

e-Business Marketing

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It's one of the toughest economies in world history. With one spectacularly bright growth sector - the Internet! This year has seen an average increase in e-commerce revenue of more than 10 percent while traditional retailers are experiencing less than 1 percent over last year. Has your Web site grown at this level? Or, are you missing Internet revenue growth completely without a Web presence?

Building a new e-business from the ground up can be a daunting task... unless, of course, you have the right web agency to support you in the process. At digital business partners, we specialize in helping companies create successful digital business from scratch. In fact, we have developed a proven methodology for that exact purpose. Called eBS (Electronic Business Requirement Specifications), it leverages our unique blend of Internet, technology and business expertise as well as established industry best practices to provide you with a customized, portable blueprint for your e-business success.

There are a number of ways that a business can promote itself on-line. Here are some of the key methods:

1. Domain Name, eBusinesses will benefit from a memorable website address. Most of the larger businesses have their own company name and product names as domain names, for example ford.com, sainsbury.co.uk and so on. Others, use a memorable word like British Gas, with house.co.uk

Unfortunately for new businesses, most simple ‘.co.uk’ and ‘.com’ domains were sold a long time ago, so it tends to mean that some ingenuity is called for. Some businesses have used words that are quite unrelated to their business as a brand name and domain name (egg.com for example), whilst others have coined a new word as their name (ocado.com and esure.com).

Other options include using other domain name suffixes, such as ‘.biz’, or being more creative with the name, such as ‘smithsofcroydon.co.uk’.

Some countries have fairly stringent regulations about registering domain names, but plenty of others have a very relaxed attitude. For example, the tiny island of Tuvalu now earns most of its foreign income from licensing the ‘.tv’ domain names.

Importantly, the domain name should be quoted on all literature, promotional material and correspondence to encourage familiarity.

2. Search Engines, Another way for potential customers to find a website is via search engines, such as Google. Some of these search engines automatically index websites according to the number of links to the website from other websites, and a ‘webmaster’ (the person who manages a website) may deliberately take steps to ‘optimise’ the website to help it climb up search engine rankings, and seeking reciprocal links with other websites is likely to be part of that strategy.

When a new website has been created, it is possible to submit the domain name and details to search engines, so that people looking for the website are more likely to find it. This can be a laborious task, but a worthwhile one as it costs nothing to do, except a few minutes to fill out an on-line form – although it is a good idea to keep re-registering from time to time. It is also possible to buy software to do this and there are businesses that will promote a website through search engines, on their behalf.

3. Price Comparison Websites, Rather more focussed in approach than search engines, price comparison websites such as Pricerunner and Kelkoo can be useful promotional tools for businesses, as long as they offer a

competitive price! When the internet user is re-directed to the shop's website, there would be a charge for a 'click through'.

4. Marketplaces, Examples include Abebooks.com and Amazon, in which a range of external businesses (Amazon calls them 'Marketplace sellers') submit stock lists and prices, and customers can search for and buy directly through the website. This enables small as well as larger sellers to reach large target markets and to derive some degree of consumer trust through their place in a larger business community. There is a sales commission to pay, but for many businesses, it is very cost-effective.

5. Banners, spotlights, pop-ups and sponsored links, These are various ways of promoting a website on other websites – they are on-line advertisements that, when 'clicked' will open another browser window to the target website. They can be animated or interactive, and are quite often linked with some kind of incentive to 'click'.

Usually, payment for this kind of promotion is by number of 'page impressions' (how many users see the advertisement on the web page) or by 'click throughs' (how many web users actually click the link). Businesses like Google earn much of their revenue through this method – in Google's case, especially the 'sponsored links' that appear on top and on the right hand side of the screen when search results are returned.

6. Viral marketing, Viral marketing is the spreading of a marketing message by sending an email to existing customers or a target group which is then forwarded by some of those users to their friends, and so on. Usually, a gimmick, such as a game, an animation or a special offer, accompanies the email. Once it has been sent, if it is an effective campaign, it can spread very rapidly and at low cost.

All is about imagination - Endang Kurniawan

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