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Online Marketing Generates SALES



Summary: In today's budget stricken climate, it's important to recognize the prominent role that the Internet can play in a cost-effective marketing strategy. Not only is Web marketing very affordable, but it also offers you an effective vehicle for public exposure.

With the economic turmoil, it is more critical than ever to focus your time and resources on keeping your services in front of potential customers. With limited marketing budgets, the key is to consistently promote your company without throwing endless money at it. Internet marketing has become an increasingly effective way to cost-effectively promote your business. Consider these 10 Internet marketing concepts:

1. Websites - Websites are a must. It's almost like you're not in business if you don't have one... a good one. Your website should be as professional as the services you offer. Customers will make judgment about your company based on the quality of your website. They will assume your website is a reflection of your design and installation skills.

Trends today include recorded video clips on websites. Record 30-second messages from your company president, tech trends or general technology advice. Make your video easy and interesting for customers to watch. If you don't have time to record your own messages, you can easily purchase short technology clips from companies in the industry, such as HDHomes.

2. Electronic newsletters - It's never too soon to begin utilizing even the smallest amount of e-mail addresses you have collected. No matter if you have 50 names or 500 names, it costs you the same amount to send electronic newsletters. These are a cost-effective way to generate repeat business, referral business and new business. Electronic newsletters easily enable you to stay in front your customers and remind them of your services. You can inform them of new technology, let them know about specific events or simply remind them of your existence.

3. Electronic surveys – Just by asking your customers for their opinions, it shows that you care about them, not to mention the critical information you will gather. You can easily create customer feedback surveys online using web based programs, such as Constant Contact. Send a survey to your customers upon completion of their project, or send a potential customer lost sales analysis if you didn't win the job.

4. Cross promote with other companies websites – Get your website linked with as many other companies as possible. For example, if you feature a particular brand of electronics on your website, try to get that manufacturer to list you on their dealer locator (if they have one). If you belong to an association, make sure your company is listed on their website. If you're featuring webinars (see below) or an event in your showroom, try to get the local publications to feature your activity on their website in local events tab.

5. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - Major commercial search engines, such as Yahoo and Google, drive the majority of web traffic to particular sites. If your site cannot be found by search engines or your content cannot be put into their databases, you'll miss out on opportunities available. Search engines are always working towards improving their technology to crawl the web more deeply and return increasingly relevant results. However, there is and will always be a limit to how much search engines can offer.

6. Provide online editorial content – Because online content needs to be refreshed on a regular basis, publication houses are always looking for new content. Try to become a feature columnist for a local magazine. Ask to write a short column on technology trends which will then be posted on their website. Make sure your article links to your website and credits you as the expert.

7. Social networks – It is important to connect with the younger generation. This is critical no matter if you're selling gadgets in a retail environment or need to secure future sales for installed services. Social networking is becoming one of the most powerful channels for word-of-mouth. Social networking sites are no longer limited to teenage gossip. Many professional businesses are posting video clips on popular sites, such as uTube.

8. Webinars – Webinars enable you to interact with customers by offering them valuable information. Conduct webinars on new technology or trends in the marketplace. Become a valuable resource for your customers by providing them interesting information and allowing them to ask questions... right from the comfort of their own home. Many online programs, such as GoToMeeting enable you to conduct webinars effectively. Participate in a webinar <http://eclipsemarketing.net/marketing-classes.html> to see how it's done.

9. Podcasts - Podcasting has become a popular forum for education. These can be a simple alternative to webinars if you don't like the typical PowerPoint format. Also, podcasts offer another option to get in front of your customer if they are not able to attend your webinars. Users can simply download the complete podcasts in advance, which gives them ability to play the podcasts offline.

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10. Banners – Banners are a cost-effective way to advertise your services on another companies website. Banners are simple and easy to create. They should be flashy enough to catch the visitor's attention. Remember, "Less is more", so keep it to a few words. Make sure your banner links to your website.

Although web marketing is a cost-effective medium, as with any marketing campaign, you still have to make an initial investment. More importantly, Internet marketing is dynamic, so even though it's less expensive comparatively, you'll need to re-invest on a regular basis.

Leslie Stevens, President of Eclipse Marketing, a full-service marketing and PR firm, has over 15 years experience providing marketing strategies and marketing tools to electronic systems contractors, manufacturers and distributors.

Eclipse Marketing provides Marketing Tools to CEDIA, InfoComm, PARA TechHome and NASBA. These cost-effective marketing tools are designed to enable system contractors to increase sales by promoting their business on a professional level.

Visit Eclipse Marketing at www.eclipsemarketing.net

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