



Internet Marketing Is **Strong** Marketing. Don't Miss Out **Increased Sales, Qualified Leads, Informed Clients Among Benefits.**

By John Russo

There has been a lot of talk lately about the benefits of internet marketing. This term can mean a lot of things like Pay-Per-Click, search engine optimization (SEO), web site marketing and search engine marketing. So what does it all mean?

Internet marketing is a strategy used by savvy businesses to drive qualified prospective visitors to a company web site. Typically there are several ways of doing this.

Search engine optimization or SEO is the process of developing a website and strategy that causes search engines serve your page up as an organic result when someone types in what you do. This placement is free on search engines and is commonly the most clicked on by users.

Making your site a **destination site** will greatly increase your sites popularity and decrease your dependency on search engines. The importance of having a destination site is often overlooked by marketing professionals. A site like Travelocity or ThomasNet.com is a destination site. It is a site that users go directly to (bypassing search engines. This is done by providing useful information and tools for the user so they come back directly to your site or even provide links on their site to yours.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) or sponsored links. You can bid or buy keywords on search engines or buy categories on directories such as ThomasNet.com. When these keywords are typed in your ad appears with links to an appropriate web page. This is an effective form of advertising but should not be used as a crutch for having a well designed and well coded web page.

Qualified Sales Leads. Internet marketing is a highly effective way to market your company. When a prospect types in "red widgets supplier" into a search engine, there is no more qualified lead if you are in the red widget business. The ROI from internet marketing is high and easily determined due to its ability be measured and to laser target leads.

Direct Sales Increases. If your company has products it wishes to sell online then having E-commerce capability can greatly increase sales throughput, and believe it or not, customer service can benefit.

Leads don't get any hotter. When someone contacts you from your website, it is immediate. The iron is as hot as it gets folks and it is the time to strike. There is no cool down time as with punch cards or mailings.

Measure. You are on a computer so use it to its full capability. A well planned internet marketing strategy can track every single potential lead or client from start to finish. You can track your cost per lead, ROI and many other metrics

First Things First

You can lead a horse to water...In this case, many horses, but if you have nothing to drink...? A site should be professionally designed and easily navigated. You have approximately 58 seconds for a buyer to decide whether or not to stay on your site. Your site needs to be able to convert traffic into sales effectively.

Before you design however, you must determine the purpose of your site, is it for direct sales, basic information, or some other purpose.

Choosing the right marketing strategy then depends on several factors, your industries buying habits, competition, budget, and your level of involvement.

Learn from your elders. Coca Cola doesn't just advertise on ABC do they? A good marketing mix is necessary. You need to take the same approach with your business. As a rule, SEO is a long term project and should be the first part of your approach. Pay-Per-Click and vertical directories like ThomasNet.com are good "insurance" and fill in for those portions of your business that your website is not getting proper optimization on.

The last step is using a measurement software like that generates reports specific to what is happening on your website, what is happening to your marketing dollars, and who is coming for how long.

Mistakes to Avoid

The internet is a lot like a popularity contest. It takes time. Do not expect to get immediate results. As with most promotional campaigns it takes time to work.

Refrain from deceptive advertising or spamming. Deceptive practices such as adding keywords in white on a white background are picked up by search engines and can lead to delisting or lower site popularity. Many of my clients wait for their nephew or local "computer wiz" to set up their site. A lot of times this leads to delays in projects as well as poor site design. Find someone who can be dedicated to your job and who has experience with industrial sites.

Link Farms and sites that promise increased site popularity are also deceptive tactics that can have negative effects on your marketing strategy.

Marketing yourself is fine if you have the expertise and time to spend on your program. Improperly arranged PPC programs can get very costly overnight. An unwatched program can easily boil over. It takes time to learn all the best website practices and search engine friendly web design.

Conclusion

90% of new industrial business is sourced on the Internet. You cannot afford not to be there or to take a passive approach to the internet if you wish to grow your business. Internet marketing is a proven strategy that can bring your company significant sales opportunities and qualified leads.

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