



Traffic  
Engage  
Convert

Harnessing the Internet  
to Grow Your Business

## **What Internet Marketers Know That You Don't**

**Four Steps to Make  
Internet Marketing  
Work For Your Business**

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## **Introduction**

Many companies decide to invest in Internet Marketing because they were contacted by someone who described a compelling offer. With eager anticipation they agree to terms and their new partner sets about building an exciting new Internet based campaign for them. It seems like a good idea, except for the fact that the true value of the program is difficult to quantify, and it's taking several months for the results to emerge, and there is no guarantee that results will ever emerge! Anxiety grows because the money being spent on this program is being withheld from other more traditional (i.e. reliable) methods. Yet, the competitors can be clearly seen pushing ahead with Internet Marketing. The whole program just does not come together as originally expected, and it will eventually be shut down.

Perhaps you've been there? Have you paid good money to an outside firm that tantalized you with their knowledge of the mysterious inner workings of Internet Marketing, and now you're wondering what you really got out of it? Unfortunately, this is a story that most small to mid-sized companies can personally identify with.

There are, in fact, many highly capable Internet Marketing Services out there with very good offerings that can help you grow. But, there is a right way and a wrong way to engage with those services. In this White Paper you will learn the right way. Read on if you've had little or no success with marketing on the Internet.

## **The Opportunity Is Real**

You have the opportunity to energize your business with new leads and customers by moving rapidly and strategically to market your business online. But, your hopes for growth will be dashed and your investment will be wasted if you proceed with any Internet Marketing program before conquering two essential challenges; challenges that are so simple any company can overcome them, yet so intimidating most companies do not. The challenges are: 1) you must decide where you are going (goals), and 2) you must choose the route you will take to get there (strategy). Yes, that seems like clichéd advice; you should consider it anyway.

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Countless companies have pulled the trigger on developing a new website, hiring a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) consultant or launching a Google Adwords campaign, for example, simply because "everyone knows" those are the things you do when you are marketing online. But the conventional wisdom is missing the point that those efforts are tactical; and tactics are not capable of producing the intended results unless they are aligned with a strategy designed to achieve your goals.

So, the opportunity is real, but not in the way you may have been thinking about it. *There is no real opportunity in any specific marketing solution you can pursue if it is not integral to a strategy.*



Perhaps you disagree, thinking “I know that a good SEO campaign will increase the traffic to our website!” But is website traffic growth the end goal? Do you know how well your website performs in converting traffic into customers? Do you know which search phrases are associated with prospects that are likely to convert? If you don’t know the answer to these and several other questions then hiring even the top-most SEO ace will not achieve your goals for growth (more about that SEO ace later).

The opportunity is real because your customers and prospects have in fact become Internet-centric in their approach to their own jobs. They all use email, search with Google, subscribe to electronic newsletters, and so on. That affords you the opportunity to reach more people with your message, generating more leads, at a true cost advantage vs. offline methods.

But you cannot win customers online with haphazard tactics. Instead, you work strategically to build an *Internet Marketing system*, including many automated components, producing repeatable results you can quantify. And that system can be continually measured, tested and improved until eventually you have outpaced your competitors. That, in a nutshell, is the real opportunity.

*You can build an Internet Marketing system that can be measured, tested and improved until eventually you’ve outpaced your competitors.*

## **Goals and Strategy Come First**

So the secret to engaging an Internet Marketing Service is to first recognize the condition of your Internet Marketing strategy. If your strategy is well defined and complete then you are in a good position to *evaluate, engage and supervise* the marketing services that can deliver the specific solutions your strategy requires.

What happens if your strategy is not established when you engage an outside service to help you? This puts you in the category of an *easy client* that some services highly prefer. The website developer is free to follow his/her creative instincts to build you a flashy site showcasing their artistry. And the SEO consultant can settle in to collect fees for several months in exchange for making your website rank well for search queries that likely have little to do with the way real prospects are searching. And so on. These Internet Marketing Services have worked with strategy-driven clients and they know the difference—they like you because your money is easy to earn and their accountability is low.

But if you recognize your Internet Marketing strategy is not in place then you are still OK. Because then you are in a good position to *evaluate, engage and supervise* your own marketing team or a marketing consultant to build a strategy that will accomplish your goals. The next section will guide you in that process.

## **Four Simple Steps**

Recognizing that your strategy is not in place is a healthy start to correcting the



problem. The following steps will get you there.

### Step 1: Determine Your Goals

It may not be immediately obvious, but the goals you set do have significant impact on the alternative strategies you can adopt. As an illustrative example consider the following possible goals:

1. Grow revenue from new customers 25% by the end of the fiscal year.
2. Grow revenue from existing customers 50% by the end of third quarter.
3. Reduce the costs associated with taking orders 30% within 12 months.

What kind of strategies do each of these goals suggest? All three goals could drive a strategy that calls for significant improvements to the product information you provide on your website. But goal 1 could also drive a strategy to invest in online advertising, which may be of little value to goals 2 and 3. And goal 2 could drive a strategy to launch email marketing to your existing customer list, which is likely not helpful to goals 1 and 3. Finally, goal 3 could drive a strategy to install a shopping cart system on your website, which is not necessarily helpful to goals 1 or 2.

*By setting goals you reduce the wide spectrum of possible strategies down to a manageable set of choices.*

By setting goals first you know where you are headed and how to measure success. And you also reduce the wide spectrum of possible strategies down to a manageable set of choices.

### Step 2: Analyze Your Situation

Goals are necessary but not sufficient for developing a strategy because the strategy must accommodate the internal and external realities impacting your business; realities of your budget, your current sales and marketing functions, your targeted markets, your current customers, your competitors, and the marketing resources available to you. In this step you will develop the questions that your goals make evident, and determine their answers.

Here are several examples of the kinds of questions you will identify:

- How do your customers use the Internet in their purchasing process?
- What are their favorite trade magazines?
- Are your competitors advertising online? Where? How much are they spending?
- Which competitor has the most effective website?
- Which search phrases are the most important to your industry and your company in particular? How much search traffic is associated with them?
- What are the competitor rankings on Google for the important search phrases?
- Are there some good marketing channels left untapped by your competitors?
- What is the typical time required from initial sales lead to closing a sale?
- How many interactions with the prospect are required to close a sale?
- What are your current most important sources of sales leads? Which sources produce the highest quality leads?
- What is the average cost of a sales lead from your current marketing programs? How much can you afford to pay for a lead?
- What is the full set of alternative Internet Marketing methods you should con-



sider? What is the estimated cost/lead for each of them?

- How many new leads do you need to achieve your goals?
- How much traffic does your current website get? What are the sources of that traffic?
- What percent of visitors does your website convert into leads?

Can you begin to see that with this kind of data in hand you will have a much different conversation with the next Internet Marketing Service that calls you up and offers a sexy program? The person calling you with the offer will quickly recognize you are not going to be one of those “easy clients.”

### Step 3: Develop Your Strategy

Your strategy will be a set of coordinated decisions spanning several functions, and those decisions will create a marketing system that achieves your goals.

Your strategy will be a set of coordinated decisions that create a marketing system.

Consider this simplified strategy statement as an example:

*In order to grow revenue by 25% we will invest to win new customers in the OEM segment, and target them with PPC ads in search engines and on relevant industry news websites. The ads will send the traffic to a new landing page offering a white paper on the topic of rapid integration of non-standard components that visitors can download if they provide an email address. We will follow up to the email address with an email series that nurtures the prospect to move beyond opting-in to becoming a viable lead our sales team can pursue.*

The simple strategy has implications for several of your functions and budgets, including Advertising, Website Development, Copywriters, Technical Writers and the Sales Team. It also makes the establishment of an integrated marketing system more apparent, for example:

- The PPC ads must be developed for keywords that your targeted OEM segment will search on.
- The PPC ad copy must reflect the needs of the searcher and the offers on the new landing page, namely the white paper on rapid integration.
- A system for downloading the white paper and collecting email addresses is needed on the website.
- Another system is needed for automatically sequencing a series of emails to each person that opts in with their email address.
- The copy in the email sequence must offer simple next steps to the recipient so they can easily identify themselves as a viable lead when they are ready to proceed with you.
- The Sales Team must understand the information that has been consumed by the leads and be ready with additional relevant resources.
- The advertising systems, the website and the email systems must all have integrated metrics measuring customer response
- Your team must conduct routine analysis of the data for the end to end system and incorporate improvements.



So, think again about that ace SEO consultant that called and offered to make your website rank high in the search engines. If your strategy is like the one described above then you don't currently need his services and don't need to spend your time considering them.

Or, if you think your strategy could be improved with an SEO component then you are already in a position to knowledgeably direct the SEO consultant to the specific landing page you want optimized and the specific search phrases you want to rank for. Those two points alone will significantly improve the likelihood of having a successful SEO campaign; you will not be an "easy client."

#### Step 4: Plan the Execution

Now it is time to map your strategy into a plan. You will specify all of the resource consuming activities, i.e. tactics, that are required to meet your goals using the approach defined by your strategy. This plan will include schedules, dependencies and milestones and it will assign ownership to each tactic.

A tactic is an allocation of resources and a directive to take action, and so it cannot be a generalization. For example, "Implement Pay Per Click Advertising" by itself is not sufficiently specific. It needs to include a description of the customers you want to reach, what those customers are searching online for, which page of your website you will send the traffic to, and how much you can afford to pay for each visitor. Without the necessary specificity you are licensing your implementers to develop their own strategies. (They will be happy to do that, but you will not like the results.)

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As you assign owners to each tactic you must decide how to address the expertise that is missing in your organization. That's the right time to enlist the support of outside Internet Marketing Specialists. And you can proceed to do so with confidence because you are now fully equipped to *evaluate, engage and supervise* each candidate Internet Marketing partner.

### **Making It Doable**

The title of the previous section was "Four Simple Steps" but perhaps they don't sound so simple given your current situation. In that case, you have two options:

- Make your goal smaller and within easier reach, then the resulting strategy and tactical plan will be correspondingly simpler. Once you have achieved success with the smaller goal you can define a larger goal to pursue next.
- Or if you need to make more progress sooner, then you can engage an Internet Marketing Specialist that will operate at the strategic level with you to create significant goals and a strategy that will achieve them.

These Internet Marketing Specialists exist as consultants who are knowledgeable



across the spectrum of Internet Marketing systems and also capable of understanding the important business realities in your company, your markets and your industry; a combination of skills not commonly encountered.

Web Lever is an example Internet Marketing consultancy specializing in leveraging the Internet to grow businesses. You can request a no-charge discovery session where you will learn the extent to which Internet Marketing exists as an opportunity for your business and the important next steps you can take to turn the opportunity into reality.

## **Conclusion**

You should now be equipped to think differently about Internet Marketing in your business. You can now focus on setting goals, creating a strategy, building a system and outsourcing with confidence. You will no longer be an “easy client” for the next sexy Internet Marketing Service that rings your phone.

But it's not enough to be equipped with knowledge—you need to act, and quickly. It is quite possible your arch competitor is working right now to build an Internet Marketing system that delivers repeatable and measurable results, with every intent of continuously improving it until you are not able to keep pace. You need to get there first!

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