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Marketing Your Online Business:

Tips of the trade you need to know

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Dear Business Owner-

We hope this handout will help you market your own online business in a very savvy, low cost way. Without the proper marketing of any website, it will just sit on the Internet waiting to be found. In this case it is not doing its job for you. Your website needs to be a fisherman casting the largest net to grab the most fishes. It cannot just sit in the boat and hope fish will jump in. This handbook will go over Search Engine Optimization, Pay Per Click, Social Networking, Blogs and Affiliates.

Enjoy these great tips and learn new lessons to make your online business more profitable.

Best,

Allison P. Andrews
President
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Ps. If you need additional support or have a question please email:
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Marketing Your Online Business: *Tips of the trade you need to know*

Marketing Your Online Business

The next step in operating an online business is to market your product or service, in order to:

- Generate awareness
- Build your customer/user base
- Increase sales.

Marketing can be the toughest part of operating a business, especially an online business, where you may be competing with thousands of other sites. For your business to be successful, you will have to implement several web site enhancing tools and online marketing techniques.

We'll cover just a few of these tools and techniques in detail.

1. Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of editing and organizing the content of a web site with the intention of increasing relevance to keyword searches through search engines such as Google, MSN Search, and others. The overall goal is to ensure that your web site appears in the results for searches using keywords that are relevant to your content, products, or services. However, it's not enough to simply appear somewhere within the search results, the key is to appear at or near the top.

Studies show that searchers scan search results from top to bottom and left to right, so placement at the top will yield more visitors to your site.

Optimizing a site for search engine traffic primarily involves editing the content of the site and the HTML coding of the web pages. HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is the predominant programming language used to create web pages. Web browsers, such as Internet Explorer , Safari or Firefox, convert the HTML code into what you actually see online. Within the HTML code of a website is section known as "Meta Data," which contains:

- the web page title
- a brief description of the site
- keywords for the site.

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Visitors to your site do not see the content of the meta data, except for the page title. This is displayed at the top of the browser window in the “chrome.”

But search engines send out small programs known as crawlers to “crawl” your site and pick up information from the meta data, which will be used to display your site in their search results.

Optimizing this section with keywords that are relevant to your content, products, or services is part of what helps get your site listed at the top of search results.

In addition to the meta data, you can include keywords in other parts of the html of web pages.

One way to do this is to add “alt tags” to your images, which include key words.

The web page text should also contain your desired keywords. Do not just repeat keywords over and over on your web page as most search engines will block sites that do that to try to fool their crawlers. There are several logical ways to place keywords in your web page content, such as product descriptions. When considering your web page content it is also important to keep in mind that users read web pages differently than say, the newspaper.

Your web site text can be promotional and full of keywords, but it also needs to be concise, scannable, and at least somewhat objective.

Nielson maintains www.useit.com which is full of articles on studies of usability on the web.

A good search engine optimization strategy should also include building an abundant amount of external links to your site. A lot of search engines are now using site popularity as a metric for determining search result placement. The more links that you have from other sites to yours, the more popular your site is considered, and the better the chance of achieving a top placement.

Once you have optimized your site, you can start submitting it to the search engines for crawling. Most search engines will allow you to submit your site for free. Look for an “Add Your Web Site” button or link on the search engine web site.

APA Business Consulting, Inc. has several preferred SEO managers that we would be happy to recommend to you, please email for more information.

2. Pay Per Click

Pay per click (PPC) is an online advertising model used on search engines, advertising networks, and content web sites. Advertisers pay when a user clicks on their advertisement and visits their site. Search engines usually determine the cost per click using a bidding system where advertisers bid on keywords that are relevant to their target market. The higher the bid, the better placement you get for your advertisement. Content web sites commonly use a fixed price per click. The top three PPC providers are Google AdWords, Yahoo! Search Marketing, and Microsoft Ad Center. Minimum cost per click

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on these services will vary from \$0.01 to over \$1, depending on the popularity of a particular keyword or phrase. You can create multiple pay per click campaigns using different keywords and set monthly spending limits. Once your spending limit is reached, your ad is taken down until the following month begins.

If you decide to implement this type of marketing, it's suggested that you create a special page or section on your site for visitors generated from this advertising to land on. This way, you can track the effectiveness of your pay per click campaign and determine your return on investment.

3. Social Networking Sites

A social networking site is an online community of people that share interests and activities, and are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. These sites provide a variety of ways for users to interact such as:

- e-mail
- instant messaging services
- SMS
- chat and game applications.
- photo sharing

The idea for a user of these sites is to build a network of “friends” with similar interests. As a business, you can use these sites to expand your contact base, and build a network of potential customers by setting up a page and finding people with interests related to your content, product, or service. Setting up a page on these sites is free, however, most of them also offer paid advertising options. Two of the most popular social networking sites are Facebook , Twitter and MySpace, which have millions of registered users. Those are just the tip of the ice berg and APA Business Consulting, Inc. has specialist that can help you create, manage, and grow your social media community.

4. Blogs

A blog is a web site with regularly updated entries such as commentary on news or other subjects, description of events, product reviews, and other content. Blog entries or articles are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order with the most recent entry displayed first.

Blogs have become increasingly popular over the last few years and can be used as a tool to market your online business. Many blogs have become peoples main business and source of income.

One way you can use blogs to market your online business is to create your own blog and provide content related to your products or services. For example, if you sell arts and crafts supplies online, you could create a blog and update it regularly with articles on arts and crafts projects. You can then promote your site by placing a link to where the readers can find the supplies needed for that project.

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Another way to use blogs to market your online business is to find existing blogs with content related to your products or services and see if the author is willing to place a link or advertisement for your site on their blog. Authors of the more popular blogs that generate a substantial amount of visitors will most likely want to charge you a fee to advertise your site.

APA Business Consulting, Inc. offers content managers to help make sure your content is supporting your sales goals, email for additional information.

5. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is an online marketing practice in which a business rewards affiliates for each visitor generated through their marketing efforts on your behalf. The way it works is you would supply your affiliates with text, button, or banner ad to display on their site. When a visitor to the affiliate site clicks on your ad, they would be redirected to your site and tracked.

Affiliate marketing services such as Commission Junction and LinkShare, to which you can subscribe, provide the system for generating ad code for your affiliates and tracking visitor activity. The difference between Pay per click advertising and affiliate marketing is that with affiliate marketing, you usually only pay for performance. In other words, you only pay out commissions if a sale is generated from the visitor that was sent to your site.

Online advertising can be very effective. However, you may also want to consider using traditional “offline” marketing such as print ads, press releases, etc. in conjunction with your online marketing strategies.

I hope you are excited now to start marketing your online business. For any assistance please email APA Business Consulting, Inc. at info@apaconsulting.biz
We hope you found this to be a helpful handbook and will come back to us for other resources.