. A key measure of ad effectiveness. One way to think about CTR is it's like your ads batting average, dividing the number of people who click on your ads by the number of people who saw your ad. (Impressions.)

Content Marketing

Creating and sharing helpful, relevant content (like blogs, videos, or listings) to attract and engage potential buyers.

Conversion / Conversion Rate

A conversion is when someone takes a desired action (like filling out a form or scheduling service). Conversion rate is the percentage of visitors who convert.

Cost Per Action (CPA)

This is most often used to measure the average cost per conversion for a campaign. It is calculated by taking the total cost of a campaign, divided by the number of conversions or actions you are aiming for. (Form submits, chat/text, phone calls, etc.)

Cost Per Click (CPC)

This is the total cost of the campaign, divided by the total number of clicks. CPC is a good measure on the cost it takes to drive a website visit for a given campaign.

Cost Per Lead (CPL)

The amount of marketing money spent to create a single lead. Lower is better. Divide your total marketing spend by the number of leads generated, helping you understand your campaign efficiency.

Cost Per Mile (CPM)

Cost per mile, aka "cost per thousand." This is your cost as the advertiser to show 1,000 ad impressions to your target audience. This is the unit of measurement most display/social/video advertising is transacted in.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Software that tracks and organizes customer information, interactions and leads. Helps you follow up consistently and manage relationships.

Dealer Management System (DMS)

Software used to manage sales, service, parts and often integrates with inventory and marketing tools.



Email Marketing

Using emails to engage leads and customers through newsletters, promotions, follow-ups and announcements.

Engagement Rate

A measure of how users interact with your content (likes, shares, comments, clicks). High engagement often signals strong relevance or interest.

Geo-Targeting

Delivering ads or content based on someone's physical location — such as zip code or region — to attract nearby buyers.

GEO (Generative Engine Optimization)

Optimizing your content for AI-based search engines to ensure your dealership's answers show up in tools like ChatGPT or Google's AI snapshots.

Google Analytics

A free tool that shows where your website traffic is coming from, what visitors are doing, and what content performs best.

High-Value Content Offer (HVCO)

Premium content (e.g., checklist, video, guide) offered in exchange for a lead's email or contact info. Builds your marketing list.

Impressions

The number of times your ad or content is shown to people (not necessarily clicked). Helps measure brand visibility.

Influencer Marketing

Collaborating with individuals who have strong followings to promote your brand or boats to their audience.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Measurable metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns and strategies. KPIs help you understand what's working and guide decisions to improve performance. Examples include website traffic, lead conversion rate, click-through rate and cost per lead.

Landing Page

A dedicated web page designed to support a single campaign goal — like collecting leads or offering a downloadable guide.



Lead

A potential customer who has taken some action that shows interest — such as requesting info or calling the dealership.

Lead Nurturing

The process of building a relationship with leads over time using emails, content and follow-up to move them toward a sale.

Lead Source

Where a lead came from — such as a third-party listing site, Google ad, or Facebook post.

Local SEO

Optimizing your dealership's online presence to appear in local search results, including Google Maps and "near me" searches. Local SEO is driven based on your location, and surrounding towns/cities/metropolitan areas, and as such your local SEO content should focus on those key geographic areas.

Marketing Funnel

The journey a customer takes from awareness to consideration to purchase. Often divided into top (traffic), middle (engagement), and bottom (conversion) stages.

Omnichannel Marketing

A strategy where all of your marketing — online and offline — works together to give customers a consistent experience, regardless of the specific marketing channels being used.

Open Rate (Email)

The percentage of email recipients who open your email. Helps measure subject line effectiveness and list health.

Organic Traffic

Website visitors who arrive at your website via search engines, but excluding paid ad clicks.

Paid Ads / PPC (Pay-Per-Click)

Ads you pay for (e.g., Google or Facebook ads). You're charged when someone clicks your ad.

Reach

The total number of people who see your content or ad. Different from impressions, which count **every** time it's seen.

Retargeting

Ads served to users who previously visited your website, helping you re-engage potential customers.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Running paid ads that appear in search engine results to drive website traffic.



Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Improving your website to appear higher in **organic** (unpaid) search results by using keywords, quality content and fast loading speeds.

Social Media Marketing

Using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or TikTok to promote your dealership, engage customers and share inventory or promotions.

Third-Party Listing Sites

Websites like Boat Trader, Boats.com and Boatmart where you can list inventory to expand reach.

Traffic

The total number of visitors coming to your website. Includes both paid and organic users.

User Experience (UX)

How easy and enjoyable it is for people to navigate your website or digital content. Good UX leads to higher engagement and conversions.

Viewable CPM (vCPM)

This is the same as CPM, but validates impressions based on how much of the ad was seen, and for how long. The Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) defines a viewable impression as "50% of the ad's pixels are visible in the browser window for a continuous 1 second." Viewable CPM is a good metric to ensure your ads are actually being seen.

View-Through Conversion

This metric tracks people who see your ads (impressions), don't click on it, and end up taking action on your website within a given time period. (Often 30 days) This metric helps marketers understand the influence of mediums like connected TV and display ads which often don't get clicked on directly.

