
Strategic Internet Marketing

By Graham Jones

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Your business depends upon other people buying your products or services. They find what you sell in two main ways:

1. Someone tells them about you
2. They stumble upon you by accident

That's it. There are no other ways of people getting to you. It's not magic; it's not a mystery; it's not miraculous. It's simple, straightforward and sure. All you need to do is let your potential customers find out about you by accident, or arrange for them to hear about you.

When it comes to your business in its online guise you have the same two options. Nothing has changed from the "offline" world. Either people on the Internet can find out about you because you or someone else has told them, or they can find you accidentally.

Now, clearly, your business is unlikely to succeed if you depend upon people who find out about you by accident. True, you'll get some business, but will it be enough to sustain you? Probably not. That's why most businesses concentrate on a strategic approach to gaining customers. Of course, what I'm talking about is called "marketing" and involves a host of activities to inform potential customers about you.

In the online world, though, the vast majority of businesses appear to resort to the second way of meeting their customers—by accident. Companies set up an online brochure in the hope that someone will stumble upon it. If they are reasonably up-to-date with the Internet world, such companies may perhaps try "search engine optimisation". But all that does is help you get high up the search engine rankings where "accidental" customers can find you.

For almost all businesses, online marketing in its present guise, including search engine optimisation, is a complete waste of time, money and effort. Stop it..!

Instead, you need a strategy to attract customers by telling them about you. There are only two ways you can do this:

1. Tell them yourself
2. Get other people to talk about you

Consider successful companies in any market. What is a significant common feature about them? There are probably several, but one of the most powerful, positive and popularly cited features of successful companies is that they somehow manage to get other people to talk about them. In other words, successful companies succeed by word of mouth. That should be central to your Internet Marketing Strategy.

Telling People About You

To get people interested in what you sell, you need to tell them. In the online world there are several ways you can do this. You could have an online brochure to which you refer people; but they aren't interested in everything you offer. You could send them emails; but many people ignore them. You could get listed in the appropriate directories; but you'll get lost amongst the competition.

Have you ever sent direct mail and wondered why sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't? It's simple. At the time the recipient got your envelope they simply weren't interested in what you had to offer. If you could have caught them half an hour later, perhaps, they would have responded. It was just the wrong time.

In the online world you face the same problem. Happily, though, there is a solution. You can offer people everything you do at the same time; yet they only see what interests them at that particular time. The strategy to achieve that is a separate web site for every single product, service and marketplace you work in. In other words, you can no longer have one web site—you need hundreds, if not thousands.

To achieve that you need multiple domain web site hosting. That's your first step in your strategy. Go to: hostseveralsites.com to achieve it.

Once you have the ability to host multiple web sites all within one account, you can separate your products and services so that each web site targets specific audiences with particular items. As soon as you have separate web sites for individual products, markets and services you will be able to tell people about what you offer in a more targeted way. For instance, you meet someone at a networking meeting and you'll be able to give them a specific web site to look at that meets their needs, rather than your general site where they have to hunt for what they want.

Research shows that if people don't see what they want within less than one second, they give up on your web site.

That's why you need highly specific web sites laser-targeted at particular needs. You should then tell people about these specific sites at every opportunity—in meetings, at conferences, in social situations, on headed paper, on promotional items, anywhere...! This should be your second step in your strategy—promoting individual web sites to specific target audiences, rather than trying to promote one general web site.

Most people visit web sites having seen the address printed or mentioned somewhere or having been told the address.

Only a minority will use search engines to find you. That's why promoting your web sites offline is so important.

Getting People to Talk About You

Having established several web sites and started promoting them in a targeted fashion, your next step is to get your online business talked about. Word of mouth marketing is the most powerful form of marketing; it is more trusted, it is more cost-effective and it is more efficient. Word of mouth marketing is used by the world's leading businesses.

To start the process you need to demonstrate you provide value. A quick and easy way of doing that is to provide something free for people who visit your web sites. This might be a report, a book or a CD, for instance. It doesn't matter what it is, providing it has some value to your web site visitors. If you provide something of value, free of charge to each specific, target audience, those people are bound to mention your name to others who may well benefit from that free material. Online, a good way of achieving this is by providing free reports that contain useful, practical information for your visitors. For more advice on this see usefreereports.co.uk.

Once you start providing free information that has real value, people will start talking about you. However, you need to encourage word of mouth activity. There are several ways you can do this, particularly online. The options include:

1. Blogging
2. Social networking
3. Forums
4. Chat rooms
5. Membership sites

By far the simplest way of getting people talking about you is to write a blog. This is a quick and easy way of adding material to your web site. Just go to blogger.com and sign up for a free account. Then follow the steps to set up a blog. Write material on your blog each day and before too long you will have people commenting on what you say and recommending your material to others, spreading the word about you.

So, your next step in your strategy is to encourage online discussion of what you offer. Blogging is a great start, but so too are social networking sites, like MySpace and Ecademy.com. You should also search for forums to which you can contribute and then get others talking about what you way. Equally, don't neglect chat rooms or membership sites, where you can stimulate discussion about your products and services.

In a recent survey 75% of people said they would welcome more contributions to forums, chat rooms and so on by commercial providers.

Continuing the discussion

Getting people to talk about you is one thing—getting them to put their hands in their pockets and buy from you is another. Several research studies have pointed out the fact that people need a number of repeated exposures to a company or product before they buy. The exact number is up for debate—but your strategy should not ignore the principle.

You need a system in place that allows you to get in front of people several times over. A series of web sites will help. Offline marketing strategies will help. Boosting online discussion will also help. But they are probably not enough.

What you need to do is set up a discussion with your clients and potential clients. In the old days it was called “keeping in touch”. But nowadays, with information overload you have to do more than merely keep in touch. You need to strike up a dialogue with your potential customers, providing them with continuous advice, information, ideas and so on. The way to do that is with something called a “sequential autoresponder”. This allows you to automate the sending of dozens, even thousands of messages at pre-set time intervals.

If you don’t have several sequential autoresponders set up—at least one for each web site—you won’t be able to strike up any kind of relationship with your potential customers. They won’t be reminded about you—and so they won’t talk about you, providing you with word of mouth marketing.

The next step you need to take is to have an account with a company that organises sequential autoresponders. There are several companies who do this, but the most popular system used by the leading Internet marketers is from marketerschoice.com. Not only does this provide sequential autoresponders, but also has several additional features, such as a shopping cart and tracking modules to allow you to run your entire online business using the facilities.

Your steps forward

To move ahead with your business online, this report has outlined some straightforward steps you need to take. Follow these steps and you will gain benefits.

- Step 1:** Get a hosting account that can handle multiple web sites.
- Step 2:** Set up separate web sites for each of your products, services and markets.
- Step 3:** Arrange for free reports to be given away from each of these web sites.
- Step 4:** Use every opportunity to promote individual web sites in the offline world.
- Step 5:** Set up a blog and encourage discussion.
- Step 6:** Contribute to social networking sites, forums, chat rooms and get people talking about you and your services and products.
- Step 7:** Arrange for a sequential autoresponder to provide your audiences with a constant supply of useful information.

Support for your online marketing

You can get support for your online marketing from the author of this report, Graham Jones. With prices from only £20 per month you owe it to yourself to find out more from:

www.netmarketingsupport.com

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Internet Psychologist

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This report provides you with several steps you can take to ensure that your business benefits from being online. Using this report you will be able to improve the way your business works online and you should be able to gain more custom as a result.

About the author



Graham Jones is an Internet Psychologist who has studied the way people behave in the online world. He has used this knowledge to help businesses grow online and connect with their audiences. He is also an Internet Entrepreneur in his own right, having several successful online products and services. Graham works as a professional speaker and consultant. He runs workshops on Internet marketing, blogging and running an online business.