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Simple Strategies for Marketing Success

By Charlene Rashkow

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While most online business owners realize that promoting their products and services are necessary, some are stymied by how to reach their target audience. Some business owners even believe they are too small to invest in a promotional campaign but nothing is further from the truth. While a full-fledged marketing effort may not be necessary for a smaller business, it is however crucial to your success that you employ some type of marketing activity. After all, if you don't spread the word about your business, how will anyone find you?

Without question, learning a few SEO strategies and including interesting copy on your site are necessary tools for empowering your efforts, that is only the beginning. When it comes to a productive and fruitful business, at the root of your success is making sure that your marketing efforts are having an impact.

The following uncomplicated strategies will definitely empower your efforts and best of all will not cost a lot of money.

1) Word of Mouth: Still the best form of advertising!

Each time you work with a client, ask if you can use them as a reference. If they've been happy with your services, they will surely say yes. You should also ask your clients if they would be willing to refer you to friends and business associates. To encourage others to recommend you, offer them a small finder's fee for their referral.

2) Testimonials Work Extremely Well!

Obtaining a testimonial to include on your site works miracles. Personally, when clients comment favorably in response to something I've written, I immediately ask for permission to post their comments on my site. I then include a link to the client's web site so that we each gain in the process.

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All in all, nothing pays off in dividends as well as good testimonials and referrals.

3) Networking with Others!

Whether it's at a meeting, at an informal gathering or during a brief presentation, every contact you make is a potential client. Share what you do with others when striking up conversations with those in close proximity. You never know if that person might be in the market for exactly what you have to offer.

4) Give something Away Free!

To get your foot in the door it's often a good idea to give something away free of charge. This is not to imply that your services are not worth paying for, but your potential client might need a little convincing. By way of example, if you're an SEO expert, and you want to gain greater exposure for your services,

arrange to speak at an event. In exchange for the exposure give the person who arranges the presentation some of your services free. If he or she discovers how talented you are, you'll get a lot of new business.

5) Your Presentation & Marketing Collaterals!

A well-written bio, press release or soft sales letter included in your marketing kit is ideal. You might also consider creating a powerful marketing slogan that helps you stand above the crowd. The goal of your marketing material is to demonstrate right off the bat what you can do for your clients, what makes you unique and where your specialty lies. Come up with a catchy slogan or line that defines your services and before you know it, you'll be branded effectively.

6) The Tried and True Article Writing!

Each in our own way has gained powerful tools through our experiences therefore coming up with an article is a great strategy for gaining exposure. Some people think that it's all been said before, but in truth everyone has something of value to share. Be daring and share something no one else knows about or present it in a way it's never been said before. Pay particular attention to your experiences and before long you'll have great ideas to write about.

7) Keeping Records of Your Strategies!

While keeping clear records may not seem like a marketing strategy, it is probably one of the most important marketing tools you'll ever use. By keeping records of your clients, where they come from and how they find you, you always know which of your efforts is working best. I make it a habit to ask visitors if they discovered my services via articles, through word of mouth or through search engines. In that way I know which of my strategies have been most effective and which aren't bringing me new business.

As you give thought to your marketing strategies, don't be timid about trying something new and simple. Very often, the simplest, least expensive method brings the greatest results.

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Creating Your Internet Marketing Plan

By Megan Corwin

For large corporations, a marketing plan is a huge document detailing strategies for the fiscal year. It may include competitor analysis or a sales forecast. While these elements are important to a large business, do you as a small business owner (without a well paid marketing staff) have the time or energy to devote to putting together a huge document? Unless you are trying to get a financial loan, probably not...

But that doesn't mean you should totally scrap the idea. A marketing plan can be a wonderful tool to help you refine your focus. You've heard the old saying "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." That's because when you don't plan you lack intention and attention.

My suggestion is to create a "micro-plan." Open up a new document and take an hour or two to answer the following questions.

"Micro-Plan" Questions

What is your purpose for being online? Awareness Sales Community

What % of your overall marketing to be done online? How much time do you expect to spend marketing on internet?

What strategies will you use? Contests Forums Free reports/e-book Newsletter Pay per click advertising Banners Articles/content Viral marketing

Timeline

Assign a project date to each of the strategies. Will they be one time events (contest) or something you need to do frequently (forums)? While you are thinking about it, schedule your projects in your time management system or planner.

Analysis How will you track the success of your marketing plans? What is your ROI?

Budget What is your total yearly internet marketing budget? Assign a \$ to each of the strategies you will use.

A successful internet marketing strategy begins with a plan. The time you take to put together your "micro-plan" will be well worth it to your business.

Megan Corwin is an internet marketing coach who helps work at home professionals grow their businesses. For more articles and advice about online marketing strategy and solutions, become a member of Megan's online community for work at home women:

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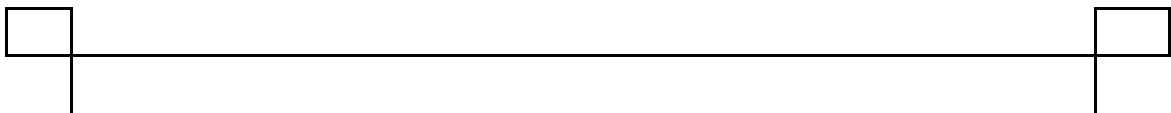
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