

7 Online Marketing

The Internet is a living thing and wherever there is life, there are goods, products and services for sale. But not every large crowd of people includes your own target group.

Proper marketing entails more than simply describing the advantages or benefits of a particular sales proposition. You must be able to define your target audience. The closer you come to refining this definition, the closer you will be to actually identifying your target group. The Internet itself cannot define your target group for you. However, it is possible to use Internet-based customer surveys (see section "Surveying customers via the Internet: knowing, not guessing, what customers want" in Chapter 5) to easily obtain valuable information. The Internet is the ideal way to obtain sound and credible information about potential customers and to identify a target group for an advertising campaign.

Using search terms to approach customers in your target group

You have tried everything, but your website just does not rank very high when you enter your chosen keywords into a search engine - despite the fact the keywords you selected should be ideal from the perspective of your target group.

One solution to this problem is "keyword advertising". This marketing term refers to the purchase of one or more keywords from a search engine operator, together with a special advertising space and prominent placement.

The advantage of this method is that it guarantees your keyword will

generate a visible response. For one thing, the keyword result is visibly different from free search engine results. Moreover, your ad should be particularly well positioned in the rankings. With a properly chosen keyword, you can filter your target group from the masses of searchers and direct visitors to your website.

How do you determine how many potential customers will actually use your favourite keywords? Search engine companies offer a variety of appropriate research tools. These can give you the actual number of times a keyword was used, normally over a period of thirty days. You can visit the Espotting website to check your keywords free of charge at:

○→ www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/SearchTerms/

This tool is also useful for finding appropriate keywords for your meta tags (see section "Correct use of search engine listing criteria for improved ranking" in Chapter 5) and optimising them.

There are three important search engines for the Internet which forward your keywords to search portals. If you are listed in the database of these three search engines, you should receive wide exposure with very little effort. It would hardly be worthwhile to register with any of the other various search engines. The amount of work would not be worth the added benefit.

The following search engines cover a major percentage of the UK search portals:

- Yahoo (www.yahoo.co.uk)
- Google (www.google.co.uk)

If your website is listed in these databases, it will automatically also be included in the following search portals:

- www.aol.co.uk
- www.lycos.co.uk
- www.msn.co.uk
- as well as dozens of other smaller portals ...

Note:

When setting up your keyword advertising, be sure not to choose any brands, product names or terms that could be construed as a violation of copyright laws.

Cost structure for booking special terms (keyword advertising) with search portals:

- Fixed fee to produce an advertising campaign.
- Price per mouse click that takes visitors to your website through the advertising campaign.

Regional online marketing using the World Wide Web is not a contradiction

"WWW" stands for World Wide Web, but the World Wide Web is by no means a medium exclusively suited to international companies. The Internet offers its advertising customers (including companies that only conduct business locally) targeted promotional opportunities and a regionally controllable reach. There are programs that offer potential rewards and make sense for even small and medium-sized companies that have only limited advertising budgets.

You can use Internet advertising space as easily as printed ads in the local press or radio spots with regional broadcasters. Newspapers and radio stations also have websites. And their effective reach is restricted to the same extent as traditional media. That is why it makes a lot of sense to advertise your website in your local newspaper.

Websites such as www.wrx.zen.co.uk provide you with a list of local newspapers throughout the UK.

To find contact details of the local radio station most specific to your business, you could search on websites such as Radio-now.

- www.wrx.zen.co.uk

- www.radio-now.co.uk

Some companies even offer advertisers the option to only present their promotional material to Internet visitors who are identified by a specific postcode area. This process is known as IP targeting.

Cost structure for booking various advertising formats at selected websites:

- Setting up advertising using the customer's materials is usually free of charge.
- Two different pricing models are used for directing visitors to the advertising website.
Ad Impressions:
Price per 1000 impressions on the contracted medium space (independent of whether or not a prospect clicks on the impression and ends up at your website!)
Ad Clicks:
Price for each mouse click that takes visitors to your website via the advertising impression.
- A fixed fee is usually added if regional criteria need to be considered; e.g., only advertising when Internet visitors are identified by a selected postcode area.

Various Internet advertising formats

The Internet is a huge advertising medium. There are now internationally recognised standards (UAP- universal ad package) that have specific advertising formats for website owners. The following standard advertising formats are available:

Full-sized banner, 468 x 60 pixels
(probably the most widely used advertising format)

Super banner, 728 x 90 pixels
(Similar to a full-sized banner, only larger)

Sky scraper, 120 x 600 pixels
(placed to the left or right of editorial content)

Content ad, 300 x 250 or 336 x 280 pixels
(advertising space within editorial content)

Popup, various sizes
(Popup advertisements automatically open in a separate web browser window. This type of advertising should be used with caution, as it is considered to be annoying. The latest browsers can be set to automatically prevent popups from opening).

All of the described advertising formats can be displayed as text only or text with images.

Using business directories to advertise regionally

To achieve success using the Internet, companies need to put themselves in their customers' shoes and understand a customer's perspective and behaviour. Many potential customers now use the Internet to find companies that offer certain products and services. For example: The roof of your house needs to be repaired and you

are looking for a reputable and inexpensive roofer. Maybe you'll ask your friends, or maybe you'll try to get comparison quotes in your neighbourhood via the Internet. That's why you should not rely exclusively on word-of-mouth referrals if you offer such services, important as these may be.

Use the power of sector-specific search engines/ directories as you would the Yellow Pages. You can register your company there and classify it under specific categories. In addition, you can list your home page, telephone number, email address and mapped directions to your premises.

•www.yell.com

Every day, visitors to the site zero in on over two million addresses. The advantage that Yell has over other search engines is that visitors can limit their searches geographically, expand them with neighbouring vicinity searches and even obtain maps that show the way. Users of multimedia mobile phones, smart phones and organisers also have access to this information.

Cost structure for using the www.yell.com business directory:

- A one-time application/setup fee is charged that varies with the type of package you choose.
- You pay an annual fee related to the type of package.

You can register your website with www.yell.com at the following URL:

○→ www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Yell

Online Marketing for companies that operate regionally

There are many Internet portals worldwide, attracting millions of visitors each year. However, not all of these are able to deliver professional user profiles that are suitable for focused target group communications. Often e-mail list aggregators and brokers would be able to step in and provide useful in-depth targeting profiles. Eg,

www.tmnmedia.com

www.equifax.com

www.avongate.com

Additional information is available at:

○→ www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/PostalMarketing/

Regional e-mail marketing

E-mail is one of the most widely used Internet applications. Almost every Internet user has an e-mail address, and most have two, a personal one and a business one. Because e-mail is so popular, the advertising trade recognised long ago that e-mail can be a lucrative marketing tool.

E-mail marketing works for many types of products. If you want to use this sales channel for your own marketing purposes, you should be very careful when choosing the recipients of your advertising message. As a result of millions of spam e-mails (unwanted advertising messages from dubious companies), e-mails are increasingly considered to be tiresome and annoying. Many fly-by-night businesses are flooding the market with spam, a practice which is now illegal. However, it is not prudent to simply demonise e-mail campaigns. There are reputable companies that lease or sell e-mail

address databases and that properly obtain permission from their customers to use these addresses for advertising purposes.

Just like postal addresses that are offered by certain service providers, e-mail addresses can also be arranged according to profiles that enable filtering according to specific target groups. The quality of the information and amount of detail associated with a particular e-mail address varies a great deal from supplier to supplier. A properly maintained profile lists information about the company's business sector, contact and position descriptions within the company, company address, postcode, phone number, fax number and e-mail address.

This information enables you to not only choose e-mail addresses from within a certain geographic region, but also allows you to properly select your target group. You can exclude recipients that you know will not be of interest and only purchase or lease the e-mail addresses that are relevant for you. Although high quality e-mail addresses are normally the most expensive; they make an e-mail campaign significantly more effective. In the long run, these can often even be cheaper due to the minimal number of undeliverable messages,

The following URL lists service providers for e-mail addresses and marketing information with high-quality e-mail profiles and regional selection criteria:

○→ www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Address-Services/

Corporate image marketing using online games that relate to products

Online games attract players – and not only children or teenagers. Research has shown that online games are played by every age group, even those fifty and over. Over forty percent of those surveyed indicate that they play online games at the office, and more than half accept advertising in online games - so-called "adgames".

Games are a valuable marketing tool that includes subtly formulated advertising messages and can:

- Increase the recognition level of the company and the advertised product.
- Create a positive image when online games and company image are aligned with the advertised product.
- Improve customer retention through higher website visitor return rates.

When choosing an online game in which to integrate your advertising message, you should observe a few rules to improve your chances of success:

- Select online games that are in tune with your target group and that support your company image.
- Remember that men prefer action games, whereas women are more comfortable with knowledge games.
- Look for online games that are a lot of fun and easy to play.

- Choose online games that don't take long and that encourage visitors to play again.
- Avoid online games that require the installation of special software.
- Include a referral form on the web page used to start the game so that players can quickly and easily send the web address to friends, relations and business colleagues.

Continuously monitoring user behaviour

A website should be a living thing that continually adapts to new market situations.

This will make your website an effective advertising medium that remains relevant to the target group. Companies that analyse the behaviour of their Internet visitors can derive important information such as:

- How much traffic is my website generating?
- How do visitors arrive at my site and who refers them?
- Which third-party websites are linked to mine?
- What is the postcode area of the visitors?

- What visitors are coming to my website?
- What pages are they visiting most frequently?
- How long are my visitors staying at my website?

If you can answer these questions with confidence, it will not be difficult to optimise your website and successfully convert new visitors to known potential customers.

Proper analysis requires clearly summarised, understandable information. Many so-called log file analysers, which are used to measure the number of visitors and the frequency with which they visit particular pages (hits), generate confusion instead of providing information about user behaviour.

We are happy to report that there is finally a powerful and easy-to-use tool available that can be used to professionally analyse website visitor behaviour and that will produce a graphic analysis that also evaluates the data from a regional perspective.

Summary

Online marketing

- Use the Internet to advertise your company's services.
- When choosing keywords for search engines, align them with the expectations of your target group.
- Focus on a few, high-profile search engines such as Espotting, Google and Yahoo.

- If your business is focused on a local geographic area, buy advertising space on the websites of regional newspapers and local radio stations.
- You can reach a large number of visitors and potential customers in your area by researching on local press and radio website information
- Use the services of sector-specific search engines such as Yell.com, which has millions of users divided into regional and business categories
- Use information from aggregators such as TMN media, Equifax and Avongate to create detailed and focused campaigns.
- Use the opportunities provided by modern e-mail marketing.
- Improve the image of your products using subtle advertising messages in selected online games.
- Observe the behaviour of visitors to your website. Take note of the origin of visitors to your website and the pages they access most frequently.