



Internet marketing

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1. What is marketing?

1.1 A definition

Marketing is "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." Marketing is a product or service selling related overall activities. It generates the strategy that underlies sales techniques, business communication, and business developments. It is an integrated process through which companies build strong customer relationships and create value for their customers and for themselves. ([Wikipedia](#))

I discovered another, much shorter, definition which I also feels sums up marketing very well. *"Marketing is your strategy for allocating resources (time and money) in order to achieve your objectives (a fair profit for supplying a good product or service)."*

1.2 What it is not

1.2.1 A profession. I know you'll hear of many people defining marketing as a profession. When I think of profession, I think of a career that has required training—many marketers (even successful ones) aren't so trained. Yet many marketers are most definitely professional.

1.2.2 Something new. It's only an alternative word for selling and salesmanship.

1.2.3 An asset. Marketing is merely a function or a means to an end.

1.2.4 Complicated. It only becomes complicated when the users lose sight of it's simplicity.

1.2.5 Advertising. There are over 200 forms of marketing, and advertising is just one of them—0.5%!

There's probably a bunch more, but I don't want to write a novel about what is isn't, but what it is, and how we can all utilize it.

1.3 What this guide will try to do

I will mention some non-Internet forms of marketing in passing, but I'm not going to give more than a quick 1 or 2 liner on each. The purpose of this guide is to introduce, and explain, some of the online tools available to you as a marketer, and a bit about how they work, and how they impact you and your clients.



2. Non-online types of marketing

2.1 TV and radio

These are 2 of the high profile campaigns in the industry, and offer the opportunity to reach the largest number of people in the shortest time frame. Among the disadvantages of these marketing efforts are the potentially high cost and the inability to truly target your demographic with precise accuracy. However, the prestige associated with television advertising can elevate a business in a way no other marketing format can.

2.2 Newspaper and magazine

This type of marketing can carry a variety of messages (either brand oriented or direct response) and can be targeted much better than TV and radio can by obtaining demographics of readership. So for example, if you want to reach people who live in Sacramento, put your marketing efforts into the Sacramento Bee newspaper. If you are selling a new line of female training apparel, focus on training-related periodicals—specifically women's ones if you can.

Print advertising must be prepared well in advance to meet the deadlines of the publications – especially with monthly magazines, since they are printed months before their release date. Again this category can be costly and can't be simply altered. Often you contract for a number of issues.

2.3 Yellow pages type publications

For years, an advertisement in the Yellow Pages was all I used to generate plenty of work in my previous business. It's still a useful asset in your marketing armory, but considerably less so now. It has some disadvantages.

- It's out of date almost as soon as it's released.
- It's impossible to change for a year once in print.
- It is now commonly passed over for use in favor of on-line (up-to-date) information.
- It becomes expensive trying to cover multiple directories in just one city, let alone a state, or the country.

2.4 Direct mail

Many will tell you that Direct Mail marketing is passé, but there is still some life in this powerful, traditional form of advertising. Direct Mail refers to postcards, brochures and flyers that are sent through the mail and generally contain a direct response call-to-action. This form of marketing also requires a reasonable outlay to do it right, including printing or printed materials, postage and the address lists of the demographic you wish to target.

2. Non-online types of marketing (cont'd)

2.5 Other print mediums

The most common of these is the business card. These have been around forever, and still play an extremely important role in business. Even the “Contacts” page hasn’t replaced the business card, though carrying around a rolodex full of cards isn’t common any more.

Other areas for print advertising, include vehicle signage, newsletters from a local school or sports club, fridge magnets and banners. All these pretty much have one drawback in common—inflexibility. It’s difficult to change once you’ve committed to printing.

2.6 Trade shows / events

Just go to the California State Fair on any given year and you’ll see that this form of marketing is very much alive, despite the huge pool of resources required, plus the relatively high cost of stands. However, this sort of marketing is quite focused and people tend to be much more willing to commit to “Yes” when at one of these events.

Some major downsides of shows is that they tend to be very localized, and secondly, whilst people are generally enthusiastic at the event, their desire cools very quickly. Even if you ring the next day, the desire to buy could be gone.

2.7 Networking organizations

The most common of these that most Western nations have is the local Chamber of Commerce. These are a great way to meet many different people as well as receive some excellent business guidance if needed. They are generally not expensive to belong to and allow you to rub shoulders with business people from all areas of the community. One disadvantage of the Chamber is that you will not be the only person from your industry there. So leads can be diluted.

An organization which was set up purely to funnel leads to members, and with a strict rule of one person from each industry per chapter is Business Network International (BNI). This is worth a look.

2.8 Cold calling

I don’t know many people who enjoy this (though I know some). This can take the form of phoning, door knocking or approaching people in the street or a mall. Whilst this is very untargeted and resistance is somewhat high, it does have the benefit over some other forms of marketing of having direct personal contact immediately. It becomes simple for the marketer to decide on the viability of any given contact, and it’s simple to track.

3. Online types of marketing

3.1 Corporate domain

Since the late 90s, nearly every company, big and small, has a web presence. The main focus is to providing visitors with information about your company, it's products/services, and anything they need—ecommerce, downloads, instant chat, etc.

3.1.1 Corporate website

Most companies have some degree of online presence in the form of a website around their brand. The content varies, but is based on marketing products, support, and corporate information. However, much of the content can be irrelevant and prospects have begun using use social media more and more.

3.1.2 Portals

These were very popular in the 90s. These tried display as much information on one page as possible, and keep users on one's own domain.

3.1.3 Satellite sites

These were created specifically for new product launches or campaign focuses, or to target specific market segments. They were often only short term, and they, typically, had a unique URL. These were (and still are) over used by some companies, leading to fragmentation of web strategy.

3.1.4 Interactive sites

These are more a logical extension of the old static sites of the 90s. No longer is the web just a static "encyclopedia", so now companies can make their website interactive. Technologies such as Javascript, AJAX and Flash have allowed visitors to "engage" with the website in a way never before possible.

3.1.5 Intranet

Websites don't necessarily have to be open for all to view. Specific sites such as Intranets are designed for employees or authorized users only to access sensitive company information and documents, and communicate privately.

3.1.6 Globalization

The internet has brought an ease of reaching people from any country, so many companies now have multiple copies of their site in different languages. Common ones are European sites.



3.2 Search Engine marketing

3.2.1 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

This technique utilizes a number of factors, both on-site and off-site, to try and have your site listed at #1 on page 1 of the major search engines for certain selected words and phrases. Generally, today, most SEO companies focus on phrases over words, as words are too broad to rank easily. We have a [white paper on SEO](#) in our downloads page on the CitrusKiwi website.

3.2.2 Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

The main difference with SEM vs SEO, is that SEM utilizes paid insertions to display search results. This is the realm of Pay per Click (PPC) and Pay for Placement (P4P). Whilst the more competitive phrases can become quite costly, there is good evidence that the ROI on these is positive.

SEM has not been without controversy, and the issue of how search engines present advertising on their search result pages has been the target of a series of studies and reports. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also issued a letter in 2002 about the importance of disclosure of paid advertising on search engines, in response to a complaint.

3.3 Outbound and syndicated marketing

3.2.1 Email marketing

This is the web version of the traditional Direct Mail campaign. These campaigns involve, often impersonal emails blasted out to individuals on a mailing list. These lists are bought and sold and, when on one, it's often difficult to ever be free of these unsolicited emails (Spam). They generally contain an offer and/or links back to the corporate website.

3.2.2 Pop ups

Fortunately these are less common and new technologies have allowed a much softer use of these. Common ones now use features which make them less intrusive such as fading out after a set time. They can still be a good way of alerting visitors of something new or special on your website, but should be used sparingly and cautiously.

3.2.3 Syndicated content and RSS

These technologies allow users to select “feeds” to receive relating to a topic they are interested in, or to have it displayed on their own website. This is a great way of getting fresh content on your site, but with no effort on your part.

3.4 Brand awareness

3.4.1 Web advertising

These include the banner, tile, or skyscraper advertising (IAB) model on websites. This works on the premise that, if there are eyeballs on the page where your advert is, your brand should 'impress' upon the users. Click through rates are typically in the 1% or lower. These ads are static and do not change even if the content on the webpage changes.

3.4.2 Contextual web advertising

This is the "smart" version of the traditional web advertising. These targeted ads will be served up on the webpage depending on the content that's on the page. This can be text, images, media or other form.

3.4.3 Widget advertising

These are the advertisements which appear on the likes of Facebook, Bebo, and LinkedIn. A brand can purchase space on any number of widgets across different social networks and communities, to provide a uniform brand push to this high traffic community sites. They are contextual as well (see 3.4.2).

3.4.4 Affiliate marketing

These programs compensate partners and alliances that bring referrals, leads, or sales. It is an overlap with some other web marketing, the goal is to provide targeted content or products to a specific demographic. Examples of this include placement on comparison shopping sites, loyalty sites, and product review sites.

3.5 Social media and communities

3.5.1 Rating/review sites

It seems that no matter what you want to buy, someone (usually quite a number) have written reviews or testimonials about it. Yelp, CNET reviews and BBB are just a few of them. You can't, generally, review yourself on these sites, but it's important to encourage satisfied customers to go there and review your business.

3.5.2 Forums and Wikis

A huge number of sites now employ both these strategies. They are not only great for visitors who can get to valuable information, or share their ideas and solutions, but they are also a good way to get your brand out there on other sites' pages.

3.5.3 Podcasts / Webinars

These are both excellent ways of communicating with existing customers and gaining new ones. I have attended many webinars and received immense benefit from them. They are a cheap and effective way of reaching a lot of people very quickly and efficiently. Remember to include a solid call to action at the end of the webinar.

3.5.4 Blogging

I am constantly surprised just how slow companies are to take up this excellent form of promotion. I agree that it takes some time to write the material, but it's a fast, effective way of giving site visitors up-to-the-minute information, or just making them feel they're "part of the family" by sharing an interesting family moment or outing.

3.5.5 Online video / streaming

The 800lb gorilla in this field is, of course, YouTube. There are reports suggesting that YouTube could rival Google (who happens to own YT!) as the #1 search engine. It remains to be seen whether that happens or not, but it's still a great marketing tool right now.

Capture video testimonials, produce how-to videos, product demonstrations and introductions, and tutorials and host them on YouTube. But make sure they stream to your website and that you make them easily found there.

3.5.6 Tagging

Tagging, adding descriptive keywords to your content, can help with getting that content found, and with SEO.

3.5.7 Voting

Digg really championed this in its infancy, where it allowed the public to vote on various stories submitted by other users. Now we see it with Facebook, blogs and many other social medium.

3.5.8 Micro-blogs

If YouTube is the video gorilla, Twitter rivals it in micro-blogging. The difference between regular and micro-blogging is the length. Twitter allows only 140 characters, so it calls for a different style of writing—almost mobile textesque. But, with a gigantic following, it's an arena every business should be in.

3.6 Virtual worlds

3.6.1 Virtual worlds

These are the virtual life “Facebooks”. [Second life](#) is a good example of this and there are many more.

3.6.2 On-line Massive Multi Player Games

These have been around a long time and include such titles as Everquest, World of Warcraft and Quake. These have appeal to a wide range of ages. And it's not just computer based titles. Wii, PS3 and other gaming consoles all have Internet capabilities.

3.6.3 On-line games

Gaming networks have started to create mini-flash games such as mini-clips, Yahoo Games, and other networks. Supplemented with advertising or sponsored branding, these can be embedded and spread to other websites.

3.7 Other mediums

3.7.1 Internet TV

Many formerly TV only shows are now available streaming on your computer. These are invariably surrounded by advertising and marketing.

3.7.2 Mobile applications

While smart-phones aren't entirely new, the way information and marketing is served up to them is becoming more and more sophisticated. It seems every second company has an “App” for you to download to view their content.

4. Closing thoughts

The Internet, and its associated opportunities for marketers, grows at an ever increasing pace as each year passes. Whilst most of us won't be on the cutting edge of development, we can all take advantage of one or more of the many marketing opportunities that are available to us.

4.1 Must-dos

I recommend that clients adopt a well designed, multi-faceted approach to their marketing strategy, be that off-line or on-line. In my opinion, there are xx must-dos when it comes to Internet marketing.

- A website with quality, fresh content
- SEO
- Blogging
- Ratings/reviews
- On-line video
- Social media—Facebook and Twitter
- Articles

4.2 Don't put off till tomorrow, what you can do today

As we have seen, there are almost endless opportunities for marketing on the Internet. Many of you will already be invested into off-line strategies and I'm not suggesting you drop them like hot potatoes and go 100% on-line. There are many off-line options which can work very well, but it depends on your business.

The important point to take home is that you seriously consider investing in on-line marketing, or expand what it is you already have. As the technology becomes easier to implement, more and more people will be doing it, and those who don't will be seriously disadvantaged.

4.3 So, what next?

If you have a website, when was it last updated? When was new content last added? If the last update was 18 months + ago, or new content added 1 month + ago, you should be seriously considering the emphasis you are placing on your website. It is your number 1 on-line marketing tool, one that all the others really need to function properly. If you are neglecting your website you are essentially neglecting your on-line marketing strategy. Period.

If you don't have a site at all.... I think you know what I'd say!

On-line is now too big a part of any marketing campaign to do poorly. Just as most of us

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don't get involved doing our own printing, or email or direct mail campaigns, it's important to find a good designer (preferably one—like us—who offers full solution packages) and make a start today. Don't put it off till tomorrow, because we all know tomorrow never comes.

On the downloads page on our website, there's a file called "What about a website?" In chapter 3 you'll find some pointers on choosing a good designer. Have a look through the document then give us a call, or drop us an email.

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