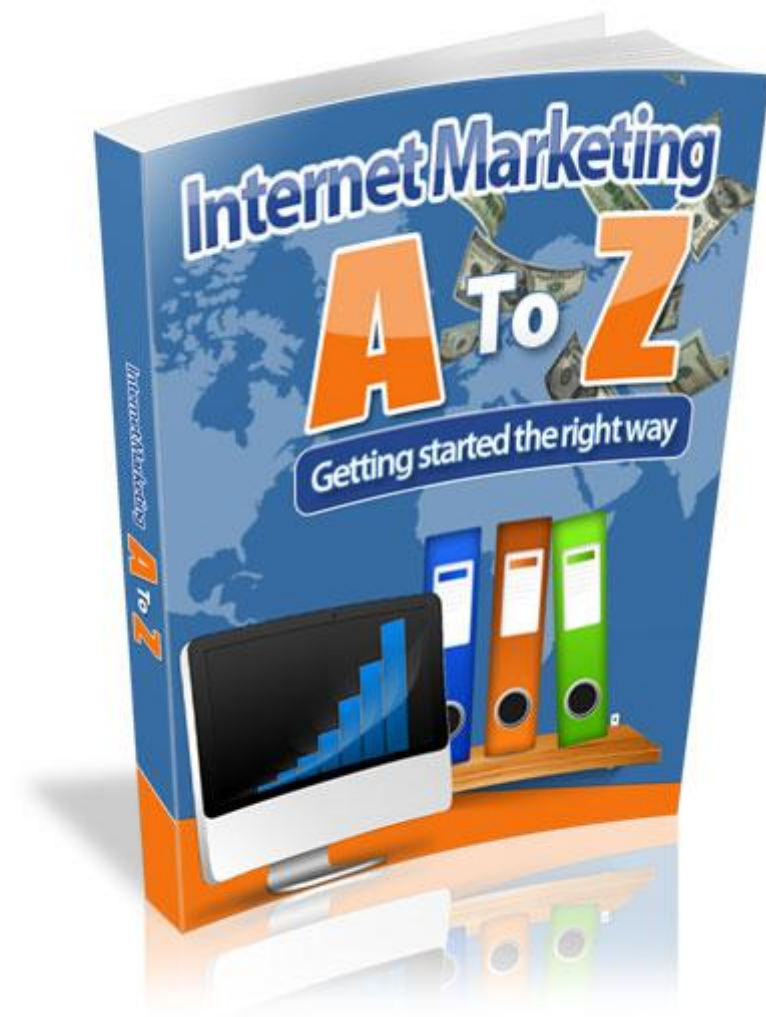


Internet Marketing A to Z

Getting Started The Right Way



It is true that the world of Internet marketing seems daunting to most people. Not helping the fact is the steady development of this genre, where a lot of new techniques are being introduced with each passing day. Things do seem to be difficult on the face of it, marketers do seem to be doing a lot of technical things all the time... but if you scratch the surface, the truth of it becomes quite clear.

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What Is Internet Marketing

If every age in history could be called by the greatest invention of that time, this would definitely be called as the Age of the Internet. The Internet has proliferated each and every aspect of our being, and indeed, it has given a whole new dimension to the way we live on the planet. Today, for each and every thing, whether it is just about buying a toothbrush to spreading global awareness about the growing hole in the ozone layer, people are using the Internet as their medium. And, the Internet has proved to be an unrelenting medium, unflinching providing people what they are looking for.

Of all these different purposes that the Internet world serves, there is one very important trend that has caught on of late. This is the trend of selling and buying things over the Internet. A whole parallel world has spawned up here, a world of online entrepreneurs, who are making money out of selling things over the Internet. The money that is transacted here is immense.

That is obvious. With such a huge population in the online world, it is understandable that the businesses here are huge. Below are some facts and figures of the online marketing industry as they stood in 2008. The situation has only improved since then.

	Continent	People Using the Internet
1.	Asia	578.6 millions
2.	Europe	384.6 millions
3.	North America	248.2 millions
4.	Latin America	139 millions
5.	Africa	51 millions
6.	Middle East	41.9 millions
7.	Australia	20.2 millions

These statistics indicate that the vast majority of the people in the world are online right now. They are consistently using the Internet as a medium of exchange. It is certainly no wonder

then that so many online marketers are trying to create a niche for their products in this world.

InternetWorldStats.com says that 20% of the world are already on the Internet. They are using the online world in different ways, such as for communication or entertainment or networking or business. But the figures are definitely heartening. It means that 1 in 5 people in the world are using the Internet in some form or the other.

If we look at individual statistics, then we can see many more positive trends happening with the online world. Japan, for instance, has grown in the Internet world by leaps and bounds. It is among the most prolific countries in terms of Internet usage. Almost all Japanese households spend at least 10% of their budget on the Internet. On an overall scale, all over Asia, the money generated through online shopping has already crossed the \$168 billion mark annually. Another Asian nation, South Korea, has the reputation of having the highest percentage of people who shop over the Internet. In this tiny nation, 99 in 100 Internet users do their shopping over the Internet. That is definitely an awesome number.

All of these things have created an upward trend in the world of Internet advertising also. Internet advertising has become a complete industry in itself today. We are already spending about \$100 billion globally on advertising on the Internet. This is a mind-boggling figure!

So, how do all these facts and figures help you for your personal growth? Right now, one of the most important things on most people's agenda is to have a safe source of income—all have a bad taste in their mouth after the economic meltdown of 2008 during which company downsizing had become the norm—and a source of income that promises a steady growth.

People have tried various options for making money, but it is the Internet world that seems the most lucrative option in today's world. This is definitely helped by the fact that a lot of people right now are doing business over the Internet. The initial reservations in shopping over the Internet have petered down, and now the Internet world is certainly a safer haven with so many tools having made their presence. It is quite understandable that now people actually look forward to buy things over the Internet. It helps them in many ways, especially they get to know reports of the products they are trying to buy, which helps them to make a better buying decision.

Personally, this could be a great way for you to make some interesting sums of money over the Internet. You could have a steady stream of income and spend more time with your family, because the Internet marketing entrepreneurs do not need to venture out of their homes if they do not want to. This could be highly beneficial to you for more reasons than you think.

Mentioning all of this at the very outset was with the intention that you realize that the online marketing world is a very lucrative option, and it is certainly something that you could consider. You must give it a try if you have not done so already.

We shall come to grips with some concepts of the Internet marketing world in the further sections of this chapter.

Understanding What Internet Marketing Really Means

Internet marketing is the umbrella term used for a collection of ways in which products and services are sold over the Internet. It is also known variably as online marketing and web marketing, and sometimes as digital marketing.

To put it as a definition...

“Internet marketing is the art of advertising and marketing goods and services through the Internet.”

This is normally done through the use of placing advertisements on websites that are on the Internet. These websites will vary according to the goods and services that they are offering. Therefore, adverts are placed according to the sites that have similar content.

Internet marketing started off when people realized that there was a lot of marketing potential on the Internet. This being the case, people had to advertise their goods and services on the Internet to get a larger amount of clientele. Most of the individuals and companies that started Internet marketing were those that were targeting international clientele. Advertising using print and electronic media in every country had proved to be cumbersome. It also proved to be a difficult task. Nevertheless, with the introduction of the Internet, a solution was seen to be possible.

The Internet marketing world has blossomed in the last decades of the 20th Century. It is a relatively new world, but more and more people are getting warmed up to the concept in recent times.

Now, there are different ways in which money can be made over the Internet. All of these techniques could be combined under the collective definition of Internet marketing. The definition also expands to include all the different models in which the businesses are carried out. Taking that into account, there are different types of Internet marketing models.

The following are some of the common ways in which Internet marketing is carried out in today's times.

Via Ecommerce

Ecommerce is a method in which products and services are sold to the consumer directly, without employing any intermediary agency. Hence, if you are buying something through an online website directly, then you are using an ecommerce website. Generally, ecommerce websites have a typical layout. They will most definitely have a catalogue of the products on their website, with detailed descriptions of all these products. Next, they will have a shopping cart. You can select the products and they enter the shopping cart. The shopping cart feature is generally used when there is more than one product on the website. When you are checking out, you are prompted to pay for your purchases through a variety of methods.

All ecommerce websites have their own membership options. You will have to make an account on these websites to access them and then use your login information to sign in whenever you want to make a purchase through these websites.

Right now, ecommerce websites are quite cautious about their security requirements, especially for their customers. This is because monetary transactions are done directly through the website. Hence, they need to provide methods such as SSL encryption, which keeps the online identity of their customers safe.

There are some other variations of ecommerce websites. If a website sells products to another business, which will likely sell it forward, then too it is called as an ecommerce website. Similarly, some ecommerce websites will allow their customers to sell products for a marginally higher amount to other customers, thus making a profit in the commissions they can earn.

Via Affiliate Marketing

Strictly speaking, affiliate marketing is not directly selling of any goods or services. All an affiliate marketer does is to promote a particular link on their website, blog or another similar place that they own on the Internet, and earn through the clicks that they are able to get from visitors.

The people whom they are promoting are called as the advertisers, while the affiliate marketers themselves are called as the hosts. The advertisers will usually pay the hosts a proportion of the sales that they get from them (known as the Pay Per Sale model) or a direct commission based on the number of clicks that they obtain (known as the Pay Per Click model). The latter is the more popular method of the two.

Affiliate marketing programs cannot be standalone businesses, though there is a lot of money involved—most times without any instalment—for the marketers themselves. However, the advertisers are usually entities who have ecommerce websites of their own where they are selling a product or service.

Though there are other prevalent models too, when we talk about Internet marketing in the current scenario, we usually speak of one of the above methods. If you want to make money through the Internet as well, you will need to choose between one of these methods, which is certainly where the real money lies.

Internet marketing includes all the methods you can employ in order to implement such businesses as well as the methods that you can use in order to promote them. In fact, for any Internet marketer, the heaviest part of their duties is to reach out to their target audience, which is known in the Internet marketing parlance as niche. They usually spend a lot of time and effort in reaching out to this niche.

These methods include affiliate marketing itself (if they are an ecommerce website), and other methods such as email marketing, blogging, article marketing, search engine optimization, directory submissions, social networking and many others. A lot of webmasters are dealing with several paid and free advertising options to reach out to their niche public. The definition of Internet marketing also includes all these different promotional strategies that are inevitably used for promoting the products and services that the Internet marketers sell.

The Advantages of Internet Marketing

Something that has become so popular will certainly have a lot of advantages. Internet marketing is a popular concept because it gives marketers many benefits. Let us briefly take a look at them.

1. This is a form of global marketing. When you are promoting something on the Internet, you are not restricted by geography. You can reach out to people in another part of the world quite easily. In fact, a lot of the big multinational companies have their websites in different languages, and they actually internationalize their content (convert \$ into £ for example) so that their businesses can be received well in other areas as well. If you are looking for a truly global business, then the Internet is the best way for you to do that.

2. Considering the reach it has, Internet marketing is the cheapest form of advertising. In fact, several of the preliminary things that you do will not want you to spend any money at all. For instance, it won't take you anything to write an article and post it in a popular article directory with your business link below it. It will not take you anything to join a social networking website like Twitter or Facebook and promote your product through it. Even if you want to build a website, it will cost you abysmally, at least in comparison to the other methods of advertising that are prevalent out there.

3. Internet marketing is one way in which you can establish your credibility. While with television and print ads, you have to be inventive and creative in order to grab people's attention, with Internet marketing you can be all that but the most important thing is that you have to promote using good content. This content should be informative. When you do that—write an article, a blog post, submit a video, etc.—you are getting exposure yourself. People understand that you know your stuff. Naturally, that adds to your credibility. Whether your product sells or not, there is a chance that you can become some kind of an Internet celebrity.

4. The other thing about Internet marketing is that it has residual value. Any other kind of advertising—most of the offline methods—have a particular timeframe for which they are exposed to the public. A billboard will remain for a particular period of time. A television ad will be on for a minute. A print ad will have as much life as the magazine or newspaper it is printed in has. However, an Internet ad can stay on forever. Some forms of Internet advertising, like articles, blogs and videos will never be deleted. The networks that people build will never be deleted.

5. Online marketers are also enticed by the fact that they can directly reach out to their niche audience. Most offline forms of advertising promote themselves to the world at large, and that is the reason why there is such a lot of wastefulness with them. Exposing the product to a billion people makes no sense if the major part of the population doesn't form the market. For instance, it is useless to promote pregnancy clothing to everyone. With Internet marketing, such niche advertising is possible. You can promote directly to your target group and get a favorable response. Marketers like the fact that they can concentrate their promotional efforts and get a better response in the process.

6. Another thing about Internet marketing is that, if needed, it could be just a one-person process. Like other modes of promotion, you do not need to have a team. You can have it if you want, but it is not necessary. Most people sit on their home computers in their boxers and PJs and do all the amazing stuff they do at promoting their products and services in the online world. If you want help, you can get it virtually. You do not need to have an office premises for handling your Internet marketing work, which makes things even cheaper for you.

7. When you are performing your Internet marketing activities for a while, you will begin to understand this great advantage—with online marketing, you are able to chart the progress of your promotional tactics in real terms. You can find measurable terms for each of the technique that you use. For instance, if you run a blog, you can find out how many people visited your blog and from what parts of the world. If you put up a promotional article, you can find out how many people came to read the article. If you have a group of people whom you socially network with about your business products and services, you could find how many other people visited your group. You can find, in real terms, how many people opted in to a list that you have on the Internet. There are so many such ways in which you can get a precise idea of the way your business is heading. This helps people to constantly make improvements in their business methods and get better prospects.

8. There are methods to popularize your product in very intelligent ways when you are using the Internet. We are living in a very highly interactive web world right now. It is possible for you to link your promotional methods to reviews on the Internet that are about your product. You could share links with other websites where your product is featured, i.e. your affiliate sites. You could even make videos and post the videos onto your website or provide links. All these are ways in which people get to know your product better, much better in fact than they can know any product that is only promoted in an offline manner.

9. Lastly, if you like to move on with the times, Internet marketing is the method you should use without another thought. Most of the new, technologically savvy marketers today are using online marketing to promote their businesses. If you are already in business, chances are that your competitors are already into the game. They are probably already taking the vast advantages that digital marketing has to offer. You do not want to stay behind in this rat race. You do not want to give people that you are technologically lacking. That is one of the most important reasons why you should not ignore this promotional method.

Limitations of Internet Marketing

When we see the vast benefits of Internet marketing, it is also important to see the limitations. There are not many limitations, but the ones that are might cause you to rethink. In any case, these shortcomings of Internet marketing universally apply to all marketers, so it is a uniform game that we are playing here.

1. Your customers will not be able to see, touch or smell the products that you are trying to sell them. They will not have the first-experience factor that they can get at, say, a supermarket. They will have to buy on blind value. For most conventional shoppers, this can be a disadvantage.

2. Most Internet marketing businesses today do not have a 'face'. They have a generic ecommerce site with a product featured on them that is calling to be bought, but they do not

have a personality. This turns off some online customers who like to get to know a business better before they can buy their product. This is actually not a failing of the system, but it is the erroneous way in which Internet marketing is done by some marketers. With a little understanding of your market and the way this world works, you will be able to overcome this shortcoming and give your online business a personality.

3. A third problem is that of security. Most people still feel insecure about buying products over the Internet. They feel that their online identity may be compromised when they buy something over the Internet using their credit card. The various spammers and malware senders of the Internet haven't made matters any easier. However, the ecommerce websites are making all efforts in order to add to the security of their business. With the help of encryption and other such methods, they have made sure that their customers have a safe buying experience.

In essence, the drawbacks of Internet marketing are fewer than the advantages. This is another reason why this trend has caught on so well. When you are marketing over the Internet, you are almost assured that you will be able to sell your product, because the market is so huge and you have ways to get at your niche crowd. That is why the few limitations should not deter you from unleashing the potential of something that is so popular and an effective marketing tool.