

Marketing Your Website

The website is the most dynamic tool in your company's marketing arsenal. It is the dynamic broadcaster of your image and message and the real-time channel for you to communicate with your market. With your website you can reach out to your customers and they too can reach out to you. All of this combines to make the website perhaps the single most important marketing activity your company engages in. This said, the website's primary weakness is that it is also the only marketing tool that itself needs to be marketed. The question therefore is, how do you market a marketing tool?

There are well known ways to market your website – some more effective than others – including search engine optimization, online advertising, incoming links, and others. This article seeks to go back to grassroots marketing, providing 9 ways to market your website through activities you can take to raise awareness and create interest. The 9 ways to market your website include:

1. Traditional Marketing

We start with traditional marketing because for reasons we do not completely understand, the impulse when dealing with website marketing is to focus on online exposure options. While the online channels are viable and relevant, so too are traditional channels, such as ads in local press, direct mail featuring a special offer, t-shirts and other giveaways, event sponsorship, and even local radio ads. Also make certain your website is featured on all your collateral materials and all your communications, including your packaging and signage.

2. Online Giveaways

The use of digital giveaways can help bring people to your website because they offer a functional tool that users find helpful and interact with often. Giveaways that are placed on a computer desktop, such as calendars, wallpaper and other software clips, not only promote your website to the user, but also present the possibility of a viral campaign by users passing your tool (and by extension your website) to others.

3. Use Bookmarks

One of the key rules of marketing is that once you have initiated a communication that has elicited a response, you hold on to the contact. If you do not have a function that requires the user to provide contact information (not always recommended anyway), the opportunity you provide the user to bookmark your website and the reasons you give him/her to come back could be the only continuity mechanism you have. Providing bookmark options on all your web pages could lead to people saving your website, and coming back.

4. Use CDs & DVDs

Another offline opportunity can be found in the distribution of cds and dvds featuring elements of your website. Once upon a time this was a good way to reach people who did not go online, but in today's environment, where 77% of people are online (and the remaining 23% probably don't constitute your market) the distribution of these discs is

more a way to gain digital exposure through traditional channels, encouraging people to visit your website by bring the website (via disc) to them.

5. Provide Useful Information

Almost every person that uses the Internet does so at some point to gather information and if you can position yourself as a source of that information, you will be able to generate traffic to your website. By putting useful information on your site you will be able to draw direct traffic, and by placing articles on other websites, you will both boost your search engine positioning and attract people back to your site.

6. Interact With Online Forums

There are chat groups and forums for just about every topic imaginable, most likely including some connected to your product/service categories. You can create interest in your website by joining and engaging these forums. Be certain to do so genuinely and not as an overt commercial, or you will do more harm than good. You know a lot about what you sell and can offer these forums true value through your participation. That value will become evident and people will begin to ask where your information comes from. At that point you can share your URL. Anything more overt than that will be scene as trickery and could backfire.

7. Publish a Newsletter

One way to keep in touch with people who interact with your website is the publication of a newsletter. This newsletter can provide useful information, serve as an update notice mechanisms, discuss new products/services, and even profile people relevant to your sector. The newsletter will provide position your company as a source of information and make your website attractive to people interested in your content.

8. Publish Books

Similar to articles, e-books serve to position your company as the resource for useful information and, when distributed through other websites, creates for your site external links that help place you higher on search engines. The books also establish your reputation to a degree perhaps a step higher than articles as books are perceived as being a higher accomplishment and a greater offer.

9. Blog

Blogging has become somewhat of a phenomenon, and for good reason. The blogs offer the opportunity for people to express opinions, demonstrate expertise, and develop a following. Your use of a blog to obtain these advantages and channel traffic to your website is rapidly becoming a web imperative.

There are many marketing tactics beyond keyword purchasing and fuzzy search engine optimization practices that drive traffic to your website. If you create a good mix of tactics and execute properly, your website can become a major source of leads and customer interaction.