

HOME RUN INTERNET MARKETING

by Paul Kaufman

INTRODUCTION

THE RULES HAVE CHANGED

For the longest time, getting your message out was done through traditional methods like radio ads, billboards, television commercials, and bulk mail. Everything is different now that the web and social media are here. Technologies and strategies seem to be evolving so fast that it can be overwhelming trying to understand Internet Marketing. This book was written to calm your fears by showing you the way, step by step, in plain English.

I've lost count of the times clients have asked me "How do I get the top spot in Google?" Or "How can Facebook help me get more customers?" There is an immense desire out there to understand and master the techniques that will drive people to your online spaces. The good news is, it's not rocket science. The way you solve these problems is through step-by-step techniques that are straightforward to learn and relatively easy to implement. However, you have to keep it up over the long haul, or your success won't last.

This book covers the three main components of Internet Marketing. The first is your website; making it look its best and filling it with valuable content. The second is search engine optimization, or SEO. This is the process of sculpting and adjusting your site so it ranks well for the terms searched on by your target audience. SEO also involves getting as many other sites as possible to link to your site. The third is social media. Websites like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+ and LinkedIn all have tremendous potential to drive an enthusiastic audience to your site. Internet Marketing is always evolving, but I focus on these three areas since, throughout my career, they have shown to be the fundamental building blocks for gaining a larger audience and making your business more successful.

So what gives me the gumption to pen a book on Internet Marketing? Well, for many years I wouldn't have thought about taking on such an endeavor, but having met so many people who struggle with this topic, I decided to share the knowledge I've gained over the last two decades in the industry. In the early 1990s, when I started designing websites, the internet felt brand-new. My career moved from web designer to multimedia developer and then to information architect. Throughout the 90s, I created websites for a variety of private companies and the government. But while most of my fellow web geeks were focused on how sites looked and how they operated, I kept having the nagging feeling that it didn't matter how well a website worked or how beautiful the

design was if people couldn't *find it* on the internet. So in 1997, I started my own company, Kaufman Web Design, and began helping companies and organizations develop professional, high-ranking websites.

Fast forward to present day. The internet and social media have exploded into the primary tools that people use to find and share information in their daily lives. From grabbing a recipe for lasagna, to finding out how to fix your Volkswagen Beetle carburetor, the web has provided an ever-expanding wealth of information. And now social media sites like Facebook and Twitter let people share stories, images, and videos with anyone they choose around the globe.

I have seen companies divert an increasing percentage of their marketing budgets away from traditional outreach methods and into SEO and social media. And time after time, it paid off. These tactics work. My career has taken tangents through graphic design, video, copywriting, and even programming, but my goal has always been to help companies and organizations reach their audience and succeed online. In my current company, Pitch-Perfect-Marketing.com, I work as a trainer, and speak at events around the United States, focusing my message on how people can master Internet Marketing. It just takes a clear road map. This book is that road map.

For those of you who aren't very computer or web savvy, don't worry. This book is written for people who aren't nerds; people who seek the information and then need to get on with their lives. You won't find endless acronyms or hard to understand "geek speak." I have been on the other side of that table where people talk over your head, and I didn't like it either. In plain English, this book will take you around the bases of internet marketing so you can put your strategy together and get cracking on your own success story.

HOW INTERNET MARKETING WORKS

As we've all heard, the only constant is change. This is especially true in marketing since there has been a revolutionary shift during the last decade. You and I and our parents and grandparents, all had to put up with the daily onslaught of advertising. The time-tested ways that companies would reach out to customers have been TV commercials, print advertisements, radio spots, door-to-door salesmen, billboards, telemarketers, and junk mail. There was no other way to get your message out to your audience except through these methods. It was the only game in town.

But along came the internet.

Boy, how marketing has changed. Companies both large and small have begun scaling back their budgets for traditional marketing due to the simple fact that those tactics were becoming less and less effective. The reason is that the old ways don't reach people like they used to. Here's the skinny. Traditional marketing is built on the premise that if you shout at enough people, a small percentage of them will come and buy your stuff. Think of a TV commercial for a soft drink as an example. If 10,000 people see the commercial, and 89 people like it and buy the soda, then the advertisement has brought in customers and profit (to the annoyance of the other 9,911 people). But in the last 10 years or so, the public has adopted technologies that block out the traditional marketing interruptions into their lives. Consider caller ID on your phone. In the 1970s, when the phone rang at your house, you picked it up and said hello. You had no idea who was calling, and many times it would be a person selling some thingamabob (thingamabobs were very popular in the 70s). You

would roll your eyes, and politely try to get off the phone as quickly as possible. In a way, they had you trapped.

Now we have the ability to filter out or even block these interruptions entirely. Digital video recorders (DVRs) for your television can let you fast forward through commercials. Internet browsers have pop-up blockers. Even spam filters can keep unwanted advertisements out of your e-mail inbox.

And companies are also taking part in this huge shift away from this interruption-based marketing; budgets for traditional marketing are starting to shrink across industries. So where are they spending these advertising and marketing dollars now? In two areas: social media and search engine optimization (SEO). Both methods provide a more effective way to attract an audience, connect with them and increase profits.

Let's look at search engine optimization (SEO). Traditional marketing is like a shotgun blast; the message is shouted at a large group, many of whom have no interest in it. A TV commercial is a perfect example. With SEO however, you are crafting your website so it ranks high in the search engines for the key phrases searched on by your target audience. So potential customers *come find you instead!* Let's say you sell anti-snore pillows. Your target audience is probably sleepy spouses typing in a search phrase like, "inexpensive anti-snore pillows." So if your company website ranked on the first results page of Google for that phrase, then you are actually attracting pre-qualified customers to your website to purchase your products. No shouting required. This is a welcomed situation for both your company and your audience. You create a site that ranks high for certain targeted phrases, and your audience can find the information they want and get the solution they desire. That's the beauty and effectiveness of SEO.

Now let's look at the internet marketing power of social media, the other pillar of. At its core, it allows people to share their lives with others, whether that's through images, text, music, or video. It lets folks take part in conversations and communities around common topics of interest. What a terrific idea! And by the looks of it, the world is psyched that it's arrived. But it also offers a new avenue for companies to reach their target audience. They can engage and converse with people through sites like Twitter and Facebook. Some of those people then come back to the company's website and become customers.

Take this example: let's say your small company creates dashboard-mounted smart phone holders. Using social media, you could join a community of LinkedIn users who discuss automobile safety. Tactfully, you could engage in their discussion about the importance of hands-free telephone use in keeping drivers free from distraction. As you continue to offer knowledge and value to these discussions, you also mention that your company creates a high quality, dashboard-mounted smart phone holder. Since you are genuinely engaging with people over social media (and you don't sound like a sleazy salesman) a percentage of people will develop some trust in you and buy your products. Bada bing! You are given a forum to connect with your target audience (but not pester other people), and your target audience receives information on a product that actually helps them in their lives. Granted, you have to offer something of genuine value for this whole process to work.

The best part is that the power of SEO and social media in connecting companies with their target audiences is real and attainable for you.

FIRST BASE: YOUR WEBSITE

When I was 12 years old, I played on a local youth baseball team in Philly. I was awful. As a third string outfielder, I only got to play when the regular outfielder got hurt and the backup outfielder was sick or missing. So naturally I didn't get to play often. But when I did play, I realized how critical the team itself was in winning games. If any one player made a mistake, it didn't cost us too much since the others were keeping it together. So if I dropped the occasional fly ball (which did happen), it never resulted in us losing a game. Your website is like a baseball team. It is the first essential element of your Internet Marketing effort.

Before any concerted effort is made to improve your search engine rankings or increase your online audience, you must make sure your website is top-notch in content and design. Why? Because everything I discuss from this point on is focused on getting people to come and visit your site. So it has to be great.

LOOKS COUNT

We've all had that instantaneous reaction when we arrive at a website and are turned off by the design or layout. Or maybe it's just hard to find what we are after. Although it is true you could have great content within a less-than-stellar website design, the question to ask is: Why make the compromise? You will lose visitors due to a sub-par interface and with today's affordable website designers, there's no excuse for it.

Once people have arrived at your site, they must be impressed right away by the design and appearance. I mean really blown away, wowed, truly impressed. Just having an okay site will not work if you are truly committed to a successful Internet Marketing effort. As web-savvy viewers, we make a judgment about a site within 2 to 3 seconds. In that brief window of time, you must give your audience the immediate sense of "Wow!" that will give them the impetus to continue to explore your site. You want to convey an impression to viewers that your company has taken the time and effort to create an awesome site. One that will help them solve their problems.

When it comes to actual web design approaches, sites that feel open and spacious do better than cluttered, busy designs. There are plenty of resources that can help you design your site, but the next question is... how to go about *actually* creating or revamping your website? The answer is... it depends. If you have the people to do the technical stuff, all you need to do is hire a professional designer to create the look and feel. Then your own people can create the actual website. If you are short on dollars or manpower, I recommend www.99designs.com. This service lets you post your website design requirements (with a set dollar amount) and then allows companies to bid on your project. Each bidding firm posts their design samples. You pick the best one and pay the winning provider to finish the work. For between \$500 and \$1500 you can have a top-notch site design (not the finished website, just the design).

CONTENT IS KING

For your website to truly be the hub of your Internet Marketing efforts, it must do more than just look great. After their first impression of your site, visitors will then be on a quest to find useful content. Besides the design, this is the other area your website must go above and beyond. Your mantra must be: "I will continually offer my audience the most rewarding, useful content possible." Above all else, people come to websites in search of content. A teenager may be looking for science project ideas for his exhibit. A couple may be searching for a local nursery to buy plants for their front yard. You may have even scoured the web in search of online marketing information before you bought this book. Most people use the web to find information. We don't use it to admire pretty websites. So if people will be arriving at your website using the tactics in this book, you must make sure that when they arrive, they find awesome, useful content.

Is creating awesome content hard?

Yes!

Is it worth the effort?

You betcha!

If you continually create compelling content that people actually need, then visitors will love your site and be more likely to return again and again. The next question is, what types of content should you add to your site?

STEP RIGHT UP AND GET YOUR CONTENT

Awesome content for your website can take many forms. You could offer video clips of common procedures people struggle with and show how to do them correctly. Podcasts (digital media files that can be downloaded from the Internet) could be part of your offerings with each one providing timely information that meets a need. However, the most common type of content you should provide is text-based. Articles, white papers, how-to guides, quick start manuals, and tip sheets to name just a few. Whatever the focus of your website is, provide free, useful, textual content. You can still sell your products and services, but it is essential that you give your audience this free, relevant content to keep them coming back. A blog (an online personal or business journal) is another powerful way to offer such value. Blogs are updated frequently and the posts are short so people can consume your helpful content quickly and get back to their busy lives.

So take the necessary time to create a substantial amount of website content that truly helps your target audience. But here's the kicker: you can't just create a dozen articles and a few videos and then walk away from your site for a few months. People can tell when a website has gone dusty. Keep adding to your content regularly. Believe me, your competition knows this fact, and they will steal away your audience if you don't keep up.

***Tip:** Check out your competition (and not just locally) to see what types of content they are offering. Review the ones at the top of the search engine rankings. Then out-do them and create even better user-centered content on your site.*

To read more....

Pre-Order Homerun Internet Marketing now at

www.Pitch-Perfect-Marketing.com!