



**GAIN
CUSTOMERS &
CREATE
PROFITABLE
GROWTH WITH
ONLINE
MARKETING**



Chances are you already have been—or are considering—advertising your business online. The Internet can be a valuable tool that can help build your brand and gain recognition for your company. Getting your share of web traffic and leads through online marketing, however, can consume a great deal of time and resources. Many businesses turn to online marketing professionals for help in building their brand on the web. Could your business use such services, and if so, how can you choose the right provider for your company? This guide will explore the many aspects of marketing a business on the Internet, and will help you make an informed decision if you need to find an online marketing services provider.

What are Online Marketing Services?

Online marketing, also referred to as Internet marketing, digital marketing, and e-marketing, is the promotion of products or services over the Internet. There are many ways to market your business online, including search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing and social media marketing (SMM). Below is a brief overview of the various means of marketing a business online. To achieve optimal results, your online marketing specialist should use a combination of these methods.

Paid Search

Also known as Pay-per-Click (PPC) and search engine marketing (SEM), paid search produces the ads that appear on the right-hand side of each search results page. In Google, the top two or three results on a page are also paid search listings. Ads are created using tools such as Google's Adwords. When you create an Adwords account, you will have access to keyword research and other campaign creation tools to help you set a budget for your campaign and maximize your ad results.

Other paid methods of driving traffic to your web site include banner advertising and email ads. Paid advertising can produce more immediate results than other forms of online marketing, so it can be a good way to get started. You will want to keep a close eye on your campaign budget, however, and adjust your pre-set limits as you track your results.

Search Engine Optimization

SEO is the process of increasing the rank—and therefore the visibility—of a web site or web page in the search engines via unpaid, "natural" or "organic" search results. Maintaining a high ranking in the search engine results is a continual process involving meta tags and descriptions, keyword optimization, backlinking and social bookmarking. The process is more time-consuming than using paid online advertising, but the results can last longer; your paid search results will only continue as long as you are funding your ad campaign.

Email Marketing

When you enter your email address into an opt-in form in order to download a white paper or receive a special discount, you will soon be the recipient of that company's email marketing campaign. Email can be a very effective tool for building trust with your existing and potential customers. Using an email auto-responder to collect addresses and send out emails according to a set schedule, you can establish a loyal following of subscribers who look to your



organization as a trusted source of information. When these prospects are further along in the sales cycle, your email newsletter could be the deciding factor in their final purchase.

Social Media Marketing

Facebook, Twitter, Digg, LinkedIn and Hub Pages are just a few of the social media networks you can use to promote your business online. If you want to see results from your social media marketing, it cannot be a hit-and-miss endeavor. Not only do you need to plan an effective marketing campaign that integrates your social media channels, but you should also track the results of the campaign to be sure you're successfully engaging your prospects.

Content Marketing

"Content is King!" This often heard mantra stresses the importance of content in creating an online presence. Web site content serves two key purposes: it can increase the importance of your company's site in the "eyes" of the search engines and it can make your site more interesting and useful to visitors. To accomplish both of these goals, web content must be of the proper length, and optimized using the right keywords. When it comes to online content marketing, both quality and quantity are important. Content marketing involves not only web pages, but also blogs, online press releases, articles posted on article marketing websites, and company newsletters.

Other Online Marketing Tools

Online video, social bookmarking, business directory listings and mobile marketing are additional ways to build your company's online presence. These should be incorporated into your overall marketing strategy. Your SEO provider can help you create a strategy that includes all the options available to increase your web site's visibility. Typically, all or most of the methods listed above should be employed on an ongoing basis in order to maintain your ranking in the search engines.

Why Use the Services of an Online Marketing Professional?

Effective online marketing can produce excellent results. Among companies recently surveyed by email service provider Constant Contact, 91 percent use email to market their business and 78 percent of those doing so found their efforts to be effective. Companies using web sites, online advertising and social media also reported satisfactory results.

Although the value of online marketing has been well established, many small to medium businesses find it challenging to create and maintain a marketing campaign that utilizes the various social media and SEO tactics at their disposal.

According to a recent survey by InsideUp, finding online marketing talent was seen as the biggest obstacle to building a successful online marketing campaign for lead generation. Of the companies surveyed, 70 percent felt that they either did not have or could not find adequate in-house talent to implement an effective Internet marketing strategy. Another 28 percent felt that social media and other forms of web marketing were too time consuming.



Outsourcing your online marketing tasks to an experienced, professional Internet marketing services provider can free you to focus on other areas of your business. A qualified vendor with proven SEO results will be able to design the best marketing strategy to build your brand and generate online leads.

Factors to Consider When Choosing an Online Marketing Provider

The Internet marketing profession is relatively new, therefore business models will vary. Some providers offer an all-encompassing service that includes:

- Web Page Optimization
- Social Media Marketing
- Strategy Development
- Keyword Research
- **Email Marketing**
- **Blogging Services**
- Link Building
- Web Design
- Surveys
- Video Marketing
- Press Releases
- Article Marketing
- Content Creation
- Social Bookmarking
- Web Directory Listing
- Website Usability Reports



- Reputation Management
- PPC Management
- Mobile Marketing
- Widget Creation
- SEO Training
- Tracking Tools

Some companies will allow you to choose only the services you want. Others may specialize in one particular service, such as email marketing or content creation. Whether you prefer a one-stop shop or a specialist for each of the services you need, keep in mind that the more comprehensive your online marketing strategy is, the stronger your results will be.

Types of Online Marketing Service Providers

You will find three basic types of providers in your search for online marketing services:

Freelancers

You can find individuals who offer some of the above services on sites such as Elance.com, seofreelancing.com and ifreelance.com. These sites allow you to search for the specific services you need and often display helpful customer reviews and ratings for each provider.

A Google search for "freelance SEO professionals" will list individual websites of freelance providers. Many of these will allow you to leave a brief description of the work you have in mind and will contact you personally by phone or email for a consultation and quote. One advantage of using a freelance SEO professional is the individualized service you will receive. However, not all freelancers offer a full range of SEO services, so you may need to use the services of more than one provider.

Agencies

Online marketing agencies can manage your entire Internet marketing plan or they can provide a single service, such as email marketing. Pricing can range from \$15 per month for some limited services up to \$1,000 or more per month for a comprehensive marketing campaign. Some agencies will allow you to sample their services with a free trial period of one or two months.

Lead Generation Companies

Online lead vendors who use Internet marketing tools such as email and social media are adept at collecting information about your prospects and categorizing leads according to detailed demographics.



Some of these companies maintain highly refined scoring systems that rate leads by their online activity during each visit to the lead generation company's web site. This type of system delivers warm leads in real time, saving you the expense of hiring Internet marketing experts.

How to Select the Best Provider for Your Company

Here are a few steps you can take to help you find the best Internet marketing service provider for your company:

Perform reference checks.

Each company you consider should be able to provide a list of references that you can contact. Also, find out how long the provider has been in business.

Ask about case studies.

A good SEO provider will be able to show you the web sites of companies they have helped to achieve a first page listing for select keywords in search engines as such as Google and Yahoo. Check with site owners to verify this, and ask about their experience with the provider.

Look at the provider's own website.

Their content should be professionally written and should read well, without excessive use of keywords or unrelated content. The website should be focused on you, the client, and should not appear to have been created simply for the search engines.

Be sure the provider is familiar with coding.

In order to optimize your website, an SEO professional should have some knowledge of HTML and CSS at the minimum. Experienced coders can perform tasks such as improving your site's load time and correcting errors to ensure pages validated in the search engines.

Find out how the company will produce results.

Simply listing your business in a few dozen directories does not constitute an online marketing campaign. The provider should not be vague or use excessive technical jargon when answering your questions, but should explain in understandable terms how they will achieve results. A good vendor will be able to provide you with a list of specific tasks they will perform, along with a schedule for carrying out these tasks.

Seek a vendor who has experience

working with your type and size of company. Some SEO service providers specialize in helping businesses reach top listings in local searches. Be sure to specify if you're looking to increase your ranking in global or national searches, which is much different than achieving a top ranking in your home town.

Discuss a time frame for results.

It does take time to see results from organic SEO marketing but an experienced provider should give you a good idea of how soon you should begin to see an increase in traffic.



Beware of exorbitant promises.

Remember the adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." A reputable company will not try to impress you with inflated numbers or a guarantee of #1 search engine rankings.

Find out where the company collect backlinks from.

Backlinks are very important for SEO success but ones from link farms and similar sites will be useless at best. Be sure the firm collects links from reputable sites only.

Be sceptical of SEO firms who send unsolicited email.

Some agencies may contact you with an email that says something like, "We have noticed that your site does not appear to be ranking well in the search engines...", followed by an offer to remedy the situation with their services. Reputable SEO companies will not use unprofessional tactics such as email spam in order to gain clients.

Choose a company that guarantees their services.

An experienced online marketing provider will gladly offer a refund if they do not achieve the promised results within a given time frame.

Ask the vendor if they provide reporting and analysis tools.

This will help ensure that your investment is yielding measurable results. By tracking the results of various marketing strategies and comparing all methods against each other, companies can better allocate marketing dollars for optimum ROI. Some vendors supply tracking tools for your convenience. Alternatively, you can use the free analytics tools provided by search engines, such as Google Analytics.

Compare pricing.

Pricing structures can vary greatly among online marketing providers. Once you have a list of about five experienced providers you feel will be best suited to your needs, gather pricing information for a side by side comparison. Be sure to weigh cost against the quality of work and the results each provider will be able to produce for your business.

Choose a provider who will communicate

with you about the changes they make to your site and the reasoning behind them

Check your results.

You should see improvement in your search engine results after the designated trial period. Always remember, however, to log out of your Google account—or better yet, use a library or other public computer for an accurate look at how your site is ranking for your targeted keywords.

Selecting the best service provider can be a time consuming process for any business. That's why InsideUp has carefully pre-selected online marketing service professionals who offer quality work at a reasonable cost. By filling out a simple form you can receive custom quotes from up to five top providers who are matched to your company's specific needs.



Glossary

AdSense (Google)

Text and image ads that are precisely targeted to page content, from which the webmaster earns a percentage of the price per click paid by the advertiser.

Adware

Also known as "spyware", a program hidden within free downloaded software that transmits user information via the Internet to advertisers.

Adwords (Google)

Google's Pay per Click (PPC) advertising program.

Affiliate

A web site owner that promotes a merchant's products and/or services and earns a commission for referring clicks, leads, or sales.

Affiliate Agreement

Terms that govern the relationship between a merchant and an affiliate.

Affiliate Marketing

A revenue sharing arrangement between online merchants and distributors (affiliates) in which the affiliate earns a commission for producing a sale, lead or click for the merchant's site.

Affiliate Network

A third party providing services to affiliate merchants and affiliates, including tracking technology, reporting tools, and payment processing.

Affiliate Program

Any arrangement through which a merchant pays a commission to an affiliate for generating clicks, leads, or sales from links located on the affiliate's site. Also known as associate, partner, referral, and revenue sharing programs.

Affiliate URL or Link

Special code in a graphic or text link that identifies a visitor as having arrived from a specific affiliate site.

Associate

Synonym for 'affiliate'.

Autoresponder

An email robot that sends replies automatically, without human intervention.



Banner Ad

Advertising in the form of a graphic image.

Blog

Acronym for 'web log', a blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The act of updating a blog is referred to as 'blogging' and those who keep blogs, are known as 'bloggers'.

Browser

A program that allows you to access and read hypertext documents on the World

Wide Web

The most popular browsers are Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Click Fraud

Click fraud, also called pay-per-click fraud, is the practice of artificially generating traffic to advertisers' sites either manually or through the use of automated clicking programs (called hitbots). The advertiser pays for this traffic, which has no potential for generating revenue; however, the scammer receives a percentage of the pay-per-click fees paid by the advertiser.

Click Fraud Detection/Monitoring

Service that provides independent monitoring of clicks from your PPC campaigns. If you notice fraudulent activity, Google or Yahoo!/Overture may provide a refund.

Click-Through

When a user clicks on a link and arrives at a Web site.

Click-Through Ratio (CTR)

Percentage of visitors who clickthrough to a merchant's Web site.

Cloaking

Hiding of page content or affiliate linking code.

Commission

Also known as a bounty or referral fee, the income an affiliate is paid for generating a sale, lead or click-through to a merchant's web site.

Comment Spam

Unwanted comments posted to blogs in an attempt to gain a link back to the poster's site.

Contextual Link

Placement of affiliate links within related text.

Conversion

When one of your visitors makes a purchase on the merchant's site... i.e. converts from 'visitor' to 'buyer'.



Conversion Rate (CR)

The percentage of visits to your site that convert to a sale.

Cookie

A cookie is a piece of information sent by a Web Server to a Web Browser that the Browser software is expected to save and to send back to the Server whenever the browser makes additional requests from the Server. You may set your browser to either accept or not accept cookies. Cookies can contain user preferences, login or registration information, and/or "shopping cart" information. Cost per Acquisition (CPA): The amount you pay to acquire a customer.

Cost per Click (CPC)

The amount you pay when a surfer clicks on one of your listings.

Cost Per Thousand (CPM)

The amount you pay per 1,000 impressions of a banner or button.

Creative

The promotional tools advertisers use to draw in users. Examples are text links, towers, buttons, badges, email copy, pop-ups, etc.

Cross-linking

Linking a group of domains, usually your own, to each other for the purpose of increasing its popularity with search engines. Excessive cross-linking may lead to your site being penalized by Google or Yahoo!

Disclaimer

A disclaimer states the terms under which the site or work may be used and gives information relating to what the copyright owner believes to be a breach of his/her/their copyright. In some cases you may wish to permit certain activities, in others you may wish to withhold all rights, or require the user to apply for a license to carry out certain actions.

Domain Name

The unique name that identifies an Internet site.

Doorway Page

Also known as bridge pages, gateway page, entry pages, portals or portal pages, these pages are used to improve search engine placement. Caution: some search engines will drop a site entirely if the existence of doorway/gateway pages is detected.

Download

Transferring a file from another computer to your own.



Endorsement Letter

Also known as a "product review", an endorsement is a promotional statement outlining features and benefits for a particular product or service.

Email

Electronic mail, a message sent to another Internet user across the Internet.

Email Signature (Sig File)

A brief message embedded at the end of every email that a person sends.

EPC

Term used by the Commission Junction affiliate network, this is your 'average earnings per 100 clicks'. This number is calculated by taking commissions earned divided by the total number of clicks times 100.

Exclusivity

A merchant that stipulates 'exclusivity' in their affiliate agreement usually prohibits the affiliate from promoting competing products on their site. (I recommend against entering into exclusive agreements.)

eZine

Short for 'electronic magazine'.

Forum

Online community where visitors may read and post topics of common interest.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Lists and answers the most common questions asked on a particular subject. Generally posted to avoid having to answer the same question repeatedly.

Google

A popular search engine, a tool for finding resources on the World Wide Web.

Google Adsense

Text and image ads that are precisely targeted to page content, from which the webmaster earns a percentage of the price per click paid by the advertiser.

Google Adwords

Google's Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising program.

Graphic Interchange Format (GIF)

An image file format, suitable for simple files. A JPEG is the preferred format for storing photographs.



Hit

A hit is a single request from for a single item on a web server. To load a page with 5 graphics would count as 6 'hits', 1 for the page plus 1 for each of the graphics. Hits therefore are not a very good measurement of traffic to a website.

Home Page

Your primary HTML page, the first page anyone would see in your Web site. Also referred to as a landing page.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)

The primary "language" used to create World Wide Web documents (web pages).

Impression

An advertising metric that indicates how many times an advertising link is displayed.

In-house

Merchant that administers its own affiliate program.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

The company you call from your computer to gain access to the Internet.

IP Address

A unique number consisting of 4 parts separated by dots, e.g. 165.115.245.2. Every machine on the Internet has a unique IP address.

Javascript

A programming language developed by Sun Microsystems designed for writing programs that can be safely downloaded to your computer through the Internet and immediately run without fear of viruses or other harm to your computer or files. Java requires a browser compatible with Java. Using small Java programs, Web pages can include animations, calculators, and other features.

Joint Venture (JV)

A general partnership typically formed to undertake a particular business transaction or project rather than one intended to continue indefinitely.

Keyword

The search term that a user may enter at a search engine. For example, someone who wants to find a site that sells printer paper might enter 'printer paper' at a search engine.

Keyword Density

The ratio between the keyword being searched for and the total number of words appearing on your web page. If your keyword only occurs, say, once, in a page that has twenty thousand words, then it has a density of 0.005 percent.



Keyword Selector Tool

Displays how many times a certain keyword was searched for at Yahoo! Search Marketing during a given month.

Link

A link is a "clickable" object that, when clicked, will take the viewer to a particular page, place on a page, or start a new e-mail with an address you specify.

Link Popularity

The total number of qualified Web sites linking to your Web site.

Manual Approval

Process in which all applicants for an affiliate program are reviewed individually and manually approved.

Meta Tags

Information placed in the header of an HTML page, which is not visible to site visitors.

Newsgroup

A newsgroup is a discussion that takes place online, devoted to a particular topic. The discussion takes the form of electronic messages called "postings" that anyone with a newsreader (standard with most browsers) can post or read.

Newbie

Someone who is new to the Internet.

Niche Marketing

Focused, targetable market segment.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC)

An advertising payment model where the advertiser pays only when the advertisement is actually clicked. Also, an affiliate program where an affiliate receives a commission for each click (visitor) they refer to a merchant's web site.

Pay-Per-Lead (PPL)

An affiliate program in which an affiliate receives a commission for each sales lead that they generate for a merchant web site. Examples include completed surveys, contest or sweepstakes entries, downloaded software demos, or free trials.

Pay-Per-Sale (PPS)

Programs in which the affiliate receives a commission for each sale of a product or service that they refer to a merchant's web site.



Portable Document Format (PDF)

A distribution format developed by Adobe Corporation to allow electronic information to be transferred between various types of computers. The software that allows this transfer is called Acrobat.

Plug-in

A small piece of software that adds features to a larger piece of software.

Portal

A term used to describe a Web site that is intended to be used as a main "point of entry" to the Web. I.e. MSN.com is a portal site.

Privacy Policy

A privacy policy establishes how a company collects and uses information about its customers' accounts and transactions.

Real Simple Syndication (RSS)

An XML-based format for syndicated content.

Reciprocal Linking

The process of exchanging links with other websites to increase search engine popularity. Recurring Commissions: Earn commissions both on the initial sale and subsequent purchases of the same product or service. Examples of affiliate programs that may pay recurring commissions are online dating services and web hosting services. Referring URL: The URL a user came from to reach your site.

Return on Investment (ROI)

This is the amount derived from subtracting your net revenues from your total costs.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The process of choosing keywords and keyword phrases relevant to your site or page on your site, and placing those keywords within pages so that the site ranks well when those keywords are searched upon.

Search Term Suggestion Tool

Displays how many times a certain keyword was searched for at Overture during a given month.

Social Networking / Marketing

Meeting and building relationships with people using one or more of a broad range of sites, such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

SPAM

The term "spam" is Internet slang that refers to unsolicited commercial e-mail (UCE) or unsolicited bulk e-mail (UBE). Some people refer to this kind of communication as junk e-mail to



equate it with the paper junk mail that comes through the US Mail. Unsolicited e-mail is e-mail that you did not request; it most often contains advertisements for services or products.

Spyware

Also known as "adware", a program hidden within free downloaded software that transmits user information via the Internet to advertisers.

Squeeze Page

A landing page specifically created to solicit name and email addresses from site visitors. Many webmasters collect only email addresses.

Targeted Marketing

The process of distinguishing the different groups that make up a market, and developing appropriate products and marketing mixes for each target market involved. Text Link: A link not accompanied by a graphical image.

Third Party Tracking Software

Software located on a server other than your own, that tracks and records visits to your Web site.

Tracking Method

The method by which an affiliate program tracks referred sales, leads or clicks.

Tracking URL

A tracking URL is a web site URL with your special affiliate code attached to it, i.e. Two-tier: Affiliate program structure whereby affiliates earn commissions on their conversions as well as conversions of webmasters they refer to the program.

Unique User

A unique visitor to your Web site. Probably the best indicator of site traffic.

Upload

Transferring a file from your computer to another computer.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

The address of a site on the World Wide Web. Viral

Marketing

A marketing technique that induces Web sites or users to pass on a marketing message to other sites or users.

Virus

A computer virus is defined as a set of commands, created intentionally, that will do some level of damage to a computer. A computer virus does not float around in cyberspace, but is always attached to something. That 'something' could be a text file (MSWord document), an email, a



photo, a music clip or a video clip. Your computer must receive one of these 'carriers' in order to get a computer virus.

Web Host

A business that provide storage, connectivity, and services necessary to serve website pages and files.

Web Site

A collection of HTML pages. Can also be a 'blog'.

World Wide Web (WWW, or Web)

A section of the Internet containing "pages" of information, including text, photos, graphics, audio, and video. You can search for documents by using one of the many search databases. To access the Web, you must use a browser.

Yahoo

One of the more popular search index databases on the World Wide Web.