

Don't Miss Out on Internet Marketing Increased Sales, Qualified Leads Among Benefits

By Corey A. Wenger

A lot of buzz has surfaced in the last two years about the benefits of Internet marketing. This term is often used synonymously with other words, like online marketing, search engine marketing, search engine optimization and web site marketing. So, exactly what is "Internet marketing?"

It is a strategy used by businesses to drive qualified prospective visitor traffic to a company web site. It typically includes two key programs.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – This is the process of creating a web site that ranks well in search engines for specific keywords and phrases relevant to your products and services. For example, when someone searches for "electronic product engineering," the goal is to have your web site show up in the first two pages of the search engine results.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) or Sponsored Links – You can bid on specific search terms in which you would like to rank well in the search engines. The higher you bid on a term, the higher you will rank for that term within the PPC section of the search engine.

Potential benefits

Increase in qualified sales leads. Internet marketing is a highly effective way to reach mass markets that would otherwise be cost prohibitive. Depending on your industry, you could see upwards of 100,000 monthly searches on your products and services.

Increase in direct sales. If your company sells products and services online, Internet marketing programs can dramatically increase direct sales. By increasing visitor traffic, your company generates the online visibility and presence needed to grow web site sales.

Sales leads at the speed of business. Internet leads are generated in real time. So they have a higher probability of converting to sales than leads generated from direct mail or trade shows.

Highly accountable and measurable. No other method is more measurable than Internet marketing programs and campaigns. You can rate the effectiveness of e-mail campaigns, trade shows, trade publication advertising, online marketing programs and public relation efforts, as well as effectively calculate marketing ROI, costs per leads, costs per new client acquisition and other sales and marketing performance metrics.

Getting started

First, you need a web site that is marketable. One that is up-to-date, professionally designed and provides compelling information about your company, products, services and solutions. Web sites that have outdated content, amateurish design or confusing information dramatically reduce your ability to generate sales and leads.

Once you have a well-constructed web site, you need to determine the primary purpose of your web site. Is it sales lead

generation, direct Internet sales or some other sales or marketing objective?

Choosing the most appropriate Internet marketing strategies depends on several factors, including your industry, geographics, customer buying cycles, sales cycles and competition. As a rule of thumb, you should execute multiple Internet marketing programs. For example, implementing both a SEO and a PPC program provides your company with the ability to rank two to three times in search engine results. Using just one program cuts your visibility by 50%.

The last step in a successful Internet marketing program is setting up appropriate marketing performance metrics. What do you want to measure and how will you measure it? Choosing a web site traffic analysis solution like licensed software or hosted web analytics can help.



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Mistakes to avoid

The number one mistake is expecting immediate high search engine rankings and results. As with any other promotion, Internet marketing programs take time to work.

The second mistake is using deceptive online marketing tactics to "trick" search engines into delivering high rankings. One example is using text that is the same color as the background to "hide" words. Cheap tricks like this can get your site penalized or banned from the search engine.

Another mistake is thinking that Internet marketing is simple to execute – a do-it-yourself task. On the contrary, successful Internet programs require extensive research and online experience. You need to understand how search engines work, be familiar with search engine-friendly web site design, and apply ethical and proven Internet marketing tactics. Unless you have the time to learn these measures, it is wise to hire a company that specializes in Internet marketing services.

Conclusion

More and more prospective customers are relying upon the Internet to research and find products, services and solutions. These people are ready to buy. If your company is not currently engaged in Internet marketing, you are missing out on significant sales opportunities. Internet marketing is a proven strategy to increase sales and qualified leads.

INFORMATION LINK

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