

How to Create and Manage an Affordable and Effective Internet Marketing Campaign

ARE YOU planning for explosive sales this year through an effective, organised Internet marketing campaign or are you maintaining your status quo and hoping for the best?

A planned, organised internet marketing campaign with rotation through a variety of targeted sites, directories and venues is not hard to coordinate, does not need to cost a great deal of money and can generate traffic and sales faster than search engine submissions alone. It takes a bit of research and a solid knowledge of your target customer, but you can plan and implement a simple marketing campaign in the space of a dedicated day.

A Five Step Marketing Plan follows, created from hands on experience with Internet marketing for small business. By doing each of the actions, you'll end up with an effective holiday marketing campaign, creating a marketing plan that can be implemented immediately and begin reaping you sales successes.

Internet Marketing Plan Step 1 - Defining Your Customer

Defining your customer is as important as defining your products or naming your business.

Download "How to Create a Customer" a FREE resource from our library if you are not sure about this.

If you have not yet done a **marketing plan** within your **business plan**, then you need to do this exercise. If you already have this in your business plan, you can skip ahead to Step 2.

Action:

Answer these questions as honestly as you can. In other words, don't project your expectations or hopes on them. What is your perfect, solid customer really like?

- Is my perfect customer high tech or low tech?
- Will I target big or small companies?
- Is my perfect customer mature or growing?
- What is the job profile of my perfect customer - an executive, manager, worker, entrepreneur, etc.
- Is my perfect customer rich or in the middle class?
- What are the preferences of my perfect customer have?
- Does my perfect customer have room in their spending budget for my product/service on a one time, occasional or constant basis?
- How do my perfect customers use my product/service - do they buy it for themselves or as part of a package for someone else?
- Does my perfect customer spend a lot, some or minimal time on the Internet?
- Where does my perfect customer look for my product/service? Both online and in physical locations?

Once you have this written out, you should have a good picture of where to start looking to place your message and how to write your message copy.

Internet Marketing Plan Step 2 - Choosing Your Targets

Now, where are you going to post your ads? A coordinated effort across several sites and venues commonly frequented by your customers is the most effective marketing campaign. If you are seen in several places your visibility and retained message is much stronger. Complementary sites that you can help cross-promote to your visitors,

who will then see you there too, will provide excellent reinforcement of your message.

When considering a site or newsletter for your ad, look at factors such as traffic, search engine placement, external linking (how many places link to it), quality of current ads and types of messages being presented in current ads. Are there many competitors of yours already or is the advertising of a complementary nature to your business? Are the ads completely unrelated to your business and to the intended traffic of the site? These are all clues to measure a best fit of your message to the traffic of the site.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising is another consideration for your Internet marketing campaign but can be daunting for someone new to this form. If you're new to PPC, stick to places that allow you to set limits on daily expenditures. Google is a good example. This will also help you to experiment and determine the most effective keywords by paying close attention to the statistics of the PPC campaign.

Conversion rates are an important measuring tool. What you need to do is determine what exactly you want to measure for your marketing campaign. Is it sales orders? Is it newsletter subscribers? Downloads of your free e-book? A conversion rate is the number of click-throughs it takes to achieve your target measurement. Your page may have 1000 hits, 14 clicks and 1 sale in a day. Your conversion rate is 1:14 or 7.1%. In other words, 7.1% of the clicks are generating a sale during this period.

Close monitoring of your conversion rates will quickly tell you what is working and what is not. Don't hesitate to change, tweak or modify your ads if needed. This is a process in constant motion until you find the best fit. Remember too, an ad may work superbly in one place but not in another.

Action:

Create a spreadsheet or document that you will

enter in all the sites and venues that are a consideration in your Internet marketing campaign.

Internet Marketing Plan Step 3 - Budget

While some people think this should be the first step, realistically you can better create the budget for your marketing plan when you have a good idea of the costs involved. That can only be done once you've figured out your targets. You probably already have a figure in mind of how much you can really spend, so go back to your marketing campaign sheet and total up the costs of all the ad spots you'd like to do. Chances are that total will exceed your overall spending limit.

Action:

Now go through that list and prioritise the ads in terms of where you think you'll get the most exposure and results that fit within your budget. Move the others into a holding list.

Remember, as the ads start to pull in results you can always go back and expand your marketing campaign from that holding list.

If you are engaged in pay-per-click advertising, check in daily for the first week or so and monitor your results to ensure you are paying for results.

Don't forget to consider ad swaps and bartering as part of your payment and marketing budget. Many sites will swap newsletter ads or banner ads for similar placement on your site. It never hurts to ask.

Internet Marketing Plan Step 4 - Creating Your Ad Content

Internet marketing works best when you focus only on one or two things. You may have a variety of products but pick one or two items that are good sellers and have a solid appeal to your target market for your marketing campaign.

Next ask yourself, "What am I selling?" It's rarely the product or service. You are selling a benefit, something that registers at the emotional level. If

you are selling fishing rods, for example, you're selling the excitement of successfully landing that monster in the lake. If you are selling cosmetics, you're selling beauty.

The most successful ads use words that relate to the customer. Use You and Yours and never put the focus on Me, Mine, Our, My or We. Create several emotional words associated with the product - fun, comforting, relaxing, stimulating, addictive - and use at least one of them in the ad.

Coupons are also an effective marketing tool. They can be easily tracked either manually or by an automated shopping cart system. Use different codes for different advertising locations and you'll quickly see which ones get the best attention.

Action:

Create a text ad for each item in your Internet marketing campaign, making sure to hit at least one to three prime keywords in the text. Text ads typically run 60 characters wide by 3, 5, 7 or 10 lines long.

Once you have your text ads, go through your banner inventory. Do you need to update them with a holiday specific message? Does every image have an appropriate ALT tag? Is the graphic properly optimized for size (under 20-50kb) and resolution (72dpi)?

Internet Marketing Plan Step 5 - Tracking & Monitoring Your Ads

Tracking and reacting to your campaign's successes are critical in maintaining an effective marketing campaign. From your website stats to PPC stats, there are many ways to determine what is working and what isn't. By paying attention you'll learn volumes about your ads and how to hone them for best results.

Tracking tricks include using specific coupon or sales codes for each ad placement, setting up separate entry pages on your site for each ad, and utilizing a service that helps track activity. For

example, a mall directory like **Under the Awning** gives you performance stats on your product listings. There are advertising management services that help you to track ad performance, such as **phpAdsNew**, a free service that is relatively easy to implement and gives powerful ad tracking management and support.


Action:

On a daily basis for the first two weeks, review the results of your various ads. Write them up in your tracking sheet and look for any trends or patterns. Which ones are performing, where and why? If some aren't working, replace them with others that are or try another from your hold list. Once you settle into a pattern of review and ad management you'll know better how often you need to monitor your marketing campaigns.

Successful Internet marketing campaigns are within the reach of any business, no matter what your budget. By following these basic marketing plan steps and committing to the follow-through, you can create a cost effective marketing campaign with a substantial return on investment.

To read more about strategies to grow your business [click here](#)

Best wishes,



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