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Internet Marketing Reality Check

By Jeff Palmer

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There are thousands of web sites, books, CD-ROM's, cassette tapes and various other forms of communication devoted to the topic of Internet marketing. The majority of these sites profess to offer "secret strategies" and "killer tactics" which promise to increase your chances of having success on the Internet. Of course you must fork over your hard earned cash for these wonderful pearls of wisdom. (Many of which turn out to be nothing more than pyramid schemes and other scams)

With all of these so called experts lining up to take your money and fill your head with dreams of making easy millions you may find it difficult to filter out the facts from the fiction. I will take the unenviable role of fact giving, bubble burster and tell you flat out, "There are no secrets to successful Internet marketing!"

Let me repeat myself, I said, "There are no secrets to successfully Internet marketing"

Successful marketing, whether its online or off, requires careful planning and a lot of hard work. And no amount of marketing will ever meet with success if the product being marketed is a bad one. This is especially true of web sites, which carry the remarkable distinction of the almighty back button. I know this from first hand experience with companies that have spent ridiculous amounts of money to market web sites which were basically unusable.

Now that your dreams of sailing around the ocean sipping margaritas, while an Internet cash machine deposits six figure sums into your bank are thoroughly dashed, lets explore some of the common issues associated with true Internet marketing success as well as a few of the many misconceptions.

The same principles that govern off-line marketing practices apply to online marketing. Research, Planning, and Analysis.

Internet Marketing Reality Check

Research:

Determine what makes your product or service stand out from the crowd. What do you offer that the competition doesn't? How do your prices compare to others in the market? What features of your product are one of a kind? All of this information will help in designing your web site to reflect a unique selling proposal. A unique selling proposal answers the customer's question, "What's in it for me?" Gather all the information possible that answers this question and use it in planning your web site.

Planning:

Develop a marketing strategy for your web site.

Are you selling merchandise online? Are you advertising a service?

Who are your customers? You must determine exactly what it is that you want your website to accomplish. Example: If your web site is focused on making it easier for potential customers to learn about your services, focus your attention on offering as much information about your services as possible. Price comparisons of your competition, directions to your business location, contact information, testimonials, etc., are a good place to start. Plan your web site around a central goal.

Analysis:

So your web site is up and running, you have developed a marketing strategy and people are interested in your product. Now it's time to figure out what is working and what isn't. This aspect of marketing your web site can be one of the most difficult to understand. This goes well beyond simply counting the number of visitors to your site. It requires analyzing the habits of those who travel to your site. Determining what features of your site compel visitors to purchase your products, what features turn visitors away. It is important to analyze every single feature of your web site, from the sales copy to the navigation. You must understand how every feature of your web site supports or detracts from your marketing success.

Hopefully by now you realize that Internet marketing requires more than just an out-of-the-box solution. There is no magical formula to marketing online, and those who say otherwise should be scrutinized. The incredible variety of businesses online require individual marketing strategies and plans. A real estate web site should not be marketed the same way as one selling comic books. Any salesman would have a difficult time selling denture glue to a teen-ager, it just doesn't fit. And neither do one size fits all marketing plans. Target markets have to be considered. Planning, strategy and analysis must be carried out in order to achieve any kind of lasting success.

Make your web site usable and you will gain success!

Now, if you would like to send me a check for \$30 for this "killer strategy" please feel free to do so. Otherwise, take this bit of information and file it in the "critically important" category. By usable, I'm talking about such web site considerations as working links, fast loading pages, limited use of images, animations and other "fluff" that will make most users hit the back button faster than you can blink a virtual eye.

Fact: Most Internet users will hit their back buttons if a web page doesn't load in 20 seconds or less.

Internet Marketing Reality Check

Increasing the speed at which your web site loads greatly increases the likelihood that it will ever be seen.

Submit your site to 100,000 search engines for just \$29.95 !!!

Beware of offers like this, the truth is there are only a handful of search engines that most people use to find things online. Concentrating your marketing efforts on these few search engines is much more effective than having your site listed in a million places that nobody will ever see

Bear in mind that most of these multiple search engine submittal sites are profit driven, and the only one making a profit is them.

Fact: Google and Yahoo are currently the major players in the search engine game comprising 54% and 41% of all Internet searches respectively.(Source: Comscore Media Metrix 05/04) There are several techniques to achieving higher rankings with these two search engines none of which are secrets. Read my article on search engine optimization for more information about this important topic.

Number 1 Ranking in Google! Guaranteed!

I have seen many web sites offering search engine ranking services, making claims like the one above, The truth of the matter is that it is impossible to guarantee a number one ranking with Google's free search engine submission. As I have stated previously there are a number of strategies and steps that can be taken to optimize your web site for search engine placement and achieve the highest rankings possible. Guaranteed results are a myth, it is possible to have the highest ranking in Google for search terms that aren't commonly used, but then, what's the point?

Fact: It is true that you can purchase advertising space using the Google service called AdWords. Advertisements appear in the right hand column of Google search pages.

Successful marketing of your business online requires time, effort and patience. There are no easy solutions. But, a fair amount of devotion and common sense can yield truly impressive results.

Jeff Palmer is an internet marketing consultant and web designer with over 10 years of experience and is the process of writing what promises to be that definitive guide to online marketing. If you would like information about this upcoming book, including a sneek peek at finished chapters contact the author directly at greatempty@yahoo.com

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Use A Mentor To Get Your Online Riches!

By Marketing Basics

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Question: Do you know what a mentor is? According to the dictionary, a mentor is "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher."

The key word here is "trust." But who can you trust on the Internet these days? There are so many scams and rip-offs, who in the world can you trust?

Well, believe it or not, not everyone and everything on the Internet is a rip-off. There are plenty of individuals on the Internet who have worked extremely hard to achieve reputations that are beyond reproach.

These individuals are helping thousands of people every day, and making plenty of money honestly—without ripping people off, and have already arrived at the destination you want to be. Would you like to join them? You can. How?

Go to Google and type in the words "Internet marketing expert". Carefully peruse the results pages. When you find an Internet marketing expert you like, check him out carefully to make sure he's not a scam artist.

Once you're satisfied he's legitimate, buy his products, subscribe to his newsletters, join his affiliate programs—do whatever you have to do to work as closely with your mentor as possible.

That's the safest and best way to learn what you need to know, and achieve your goal of making money on the Internet!



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