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FREE NEWSLETTER

How to capture a fair share of the market via online marketing techniques

You've set up a business and need to market it. While we've seen that if correctly done, DM campaigns work well in increasing sales and publicizing a company (link to post: Traditional Direct Marketing: Does it Still Work In Today's Web Environment?), it is also imperative that business owners turn to online marketing to help promote their brands.

Online marketing techniques, simply put, are strategies used to market a business' products or services to an online audience. While you may have already announced your business online via a website, having a site alone is not enough. You need to implement certain strategies to cast a wider net and draw an audience to your site. You will need to target your audience, educate your potential buyer and convert visitors to clients.

Most companies will integrate their IT and Marketing departments in order to maximize the impact the various tools and programs available have. A good marketing strategy will do some or all of the following for your business:

- Bring in a targeted audience to your site: While a large audience is good, a targeted audience is even better. Your marketing should be aimed at capturing the right segment for your business.
- Build your credibility: In order for visitors to convert to sales, you need to build the reputation and credibility of your company and its products and services. This becomes all the more important when it's about selling a new product or introducing a new service.
- Allow you to host multiple income stream opportunities: Can your business diversify its marketing streams? Can you build an affiliate business which allows you to have others market and sell your products for you? A good marketing plan will recognize the need for diversification and allow you to have in-built sensors to seize and capture new opportunities.
- Increase the sales and thereby revenue of your business: Your marketing plan should also allow you to increase the sales of your products and services. It's not just about announcing them to the world at large, but about converting your announcement into revenue for your business.

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building as a priority in it.

- Provide your audience with an interactive platform, thereby converting them into repeat customers: Can your audience connect with you? Can they connect with each other? Research proves that the more interaction your site allows, the greater the chances that your visitors will stick around. Which gives you a larger platform upon which to sell them your business.
- Allow for immediate customer service: One of the key differences between traditional and online businesses is that the latter allows for immediate customer response and feedback. If your client has questions, if he is unhappy with something he's bought, you can respond and reassure him right away and address the issues with speed and immediate insight.
- Track your spend so that you can monitor your ROI's: Most marketing plans will call for a systems tracker, whereby you can track the sales made via your website. You should also be able to track your investment, spending, traffic, traffic spend and even advertising and marketing budgets. And given the online program options, doing so should be easy even with no technical background. Some excellent sites to check out include: <http://www.webtrends.live.com> , <http://www.statcounter.com>
- Decrease print and offline advertising spend: And finally, online marketing should allow you to cut back on more traditional forms of advertising, thereby making better use of limited budgets.

Having said this, to ensure you make the most of your advertising and marketing budget, you need to select those strategies which will work for you. This can be a hard choice given the number of options available. A good way to begin is by selecting a few techniques and being consistent in using them. This will also allow you track the progress made and delete those techniques which are not working for you.

Time management is also another trick which needs to be mastered. While it's not feasible to spend all your time on marketing your services, if done correctly, you can manage to spread out your marketing message with limited resources. Using social networking sites like <http://twitter.com> and <http://facebook.com> are excellent examples of how time-managed techniques can help bring in a large audience following.

In order to optimize your marketing's effectiveness, you will also need to be aware of the newer technologies and methodologies available. As these change often, it's important to devote some 'study time' on a regular basis to keep abreast of newer developments. Being adaptable and willing to change is another basic requirement. How you alter your thinking to shift your marketing strategies will determine how much you get back from them.

Some standard tools which will help you market your products and services include:

- SEO and keyword optimizing.
- Article distribution and web linking.
- Paid advertising including pay-per-click advertising.
- Affiliate marketing
- Online DM campaigns, including online email blasts and post card mailers.
- Traditional marketing including the use of business cards, brochures, banners, direct mailing campaign, URL's on signatures, forum and site chat rooms, blogging etc.
- Utilizing public relation techniques such as online press releases via sites like <http://prweb.com>, <http://www.onlinepressreleases.com> and <http://www.prlog.org>

Internet marketing as a whole is a growing and ever changing organism. To master it, you first need to study it, embrace it and learn to adapt with it. Only then can you gain the maximum benefits for the time and effort you invest into it.

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