Nicolae Sfetcu

How to... Marketing for Small Business

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BOOK PREVIEW

Introduction

With the exponential growth of the popularity of the Web – the primary instrument using the Internet – an increasingly profitable activity began to be used by a growing number of companies: electronic advertising and marketing, instruments that offer tremendous opportunities at minimal cost .

With more than billion of users worldwide and a big growth rate in the number of users per month, marketing on the Internet is much easier than the traditional methods. Taking into account that a typical marketing campaign causes a response rate of at least 2%, theoretically gives a huge number of answers on the Internet.

Increasingly more businesses – from all sectors – are beginning to realize the enormous potential of the new medium of electronic communication, the Internet. To have access to an audience of several million of "fans" – and potential customers – the major television networks offer tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars for commercials 30 seconds to reach such audiences. Only giants like IBM, Coca Cola or Ford could afford million dollar advertising campaigns. But through the Internet, any company can ensure a continuous presence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for prices incomparably lower. In addition, this permanent presence, the company provides service support and continuous information quickly and effectively to customers.

Marketing or advertising?

There is an essential difference between marketing and advertising concepts. There is no free Internet advertising. True, many sites (especially the most popular search engines) sell space in their pages which show firms commercials. But they can not compare with commercials on TV or radio. In fact, initial ethics even condemns the use of Internet for commercial messages. The primary purpose of the Internet is information sharing.
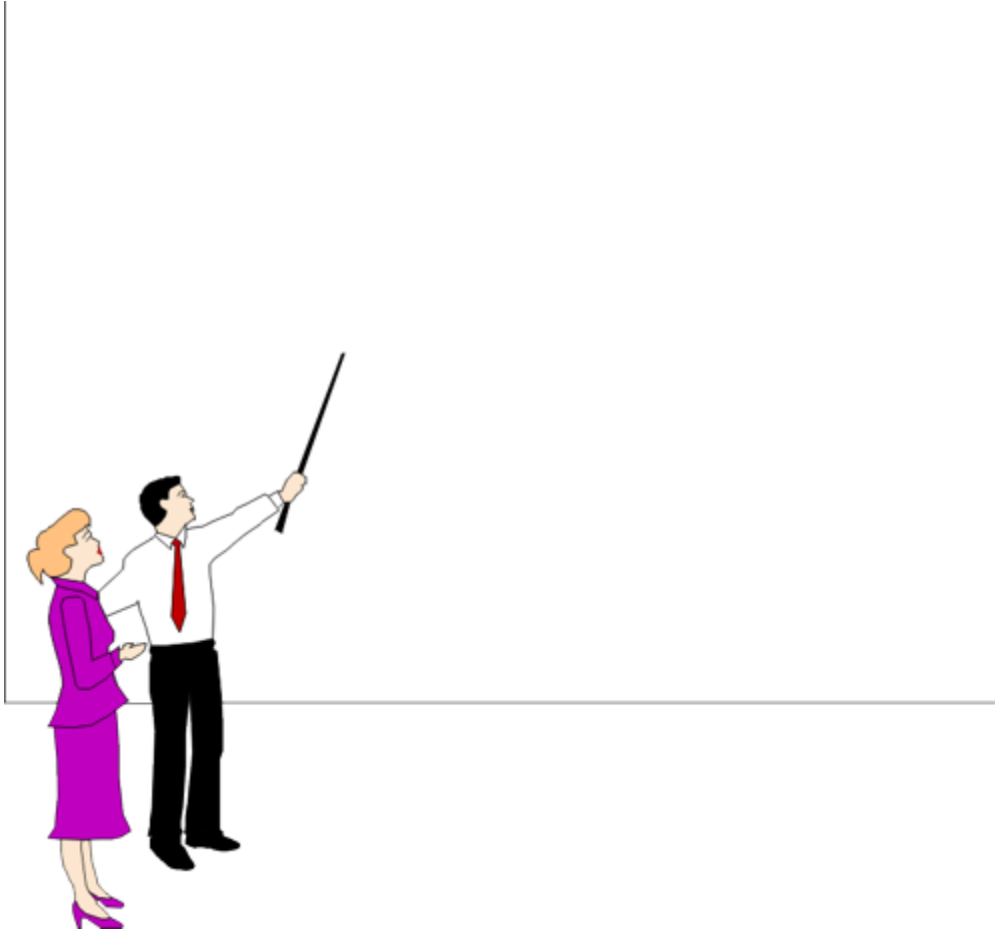
This is the main objective of Internet users … and this is the way in which you attract prospective customers. This exchange of information involves the following mechanism:

*** User needs, which will seek to inform the Internet the same way as looking for a TV program appropriate to their needs of the moment, looking from channel to channel to find a particular show that they keep their attention;

*** Your wish to be found, assuming a specific strategy;

*** Your offers of products, services and information that must match the user's needs for it to turn into customers.

The key to success in online promotion

A general finding that emerges from the experience of the companies already activating on Internet: to be successful in online market, this advertising must be taken into account, if not appreciated. Web population grows rapidly every month and the rate of increase in the number of available documents is even higher, making it impossible to " discover " an isolated page. A very big help is a link to the so-called " search engines " – indexes and huge database containing

billions of URLs. These indexes, becoming more and more comprehensive, include specialized categories, and there are indexes specifically dedicated to business .

Just like the websites, these indexes are divided into two categories: free and commercial. Usually, the basic rule is that non -profit pages (informational pages, resource lists , etc.) – and such websites – are included for free in general indexes, that uses "search bots" to automatically index largest possible number of sites. On the other hand, commercial resources – websites commercial enterprises – are generally listed in the commercial indexes that offer their services for not negligible payments.

Another method is the rental of advertising space on a popular website, with high traffic. As television networks charge proportional to the number of viewers of a program, so rates for a "banner" advertising – which points to the company's website that rent advertising – depend on the traffic on the site.

To be bound to such a service provides important visibility to commercial companies, without which their presence on the Web would remain ineffective. Unfortunately one or more connections are by no means sufficient . Extremely important emphasis should be placed on the construction and design of advertising pages, requiring much attention, good taste and style.

However, a great graphic design can not by itself to guarantee the success of a website. A good content associated with a good graphic design complement together, ensuring the success of a Web page.

Failures and solutions in web design

Signs of an unsuccessful site are clearly identified. Briefly, here are some characteristics of a doomed page: a page with a reasonable design (somewhere around the average), but the administrators have not tried to index the website at any major search engine or directory, or on no popular page with high traffic, so no one can visit it being unknown, hidden. They are the so-called "**invisible websites**."

Another category is the "**dead site**". It is a site remained unvisited for quite a while, which was not brought up to date regularly. On a site such thing never happens, no changes or additions.

Not far from such a site is a site where visitor sends an e-mail, hoping for a contact, an information, a help, but receives no response ("**stray site**"). It is obvious that such a move will lead visitors may not return soon.

Another danger is the use of huge graphs (complete pages whose textual content is displayed graphically, for example) that take too long to load ("**tree sites**"). Also there are "**ad-hoc sites**" that use inadequate equipment with a very slow connection, it will be quickly ignored by visitors looking for more rapid and convenience information.

Solutions

A good solution to avoid such problems is, a link to a reasonable speed. What is considered reasonable vary from one site to another, and especially from one country to another.

Also, the reduction of (as much as possible) the size of the image. This involves a change of ratio between the image text size (if the image has also a textual content) and the physical size of the image, to prevent loss of readability. In the same vein, there are useful tools like gif tool – programs that allow "blending" (interlacing) GIF images. Thus, these images loads faster, since a weaker resolution for the visitor – although unable to see immediately all the details – to quickly make a general idea about the content of the image, and so may decide whether or not to continue charging the entire image.

Finally, another type of pages that "*does not work on sale*" are those that are maintained by a small team, with inadequate material resources, the group is not integrated into the environment and culture of the company, and therefore fails to transmit the same perception, image or message. This mini-team fails to work in cooperation with other marketing services of the company, does not follow the same directions, and the advertisement has suffered.

Content

Design and management of a successful website is therefore not a trivial task. It is rather an activity to be coordinated, which can become expensive both in time and money. However results may far outweigh the investment. Particular attention should be given to how to combine the content information with graphics, without leaving the one hand, to the extent possible, the technical content.

A large number of websites that have registered a strong success, however, have a modest and under-developed graphic and technical design, but brimming with informative, new, fresh and interesting content. Because the Internet key is: **content, content, content**.

The goal of web marketing

Once you have decided on the information and services that you offer on the Internet, you need to set some goals. These are:

- Promoting and maintaining company reputation
- Create a certain image of the company
- Generating traffic to direct sales
- Collection of database and e-mail lists and then used in the marketing process
- Directing certain trends
- Direct sale of goods and services.

The e-marketing concept

So, what is e-marketing? Electronic Marketing. Including all marketing methods that can be adapted to an on-line business. Such business will be promoted using specific means: e-mail, link exchange, contests, submission to search engines, use of an autoresponder, publishing a newsletter, participating in discussion groups, etc.. The beginning of any business is to set up a promotional plan. Here is a sample plan in 7 Steps to Success on the Internet:

1. Decide what you sell: products or services. The product of the future: information
2. How will you advertise? What words do you use in commercials? Free, how, you, money, secret.
3. Where will you advertise: electronic publications, web sites, off-line?
4. Do you use automation?
5. How will you create your own website?
6. How will you promote your site?
7. In what will you become an expert?

Why is the Internet likened to an iceberg? Because most of the information is hidden, only a small percentage of sites are cataloged by "search engines" as a study conducted by Dr. Steve Lawrence and Dr. C.Lee Giles for NEC Research Institute. Commercial sites are those that have invaded cyberspace, holding 83% of the page, followed by sites that have scientific and educational content.

What will be your place of business? The use of e-marketing will decide.

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Finally,

Book

With the exponential growth of the popularity of the Web – the primary instrument using the Internet – an increasingly profitable activity began to be used by a growing number of

companies: electronic advertising and marketing, instruments that offer tremendous opportunities at minimal cost .

With more than billion of users worldwide and a big growth rate in the number of users per month, marketing on the Internet is much easier than the traditional methods. Taking into account that a typical marketing campaign causes a response rate of at least 2%, theoretically gives a huge number of answers on the Internet.

What do you expect from Internet Marketing? If you have the patience to deepen understanding of your products and services, and you will design and implement a detailed and valid marketing plan, you can relatively easily to achieve any goal you propose. Perhaps this will not bring immediate material gain, but you will easily notice that you have already created a reputation among clients and competitors, and have been known your offers, at a price much lower than the classic approaches.

In short: you have to give valuable information in an attractive framework... change its content as often as possible ... spread them using the many resources offered by the Internet ... and use them in such a way as to facilitate client activity... being sure that you are on your way to SUCCESS!

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