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The Biggest Promotion Mistake

By Gordon King

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Whether you run an online or off-line mail order business one thing all businesses need are customers.

So how do you go about getting customers?

Well in the snail mail order business you could run ads in business opportunity magazines, or you could go direct mail renting mailing lists.

Online business works something the same you can post your message on Newsgroups or Free For All sites.

To promote my latest opportunity I recently rented a mailing list of 200 fresh business opportunity seekers supplied on sticky labels.

Out of the 200 names and addresses at least 30 of them were regular advertisers in UK business opportunity magazines, another 10 had business names and addresses but the biggest surprise was finding my own name and address on the list.

After I discarded the useless names I sent my offer to the rest of the list and had a 0% response to the mailing.

The whole mailing had been a complete waste of time and money.

It wasn't until later that I found out why my response was so low.

I ran a small classified ad in around 10 business opportunity magazines and small adsheets for a month and coded each ad to see which publications were bringing in the best response.

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I got a reasonable response from all the ads for up to two months.

After two months I was still receiving replies from these ads but instead of further information requests these replies were filled with business opportunity leaflets and had a sticky label on the envelope.

Someone was going through these publications and compiling a mailing list and I could tell by the different codes on the labels to which publication was renting my name.

To someone new in the business opportunity market this list could be

a make or break for their business but it showed me what a lot of businesses online or off-line are doing wrong.

If you try to sell any product you run a better chance of selling it to a buyer than another seller but a lot of direct marketers are promoting their product to other sellers.

If you post a message to a Newsgroup or FFA site they are full of other sellers and you usually get counter messages trying to sell you something.

The same goes with mail order mailing lists they usually contain more sellers than buyers.

It doesn't matter how good your product is or how good your headline or promotion materials are, if your message is going to someone who is already involved with a business opportunity you can be sure they don't want another one.

In order to reach the real market for your product you must advertise in any magazine or ezine that your potential buyers would read.

Create an advert that will invite potential customers to send for further information on your product or service.

When customers reply to your advert save their names and addresses to a database or address book and use these names to promote your products.

These names have made the effort to contact you and have shown an interest in your product so it is only a matter of time before they purchase one or more of your products.

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Gordon King of The Psg Classifieds Ezine. Aimed at the 99% of internet businesses that fail every year. Free ad for all new subscribers. <mailto:psgclassifieds-subscribe@topica.com> Free Software, E Books and Advertising. <http://www.psgclassifieds.co.uk>

Branding, Branding, Brand-Ing? :: MSN Fails To Keep It Straight

By Rob Sullivan

Sometimes you see promotions come along and you wonder - did they just do that? The current MSN promotion - [msnsearchandwin](#) is a prime example of this.

Not only do they use "black hat" or at least "questionable" tactics on the site, but the messaging is inconsistent.

In this article I look at the new MSN promotion and ask the question: Why bother?

By now you've probably heard about the new MSN promotion where you can win prizes simply by using MSN search.

They did do something right by registering a domain name that implies that message. If you go to

<http://www.msnsearchandwin.com/>

you will see the familiar MSN search box.

Wait a minute...Why is this search box blue? Didn't MSN just rebrand with a nicer, cleaner silver grey look?

That, my friends, is mistake number one. It's as if the technical team and the marketing team didn't get together to discuss this program.

I mean, when you go through something as complex and massive as a rebranding, you should make sure the messaging is consistent across the various media. Especially when the promotion and the rebranding launch within days of each other.

This is eerily similar to the article I wrote about Superbowl Ads:

http://www.textlinkbrokers.com/blogs/comments/329_0_1_0_C/

. In that article I talked about how

advertisers spend millions on a 30 second or 1 minute TV commercial yet they fail to carry that messaging over onto their website effectively if at all.

And here we have MSN - probably one of the most recognized brands on the web and subsidiary to

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the company with one of the most effective and ruthless marketing arms in the world - and it can't seem to communicate it's message that MSN is rebranding.

I mean, how hard would it have been for someone in Tech to phone up someone in Marketing and say, "By the way, you know that search and win promotion you are doing? Be sure that the colors match the new look of MSN that's launching in a few days."

But wait, it gets better.

First spotted by

<http://www.kerrydean.com/blog/>

, if you view source of the msnsearchandwin home

page what do you see?

That's right, about a million keywords stuffed into the keywords tag. (OK maybe not a million but there are 256 keywords in the meta keywords tag).

It gets worse. Immediately below the overstuffed keywords tag you will see a bunch of keywords stuffed into a comments tag. Again the same 256 words used in the meta keywords tag.

So tell me, is it OK for a search engine to spam itself?

Perhaps we could all learn a little something from MSN's marketing mistake: Keep it consistent!

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