

Internet Marketing for 2007 - Affordable Efficiency

If you pay attention to online marketing, you are constantly inundated with people who sell the so-called "secrets" to brand new marketing techniques on the Internet. Each and every day you are bombarded with new e-books, teleseminars and software alleging to hold the "secrets" of blog and ping, or the "secrets" of the death of Google AdSense or the "secrets" of content is king for Search Engines.

However, the truth of the matter in nearly all cases is that most of these products are expensive and endorsed solely by the gurus who get paid for every item they sell. Real testimonials are rare and the pressure you are under to purchase these products is enormous.

Let's make a two-fold pact for 2007:

One - We will not be swept away by all the hype on the Internet.

Two - We will primarily use tried and tested, successful Internet marketing techniques that won't cost us a fortune to use.

To help you off to the right start in launching your own cost-effective marketing strategy for 2007, I want to share some valuable ideas that I've used to grow my own business. These marketing concepts are genuinely affordable, truly simple to implement and have honestly helped me gain generous exposure, which has resulted in new clients and increased sales. My top fifteen favorite effective and inexpensive Internet marketing tactics are listed below:

1. Article submissions to online e-zines, directories and newsgroups, and off-line magazines and newspapers (don't worry about the duplicate content issues ... just get as many one-way links to your site as possible to boost your Search Engine ranking). Writing and submitting free reprint articles is a resourceful way to generate increased exposure and will drive traffic to your web site.
2. Create and market your own affiliate program using low cost tools on the Internet, which incidentally, there are numerous tools on the web that are very affordable. Offer affiliates your articles for reprint and allow them to use their affiliate link in your byline. But don't stop there ... submit your program to affiliate program directories so that prospects can find it readily.
3. Write and submit press releases to both paid and free press release sites. Let your target audience know about your company, new products and services you're offering and also about special company events or promotions. If you're concerned that perhaps your writing talents are a bit rough yet, hire a ghostwriter to draft your release for you. And yes, there are many talented, professional writers who work on a freelance basis and accept both one-time and ongoing projects at an affordable rate.
4. Register with and actively participate in forums that target your ideal client or customer. Check in at least once a week and offer helpful advice to other forum participants seeking assistance and information in your area of expertise. Be sure to craft and use a compelling signature that will get added to your posts. With just a small investment of your time, you can establish yourself as an expert within your industry, which can result in generous exposure.
5. Offer legitimate comments and articles to blog owners who cover your topic area and target your audience. Create solid and productive relationships, offering to make blog postings for them in return for a byline with a live link to your site. The fact that you're willing to offer blog owners something of value upfront will make them eager to reciprocate.
6. List your teleseminars, e-zines, live events and books on Craigslist in cities and sections that have appeal for your target audience. Sign-in and repost your listings on a regular basis to keep them current.
7. Research opportunities to be a guest on teleseminars, podcasts and webinars. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the number of opportunities available if you simply take the time to look for them. Keep a list of questions and potential topics ready for your pitch. Keep track of your guest appearances and promote them on your web site.
8. Actively participate in online social networks such as MySpace, Ryze and LinkedIn. Write compelling copy for your profile and be sure to have a good picture and logo to add where permitted. Including your photo allows people to feel a connection to you, simply because they can put a face to your name.

9. Join and participate in associations and non-profits that attract your perfect client. Find relevant associations by searching for your keyword + association in search engines and visit the American Society of Association Executives. Involvement in organizations such as this, as well as local civic organizations, offers valuable networking opportunities.
10. Place paid advertisements in e-zines that target your audience. If possible, purchase the advertisement when the publisher is running one of your articles in order to gain maximum exposure with this strategy. There are three types of common advertisements available in e-zines: classified, sponsor and solo. Chose the most inexpensive position with the greatest exposure.
11. Write or hire a ghostwriter to create a short e-course that you can give away so long as people provide you with their e-mail address. Make certain that your e-course is relevant to your target audience and not full of fluff and fillers. By offering solid value in your e-course, you can benefit from readers who take notice of your other work/articles and will often seek out additional work you've written. Be sure to include a privacy policy and notify those who give you their e-mail address that they will be subscribed to your e-zine.
12. Downloadable white papers are usually longer versions of articles and often include graphics and links to resources. As with your e-course require people who want the white paper to register for your e-zine. Encourage people to send the registration link to their colleagues, friends and family who share a similar interest.
13. Create your own blog, update at least every other day and include links to your web sites. Ping blog directories and Search Engines every time you make a post for verification that your blog is turning up results.
14. Sponsor contests and submit them to contest directories. Give away a book a month or an hour of your services and encourage people to register for your e-zine. If your business involves selling a product rather than a service, you can offer specific products for prizes with contest entry automatic when people signup for your e-zine. Be creative with your contests, but always make the winning prize something of value that is relevant to your business.
15. Testimonials and referrals can be obtained from the same people. Offer to include a picture with testimonials and a live link to your client's web site. This strategy is a win-win marketing tactic for both you and your client. No satisfied client would refuse such an opportunity! Instead of e-mailing referrals send a professionally written letter via postal mail with some of your most popular articles and invite recipients to call you for a free fifteen minute consultation.

There are dozens of free marketing techniques in the online and off-line world. These fifteen are not the only ones I use but they are my absolute favorites and have been used successfully by thousands of people, including Internet gurus. Don't fall for every new marketing scheme; instead, spend your money selectively on marketing products. If you are pressed for time hire a virtual assistant to handle the free and low cost marketing techniques listed here and carve out some time in your schedule every month to research and evaluate new techniques.

Happy Marketing!

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