



INNOVEST SME

Accelerating Small Business

The Basics of Internet Marketing for SMEs

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CONTENTS

	Preface	5
1	SWOT Analysis in Marketing	8
2	Marketing Research	13
3	Real Time Marketing	21
4	Brand Management	28
5	Social Media (I)	35
6	Social Media (II)	42
7	SEO Basics	49
8	Website Characteristics	55
9	Capturing Leads	61
10	Campaign Characteristics	68

*Don't be afraid to get
creative and experiment
with your marketing.*

MIKE VOLPE

*Success always comes
when preparation meets
opportunity.*

HENRY HARTMAN



SWOT ANALYSIS IN MARKETING

Successful internet marketing requires an internal and external analysis. Tools such as a SWOT analysis will determine the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and threats that different organizations face. Strengths and weaknesses focus on the internal aspects of an organization, while opportunities and threats are external factors. Conducting a simple SWOT analysis will provide information that can guide the marketing campaign and increase its effectiveness.

STRENGTH

Core competencies and competitive advantages are the strengths of a company. To put it simply, strengths are what the company does well. Strengths are internal to the organization, and they should be approached from the customers' point of view for marketing purposes. Market research is useful for finding strengths and other parts of a SWOT analysis. For example, low price points, excellent customer service, or quality merchandise are examples of different strengths that draw in customers. It is important to identify and build upon strengths so that you may use them effectively in your internet marketing campaigns.

WEAKNESSES

Every organization has internal weaknesses. A weakness is what the organization does poorly. From a marketing perspective, anything that does not meet customers' needs is a weakness. For example, high price points and poor customer service are weaknesses that need to be addressed. Fortunately, it is possible to convert weaknesses into strengths.

Reducing price points will create a competitive advantage that becomes a selling point and strengthens the company's image. Similarly, improving customer service ratings will draw customers. When weaknesses are transformed into strengths, they must be marketed to the customer base.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities and threats are outside influences such as fashion trends, market changes, or technological advances. Finding new opportunities requires analyzing the future of the market. Opportunities, however, are favorable for a company if the organization is prepared and takes advantage of them. For example, implementing new technology that makes purchasing easier for customers is an opportunity. Once the opportunity is established, it equals a strength that needs to be addressed in an internet marketing campaign.

THREATS

Outside factors are not always beneficial for a company. Threats occur when changes in the market and environment have the ability to hinder the organization. New technology, better merchandise, or improved services from a competitor are threats to the organization. Fortunately, it is possible to transform threats into opportunities by making changes within the organization. For example, focus on developing new merchandise that is more competitive and better meets the needs of customers. These new opportunities can be used to draw more customers and improve the effectiveness of the internet marketing campaign.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The CEO of MyBrand was constantly getting complaints about poor customer service, but people always complimented the quality of the clothing. He monitored sales, and the customer service did not cause sales to slip, so he did nothing about the complaints. After a few years, a competitor opened nearby. The store advertised “excellent service and merchandise.” After three months, sales slipped 20%. The CEO of my brand decided to implement an employee-training program to improve the quality of customer service.

*Advertising people who
ignore research are as
dangerous as generals who
ignore enemy signals.*

DAVID OGILVY



MARKETING RESEARCH

Marketing research is essential to a successful marketing campaign. This information needs to be done on two levels. Primary information is the research that you do for yourself or have an employee do. Secondary information is provided by government agencies and other organizations that offer market information. Once this information is collected, it will determine the appropriate price point, product development, and your target audience.

CONSUME ALL MEDIA

Research must be thorough to provide insight. Review all the media that relates to your market carefully. This includes information that is provided by social media. Primary and secondary research is necessary when conducting market research. There are five basic methods to employ in primary market research:

Primary Information

- **Surveys:** A survey is a traditional marketing tool that is still effective in marketing research. Surveys can be completed, in

person, over the phone, through the mail, or online. The larger the group surveyed, the more accurate the results will be.

- **Focus groups:** Focus groups are meetings led by moderators with scripted questions to learn customer feedback concerning products, promotions, etc. There should be at least three different focus groups.
- **Personal interviews:** Personal interviews are more subjective than focus groups. The results are not conclusive, but they provide information about shifts in customer attitudes.
- **Observation:** Pay attention to the shopping habits of consumers. Track buying habits when possible. This will provide insight into purchasing trends.
- **Trials:** Test new merchandise and price points to determine the customer response. Testing will help prevent changes or merchandise that conflict with the needs of customers.

Secondary Information is available from different organizations, and it is abundant. When examining secondary information, it is necessary to choose the most reliable sources.

Secondary Information Sources:

- News and media
- Government agencies
- Market publications

- Competitor reports
- Market researchers

FIND THE RIGHT PRICE

Price is a main factor that determines what customers will purchase. Competitive pricing is particularly important on the internet where consumers can easily compare prices between sites. When it is impossible to provide the lowest price point, it is essential that companies rely on a reputation for quality or expertise. An understanding of floor and ceiling pricing is also necessary in order to find the correct price.

A price ceiling is the highest price that can be charged for a product. This is often the result of a government regulation such as rent control. The price floor is the lowest price that may be charged for a product. When the price floor is high, consumers are less likely to buy, so production should be limited. Always be aware of any price floors or price ceilings that affect your market. A price control can result in a shortage or excess.

Other things to be aware of when finding the price include:

- **Quantity:** When you maximize sales, it is possible to have a lower price point on each item.
- **ROI:** Prices may be set for a specific return on investment. The price may be higher and requires a loyal customer base.
- **Value to customers:** When a product is of value to consumers, they are willing to pay more for it.

- **Popular prices:** People are willing to pay familiar price points such as \$19.99. People are often unwilling to go above these price points.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Marketing research is an important part of product development and improvement. In today's fast-paced environment, it is necessary to stay ahead of market trends. Research will determine customer needs and guide development of new products as it improves current products. For example, a carmaker might add a new feature based on customer feedback. There are different stages and methods of product development.

Stages and Methods:

- **Generate Ideas:** Research, for example from a focus group or survey, provides information to start generating ideas to develop and improve products.
- **Develop Features:** Use the ideas generated to develop features for a new or existing product that meets customer needs.
- **Develop the Product:** Combine the features and ideas to create a new and/or improved product.
- **Test the Product:** Once the product is developed, test it to determine consumer interest and price.

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

It is impossible to meet the needs of every consumer. This is why it is necessary to determine who your target audience is and how you can best meet their needs. You can determine your target market based on the following criteria:

- Age
- Gender
- Income level
- Education level
- Location
- Use of technology and the internet

Once the target audience is identified, you can research their expectations to guide your product development, pricing, and marketing methods. For example, an internet marketing campaign would be a waste of time for a target audience that does not use the internet regularly.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The local company, Media Inc. saw a shift in the popularity of their products, which indicated a change in their customer base. Action movies and romantic comedies were their mainstays the previous years, making up 65% of the sales. Now, children's and family movies made up the bulk of their rentals, accounting for 72% of the sales. Action movies and

romantic comedies now only accounted for 20% of her sales. After the CEO examined primary and secondary information, she learned that the middle class in the town was growing. Additionally, more young couples were having children. To understand her target audience better, she collected as much information about her customers as she could find. She used the research to guide her as she updated her movie collection.

*I like to think that the
Internet and file sharing
if utilized properly and
embraced...is a high
powered marketing design.*

SEAL

REAL TIME MARKETING

Successful marketing goes beyond traditional research; it requires real time marketing. Tools such as social media, customer rewards, news media, and blogs allow companies to monitor the changing needs and interests of customers in the moment. This means that organizations can tailor programs, ads, and content to satisfy individual consumers. It also allows companies to engage with their customers in the moment to improve sales. Real time marketing requires dynamic content, engagement, consistent monitoring, and flexibility.

DYNAMIC CONTENT

Dynamic content is tailored to the needs of individuals based on shopping habits, customer feedback, or sessions online. There are different methods of tracking customer-spending or shopping habits. Traditionally, sales representatives developed relationships with customers and remembered their preferences. Now, however, computer programs help companies track individual sales both in store and online. Automated tracking provides the perfect opportunity to create dynamic content.

Types of Dynamic Content:

- **Personalized Ads:** Ads can be personalized based on interest established by information about habits, location, and history.

For example, it is possible to advertise a sale on cosmetics to individuals who are known to be interested in specific cosmetic products.

- **Emails:** When customers sign up to receive emails, you can take the opportunity to provide them with information about promotions and new products.
- **Personalized Content:** Use gathered information to personalize the landing page and provide links that will interest the customer based on location, behavior, and keywords.
- **Product Suggestion:** When a customer's shops online, provide links to merchandise that is similar to the product being researched or added to the shopping cart.

ENGAGEMENT BUILDS FOLLOWERS

Real time marketing is effective when it is done correctly. Social media, such as Twitter, blogs, Facebook etc., provides the opportunity to engage with customers on a regular basis when they choose to follow your organization. However, it is easy to transition for real time marketing to spam when the content moves from engaging to overwhelming and uninteresting, which will cost followers. Engaging customers requires you to understand them and their interests. Customers who follow will share engaging content, which will increase the number of followers an organization has.

Ways to Engage Followers:

- **Provide expert information:** People follow organizations that have value to them. Showing expertise lends more value to the information.
- **Offer promotions:** Many companies offer special promotions to their followers. Followers will then share this information with friends.
- **Be clear and consistent:** Communicate clearly and be consistent with information. Poorly written content will not engage followers.
- **Converse with followers:** Communication should not be one-sided. Address feedback quickly and respectfully.
- **Make Information easy to share:** Allow followers to link content. This will expose potentially new followers to your site.

It is also possible to purchase followers, but your marketing will be more effective if you earn followers with engaging content.

CONSTANT READINESS

It may seem obvious, but real time marketing requires constant monitoring. Many programs have alerts that assist with monitoring, but they should not be relied on exclusively. Information on the internet changes quickly and it is easy to miss an opportunity if you are not constantly monitoring in real time. Many companies choose to assign employees monitoring

duties. Monitoring customer communication, shopping patterns, and popular stories in social media will help determine changes that need to be made to real time strategies. It is also possible to find opportunities to address new customers.

Real time marketing requires greater flexibility than traditional marketing campaigns do. You must be ready to act quickly in real time marketing. You must change ineffective techniques based upon information you learned from your monitoring. You may also learn about stories that your customers find interesting. For example, the YouTube sensation “United Breaks Guitars” was a great opportunity for the owner of the Taylor Guitars to communicate with the musicians who were interested in the popular story.

THE TIME, THE PLACE, THE MEDIA

In real time marketing, timing is everything. To remain relevant, be prepared to follow real time events and use social media. For example, Oreo chose to use the 2013 Super Bowl as an opportunity to begin a campaign. Branding experts carefully monitored social networking during the Super Bowl. When the lights in the stadium went out, Oreo tweeted “you can still dunk in the dark.” The tweet was shared over 15,000 times.

Oreo’s tweet was not just luck. The company already had a real time campaign in progress and was monitoring the game carefully when the moment presented itself. Sending the tweet even an hour later would have been too late. The moment would have passed. The lesson is simple;

always be prepared because you never know when the right moment will present itself.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Henry was busy trying to improve the real time marketing for his restaurant, but he could never get ahead of it. He tried to engage followers, but his real time communications were always late. His friends told him to monitor everything and always be prepared, but he did not have the time. His friends offered to help him with monitor the opening ceremonies of restaurant week because it was so important to their market. Henry said he would rather stay home and rest. He took a nap during the ceremonies, and when he woke up, he discovered that his restaurant had been shown on television because it was a judge's local favorite.

*A brand for a company
is like a reputation
for a person.*

J E F F B E Z O S



REPORT



Expense	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Trend
Exp 1	375.00	201.00	33.00	234.00	323.00	224.00	134.00	201.00	2,221.00	
Exp 2	111.00	98.00	355.00	411.00	358.00	699.00	543.00	440.00	3,852.00	
Exp 3	333.00	122.00	222.00	334.00	85.00	88.00	348.00	122.00	2,112.00	
Exp 4	125.00	187.00	66.00	112.00	97.00	123.00	464.00	187.00	2,381.00	
Exp 5	944.00	608.00	678.00	1,091.00	844.00	1,144.00	1,489.00	990.00	10,564.00	

BRAND MANAGEMENT

Each organization must manage its brand carefully. A brand is not simply a logo; it is what customers believe about an organization and its products. It is the company's image, which may be for quality, service, or unique merchandise. It takes more than marketing to maintain a brand. Branding requires care at every stage of customer interaction, consistency, and distinctive qualities that set the company apart from its competitors. Once the brand is established it must be maintained carefully.

EVERY INTERACTION COUNTS

Every interaction with a customer is a chance to establish or maintain a brand. It is important to demand the same level of customer service at every level. Basically, customers should expect the same level of service online that they experience in a brick and mortar store. When you manage the customer relationship correctly, you will retain customers and attract new ones to your brand. Whether it is answering email, using twitter, posting on Facebook, or monitoring the website, every interaction matters.

Tips to Improve Interaction:

- **Pay attention to each communication:** Address questions individually regardless of the information. Using pre-written

responses to answer each question will give the impression that you do not take communication seriously.

- **Be courteous:** Tone and facial expression do not translate easily online. Make sure that the written tone is friendly and courteous. Double check communications for any phrasing that could be considered rude.
- **Be accessible:** Make sure that websites are attractive and easy to navigate. Additionally, respond to email and social media regularly.

CONSISTENT THROUGH ALL MEDIA

Branding must be consistent to be effective. It is easy to develop an image and theme for an organization and forget to carry it through all the media venues. There are specific steps that need to happen in order for branding to be consistent.

Steps:

- 1. Determine the Visual Design:** Choose a logo and style for your brand. It may be classic, fun, professional, etc. This style needs to be consistent, so choose something that you believe best represents you.
- 2. Determine Your Message:** Each organization has a message that is expressed in its values and principles. This message may be charitable, eco-friendly, etc. This message should be clear

to consumers and included in all marketing platforms, including social media.

- 3. Be Consistent:** Include the message and design in each media platform. For example, use the same background and logo design on social media and the website. Additionally, no matter what happens, do not deviate from your message to consumers. All communication should support your message.

Media consistency will require careful monitoring, but any inconsistencies that customers perceive will negatively affect your brand.

UNIQUE QUALITIES

A brand sets an organization apart from its competitors. It stems from everything that makes your brand stand out. In today's market, however, it is difficult to be truly original. Even if you do have a completely new concept, competitors will eventually find their way into your market. You have to inform your customers about the qualities that make your brand unique. A brand positioning statement will establish the unique qualities of your business.

The brand positioning statement includes:

- **Target Audience:** Who your buyers are?
- **Competition:** Mention your competition to distinguish yourself
- **Benefits:** The main qualities that separate you from the competition
- **Promise:** The selling position such as a guarantee

Example:

To the tech savvy consumer on the go, when you travel with Portable Pro, your portable devices will charge faster and maintain battery power longer than they do with other chargers. The speed and ease of this portable device is guaranteed, or you may return it for a complete refund.

NEEDS TO BE ACTIVELY MANAGED

As part of Internet marketing, brand marketing requires constant vigilance. It is tempting to create a brand strategy and then apply the “set it and forget it” approach. Without promoting the brand and following up with customer responses, the company’s reputation will fall into obscurity. In some instances, the brand can develop a negative reputation if the company does not pay attention to everything that it is linked to in cyber space. For example, it can take months to repair a brand’s reputation if a story of poor customer service is not addressed. In the age of social media, a brand can be destroyed overnight.

What to Manage:

- **Social media:** Create new content to engage customers, and monitor the response. Additionally, address any complaints or negative press on your social media. Ignoring them will only harm your brand. No matter the situation, be respectful in your tone.
- **Track metrics and keywords:** Pay attention to any press or comments concerning your brand with different programs

available. Act quickly to resolve negative issues and take advantage of opportunities.

- **Customer response:** Use your market research to determine how customers are responding to your brand and how you can improve.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Gracie went to her favorite luxury retailer to pick up a gift for a friend. She was on her way home from running errands, and was not dressed well. When she went in, no one greeted her or offered to help. She walked to the counter with her gift where she was ignored. She finally put the gift back and went home.

Humiliated, Gracie wrote a letter to customer service online about the incident. She later received a form letter thanking her for her positive feedback. Gracie determined that the company did not care about her feedback and vowed never to shop there again.

*One of the greatest
challenges companies face
in adjusting to the impact
of social media, knowing
where to start.*

SIMON MAINWARING



SOCIAL MEDIA (I)

To be successful in internet marketing, mastering social media is imperative. Unfortunately, many organizations do not put the necessary effort into social media. It is not enough to join different social networks and add updates. Like any other method of communication, interactions on social media can help build friendships or alienate people. The goal of social media in marketing is to build a community around the company brand.

YOU ARE BUILDING A COMMUNITY

There are different types of social media, but each platform provides a chance to build a fully functioning community. Whether using a blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter, there is a social media platform to suit every group. Building a community requires understanding the brand as well the customer, and you should have a handle on both by now. With this knowledge, you can proceed to build a stable community.

- **Choose the appropriate media:** Do not overlook smaller platforms that fit your brand.
- **Make connection simple:** Link the different platforms and make following your brand simple with social network aggregation platforms.

- **Invite current followers to other platforms:** Invite customers who subscribe to your emails to other networks.
- **Encourage interaction:** Community requires more than communication between the company and the customer. Customers should be able to interact with each other.
- **Track the results:** Pay attention to customer reaction and interaction. Avoid ineffective techniques and build upon the successful ones.

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Social media is only effective if you have a personal touch and a personal voice. The voice needs to accurately reflect the brand while engaging the community. The voice may be funny, witty, playful, expert, etc. The social media community should feel that they are communicating with people, not automatons.

Once a voice is established, consider the different methods of delivery that will appeal to your audience. Answering emails, writing informative blogs, and providing status updates are helpful, but they are not the only ways to connect with customers. People enjoy putting a face to a name. Consider the effect different online videos have on brands. For example, Google and Zappos have successfully communicated their culture through online videos. Online chats with CEOs are also popular methods of personalized communication. Regardless of your chosen methods of communication, always be polite, honest, and respectful in your tone.

BRAND CHAMPIONS

Every Brand needs a champion or guardian. Owners or CEOs can become powerful champions who are synonymous with the brand. For example, Steve Jobs represented Apple, and Howard Schultz is the champion of Starbucks. A brand champion is a person who focuses on increasing the equity of the brand by protecting it from negativity and showcasing its strengths. It is not possible, however, for every owner or CEO to have the impact of Steve Jobs. Sometimes it is necessary to find brand champions within the company. In fact, many organizations have Chief Brand Officers.

In the discussion of brand champions, it is important not to overlook your customers. Loyal customers can be your greatest champions in social media. They provide word of mouth advertising that has a unique credibility with the public.

Customers as Champions:

- **Draft them:** Find satisfied customers who fully understand and appreciate your brand.
- **Interact with them:** Thank brand champions for their purchases, surveys, comments, etc. and begin building a closer relationship.
- **Give them perks:** Offer brand champions loyalty rewards and special perks for providing testimonials or sharing your brand with others.

- **Listen to them:** Champions provide excellent feedback and should be used as beta testers. Take their praise and criticism seriously.

MAKE IT EASY TO SHARE

You want customers to share your social media with friends, so it is essential that you make sharing as easy as possible. To increase shares, pay attention to the market and participate in sharing tools that people are more likely to use. For example, Facebook shares far outnumber shares from Instagram. Link the appropriate share buttons across websites, blogs, and other social media that you use. Using every possible share button makes customers search for their platforms, complicating the process. Only use share buttons that are relevant to your customers.

There are several services that allow you to link different social media share buttons. Find the best choice for your organization and place buttons somewhere visible such as a side bar or below the content. The share buttons should be prominent, but they must never distract from the content.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The CEO of Fun Toys decided to create a video blog about the company culture. The videos mainly showed employees playing with toys they were testing. One entry showed the CEO as he was playing a prank on an employee with the new “joke” merchandise. These videos became internet sensations. Links to the video of the prank made their way through Facebook and Twitter. After a week, it had 375,000 views, and company sales increased by 15% as a result.

*Increasingly, consumers
don't search for products
and services. Rather,
services come to their
attention via social media.*

ERIC QUALMAN

SOCIAL MEDIA (II)

Now that you know about building your online community, you must make sure that you keep your community engaged. Staying relevant in the minds of your customers requires you to produce new content and interact socially. Do not become complacent in your social media marketing. Monitor your social media carefully, and adapt your techniques to suit your customers.

CONTENT IS KING

The phrase “content is king” is used frequently by marketing experts. The meaning of this phrase, however, goes beyond simply adding new content. While it is true that new content must be added frequently, it must also be relevant to your online community. Creating relevant content requires you to understand your customers and their needs. Once you find a relevant topic, you have to communicate your opinions well.

How to Create Content:

- **Upload frequently:** There are always opportunities to provide content. Comment on new trends, talk about new products, respond to customers, and share inspirational stories. You should always be working on new content.

- **Be relevant:** Stay informed on the latest trends that affect your audience. Writing about an event a week late will not result in many shares or comments.
- **Use variety:** Use both written and video content. Consumers are more likely to share video links than written content.
- **Communicate well:** Make sure that your content is well written and has a personable tone. Check that videos are edited properly. Failure to double-check your content can lead to miscommunications.

BLOG AND INTERACT

Blogging is now considered essential to internet marketing. Fortunately, you do not have to be a talented writer to have an effective blog. Video blogs are gaining popularity, and many companies mix text and video. Once you find a comfortable blogging style, you must blog frequently to maintain followers. People will stop checking a blog that is not updated regularly. While you must blog consistently, you do not have to write an essay for each entry, so do not panic about finding the time to blog. You may use short, concise entries. While you should be responsible for a majority of the content, you may invite employees to be guest bloggers or share stories that you find interesting.

Once blogs are shared, you have an opportunity to interact with your audience. Replying to customer comments is the obvious method of interaction. You may also interact with your audience by asking for

comments. For example, a blogger might ask for advice from readers. Regardless of how you come to interact with customers, remember to stay on topic and be polite. The goal of interaction is to create a dialogue, not an argument.

WEBINARS

Webinars are basically seminars that take place online. Done correctly, they have the power to increase your brand and engage your customers. Any company that provides expertise in an area can benefit from hosting a webinar. Webinars are growing in popularity because they allow customers to see and interact with leading experts, and they are an excellent way to reach large groups of people with little expense to the company. Traditional seminars require paying for a location, materials, equipment, and other expenses that webinars do not incur.

There are different types of webinars. They may be free or paid, and they can cover a variety of topics.

Types of Webinars:

- Meetings
- Tutorials
- Presentations
- Trainings

Regardless of the type of webinar you choose, you must be prepared and professional. If you choose to host webinars, create a schedule and

advertise them on your social media sites. There are plugins and webinar services available that will help you host webinars.

CONSTANT MONITORING

Social media requires constant monitoring. However, monitoring social media is a complex task that requires the appropriate tools. Fortunately, there are free tools such as Twitter Counter and Google Analytics Social Reporter are available to help track the information. Some companies may choose to purchase programs or outsource this task. The information gathered is interpreted to show how customers respond to your brand.

The goal of constant monitoring is to handle unflattering information before it gets out of hand. If untrue or inappropriate information about the company makes its way through social media, you must address it quickly.

- Put an end to rumors with the truth.
- Address customer complaints fairly and directly.
- If the company is in the wrong, show that changes have been made.

Remember not to appear defensive or desperate. Keep the tone calm and respectful. Even if your company is under attack, you must personify your brand to the public. Anger and panic will not help your public image.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

A customer of Owl Designs complained on the blog that a \$25 figurine was broken when she purchased it, and she wanted her money back. Sarah, the owner of the company, did not believe the customer and chose to ignore the complaint. The complaint was repeated on other social media sites. Soon, other customers began to question the company's merchandise and policies. Sarah found herself inundated with complaints on behalf of this customer. Even after she issued the refund, it took some time for the negative views of the company to die down.

*SEO is not synonymous
to junk email.*

MATT CUTTS



SEO BASICS

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a term tossed around in any discussion about internet marketing, but few people truly understand what it involves. The purpose of SEO is to rank higher in search engines and draw people to your website. Effective use of SEO content requires more than repeating specific words in a post. SEO is a combination of content, keywords, value propositions, and links. When used correctly, SEO can be a useful marketing tool.

RELEVANT AND ORIGINAL CONTENT

Search engines look for keywords, but they also search relevant content. Writing gibberish in keywords will not help your SEO. Original content that is in keeping with your website is the best choice to drive visitors to you. When creating original content, do not forget that it needs to be relevant, well written, and customer focused if you want people to click on your site.

Tips for writing content:

- **Proofread:** Numerous spelling and grammar mistakes will distract customers, and, in extreme cases, they make it difficult for the search engines to analyze your content.

- **Use titles and headings:** Break up content to make it easier for people to skim. Keywords are more effective in titles and headings, so make sure to give yourself opportunities to use them.
- **Use short sentences:** Online content is not a book. Use short sentences that your audience can read easily.

KEYWORDS

Keywords are words or phrases that people search online. Integrating these keywords into your content will improve your search engine rankings. An effective SEO campaign, however, relies on choosing the correct keywords. For example, keywords that match websites will rank higher in search engines. Additionally, popular searches change, so it is necessary to research the best keywords for your content. Fortunately, there are search tools such as Google Wonder Wheel that will show how the search engine groups keywords and their popularity. Once you choose your keywords, use them to guide your original content. Variations of keywords should be in the title and headings and repeated throughout the content.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Every company should have a clear understanding of its value to customers and what separates it from the competition or its value proposition. According to Google's Maile Ohye, failure to provide value propositions is the number one mistake that companies make. Value propositions should not only appear on the company values page. They

must be spread throughout your content in the form of differentiator phrases found researching keywords and phrases. For example, instead of simply using the phrase “local cheese shop” add differentiators that describe the business such as “handmade artisanal cheeses.” Integrating differentiators into your content will improve SEO as well as your marketing in general.

LINKING

Linking is an important part of the SEO process. Every external link is a vote of confidence in the relevance of the website. The goal in SEO is to gain inbound links to your website. The more inbound links, the better your SEO rankings will be. Fortunately, there are ways to improve the number of inbound links on your site.

Tips to Inbound Linking:

- **Write:** Writing and publishing articles online will provide a link back to your site. You may even make this a stipulation of using the article.
- **Contact bloggers:** Ask bloggers to review products or share information that will lead back to your site.
- **Send out Press Releases:** Include links to your site on your press releases. This will result in numerous links to your site.

If you are willing to spend some money, there are pay per click ads and affiliate sites. These can generate links, but they are in a grey area ethically. Some search engines penalize pay per click ads, so the risk is up to you.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tim wanted to increase SEO on his website and improve his rankings, so he decided to rewrite the content. He chose to use his company name, Quick Car Repair, as the keyword. He used it in the title and every sentence that followed. When he was finished, he did not bother to proofread the content. It was filled with mistakes and did not make any sense when read. Tim was surprised when he soon dropped in the rankings.

*Good website practice and
optimizing for conversion
usually makes for good
search engine optimization.*

MARC OSTROFSKY



WEBSITE CHARACTERISTICS

Everyone wants a website that draws in customers and helps build a strong community, but many websites fail in this endeavor. When websites are difficult to navigate, have weak content, and are not easily accessible, customers will avoid them. Successful websites have certain characteristics in common that you can emulate, such as SEO optimization, easy to navigate landing pages, and mobile friendly characteristics.

SEO OPTIMIZATION

SEO is an important characteristic of websites that helps drive traffic. As the previous chapter explained, SEO is a complex process. You already know the SEO basics, but there are a few familiar strategies that you can put in place to optimize your website.

- Choose strategic keywords.
- Include relevant, well written content on each page with html coding.
- Place keywords in the content.
- Use SEO descriptions for links.

Optimizing your webpage is an ongoing process. You will have to monitor and alter your SEO strategy as necessary. The important thing to remember is that, even if you do not have the results you want at the beginning, SEO optimization is necessary for a successful website and can always be improved.

LANDING PAGE

The landing page is the webpage that customers arrive at when they click on a link. The point of a landing page is to capture leads. Regardless of which page you choose, your landing page is your first impression. The design, layout, and content must be impeccable.

Effective Characteristics:

- **Simplicity:** Do not distract the customer with complex designs or excessive content. The landing page should have a clean and simple look.
- **Communicate value:** The content should clearly explain how the customer will benefit from taking action.
- **Be clear:** Landing pages require action from the customer. Provide clear directions and highlight the call to action.
- **Be brief:** Make any forms that customers fill out short and non-invasive.
- **Share:** Allow customers to share your landing page with others.

ANALYTICS

Websites should be changed from time to time, and analytics will allow you to track customer responses to the website. There are different analytics available to suit any business needs. There are clickstream, competitive analytics, and social analytics that vary in price and function. Research will determine what will work best for your company. The results from analytics will show you the number of visitors and how they arrived at the website. You will also be able to determine which links were broken, which ones were used the most, and which portions of the website did not generate traffic. The information that analytics provide will help you make the necessary changes to create a more user friendly website.

MOBILE AND TABLET FRIENDLY

Given how entrenched mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets are in today's culture, it only makes sense that websites be mobile and tablet friendly. Not having a mobile friendly site will cost you customers. In fact, 61% of people surveyed by Google said that they would not stay on websites that are not mobile friendly. Fortunately, it is not difficult to make a mobile friendly website. For example, there are plugins that work with certain platforms such as WordPress. For the best results, however, you want to create a response layer. This action can require a designer. Once the website is mobile friendly, you need to test how it functions before allowing customers to access it.

Effective mobile websites will:

- Load quickly – the ideal loading time is 5 seconds or under
- Be easy to use – the layout should be easy to use with visible buttons and scroll bars
- Be informative – The text and contact information needs to be visible and easy to read.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Albert created a website when he opened his store five years ago, but he hardly every updated it and did not know how to use analytics. Finally, he allowed an employee to make a few changes because she promised that they would increase business. Sally focused on SEO and created a landing page. She also used analytics to monitor progress. After 6 months, information from the landing pages gave him leads, and traffic doubled on the website. This all accompanied a 7% increase in sales.

*Making a prospect
feel like they have an
exclusive membership
in a club makes Lead
Generation a positive
customer experience.*

ERIC BROWER



CAPTURING LEADS

Successful internet marketing will allow you to generate and capture leads. The internet has changed the way that we capture leads. Traditionally, cold calling or sending mailers were the main methods for generating and capturing lead. Online methods have made the process much simpler, and they save time.

LEAD MANAGEMENT AND GENERATION

A lead is anyone who shows interest in your company's services or product. When generating leads online, the landing page is your greatest tool. Visitors who fill out contact information on landing pages are leads that you can market your products to directly. By choosing to volunteer their contact information, these visitors are showing interest in your product and are prime candidates to buy. There is also software available that will help generate and manage leads based by tracking visitors and their actions. Identifying search terms and referring URLs will also generate leads for the company.

When managing leads, it is important to use different methods such as email, newsletters, promotional offers, social media, white papers, and webinars as touch points to nurture leads. Using this cross-section of mediums is typically the more effective method of lead management.

The key to converting leads to sales at this point is being consistent in your message. Customers are less likely to commit when they see inconsistencies between the messages.

GIVE SOMETHING AWAY

A classic method of lead capturing is giving something away. The method of lead capturing is common in brick and mortar stores that offer free samples to shoppers. The same rule can be easily applied in the online community. However, when you do offer leads free products or services, they must be of value to your target audience. For example, a discount on last season's product is not a giveaway to capture leads; it is a sale. Giveaways are an expensive loss for your company if they do not promote value to your customers. When you give something away, it should accurately reflect your brand and inspire your lead to make a purchase.

Typical Giveaways:

- **Discounts:** Offer coupons or vouchers for products and services.
- **Samples:** Offer to send free samples of your product or a test of your services such as a 30-day free trial.
- **Freebies:** Free gifts can be sent through direct mail services. You can also offer free downloads or webinars if you only have an online presence.

QUALITY VS. QUANTITY

When generating leads, there is always the question of quality vs. quantity. Your content should draw in people who have an interest in your product, but you need to determine which of these leads to nurture. Quantity leads can be found using search engine results such as pay per click, but this does not guarantee interest. It is true that quality leads are more likely to buy. These leads include people who follow the company on Facebook and people willing to fill out landing pages. However, generating quality leads requires research that will increase company cost. It may also leave out potential customers. For example, you may not follow up with a lead for which you only have an email address when you focus on quality. Limited information, however, does not mean that the lead could not be nurtured into making a purchase.

So, which method of lead capture is better? The truth is that there is no right answer. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. You must be aware of your quality and quantity lead, but who you choose who to nurture must be based on what the right fit for your business is. Many companies choose to mix their lead generation methods at the beginning to determine the best methods for them. As you make changes to your lead generation system, measure and review the results. This will show you if quality or quantity provides you a better ROI, and you can revise your methods.

CAPTURE REPEAT CUSTOMERS

Statistically, 80% of your business comes from repeat customers. This is why you cannot ignore former customers. A business that focuses on nurturing leads but not current customers is doomed to failure. Fortunately, repeat customers have already proven that they have an interest in the company. All you have to do is make sure that you have captured their information at checkout and continue building a relationship. The key to repeat customers is to mixing promotions with other communications that are entertaining, helpful, or informative. This way they do not feel like you are constantly selling to them. For example, you should remember customers on their birthdays. Remember, promotions should only make up ¼ of your communication.

Examples of useful customer communications:

- Host events for repeat customers
- Offer free gifts for repeat customers
- Provide expert information
- Create a rewards program

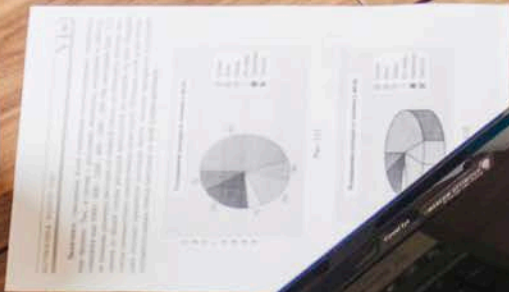
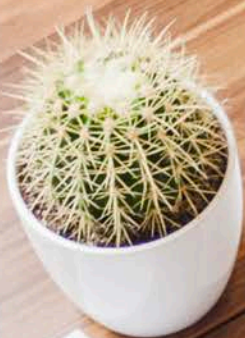
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Harold was having difficulty with his leads. His business generated quite a few leads, but only 6% of them ever converted to sales. His method for handling leads was to send out a mass email to every lead showcasing his company's strengths. When the leads responded, he would send

further information. Harold used pay per click to collect leads, and he was not seeing a very high ROI for his efforts. Finally, his mentor helped him create a landing page. After three months, Harold saw a total conversion rate of 20% and 15% came from the quality leads that were generated by the landing page.

*The aim of marketing is
to know and understand
the customer so well the
product or service fits him
and sells itself.*

PETER F. DRUCKER



CAMPAIGN CHARACTERISTICS

An internet marketing campaign is essential to the success of your business. A campaign requires more than a few banner ads placed in social media. It has to be carefully planned and executed. There are no excuses for a poorly planned and executed campaign. There are certain characteristics that all effective internet marketing campaigns have in common. Pay attention to these characteristics, and you will improve the success of your campaign.

TAILORED FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Campaigns need to be tailored specifically to the interests and needs of your target audience. To do this correctly, you need to consider the results of your market research. What is the average age of your customer? Are your customers local? What do they value?

Once you have established your target audience, use the information to tailor every aspect of your campaign, including the platform, content, and style. For example, you might want to use a witty message and interesting font for an email to a creative audience. If you have more than one target market, it is worth your time to create a campaign for the different audiences. For example, try sending a message focused

on savings to frugal shoppers and one focused on green initiatives to customers who have environmental interests.

USE POWERFUL WORDS

Everyone knows that word choice can make or break a marketing campaign. Using the right words will increase the chances of your campaigns success. According to a study at Yale, there are 10 power words that will engage customers and influence them to make purchases.

Power Words:

- **You:** The pronoun engages people at a personal level.
- **Love:** This creates an emotional connection.
- **New:** People are always in search of something new.
- **Safety:** This is most effective for health products and automobiles.
- **Save:** Everyone enjoys saving money.
- **Results:** Proven results provide a reason for a purchase.
- **Health:** An advertisement for health gives credence to specific products.
- **Guarantee:** The promise creates a feeling of trust.
- **Discover:** Offers customers a chance to try something new.
- **Proven:** A proven product feels safe and reliable.

THE 4 W'S OF A CAMPAIGN

Before you launch an internet marketing campaign, it is important that you answer some basic questions called the 4 W's. The W's stand for who, what, where, and when. The answer to these questions will help you create an effective campaign.

- **Who** – Describe who you are marketing to with your campaign. This is your target audience, and you must tailor the campaign to the needs of the audience.
- **What** – Explain your product or service? This is your company's brand.
- **Where** – Decide the type of media you are going to use. This is based on your customers. Do some research to determine which media has brought the most customers?
- **When** – Discover when customers are more likely to purchase. Research the past month of analytics to determine when customers are more likely to buy and time your ads accordingly.

MONITOR AND TWEAK

An effective internet marketing campaign requires careful monitoring to determine how effective it is. Adjustments or tweaks should be made based on the information you gather. There are different tools that allow you to track the response to your campaign, and they will depend on the platforms that you use. It is important to monitor sales, traffic, engagement, inbound links, and ROI. If these metrics are low, you should

consider tweaking the campaign based on the information. If traffic is low, consider tweaking SEO and adding more inbound links. You should also examine your content. Make small changes at a time based on the information you have on hand. If you find that tweaking your campaign does not improve results, you should revisit the 4 W's to make sure that you understand your customer. If you do not understand your customer, you will market to the wrong target audience.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Evelyn created a market strategy for her shoe company based on her personal interests. The font and tone of the messages were playful, and the campaign hinted at extravagance because she viewed shoes as a fashion accessory. The campaign did little to improve her sales and was a poor ROI.

Finally she did some market research and discovered that her customers were mainly students and young mothers who valued her low price point and variety of styles. Her next campaign concentrated on the excellent value of the product and was worth the ROI. Sales increased by 12%.

*The strongest
principle of growth lies
in human choice.*

GEORGE ELIOT

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Dave Naylor:** Google loves brands – build one.
- **Greg Hartnett:** Focus on the user, build for the long view, and the money will come.
- **Joan Holman:** You need an information-rich web site and a web site that responds to [customer] needs, whatever they are.
- **Chris Baggott:** It used to be that if you wanted sophisticated marketing tools, you had to be rich. That's not the case on the Internet. Anyone can compete, just at different levels.





Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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