

**YOUR BUSINESS CAN
KICK
IN 2013!**



Digital Marketing Secrets All Local Business Owners Must Know!

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In English: You are a business person. I am a business person - you need to be responsible for your own marketing, actions and results online.

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INTRODUCTION

As a small business owner there's probably two things you want more than anything else in today's economy.

More customers & more cash flow for your business!

However, you've probably come to realize, that's not as easy as it sounds today. I'm sure this wasn't always the case.

Many businesses not long ago were booming during one of the biggest economic runs this country had even known. You had as many leads and customers as you could handle thanks to a thriving economy.

Your sales were skyrocketing, your employees were happy and you were on top of the world, buying nice cars, investing in vacation homes in your favorite get-a-way destinations, traveling the world with your spouse and family and enjoying the finer things in life...as you should have.

Then it happened...



- The economy peaked...
- The stock market crashed...
- Banks were failing daily...
- The housing bubble burst...
- Real estate values plummeted...
- Unemployment rose faster than a rocket ship...

And just like that, money stopped circulating in abundance and we entered one of the deepest recessions of this county's history.



It seemed as if it was overnight that their businesses came to a screeching halt. All of the previous years' success and prosperity seemingly wiped out in days, weeks or months.

All of a sudden business owners were issuing pink slips and watching the stack of bills grow and grow while searching desperately for answers to questions like:

- Would this be a temporary recession as we've had in the past?
- Would the creditors understand that they weren't paying late on purpose and grant some forgiveness for the time being?
- Would this government step in and provide any relief for small business as they did the big banks?

By now, we all know the outcome. Businesses failed and many of our friends who were also business owners went belly up and lost everything.

Unfortunately, we know too many in this category.

But For You There's Hope...

If you're reading this report, you've made it through one of the worst crisis' we've ever faced or at least you're still trying to make it.

You're working diligently to either turnaround your business or you've started a new business given that you're an entrepreneur and have that *"never say die"* attitude and you're likely looking for ways to get **more customers** and **more cash flow** to take you business to the next level and get back to the days of old.

This report aims to challenge your thinking in the way of marketing. We'd like you to consider the details herein and really open your mind to the thoughts and suggestions made. (Yes, we will provide suggestions in this very report).

You may be somewhat familiar with this information, perhaps even tried a few of the strategies contained in this report. I'd simply ask that you put aside your previous experience in the world with internet marketing (successful or not) and open your mind to the concepts we're about to walk you through.

Doing so could change the way you market your business forever and yield benefits far beyond your imagination allowing you to build a marketing fence around your business that no economic turbulence in the future can penetrate.



PART 1: Consumer Trends Have Changed! Has Your Marketing?

Today, over 72% of American adults use the internet to research products and services online and there are an estimated 300 million searches done each and every day on Google.

With approximately 1/3 of US consumers spending three or more hours online every single day, what are you doing to make sure your customers find you online when they search for products or services you offer?

"...the internet has turned what used to be a controlled, one-way message into a real-time dialogue with millions." Danielle Sacks, The Future of Advertising, Fast Company, November 17, 2010

We all know that one of a business owner's top priorities every day is to get your company's message of your products and services in front of the target audience you want to buy them.

In the past, companies used a variety of strategies and avenues we refer to as "**outbound marketing**" such as cold calling, email blasts, print advertising in the newspapers and magazines, phone book, door flyers, trade shows and television.

While we don't suggest that these mediums of advertising don't work at all, let me ask you a few questions.

How effective are these forms of advertising on YOU as a consumer when you receive them today?

If you're like most consumers today...

- You open your mail over the garbage can.
- You have caller ID on your cell phone and don't answer unless you know who it is.
- You probably don't have a home telephone at all and all your kids have cell phones.
- You most likely don't have a newspaper subscription and probably don't read it daily if you do.



- You have TIVO or DVR and skip by the commercials and just get the content of the show you're watching.
- You throw those door flyers in the trash without even noticing where they came from(they'd otherwise litter your front porch).
- You haven't opened a phone book in recent months and it's possible you don't even



Pulse Check: If you agreed with 3 or more of the above assumptions...whheewww! I am now thrilled because I am talking to the right business owner.

Personal Foul - Blocking on the Consumer!

We are all bombarded with endless advertisements and we are more skeptical than ever of the advertiser themselves (at least I am).

These mediums are simply not as effective as they once were because of our ability to block out these interruptions. Did you ever consider that when your prospective customer receives your advertisement, no matter what it is, it's an interruption?

Consumers no longer want to be bombarded with marketing messages. Consumers today want to seek out the products and services they need WHEN they need them and not before.

People shop today in a completely different way than just a few short years ago and while many business owners will continue to struggle in this environment, this report aims to be the start of helping you transform your marketing by using "inbound marketing."

Inbound marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on getting found by customers and seeking their permission to put your message in front of them.



"Instead of one-way interruption, web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it." -David Meerman Scott, Marketing Strategist, Author of the New Rules of Marketing and PR

You see consumers are primarily using search engines to find what they want, not what you want them to have.

Rather than looking at and making decisions about the solicitations they've received; Consumers today search for what they want, ask their friends what they think about the product or service, check online reviews for what others have experienced and then buy.

Key Takeaways to Consider:

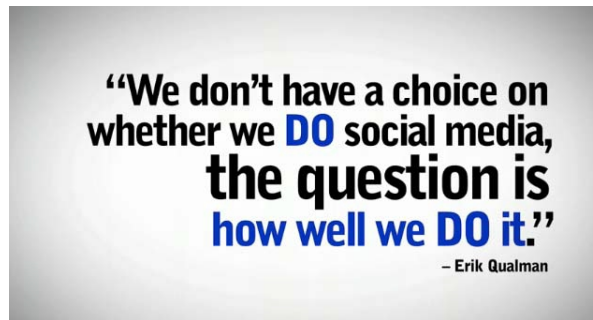
1. Examine your current marketing channels, are they outbound (interruption-based) or inbound (permission-based)?
2. Are you as a business owner like most consumers who block out advertising?

The most powerful and most effective form of advertising has always been word of mouth. The social revolution has taken word of mouth to a whole new level. The social revolution is here and here in a big way. 9 out of 10 internet users visited a social networking site in 2010 (Comscore, February 2011).

What seemed perhaps like a fad a short while ago that we decided not to become a part of has now morphed into a viable communication medium for individuals,



businesses and brands to get their message in front of their customers when the customers want to see it.



The old playbook is out and the new playbook is in.

Welcome to the stage - Inbound Marketing! -

Inbound marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on getting found by customers. This sense is related to relationship marketing and Seth Godin's idea of **permission marketing**.

David Meerman Scott recommends that marketers "earn their way in" (via publishing helpful information on a blog etc.) in contrast to outbound marketing where they used to have to "buy, beg, or bug their way in" (via paid advertisements, issuing press releases in the hope they get picked up by the trade press, or paying commissioned sales people, respectively).



PART 2 - Inbound Marketing: The Secret to a Successful Website?

If your website is like most websites on the internet today, it got there because you as a business owner heard about this thing called the internet and people started asking you, "Do you have a website?"

After being asked a number of times, you realized you'd better get one done. So you found a web designer, handed them a business card, brochure or flyer that you might hand out at a networking event or convention.

They then took that information and created you a website and you were instantly online. You were then happy to order new business cards with your "www.xyx.com" and optimistic that new customers were going to find your site and do business with you online. While there's a little more information on your website than on your business card or brochure but essentially most website today are not well equipped to do it's job of getting your business found and generating new leads and customers for your business.

Most websites are designed more like billboards than marketing tools. The problem here is that if your customers find you, they click a button or two and leave it does you no good. If they were looking for you specifically, then that's great, they may be in to your store or office to see you and buy from you. We can agree that those customers were already sold on your product or service and were on their way in to see you.

That's not the customer we're trying to help you capture - You already have them. Studies show that most consumers on the internet are not yet in the **"buy now"** mode and many business owners are missing huge opportunities to capture these customers who have not yet entered the "buy now" mode.



One of the most cost effective employees on your payroll...

Now, I know you might be thinking I'm crazy for saying this but I believe **your website is one of your most effective employees** on your payroll.

Consider this...

Your website has a job to do and if set up properly as a living breathing, marketing engine, it can yield unimaginable results and provide you leverage beyond your wildest expectations.

What I'm not saying here is that your color scheme is wrong or the menu bar is wrong or that your graphics should be changed.

We're saying that you need to begin seeing your website as a marketing tool that works.

What are the benefits of a properly designed website?

- It doesn't need a break
- It never takes a day off (or rarely in the event the server is down)
- It doesn't talk back
- It doesn't need benefits
- It represents your brand 24 hrs per day, 7 days per week
- It can capture leads
- It can provide value to your customers
- It can make you money

The problem we see with most websites is that they are not functional to other visitors who are **NOT READY** to "Buy Your Stuff."

People who visit your site will fall in one of three stages:

1. Info Seekers
2. Comparison Shoppers
3. Buyers



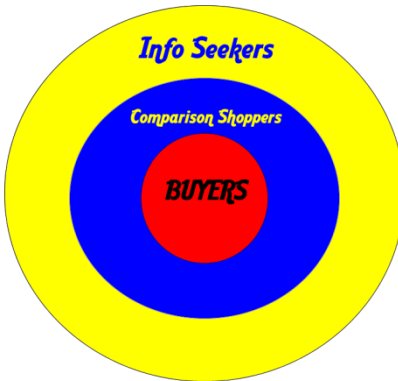


Image not scaled for percentages

Depending on the type of product or service you offer, the time frame or sales cycle for your customer will vary but rest assured they **WILL** fall into one of these stages.

The largest majority of the people visiting your site will be in either the "info seeking stage" or "comparison stage".

They've made a decision to seek out information about the product or service that you offer but they are not ready to buy just yet. This is an enormous opportunity for small business owners to capitalize on.

Example: If you sell real estate or you are offering mortgage financing, typically prospective homebuyers will begin looking at the steps of buying a home or getting mortgage financing 6-12 months prior to buying.

If you are only prepared to sell them real estate or take their mortgage application, they will move on.



Are You Guilty of “Iceberg Marketing?”



We've all heard that only approximately 15% of an iceberg sits above the water visible to the eye and that about 85% is beneath the surface of the water.

Well iceberg marketing is marketing efforts that only focus on the 15% of customers who've raised their hand and identified themselves as buyers of your goods and services while ignoring the other 85% of consumers who are preparing to buy products or services you sell.

On the internet, it can be more like 10% of your customers above the surface and 90% beneath. Consumers online are not as trusting as they are offline. With all of the online scams, who could blame them?

One thing is for sure if your business is going to succeed in capturing customers online and that is, you must re-think your lead capturing strategy.

Businesses survived and even thrived when the economy was good because there were an abundance of buyers.

This simply doesn't work today because there are fewer buyers and competition is stronger than ever.

If your website is only buy now oriented and doesn't offer your prospective customer an opportunity to see your company as a resource that will help move them from an information gatherer to shopper to buyer, you will miss the business because another site will.



So what can you do?

Here are 4 Sure Fire Ways to Bring Your Website Alive and Capture More Customers!

1. **Start a blog** - a blog is great way to keep your website alive. Publishing new content to your blog does not have to be difficult or time consuming. It gives your future customers a way to stay connected with your company and learn how you can help them reach their goals.
2. **Frequently Asked Questions** - Every business has at least 20 questions that they are asked on a frequent basis by their customers. Preparing a list of these questions along with helpful answers and placing them on your site will elevate you over your competitors who just want visitors to call to get their questions answered and end up in a sales pitch.
3. **Start a monthly e-newsletter** - A great way to announce new developments with your company, special products, sales or promotions or a new products offering you have.
4. **Social Media Accounts** - A wonderful way to connect with you customers. **1 in 8 minutes online is spent on Facebook.** Do you have a Facebook fan page? What about a Twitter account. Don't use social media just to push your message out to your customers, be there to engage with your customers, build relationships and provide them with value.



PART 3: Are you Getting Found When Your Customers Are Searching Online?

So we've talked about the way you need to think about your website, now we need to talk about whether your customers can **FIND** you online.

Search engines are the main resource used by your customers who are looking for products, services and businesses. They now represent a larger share of consumer's eyeballs than the Yellow Pages.

Search engine marketing, often referred to as **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** can potentially save businesses thousands of dollars over traditional advertising and help your business get found online.

3 major areas of Search Engine Optimization:

On Page SEO is the foundational aspect of a SEO strategy referring to what you can do on the pages of your website.

Search engines rank websites according to their authority and relevance to the search terms as well as their authority on the web. On-page optimization creates this relevance.

On-page optimization is basically about two things:

- Picking the right keywords around your business niche to be used on each page of your site.
- Being clear to the search engines that your page is related to those keywords.

Off Page SEO is the process of building links from other sites pointing back to your company's website. While on page SEO works on the relevance of your site. Off page SEO works on your site's authority and is considered to offer more benefits between the two. Doing this part wrong could cost you all of your rankings in the search engines.

Local SEO focuses on making sure customers who you want to find your business, product or services in your local area find you. It does you no good if you're an accountant in Phoenix, AZ to be found by someone looking for accounting services in



Dallas, TX. This is one of the largest opportunities for local small businesses. It's estimated that up to 30% of searches done online have a "local intent."

Additionally, 80% of offline purchases are preceded by an online search. Implementing geo-targeted page optimization can help you get found by the customers who matter most in your business. Map search, or local search, is a growing trend online and the major search engines do a good job of displaying local businesses.



Local Search Results

There are many other factors to consider in building a well optimized campaign for your website so your company gets found. Your website is likely sitting on huge opportunities to get found by more people online.

Search engine optimization is an effective way of getting more people to find your website and improves the chances that your website will do its job of generating income for your business.



PART 4 - How is your company using Social Media to market your business?

Welcome to the world of Social Media. Once thought of as a fad is now main stream and companies big and small are reaping the benefits.

Your current and potential customers are spending an ever growing amount of time on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and now Google + just to name a few.

- They are discussing your industry, your company, your brand and their expectations.
- They are looking for recommendations to products and services.
- They are listening to opinions that will direct their next purchase.

"People share, read, and generally engage more with any type of content when it's surfaced through friends and people they know and trust."- **Malorie Lucich, Facebook Spokesperson.**

Some stats compiled by our friends at HubSpot.com

- Twitter's active user base generating over **90 million tweets per day** (RJMetrics, January 2010)
- **More than half** of all internet users read blogs at least monthly (EMarketer, August 2010)
- The number of marketers who say that Facebook is "critical" or "important" to their business has **increased 83%** in just two years. (Hubspot, 2011)
- **51% of Facebook fans** are more likely to buy the brands they fan. (Chadwick Martin Bailey & I moderate - Research Technologies, February 2010)
- **79% of Twitter followers** are more likely to recommend the brands they follow.





Top 5 Social Media Marketing Mistakes To Avoid

1. **Failing to Accurately Monitor** - Companies that do not first "listen" to their audience and observe how their customers and fans talk about their brand risk jumping into a cyclone of unanticipated activity. We know you have a business to run so monitoring need not take all day.

"The biggest mistake we see companies make when they first hit Twitter is to think about it as a channel to push out information." *Tim O'Reilly & Sarah Milstein, Co-Authors of The Twitter Book.*

2. **Having Unrealistic Expectations** - Social media marketing must be considered a marathon, not a sprint. It takes a substantial amount of time to build credibility with your potential customers and with search engines too, but with the right plan it can and will happen, your customers are already there.

"Marketers need to build digital relationships and reputation before closing the sale." *Chris Brogan, Founder, New Marketing Labs*

3. **Monkey See, Monkey Do** - Don't do anything solely because it's trendy or you see your competitors doing it. Make sure to get proper advice and map out your strategy that's unique to your company and brand. Then monitor and adjust that plan and social media continues to evolve.

4. **"Either write something worth reading about or do something worth writing about." *Benjamin Franklin***

5. **Not Focusing on Your Niche** - The more focused your message, the more it will influence your target audience. You can't be all things to all people otherwise, you'll be frustrated and quit. It's also not mandatory that you are on ALL social networks. Find out where your customer is spending time and be there.



"Clarity trumps persuasion." *Dr. Flint McGlaughlin, Director, MeCLabs*

6. **Not Engaging Your Community** - This is the cardinal sin in social media. It's social media so your company must be social. Cultivate relationships with your community and audience. Make it easy for your fans to connect with you and learn about what you offer. Ask questions, provide surveys, share relevant content that engages them and holds their attention.

"Effective engagement is inspired by the empathy that develops simply by being human." *Brian Solis, Principal, Altimeter Group*



Conclusion

The internet has definitely changed the game in business and we hope by now, you fully understand that consumer trends have changed and with that change comes an enormous opportunity to exploit new ways for you to get more customers and generate more revenue.

After all, that's what this is about, right?

We also discussed that having a great website isn't so great if no one can find it. We explored through the idea that once your site is found and since it's able to do its "job" 24/7 unlike any other employee you have, we must find ways to improve your customer's experience when they arrive so they engage with you more as they are in the "shopping" and "comparison" stage prior to buying.

Bringing your site alive and adding elements to your site that will make visitors want to engage with your company is an important key in developing trust long term and in advance of their decision to buy.

Lastly, we covered some key strategies to expand your company's reach using social media. I think we proved that your customer is already spending time there and while social media is not the place to just sell, sell, sell, it's a wonderful place to increase awareness of your brand, find out what your customers are looking for and position your company in front of their eyes.

There are huge opportunities in this space.

Follow these guidelines and you will soon have a great website that generates traffic, leads and sales. But don't stop there. The internet is only a teenager and your website should never truly stop growing. Keep learning and adapting to these exciting times and you will be rewarded.

Thanks for reading.

Jeremy Kean





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