

Internet Marketing:

Tough Times Call for Smart Decisions





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The Internet is very much like a toolbox. You have a problem; you go to your toolbox, select a tool and fix your problem. But, in light of the current economic state, what should you do while sales are low and the light at the end of the tunnel is quite dim? What tool is best? Should you spend thousands of dollars on a public relations campaign or, try to develop and implement a targeted internet marketing strategy on your own? What's right for you? How do you know?

Well, before you rush off and start your research, it's important to remember the first rule of marketing: When the economy is slow, you shouldn't slack off on your marketing efforts. Internet marketing is very much like quicksand...the bigger your 'splash', the faster you'll sink. To control your 'splash', use the tips below to effectively manage your internet marketing efforts. Roll up your sleeves - tough times call for smart decisions!

It's about quality, not quantity. Yes, it's a cliché but it couldn't be more appropriate when it comes to online marketing. Is it better to cast a wide net, or be selective? Too many initiatives or poorly directed efforts can quickly alienate and confuse your audience. If your marketing is worth its salt, it'll deliver results, without offending or browbeating. If not, at best you'll be irritating and at worst, you'll be ignored.

To ad or not to ad. The choices are many; however, good choices are few. Should you buy ads on heavily trafficked web sites or should you keep it simple and go for the smaller sites? Should you clutter up your own web site with ads? The answer to this can only come from you. Take a hard look at your objectives and business plan. Are you trying to sell a big-ticket item or service? Do you need to target customers in a niche market? Do you have the personnel and infrastructure in place to handle the response? Examine what your business needs to accomplish and then start small. You can always 'upgrade' later.

Deliver. If you're practicing doing quality marketing, you need to back it up with quality work. Nothing is more disappointing for a customer than biting the marketing bait and being interested in what appears to be a qualified business, only to find out that the business cannot deliver on the promises made through their marketing.

Stick with what works, ditch what doesn't. If you have big deal experts giving you marketing advice and it's not producing results, move on to another strategy. Experts aren't always right. Conversely, if your marketing strategy is working and someone tries to convince you to abandon it, stick to your guns *and* your strategy.

Measure twice, cut once. Be sure to measure your marketing efforts and results. When you get a response you'll know exactly where it originated. Using this technique, you'll be able to axe efforts that are not generating results and focus on those that do.

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Treat internet marketing like dollar-cost averaging. You can't expect to get outstanding results with your first efforts – it's nice if it happens but, it's rare. You have to launch a steady, consistent and patient with your marketing plan. If you hone your strategy, over time you'll reap an abundance of results – whether the economy is up or down.

Internet marketing is sticky business and the worst part is there are no hard and fast rules to guide you. Most of it is trial, error and hunches. But, keep a level head, follow a set plan, and stick to it and not only will you be ahead of the game but, you'll be on solid ground by the time the economy begins to recover.

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