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Shady Marketing Tactics - What they will Cost you and your Business or Learning to Market Responsibly.

By James R. Sanders

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Don't you just hate writers, or at least the ones that write up articles identifying a problem then pitching you information to help you solve your problems for \$49.95? The writing industry has taken a turn where everyone who has something to sell can write an article, submit it to an online venue, and wait for us to read it or download it and see if we'll buy their products or services. Don't you just hate it when you spend your time looking for the information only to find that you have to make a further investment before you can get the actual answers to your problem? You've already spent countless hours looking for it, and now you have to make a monetary investment to boot. Is it a practice you've come to accept, expect, and chalk it up to the costs of running a business, or are you forever turned away from that writer because of their approach? Would you rather have the information up-front telling you that you'll need to make a purchase to actually get your questions answered or do you just expect you'll have to make a purchase as the norm?

Don't get me wrong, even in such material; there is still valuable information to be found. These articles work great for readers looking for a paid solution or a quick fix, but they do little for the "do it yourselfers" who are looking for the "hows" to answer the question and fix the problem

themselves. Then there is the time investment problem where you have to sometimes spend large amounts of time digging for the valuable information, sorting out the hype, and tossing away the chaff. The bottom line is that marketing has gotten harder on the internet because of the ways that marketers have conditioned surfers over time. Think back to the earlier days when banner ads were affective. Today, banner ads have taken a downward spiral where effectiveness has dwindled to the point of almost zero. Think about your own surfing habits. What do you usually tend to do when you come across a banner ad? Do you even notice them on web site pages anymore?

Full Page Ads and Time Limited Offers.

The latest craze seems to be building long page advertisement pitches engaging the visitor's emotions and providing them with mountains of testimonials to convince them to purchase the product or service. Isn't it ironic how most of them started out in debt, no money in the bank, house in foreclosure, and after finding this secret suddenly bought their dream home, quit their day job, and drive their favorite expensive sports or luxury car, and accomplished this amazing feat in just a couple months? These stories have variations, but the theme is always the same. Although I have no SOLID proof to offer, I'd tend to believe that many of these "guru's" found a way to prey on people's dreams. They put together some information that sounded good, figured out how to market it, and since almost everyone always dreams of more money, they pitched their idea to people and made armored carloads of money. The point here is that they made their fortunes off SELLING the idea and NOT actually by DOING the idea. They all use the idea of a time-limited offer too. The problem with time limited offers on the internet is that if they do not use a tracking cookie, or if they don't require you to sign up to the site for a membership, there is no way for them to track that time sensitive offer. To prove my point, take any particular pitch you see, bookmark the page, and then go back in a couple days. You'll more than likely find that you get the same time sensitive offer and you didn't miss anything. If that doesn't work, then clear your internet cache in your browser and repeat the same process. You'll then understand what I'm talking about. You're being duped, and they play on that emotion to entice you to make a purchase. When I see

one of these anymore, if the product or service appeals to me, I IMMEDIATELY scroll to the bottom to see how much it costs. If it's within my budget, then I MIGHT scroll back up and read the page, but if not, then I close the window.

Don't get me wrong, I am sure that at least SOME of them have been broke, in foreclosure, no bank account, etc, but ALL of them? There are literally THOUSANDS of them out there. What about ones that were just broke and had no bank accounts? Nevertheless, just about every one of those full-page articles tells the same story. Just switch around the job they used to do, the style of home they bought, and the type of car they now drive, and they are all variations on a theme. I am also sure that SOME of them are legitimate, but try to pick out the legitimate from the fakes and you'll have a tough time of it. Then there are those that tell the half-truths. When I speak of half-truths, I am talking about either those that had credit to take out a rather large loan to market their business idea, or those that had friends to

borrow the money from or relatives to give it to them. They never seem to tell you about the investments they needed to make in order to make the idea work, just the fact that they make thousands of dollars a month and have everything they want in life. They also fail to tell you how much they were making when they started out. Kind of convenient isn't it. What sense does it make to purchase that information when you don't know if you have the extra funds needed to make it work? Sure, I could sell you an information article on how to make millions waxing turtles. But if it required you to live in Hawaii and was going to cost you \$5,000.00 in advertisements to get it going to make those thousands of dollars a month, then what good would that information do you if you didn't live in Hawaii and didn't have \$5,000.00 in the bank? If you didn't know that extra information, then you might buy the information, waste money, and never do anything with the information. That's exactly what hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of people are doing. They're buying this information that they might never be able to use, and are losing hard earned money in the process. Are you getting the idea yet?

Where Past Marketing Practices Effect Present and Future Marketing Results.

You see, thanks to the other marketers that have come before you, just as those to come will look back at you in future, we pave the road for the marketers tomorrow. Using shady promotion tactics will continue to make the future of marketing harder and harder. It's conditioning, and just like Pavlov's dog's were made to salivate through the ringing of a bell, internet surfers are getting fed up with the shady marketing tactics and learning to IGNORE them. Take for instance the value of contextual links used to promote an affiliate program. When marketers first started using this tactic, their affiliate program owners received allot of traffic, and the marketer made a tidy sum of cash. The problem was that most marketers, in their greed for the almighty dollar, failed to do the proper research into a company before they chose to promote it. They were so hurried to post program links to make the money that they just didn't bother with the research. Just making sure the program pays it's promoters promptly and on time is only ensuring half the battle. It's just great that you make sure you are paid, but what about the visitor that trusted you to click that link. You know the visitor that was DEPENDING on you to give them reputable information. What happens when they have a bad experience with the affiliate program owners or are ripped off? I'll tell you what happens. Marketing

gets even harder for YOU because your visitors loose their faith and trust in you. Sure, you can make a thousand dollars a month for a while, but if your visitors have problems with the links you send them to, then eventually you are going to loose income. Not only will you loose the income, but you will also loose reputation and traffic to the point that there will no longer be visitors to send off to those links you promote.

The sad part of the situation is that those types of marketers are either just misguided or greedy. There's so much information out there on marketing, and a great deal of it seems to focus on making the sales at all costs. What happened to maintaining integrity to ensure your business future for the long haul? The days of the firm handshake to seal a deal are long since gone, but has integrity died along the wayside too? What happens when the shady marketing tactics continue to dry up the once abundant marketing pockets and it continues to become tougher and tougher to make sales? Are we that greedy to squander the pockets so

there is none left for future marketing generations? Is it really worth the costs when your business integrity suffers in the end?

Better Marketing Principles - Honesty and Integrity and Ways they Promote Visitor Trust.

It's all about honesty, integrity, and trust. If you can instill those emotions for your business within the consumer's mind, and do so in an honest manner, then you are going to be successful for a long time to come. Like that old adage goes "You'll catch more flies with honey than you will with vinegar". Time will always bring out a lack of integrity if one exists, just as true colors also tend to show over time. No matter what you do, if you are not sincere then in the end, it will be revealed and your business will suffer. The bait and switch is an overused marketing tactic that is losing its effectiveness. Any marketing practice that is questionable or similar to that tactic is like the vinegar mentioned earlier. The "honey" is things like researching your links to make sure your visitor is going to be happy with the products you suggest. It's letting them know that the link might require an investment, or letting them know some personal, honest experience with the link product or service that you have experienced. Sincerity and honesty will build trust, and building trust is not something that happens overnight. Far too many people have been burned on the internet. It is a time investment to overcome those bad experiences and turn a visitor around.

Prevention is better than scrambling to fix a problem once it's happened.

Meta Tag Scams and Other Shady Web Page Design Tricks.

Another marketing tactic gone south is the keyword meta tag and the other various meta tags used in a web site page design. Shady marketers have abused even those tags. I remember back when Britney Spears was the craze and their were all kinds of searches being done at the search engines for Britney Spears. A few dubious marketers decided to add "Britney Spears" to meta tags and wound up getting top page rankings in the search engine reports for the search term "Britney Spears". The problem, most of those pages had

nothing to do with Britney Spears or her music to begin with. That didn't last long as Google and all the other search engines scrambled quickly to change their algorithms to keep the shady marketers from manipulating their results. We all paid for it in the end. Web sites that were once ranked highly either found themselves out of the rankings or dropped drastically in rank. Another old adage comes to mind "It's the one that spoils it for the rest of us".

Speaking of the search engine ranking stuff, another craze was long paragraphs of repeating keyword phrases and text using the page color to hide it, used as a means to manipulate search engine ranking. The results are the same as the Britney Spears meta tag scam. Marketing is definitely an area where the actions of others will come back to bite you in the backside in the end. If you don't watch whom you link to, then you can be "guilty by association". That brings to mind the link farms that used to enjoy high ranking in the search engines. These worthless sites composed of nothing but a bunch of links to other sites and created specifically to boost the listed sites ranking are another shady marketing practice that has fallen by the wayside. And the list continues to go on and on. Some just look at these ideas as valid marketing tactics that worked, and to a degree, I'd have to agree with them, but they worked at what price? How many visitors were forever turned off by questionable marketing tactics? How many visitors lost substantial amounts of money in the process? How much money will future marketers need to spend to undo the negative results past marketers have caused for the marketing industry? The damage remains to be seen, but little by little, once tried and true marketing ideas are becoming less and less effective. Do I want to make a buck? Sure I do, but NOT at the expense of my company's integrity

nor at the expense of my visitors, nor at the expense of future marketing generations to come.

Better Marketing Practices - How They'll pay off and who they Benefit.

All this brings me to the predominant point of this article. There are a few actually. The first and foremost is learning to think about your marketing tactics before you just implement things that could be labeled as shady. The best

relationship you can build with your potential visitors is trust. This is a long and involved process but offers long-term payoffs that are well worth the work investment. Taking the quick or easy route will always cause you to miss something that will prevent you from forming that bond with your visitors. With the mass of circuits, tubes, and chips sitting before you, it's sometimes hard to remember that your actions are affecting other human beings with some of the same hopes and desires that you have. Remember that you are interacting with them and helping them to meet those hopes and dreams. If you had the same hope or dream you are offering them, would you want to be treated the way that you are treating them? It's the golden rule personified. Learn to practice ethical marketing concepts that protect your visitors while building trust and integrity. Once you accomplish that, there is nothing on earth that can prevent your self-employment dreams. Until next article, be good to one another. Give your visitors the safety and protection they need, and you will benefit in the end.

Develop An Online Marketing Strategy To Maximise All Of Your Marketing Activities

By Wendy Hearn

Developing an online marketing strategy is essential before you do any marketing or promotion of your business. Without a strategy it's like stabbing around in the dark, not knowing what you want to achieve. You risk your marketing becoming unfocused and not producing the results you really want.

An online marketing strategy is the general and overall approach you'll take with your marketing and encompasses the big picture. It's the starting point for choosing the most effective marketing tactics to use and then the actions you need to take. A clear strategy helps you make the right day-to-day decisions, saves you time and keeps you focused.

Before doing any marketing of your business, you need to develop your strategy. This gives you a clear picture of what you're up against and what you need to overcome through your marketing. This enables you to choose the best marketing tactics. The tactics are the means of achieving your strategy.

With so many different marketing tactics to choose from it's too easy to do what many people do and that's just pick any tactic. Just picking any tactic prevents you from maximising your marketing and the results it produces. You may use a variety of marketing tactics to fulfil your strategy.

So, how do you develop an online marketing strategy?

First you need to do an appraisal and gather information about your company, competitors, customers and other industry players. You need a clear picture of what you're up against. This includes identifying your target market/clients and carrying out a SWOT analysis.

S – Strengths

What are the strengths of your business?

W – Weaknesses

What are the weaknesses in your business?

O – Opportunities

What opportunities are available to your business?

T – Threats

What threats is your business facing?

Next, define specifically what are the challenges and problems that you need to overcome. From this answer the question, "What will it take to overcome your main marketing challenges and problems?"

Once you've developed your objectives, then choose the strategies to support these objectives. Your strategies could include:

Improve communication

Educating potential clients

Sharing information

Increase awareness of your products/services or company.

Then select the most effective marketing tactics to

bring your strategies to life. These tactics then need to be turned into an action plan.

Develop An Online Marketing Strategy To Maximise All Of Your Marketing Activities

Alarming Marketing Trend

Is Your Marketing Strategy Killing Your Profits?

Book Review - Guerrilla Marketing For Free

What Is Your Marketing Really Costing You

GUERRILLA MARKETING Volume 1

The Great Big Book of Internet Marketing

GUERRILLA MARKETING Volume 2

GUERRILLA MARKETING Volume 3

Starting a Successful Retail Business



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