

Marketing Your Website

by John Ragosta

Marketing your website is a never ending process. Before the Internet the basics of how to market your products and services was generally understood by most business people. You printed business cards, ran classified ads, distributed flyers, sent out press releases, used radio and TV, gave away branded promotional gifts, and more. These are some of the tactics referred to as traditional marketing.

The advent of the Internet brought with it the era of online marketing. All of a sudden we had to know about Search Engine Optimization, E-mail campaigns, Link strategies, news groups, affiliate programs and more. Online marketing was invented. Successfully promoting an online business requires a sound understanding and methodical application of the principles of online marketing and promotion.

The objective of this month's newsletter is to help readers understand the importance of marketing your website via traditional marketing. Focusing on online methods to the exclusion of offline does only half the job. Give due attention to offline methods of promotion in conjunction with your online promotional efforts to ensure the widest possible coverage of ALL of your potential markets.

This is often referred to as offline marketing of your website. With offline marketing the focus is telling the world about your website much the same way you would traditionally market any other product or service you may be offering. In other words you need to market in the physical world the fact that you have a website. This is true whether you sell through the website or use it as a way to educate customers and prospects.

Even if your business only exists in the virtual world you must realize ALL your customers live, and always will live, in the physical world. Hence they can often be reached much better from the physical world. The moral of the story is to never forget about the offline promotion of your website. Your success or failure could depend on it.

Online and offline marketing should be integrated for maximum effect. Traditional marketing can play a big part in informing your target audience about your web site. Advertising, direct marketing and PR should all be included in your web site promotional plan. One school of thought sees the main role of the internet within commerce as a vehicle for improving service to customers and increasing organizational productivity. The integration of online and offline marketing is what is required in order for the internet to evolve as a channel of communications that is tightly integrated into enterprise marketing strategies. Through the integration of online and offline marketing isolated businesses will be able to extend themselves into organization with wider boundaries that can easily be penetrated by both customers and suppliers. Ensure your web site address (the URL - www.yoursitename.com) appears on all forms of written communication such as stationary, business cards, print ads, signage and packaging. There are many other options available for you to promote your web site using traditional offline media. The point here is to think about the whatever offline marketing you're doing and consider ways your online marketing can be integrated with this.

Perhaps the most effective and under-appreciated tool of them all is word of mouth. Talk about your business and your website at every opportunity and encourage your customers, friends,



family and colleagues to do the same. You would be surprised at just how many businesses out there owe their success to little more than word of mouth referrals.