



Internet Marketing: A lot of hype to avoid

If you have a web site, you will doubtless have received messages similar to these:

"Your complete search vehicle analysis is WITHOUT CHARGE".

"We feel there is very substantial potential to publicize your site on the Internet. That is what we do - we bring traffic to our client's websites."

1) Let's say you... Sell a \$19.95 PRODUCT or SERVICE.

2) Let's say you... Broadcast Email FREE to 500,000 PEOPLE DAILY.

3) Let's say you... Receive JUST 1 ORDER for EVERY 2,000 EMAILS. CALCULATION OF YOUR EARNINGS BASED ON THE ABOVE STATISTICS: [Day 1]: \$4,987 [Week 1]: \$34,909 [Month 1]: \$139,636

"We will get your site listed HIGH on over 200,000 search engines. Imagine the revenues!"

These promises are no better than someone phoning you and saying that you have won a free kitchen or windows replacement. Of course they are sales hype, but the fact is that some people do sign up. That's why there are so many of them.

Internet marketing is a skill. Success isn't instant and it's not available for a few dollars. Furthermore, there is an increasing amount of legislation which guards against unsolicited marketing. So beware of the "get rich quick brigade".

Traffic is King!

Web sites only succeed when they get traffic – PERIOD. No matter how good your product or how smart your site is, if you don't get visitors, you won't make money.

The next page offers some pointers towards developing a consistent marketing strategy.

Internet Marketing Strategy

1. **Search Engines:** Optimise the web site pages by preparing separate keywords for each page and then submit your site to the major Search Engines. If you are able to rank within the top 10 or 20 sites for a particular key phrase that is likely to be used, you will have improved levels of traffic.
2. **Major Indices:** Getting listed on the large, human edited directories such as Yahoo! and the Open Directory (Dmoz.org) can deliver significant increases in traffic. You should note, however, that commercial reality has struck with Yahoo!, and it now costs \$300 per year to be listed.
3. **Pay-Per-Click Adverts:** Some search engines, such as Google, offer you the chance to pay for your ranking. This is becoming a popular option, especially for people who don't want to fiddle with search engine optimisation. You place a bid per 'click' then, every time someone clicks on your link, you pay the bid amount. (Take a look at Google Adwords Select programme.)
4. **Affiliate Marketing:** Affiliate schemes are becoming a very popular way to generate traffic outside targeted advertising campaigns. Scheme managers, such as TradeDoubler and Affiliate Window act as brokers, thereby reducing the level of administration and providing a wider network of potential site reference points.
5. **Exchange Links:** A free and effective way to increase traffic is to exchange links with another site. Find other good sites within your market and offer to trade links with them. Some of the major Search Engines now use 'link popularity' to help determine your ranking – provided the link is relevant. (Mass generation of irrelevant links can be counter-productive.)
6. **Opt-in Newsletters:** A newsletter gives you the opportunity to build your credibility and keep in touch with your clients. You'll be able to market your own products or services to them as well and potentially earn income from advertising sales.

(That reminds me – do you want to receive these articles by email? If so, the contact details are at the end of this article.)

7. **Article Submissions:** There is always a demand for good, original articles. Offer your articles to editors of newspapers, magazines, Ezines and webmasters in your market. Offer the article for reprint in exchange for an author byline. Look for sites which run syndicate networks, so your article may appear on hundreds of sites.

8. **Ezine Advertising:** Ezines are proliferating and it's getting to the stage where the market is overloaded. But if you choose the right one, i.e. one which is likely to reach your target prospects, then advertising can be cost effective.
9. **Message Boards:** Join a forum where potential clients or partners may congregate. Leave your link at the bottom of your posts and then if you become respected for your help and support, you will win visitors to your site. Note: this strategy requires a delicate touch – don't get kicked-off the forum for advertising too strongly.
10. **Joint Ventures:** Partner with editors or webmasters within your market to help promote each other's businesses. Examples include: swapping adverts, barter agreements, affiliate commissions and discounts of your own products/services to each other's customers.

The key to successful marketing is constancy; writing an occasional article or placing an advertisement once in a while isn't enough to give you the targeted traffic necessary to build a solid, steady online income.

(We will cover Internet marketing jargon next month.)

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