

**Suite 308****MARKETING YOUR WEBSITE**

***Marketing Your Website***  
***Online Marketing***  
***Online Advertising***  
***Helpful Links***

**308.01 PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE**

E-marketing means using digital technologies to help sell your goods or services. These technologies, like e-mail and websites, are a valuable complement to traditional marketing methods whatever the size of your company or your business model.

The basics of marketing remain the same – creating a strategy to deliver the right messages to the right people. What has changed is the number of options you have. Through businesses will continue to make use of traditional marketing methods, such as advertising, direct mail and PR, e-marketing adds a whole new element to the marketing mix.

Simply put, e-marketing gives you lots of new ways to reach your customers, many of them cheaper and more effective than traditional methods.

**308.02 NAVIGATION****DIRECT NAVIGATION**

- The best way of generating web traffic is also the cheapest to implement – simply make sure you include your web address on all printed material: business cards, letters, flyers, newsletters, posters, etc.
- If you have chosen a simple URL, it will also make it easier for people to remember from television and radio adverts or personal recommendations.
- You might want to consider a .com address. If you operate exclusively in the UK, choose a .co.uk address. To make it easy for someone to find your website, avoid hyphens or other punctuation in your web address.

**WEB REFERRALS**

Over a fifth of web visits come from web referrals. There are a number of ways you can generate these:

- **Include your web address** as a standard part of all e-mail footers.

- **E-mail marketing** – targeted electronic newsletters and offers to customers can be very effective. If the offer is interesting it is also very easy for people to pass the e-mail on to friends and colleagues.
- **Online advertising** – the use of banner and pop-up adverts on other websites to drive people to yours in a contentious issue. Response rates tend to be very low. However, the amount of money spent on them continues to increase. If you are considering paying for online advertising, it's essential to have a clear idea of your objectives and to take advice from an agency on the best way to reach your audience.
- **Reciprocal marketing** – this involves finding sites with complementary content and agreeing to have links or banners to each other's sites. A good example of this would be your Trade Association.
- **Forums** – there are discussion forums devoted to every conceivable topic. It is perfectly acceptable to monitor these, join in discussion and point people towards your website. However, it is essential you do this only as a direct answer to people's queries – it's considered bad form to promote your products overtly or to conceal the fact that you represent the company you are recommending. Some companies with a high profile in a given industry host their own forums, which can be a good way of positioning yourself as a 'voice of the industry'.

## **SEARCH ENGINES**

While search engines are far outstripped by direct referrals, they can still prove useful for attracting customers if you are in a very price sensitive market or you provide a niche product.

Over 90% of all referrals to e-commerce sites come from the four largest search engines: Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL. Competition for a high ranking on these sites is intense because only 10% of web users look beyond the second page of results.

If you are expecting your website to generate significant commercial returns it may well be worth spending the extra to engage the services of a professional search engine placement agency. If you are a small company with a limited budget, and your website is just one of several channels to market, you may be better off with a DIY approach. If things go well you can always revisit your search engine placement strategy at a later date.

Different search engines rank websites in different ways – some by a site's popularity, some by relevance and some by quality. Many also offer the option of paying for a place on the first page.

### **Key words**

You can improve your ranking on search engines that work by key words or metadata (information that describes a web page, but isn't visible on the pages) by using the right combination of descriptive words when you build your website.

## **Link analysis**

Other engines measure a site's popularity by the number of websites that have a link to it. You can boost your ranking on these search engines by getting reciprocal links with trade associations and consumer forums.

## **Pay for inclusion**

This means paying a search engine to include your web pages. Although most web pages will be found by a search engine and included eventually, pay for inclusion can mean your website will appear nearer the top of the search list. Looksmart, for instance, charges about £150 for submission of new sites.

## **Pay per click (PPC)**

This allows websites to pay for the position they occupy in a search engine's listings. The highest bidder for a particular keyword or phrase appears first, with the second highest appearing second, and so on. You can often specify how much you are willing to pay per click – anywhere from about 15 to 35 pence per click. How much you pay, and how many click-throughs you receive, determines your position in the search engine's ranking.

## **Set Targets**

- Set goals for your e-commerce website and for e-marketing: to bring in new business or cut the cost of each sale or expand your business into new markets.
- Agree specific, measurable objectives for what you want to achieve, such as a percentage increase in sales, new customers or an increase in the average value of each sale.

## **Cost-Benefit Analysis**

- Compare the costs of an e-commerce site, like design, paying for search engine placement, software and maintenance, with benefits like improved sales, greater order handling capacity and global representation.

## **Plan & Test**

Options: There are a wide variety of e-marketing options available, each with their own particular strengths and weaknesses.

## **E-Mail**

This method allows people to receive documents or other files electronically. It is a fast, flexible and effective way of getting marketing messages through.

## **308.03      MARKETING REGULATIONS**

### **Getting it right**

#### The new rules

In December 2003 new rules came into force covering marketing e-mails and SMS message to individuals.

The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations introduced an opt-in consent procedure for commercial e-mails – which means you can only target people who have agreed to be contacted. This is a change from the previous rules, which only required that customers be given the opportunity to opt out of being marketed to.

To save having to contact all your existing customers to get consent, the rules apply only to new customers. You can continue marketing to your current customers provided they can opt-out of future messages and the messages cover similar products and services.

The other main point is that you must clearly mark your e-mails with your contact details and include a valid return e-mail address.

### **Using 'Cookies'**

Cookies are small pieces of software which websites store on users' computers. They have a very wide variety of uses, but an important one is to 'track' the movements of visitors to websites, counting clicks, establishing how people arrived at the site and how they navigate around it. In short, cookies can be a very useful marketing tool.

Under the new Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations, businesses have to inform their customers that they use cookies, and provide an opt-out facility for those who do not wish to accept them. In practice this will mean providing the user with a 'privacy' or 'cookies' statement which explains how they are being used and how they can be switched off.

### **Don't overdo it**

Done right, e-mail and other forms of e-marketing can be extremely effective. Done wrong, however, and they can be extremely intrusive and annoying – almost more so than any form of marketing.

It's essential that you contact customers in a measured, planned and targeted way with offers that they will appreciate. Nothing will turn your customers against you like relentless unsolicited e-mail (known as 'spam') or SMS messages.

By sending unsolicited commercial communications you may also be breaching the new privacy rules set out in this brochure. It is very important that you take these fully into account when planning campaigns and ensure that you comply with them. Failure to do so could result in fines – and a lot of negative publicity.

## **Appropriateness**

Make sure the technology you choose is right not only for the message but for your customers. The set-up and performance of people's computers varies tremendously. Some office computers don't have soundcards, which means music or video files won't be any use. Firewalls, which protect networks, are also common these days. Often they will limit the size or type of file that customers can receive. One solution to these problems is to host large files on your website and simply send an e-mail with a link.

Another important consideration is the connection speed. Do most of your customers access e-mail at work with a fast connection or do they use a modem at home? If it's the latter, then large attachments or images will make the e-mail frustratingly slow to download.

Finally, there's an issue of compatibility. Different programmes will display e-mail differently. An e-mail with images or an HTML component could look messy on a different set-up, or even cause the programme to crash.

The solution is to profile your customers and understand what the best format for them is. Some may like e-marketing with whistles and bells, others might just like a plain text e-mail.

### **Pros**

- Flexible – you can send plain text, graphics or attach files – whichever suite your message best.
- Easy for people to forward on to others, building your reputation by word of mouth
- People can click on links and follow your call to action immediately.
- Less intrusive than telephone marketing.

### **Cons**

- Files need to be small enough to download quickly
- Unsolicited commercial e-mail (or 'spam') is a real problem and irritates consumers. You need to make sure that your e-mail marketing complies with privacy and data protection rules, and that it is properly targeted on people who want to receive it. If you do this properly, you can build a strong reputation as a best practice marketer.

### **Costs**

- If you already have an e-mail system, you can send e-mail at virtually no cost. If you want to send a bulk mailing or you want someone else to handle the responses, you can use an e-mail marketing agency. Even then the cost can be as low as a few pence per message.

## **TEXT MESSAGING (OR SMS)**

Text messaging or SMS (Short Messaging Service) are the brief messages that people send from their mobile phones.

### **Pros**

- Over 70% of the population have mobile phones, making them a very powerful way of reaching people.
- Most people take them everywhere – meaning they can be great for time sensitive messages.
- People tend to read virtually every text they get – unlike junk mail, spam or adverts which can be ignored.

### **Cons**

- Your message can be up to 160 characters – which does not give you much space to get your message over. Because phones are such a personal thing, people will respond negatively if they receive unwanted texts. Make sure you have their permission to send them texts and that your SMS marketing complies with privacy and data protection rules.
- Because there has been a rise in fraudsters using text messaging to get people to call expensive phone numbers, people are less likely to respond to teaser messages. It's good practice to make it clear who the message is from.

### **Costs**

- Because it's not practical to send out text messages one at a time you will need to employ a mobile phone agency to send out the texts for you. These work out at about 10p per text.

The development of 3G and smart phones, which have large screens and can play music and video clips, has made MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) possible. In future, companies will be able to send much richer, more interesting messages to these phones. Since the technology is new, it isn't yet being widely used. However, the same agencies that manage SMS campaigns will offer it soon.

## **308.04 FULLFILMENT**

Word of mouth on the web can be incredibly powerful. E-mail and web discussion forums make it easy to recommend your business or pass on details of special offers very quickly. Sometimes the buzz around a business can be so intense that the company becomes deluged by web visits, phone calls or orders.

## **ONE TO ONE MARKETING**

E-marketing lets you reach people who want to know about your products and services instantly – you don't have to wait until they come home from work and switch on the TV or open their mail. People have a different, more personal relationship with most new technologies. For example,, many people take mobile phones and PDAs where ever they go, and a surprising number feel lost without their e-mail. Combine this with the personalised aspect of e-marketing, and you can create very powerful and targeted campaigns.

## **MORE INTERESTING CAMPAIGNS**

E-marketing lets you crate interactive campaigns using music, graphics and videos. You could send your customers a game or a quiz – whatever you think will interest them. One of the great successes of e-marketing has been film companies letting people download trailers for forthcoming movies. Other small companies have picked up this idea – a radio controlled car company sends customers designs or photos of new products in development while clothing companies send out sneak previews of the new season's range.

## **BETTER CONVERSION RATE**

If you have got a website, then your customers are only ever a few clicks away from completing a purchase. Unlike other media which require people to get up and make a phone call, post a letter or go to a shop, e-marketing is seamless. The change from reading an e-mail to buying on a website is negligible – no special effort is required, meaning that your call to action can be much more direct.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING**

Not all businesses have found their sites to be as successful as hoped. Sometimes this is due to underlying strategic problems. However, because web users are impatient and have high expectations, minor easily-repaired flaws can often be enough to scupper a sale.

## **ONLINE ADVERTISING**

### **308.05 GETTING IT RIGHT**

You've managed to design your own website, round up the necessary funds, and get through the various agreements you need to sell your wares over the Internet. You are officially a cyber seller, a net-setter, an e-tailer. Before you start promoting your product, don't forget about your friends at the Federal Trade Commission, because they certainly haven't forgotten about you. In fact, the FTC recently published a guide for online advertising called Dot Com Disclosures

**Follow some basic points and you'll be fine:**

- If your advertisement doesn't pass muster offline, don't bother posting it online.
- If there's something your customers ought to know – that the purchase price does not reflect hidden fees, for instance – disclose it.
- Make your disclosure clear and conspicuous

The rules of conduct are, of course, only fresh until the next technological development, but the FTC has tried to make its guide as general and widely-applicable as possible. Its authority for implementing the new guidelines is derived from Section five of the Federal Trade Commission Act, which prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts or practices." This prohibition covers:

- Advertising claims
- Marketing and promotional activities
- General sales methods

The act isn't limited by medium, either, so the commission ensures consumer protection online as well as in traditional print, television, and other communication modes. In fact, the commission has taken a number of actions over the last six years to prevent online fraud and deception.

**The contents of your advertisement must comply with three basic principles:**

- An ad must be truthful and not misleading. So, if an ad is likely to mislead an average consumer and that misperception influences a customer's decision to buy or use the product, it is considered deceptive.
- Advertisers must be able to substantiate their claims. If you're going to run an ad, you must have support for the claims the ad conveys. For example, if your ad claims that tests show xyz.com is a better search engine than cde.com, you should have some test results to back that up. If there is more than one reasonable interpretation a consumer can make, the ad has to substantiate each interpretation.
- An ad cannot be unfair. It's unfair if, according to the FTC, it causes (or is likely to cause) serious consumer injury that couldn't have been reasonably avoided and isn't justified by the potential benefit to consumers or competition. For example, you must disclose all hidden fees. It's also considered unfair if you don't admit that you paid individuals for endorsements.

**Make it Clear and Conspicuous**

Much of the FTC's Dot Com Disclosures guide is devoted to a discussion of what constitutes a "clear and conspicuous" disclosure. The requirements depend on the nature of the advertisement. To determine if your ad complies, the FTC recommends adopting the perspective of a reasonable consumer and then asking yourself if the disclosure is presented in a way that you would both notice and understand.

There are a number of factors to consider, including:

- Whether a single disclosure is sufficient or whether the disclosure needs to be posted at various points throughout the site.
- Whether anything on the site distracts attention from the disclosure.
- The location of the disclosure, including where it is in relation to the advertisement (generally, you should avoid requiring customers to click on a link to read the disclaimer).
- The prominence of the disclosure.

You also need to keep in mind that competing browsers may display webpage formats differently, so the effectiveness of a particular disclosure may vary depending on the browser. The FTC links to a number of helpful examples on its website.

Use size, colour, and graphics to help highlight the disclosure. There is no need for subtleties here; simply indicate that you are making a disclosure or disclaimer and list those details that the consumer needs to know.

Two final notes: first, the FTC emphasizes that its rules and guides using the terms “written” or “writing” apply online as well as offline. Second, the FTC cautions that certain advertisements sent by e-mail may be considered “direct mail advertisements” and thus be subject to certain prohibitions under the direct mail solicitation rules.

Ultimately, if you run an ad on your website that a reasonable consumer will understand and that will not deceive that consumer, you should be fine. If, however, you run an ad that is even slightly deceptive or somewhat confusing, and you fail to “clearly and conspicuously” disclose, you may have a problem.

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## **HELPFUL LINKS**

### **Small Business Development Center – USA**

The following links will provide in-depth information on the following:

E-Commerce basics: The E-Commerce business strategy and how can it fit with your business. Help in building your web site. Web storefront services such as an out-of-the box commerce-enabled site. How you will receive payment on your web site? Credit Card clearing services who take credit card information and transfers the information to your Merchant Account Provider. Security issues to ensure that all transactions on your site are protected. Taxation principles and how they apply. How to market/promote your website. How you can track and fill your customers’ orders. And of course, customer service – making your site a good experience for your customer.

Search for domain names

<http://www.allwhois.com/>

List of accredited domain name registrars

<http://www.icann.org/registrars/accredited-list.html>

Find a host for your web site

<http://www.isp.check.com/indes.php>

Determine what services you need from an ISP

[http://www.work.com/content/view\\_content.html?content\\_id=5020](http://www.work.com/content/view_content.html?content_id=5020)

Usability checklist for site developers

<http://www.bunnyfoot.com/freestuff/articles/usability/usabilitychecklist.htm>

E-Commerce Software Packages

<http://www.freemerchant.com/>

Yahoo Store

<http://www.smallbusiness.yahoo.com/merchant/>

Guide to e-commerce software

<http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/resources/article/0,1467,3661-1125741,00.html>

How to build a web store

<http://www.sellitontheweb.com/ezine/buildit20.shtml>

Payment solutions for your e-commerce web site

[http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/solutions/secure\\_pay/index.php](http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/solutions/secure_pay/index.php)

Adding plastic to your site

[http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/news/news/article.php10380\\_362431](http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/news/news/article.php10380_362431)

Cyber Checkout

[http://www.cio.com/archive/111500\\_expert.html](http://www.cio.com/archive/111500_expert.html)

Understanding Merchant Accounts and their fees.

[http://www.workz.com/content/view\\_contact.html?section\\_id=530](http://www.workz.com/content/view_contact.html?section_id=530)

Finding the Best Merchant Account Provider for your Business

[http://www.ecomresourcecenter.com/ecom\\_connection/0901\\_03.html](http://www.ecomresourcecenter.com/ecom_connection/0901_03.html)

Electronic Payments – Alternative Systems

[http://www.workz.com/content/view\\_content.html?content\\_id=6265](http://www.workz.com/content/view_content.html?content_id=6265)

PayPal – a possible choice for merchants with lower-priced goods who may not be able to afford credit card capabilities.

<http://www.paypal.com/>

Micropayments – From the W3C

<http://www.w3.org/ECommerce?Micropayments/#What>

Developing Your Privacy Policy on Your Web Site

<http://www.ecomresourcecenter.com/build/developprivacy.html>

Web Site Security

[http://www.workz.co/content/view\\_content.html?content\\_id=6283](http://www.workz.co/content/view_content.html?content_id=6283)

Thawte – Digital Certificate Provider

<http://www.thawte.com/>

Verisign – Digital Certificate Provider

<http://www.verisign.com/>

Entrust – Security Products/Services

<http://www.entrust.com/>

Focus on Net Taxes

<http://www.tecsoc.org/econ/focustaxes.htm>

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Search Engine Submission Tips

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/index.php>

E-Commerce Merchandising/Marketing

<http://www.ddj.com/>

Market Your Local Business Online

[http://www.workz.com/contact/view\\_content.html?section\\_id=530](http://www.workz.com/contact/view_content.html?section_id=530)

E-Commerce Statistical Toolbox

[http://www.clickz.com/stats/stats\\_toolbox/article.php/](http://www.clickz.com/stats/stats_toolbox/article.php/)

Shipping Costs Bleed E-tailers Dry

<http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/7386.html>

Using Drop Shippers for Your Online Store

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/0,4621,306132,00.html>

Distribution Decisions: Drop-Shipping vs. Inventory vs. Fulfillment House

<http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt5/plan-4place.htm>

Should you Outsource E-Commerce Fulfillment?

<http://www.advisor.com/Articles.nsf/aid/CHOWE01>

E-Fulfillment Companies

[http://www.business.com/search;/rslt\\_default.asp?r4=t&query=e-fulfillment](http://www.business.com/search;/rslt_default.asp?r4=t&query=e-fulfillment)

Understand Online Customer Service

[http://www.workz.com/content/view\\_content.html?content\\_id=6181](http://www.workz.com/content/view_content.html?content_id=6181)

The Human Face of E-Customer Service

[http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2001/01/power\\_webvan.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/articles/2001/01/power_webvan.html)

E-Commerce News and Information

<http://www.internetnews.com/EC-news/>

### **United States Government**

Electronic Commerce Working Group (ECWG) of the United States Justice Department

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#ECWWG>

Consumer Protection in the Global Electronic Marketplace

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#FTC>

Congressional Activities on E-Signatures

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#ES>

Executive Order on Unlawful Conduct using the Internet

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#EO>

US Jurisdiction in Lawsuits

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#JLS>

US The National Infrastructure Protection Center Advisory

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ecommerce.html#VI>