



# Marketing Wisdom

for 2009

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Lessons Learned

by the Readers of MarketingSherpa

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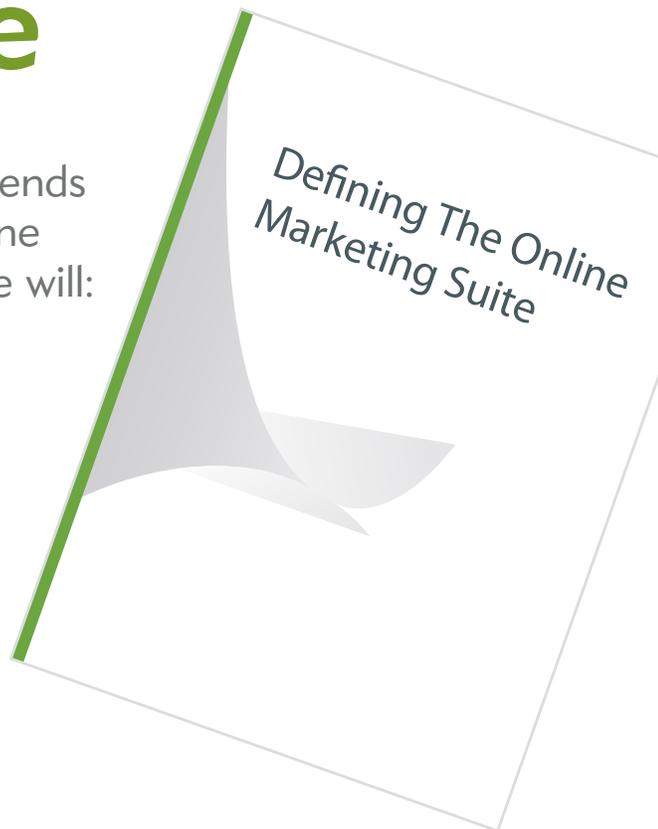
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## **MarketingSherpa's Marketing Wisdom for 2009**

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# Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the seventh annual edition of MarketingSherpa's 'Wisdom Report', showcasing scores of some of the best stories and lessons learned in 2008 by readers and told in their own words.

As in past editions, this report compiles the shiniest gems of wisdom chosen by Sherpa's Editorial team from hundreds of submissions by your colleagues. Prospecting these words of wisdom wasn't easy; marketers put a lot of effort into submitting their best stories for inclusion in this report.

Topics covered this year touch on just about every aspect of marketing – from traditional tactics, such as direct mail and advertising, to more contemporary tactics, such as Web 2.0 and mobile marketing. Many of these dozens of words of wisdom are not big-sky ideas. Many are simple and straightforward tips you can plug into your marketing plans right now. Take this submission from Joe Van Remortel, Red Bricks Media:

*Managing paid search campaigns is more difficult than ever. Depending on the campaign, upwards of 20-25 distinct variables can influence performance and ROI. What worked last week might not work this week. Based on our research and observations, focusing on four fundamental areas can give a real boost to paid search campaigns. We recently adopted a paid search program for an entertainment client and within a matter of three months reduced the cost-per-click by more than 80% and increased traffic by 300% by applying a mix of these basic ideas. 1. Understand the complexity and the relationships between variables and performance by implementing tests to isolate the variables with the greatest impact on performance. You must segregate winners from losers using a scientific method and statistical significance. Hire a scientist, if you must. 2. Make iterative improvements to campaigns with active management on a daily and weekly basis. Over-reliance on technologies that act like an autopilot is a sure*

*way to overpay and under-deliver. Every week should show incremental improvements. 3. Messaging relevancy is the consistent and meaningful link between keywords, consumer motive/intent, queries, ad words, and landing pages. There is no better way to increase conversion rates and quality score. Messaging is how paid search connects with the consumer. 4. Avoid the natural inclination to organize ad groups in campaigns by theme. Instead focus on organizing them into performance tiers. When properly structured this way, campaign managers have far more control over budget allocations to winners and losers.*

Readers' submissions, as they do each year, reflect several trends. Here are three that we noticed:

## **TREND #1: EMAIL IS NOT DEAD**

Marketers continue to find that reports on the death of email are exaggerated. Email works, and marketers love the ROI it brings. So, they continue to tweak and dabble. They personalize messages more than ever, segment their lists to create the most focused targets possible, keep their messages simple and straightforward, optimize and test to find the best send times, write specialized blasts both inside and outside the box, include anecdotes to customize even more, and often eliminate pretty pictures and images.

## **TREND #2: BUILD SOCIAL NETWORKS**

The picture on the effectiveness of social networking seems to get clearer every day. Marketers see the value of building relationships one network and one person at a time. LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter get a lot of attention, but other social networks get more members and friends all the time. These cultures of community connection and interaction, not just contact and information dissemination, get more and more endorsements by marketers. And blogs are much more than personal rants or diaries today; they mean business to more and more organizations.

### TREND # 3: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Paid search grows more reliant on testing and relevancy. And boosting the rank of a website on search engines puts SEO front and center for marketers who see significant ROI in natural search. Tactics for optimizing a website can be as simple as editing content and HTML coding to make them more relevant to certain search keywords. More and more marketers focus on making their websites search-engine friendly.

Overall, as you peruse your fellow Sherpa readers' words of wisdom, try to match them to your own campaigns and marketing situations for 2009. Many submissions go back to the tried and true; others reflect some new ways of thinking. Whatever the wisdom, you can learn something from it.

Of course, your involvement does not have to end with this report. Sherpa is always seeking out Case Studies, test campaigns and how-to pieces to cover in our weekly newsletters. If you have a great story to tell with plenty of results to back it up, don't hesitate to contact us.

Finally, thank to all of this year's 'wisdom' contributors. Your words will inspire and guide tens of thousands of your colleagues. And best wishes for 2009. It will be a challenging New Year.

Bill Rupp  
Managing Editor, MarketingSherpa  
BillR@MarketingSherpa.com

## PART 1:

# Email

### YOUNG CONSUMERS WANT EMAIL

**1** Going into 2008, I was flying blind when it came to knowing how social media and text messaging (SMS) are changing communication and purchasing patterns. Our 2008 Channel Preference Survey helped me create a clearer picture of the messaging and marketing preferences of younger and older consumers. One of the biggest takeaways is the fact that messaging preferences do not equal marketing preferences. In fact, they may not even be related. Our survey of 1,500 internet users in February 2008 showed that while teens and college students lean heavily toward SMS and social networks for daily messaging, 34% of those 18-24 still use email primarily when sending written communications. Only 1% of this age reported they were willing to receive promotional messages via SMS or social networks. They still see these as very personal, sacred ground. 73% of 18-24 year-olds said they wanted opt-in promotional messages via email. Good news. Email isn't dead and will continue to be the most effective marketing tool yet again in 2009 even for teens.

Chip House, ExactTarget, <http://www.exacttarget.com>

### GET PERSONAL

**2** In 2008, we initiated an excellent personalization campaign using Intellidyn's I-Distinct solution and our personalized email showed over 50% lift in response rate compared with the generic, control group email.

Cathy Beers, Magazine Yellow Pages, <http://www.magazineyellowpages.com>

### CHECK SMTP LOGS

**3** In Check your promotional email/newsletter SMTP (Simple Mail Transport Protocol) logs! You'll be amazed at how much deliverability information is hidden away in there; larger ISPs may even tell you not only what the problem is but how to fix it.

Chris Herzog, Geeks.com, <http://www.geeks.com>

### MARKET TO WARM LISTS

**4** In a battered economy, highly targeted marketing is one of the keys to success. We have run several "mini cash machine" campaigns for our products. These 4-5 day campaigns are highly targeted to a warm list with exclusive benefits never packaged before, at a substantial discount.

Here is what we learned in these campaigns:

1. Take care of your existing customers before searching for new ones
2. Create irresistible value through packaging and discounting
3. Recognize and embrace the tough times your customers are also going through
4. Set tight time schedules for campaigns and make them personalized

This year we ran 17 “mini” 4-day campaigns that resulted in an average net profit of \$9,617 each.

Chip Cummings, Northwind International,  
<http://www.ChipCummings.com>

### KEEP IT SIMPLE, PERSONAL

**5** Early this year, we ran an email campaign for one of the most renowned universities in the country. Open rates were quite high – from 8% to 28% – and CTRs – from 5% to 8%. One of the success keys was the database of current and former students, which was perfectly segmented, so recipients only received one of the 22 emails sent in the campaign: the one that was related to the student career. Another success key: Email was beautifully designed, providing links for signing up to post-graduate courses, downloading PDFs with full information, etc. We decided to test another option. A few days before the courses began, we sent a plain text email to the recipients in a very personal and more informal way, with the signature of the Post Graduate Office Director. No fancy graphics, no fancy links or buttons. Just a plain email saying, “Hey (name), in five days the course “(course name)” is starting. I think you might be interested in it. If you need my assistance, please call me at (phone number). Kind regards, (Name of the Director), telephone, email.” Results were even better than the “graphic” campaign. Open rates: 12% to 33%. CTR: 6% to 9%. Estimated ROI (both graphic and plain text emails): 800%. The lesson learned: When thinking about email, it’s not only about graphics; it’s about the message, and personalizing it as much as you can.

Juan Manuel Lucero, INNOVA,  
<http://www.innovaestudio.com.ar>

### TEST SUBJECT LINES

**6** Online EU Training has been giving valuable services to those wishing to learn about the European Union via e-learning, webinars and online practice tests to get recruited to EU institutions. Apart from the online training, we have been giving insights and practical hints on how to prepare for

these recruitment exams. From the outset, we always focused in our monthly newsletters on issues related to the website (new features) and special pricing (% discounts) with some additional info about upcoming competitions. This triggered very limited interest from users. Once we started focusing our monthly newsletter on tips and tricks, and only mentioning website improvements and other info marginally, our newsletter open rates increased by 12%! This was further improved by A/B testing for each newsletter as we tried 4-5 subject lines on a small sample and used the one that proved most successful for the big list. Again, when discounts or general wording such as “October newsletter” were mentioned in the subject line, open rates were 8-9% lower compared to having “provocative” subject lines like “[Newsletter] You CAN...get an EU job!” or “[Newsletter] EU exam preparation - a waste of time?” Conclusion: Focus on the big picture, convince the user that you are knowledgeable and trustworthy, and they will buy your services without any push whatsoever.

Gabor Mikes, Managing Director,  
Arboreus Online Training Services LLC  
<http://www.eutests.eu> <http://www.eustraining.eu>

### OPTIMIZE BY TESTING TIMING

**7** We have analyzed if the click-to-open rate depends on the opening hour. The answer is yes: The graphic resembles a sinus curve with the highest click-to-open at around 8 a.m. and lowest at 5 p.m. with a difference of 10 percentage points. In other words: attention for an average email decreases in the time interval of a typical workday. Capitalizing on this pattern is not trivial since only a small portion of emails gets opened before 9 a.m. Influencing opening time by earlier sending time has only little effect. Split tests of large campaigns in 24 identical campaigns, one sent each hour, did not show any potential for time-of-day optimization. We continue our research in email timing optimization.

Frank Strzyzewski, CEO, XQueue, <http://www.xqueue.com>

### SPECIALIZE YOUR BLASTS

**8** We had a spectacular year, well, up until the 4th quarter! In January of (2008), we shifted our focus, just simply allocating more time to sales and marketing and less to live events. It’s a small, three-person office, so every man-hour counts! The shift was incredible, boosting our revenue 73% for the first quarter; then it turned to October. Skittish clients, straight-up panic, dropped our renewal

revenue and completely froze new business. Everyone was just too afraid to spend anything. In early December, we had one brave client who wanted to try a new product we had introduced... It's a very directed piece of email, all about one vendor, and sent to selected groups within our list. (We serve the film and event planning businesses, so for example, this was sent to women in film, photographers, and film crew subgroups). Results? We were wowed! 48% open rate vs. our normal rate of 28-30%. This very specialized blast helped them move the expired inventory before the end of the year.

Teri Cundall, The Propville Directory, <http://www.propville.com>

### HTML NEWSLETTERS STILL WORK

**9** Our agency's six-month old HTML newsletter has generated incremental revenue and several new prospects and – just as important – ongoing conversations with current and potential clients. The amazing thing is we weren't selling anything specifically – just offering brief stories of successful campaigns with links to longer articles or videos. We're participating in all the new Web 2.0 marketing activities – blogging, SEO, PPC, etc. – but, at least for us, the oft-maligned, low-cost monthly HTML newsletter is a key part of the solution.

Bob Boucher, Cole Creative, <http://www.cole-co.com>

### STAY OUTSIDE THE BOX

**10** Sometimes, we in enterprise marketing follow overly strict guidelines to keep our subject lines professional. This year, we tried to "write outside the box" with both email and press release titles, with some happy results. CASE 1: Change up in press release titles. Our typical press release titles have followed the hallowed formula of "X Company Launches Next Release of Market-Leading ABC Product." Using that formula, our latest release title would have been: "Exeros adds new data profiling capabilities to ca's market-leading data modeling product." Instead, we stretched a little, and doubled our release pick-up with: "Exeros rocks the data modeling world by adding profiling capabilities to ca." CASE 2: My marketing VP laughed at me for this email subject line until he saw both the open and registration rates. I often send out invitations to webinars to a broad audience with varying response rates, and I'm always testing for improvement.

One webinar's topic concerned data quality, which includes data cleansing, and I used two different subject lines with the following results. The more successful subject line used the term "Greening," which was a reference to the current popularity of the green movement. (Note: Even though the open rate increased 54%, the registration rate rose 140%.) SUBJECT LINE 1: "Learn the Facts About MDM Data Quality." Open rate: 16.5%. CTR: 0.9%. Registration rate: 0.5%. SUBJECT LINE 2: "MDM University Webinar: Greening your MDM project." Open rate: 25.4%. CTR: 2.0%. Registration rate: 1.2%.

Denise Sparks, Exeros, <http://www.exeros.com>

### PERSONAL ANECDOTES INCREASE READERSHIP

**11** While we have not undertaken detailed A/B testing, our anecdotal evidence indicates that readership of our monthly newsletter has increased since we have started adding in client-focused anecdotes about cases we have encountered in serving our clients. Sometimes these brief (less than 300 word) descriptions will highlight a software or hardware capability we have deployed for a client. We try to focus on the stories which reflect an unusual or unique instance, rather than the run of the mill work we do. Even more powerful have been stories which reflect a positive human nature aspect. An example is a recent story which highlighted our work in conjunction with a couple of client firms to enable them to provide a computer to a disadvantaged child in our community – her one main Christmas wish. Our employees even got involved donating some software and their time since we knew the young girl would not have the unit connected to the Internet and we wanted to make sure it was still useful and fun for her. After the story ran announcing the work undertaken (done to promote the clients involved), we had several offers of additional resources for other charitable uses as a result of that story. The result of this focus is a more human face to our business and more of a personal connection to the clients we serve...all through an email newsletter which can often seem impersonal. We think this helps us to remain relevant in a human way, not just a professional way.

Lee Kirkby, MBA, Leppert Business Systems Inc.,  
<http://www.leppert.com>

## TRY A TEASER EMAIL

**12** In a recent email campaign to generate B-to-B leads for a client, we tested different email strategies to increase the open rate. We conducted tests with two different variables: 1. Subject line. 2. Message frequency. During the first tests with various subject lines, we were able to increase the open rate from 13% to 21%. We found that the following subject lines provided the biggest increases:

- Longer subject lines outperformed shorter ones
- Using the company's name in the subject
- Mentioning titles of other executives you are emailing

Examples of successful subject lines: "Key people at XYZ Company for conversation about (topic)" and "Request for meeting with you and your CFO." After our initial increase in the open rate we tested our second variable, which was the message frequency. Typically, our clients send a one-time email blast. But we convinced them to send a "teaser" email before emailing their primary message which asks for an appointment with the recipient. The teaser email was sent 48 hours prior to the primary message. The purpose of this email was to create name recognition and confirm that we were emailing the appropriate person. Here is an example of the first email: "Hi Joe, I wanted to reach out to you to determine who should be involved in a discussion about the lead generation strategy at your company. I understand you oversee this—is that correct? I'll plan to reach out to you in a couple days. Otherwise, if there is someone else that you would like me to talk to first, please let me know." By sending this short "teaser" message first, it increased the open rate of our primary message from 21% to 48%.

Jake Atwood, BuzzBuilder Pro,  
<http://www.buzzbuilderpro.com>

## ELIMINATE PRETTY PICTURES

**13** We like using images in our email. What's wrong with using pretty colorful pictures that summarize our message? We decided to implement several changes to our next email for an upcoming webcast. Change 1: We lost the images, pretty pictures and any graphical insert that would appear at the top of the mailer invite. Many prospects viewed their emails through their mobile devices, which meant all the banners in the email, although stored on a Web server, simply appeared

as multiple lines of the URL address. This required handy scrolling to get to the key message! Change 2: Provide sign-up option at the top, right after the title/date/time section and at the bottom. Change 3: Get to the message. Explain the purpose of this webcast and what it would provide for the prospect at the end of the day with clear deliverables and expectations. Change 4: Reduce the friction in the sign-up process. Simplified the form and had few required fields which consisted of: full name, email address, company and phone numbers. This meant more work later on for lead follow-up. Change 5: Reminder is king! We sent three reminders after the initial invite to those who did not register; 10 days to webcast, 1 day to webcast, same day as webcast. Final Results:

- 634% increase in registration
- 10% of total registrations came after the 'same day' reminder
- 39% attended webcast vs. 3% previous webcasts

Saying good bye to "pretty pictures" was worth it.

Rana Aluraibi, Open Text, [raluraib@opentext.com](mailto:raluraib@opentext.com)

## CREATE HIGHLY PERSONALIZED CAMPAIGNS

**14** Our client is in a highly competitive commoditized market sector – hotel chains. They wanted to cut marketing costs and use their existing customer base to engage customers in conversation and, therefore, improve occupancy rates. To tackle this problem, a highly personalized email campaign with conditional content was launched which endeavored to communicate to its customer via the hotel's loyalty scheme. The initiative had three objectives: 1. Maintain conversations with existing customers to drive re-bookings. 2. Reactivate dormant customers through engagement. 3. Informative to active booking customers. This was all facilitated through personalized dynamic content driven by the marketing and loyalty database, using a combination of membership level, points information, possible actions, stage in the customer cycle, real-time locality specific and personal information, which resulted in 10,080 message combinations. The results were as follows:

- £9.50 increase in revenue per contact – up 39%
- Average cost per booking down 24%
- Conversion rates increased 41%
- Point claims up 541%

Ryan Davies, RAPP, <http://www.uk.rapp.com>

## PART 2:

# Web 2.0

### LEVERAGE YOUR CREDIBILITY

**15** We embarked on a social media campaign in the middle of this year, even hiring an in-house “Social Media Specialist” to assist us in our efforts on a full-time basis. Our social media efforts have added a new dimension to our more conventional PR efforts by further enhancing the credibility factor of our company and our products and services. It is a vital part of our media mix, and will be for the foreseeable future. As part of our mix, we added more than 1,000 coaching videos to YouTube, created Facebook and MySpace pages for our coaches, and leveraged our messaging through blogs and blog posts. Not only have those efforts helped our SEO programs, they’ve helped leverage credibility for our coaches in their own communities – which is vital for the growth of our business as our coaches typically work with businesses based in their city or municipality. I’m one who believes you can build a great brand through PR. Given the rise of social media, however, I think in today’s world you need both. Not only does it help SEO, it helps build that ever-so important credibility in a business-to-business space, which is important in lowering the walls of resistance to buying and any barriers to purchase. As more business owners use the web for research and due diligence, the more credibility we can build through third-party endorsements, the more we can take any perceived risk out of the purchase decision – and social media is one of the most effective ways we’ve found to do that for our customers and potential buyers.

Jodie Shaw, Director of Sales & Marketing, ActionCOACH,  
<http://actioncoach.com>

### BETRANSSPARENT

**16** Even as advanced as we are becoming with our new communication tools such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, blogs etc., we are naturally gravitating towards true and authentic communication. All these outlets require you to truly build transparent relationships with your customers, especially if you want to be very effective. Coupled with the fact that customers and their trust level to companies especially corporate brands as a whole has been completely severed; this has forced marketing executives to peel away the layers of grand illusions. Since the economy has been on a downward slope, sincere word of mouth referrals and relationship building has played an extremely important role for me and my clients. Free advice has turned into powerful relationships

and resulted in new customers. I've seen a 30% response rate when our message has been about how we are sincerely doing in this economy. People want to feel connected again. This is no longer a celebrity driven endorsed world. People truly want to know if their friends endorsed it. They are asking themselves, "Did someone that looks just like me benefit from using this product?" You can see this illustrated on the Internet now. We've moved from contact to connection - from examining to explanation- from information to interaction, and finally from reading to reviewing. It's easier. And it pays off.

Shemia Miller, The Giants Den Firm,  
<http://www.thegiantsdencommunity.com>

### CONTESTS GET INTERACTION

**17** Always searching for opportunities to interact with our audience, in May of 2008 Jones Soda launched a social media campaign with the popular comedy picture site ICanHasCheezburger (ICHC). The site was chosen specifically for its loyal audience which had a very high interactive rate with the content posted on the site. The campaign was in the form of a contest that allowed ICHC readers to submit local photos and vote which photo from their community would end up on a national Jones Soda label run. The contest, voting, and all comments took place on the ICHC site. The campaign ran for a month with 20,000 entries and over 70,000 people voting. Aside from the phenomenal participation rate, Jones Soda saw a huge spike in online sales during the months of May and June of 2008 which can be directly attributed to interaction with the ICHC audience. The vast majority of sales were in the customizable product section of Jones Soda called myJones where Jones Soda fans can put their photos on a bottle of Jones as a gift item. The campaign was so successful that Jones Soda decided to take ICHC offline and created and mixed six local labels, including the winning one, from the ICHC audience into the fall '08 lineup of Jones Soda bottles in retail stores. So locals were available at local Targets, for example, this year.

Angel Djambazov, Jones Soda, <http://www.jonessoda.com>

### BLOGS BRING NEW BUSINESS

**18** Too many people in the marketing business still see blogs as nothing more than online diaries. And too many businesses are still putting

up static websites on the Internet just copy-pasting their brochure content. I've found that blogging makes a lot of good business sense because blogging gets a message out better, faster and cheaper than most other media. A few blog posts about advertising positions open in the UAE (United Arab Emirates) get CVs in my email almost on a daily basis. Many of my blog readers have called to say that they got a job through my blog. I used to get almost daily phone calls from potential copywriting clients. Since I have my hands full with my work at an international ad agency, I had to actually take my phone number off my website because of too much business enquiries from my blog! Also, I have been quoted by the Guardian-UK, the International Advertising Association's UAE Chapter, and interviewed on TV, radio and online - thanks to my modest blog. All of this when I post an average of 2-3 times a month! A blog like mine could be hosted for free, posted for free, and picked up by search engines in a day if cited online. That's far more leverage and authority and buzz for almost zero cost for not just an individual but any business, too.

Farrukh Naeem, CopywriterJournalist.com,  
<http://www.CopywriterJournalist.com>

### FLAG FLOGGERS WITH GOOGLE ALERTS

**19** Flogging can be an entire blog set up to run fake product or service testimonials or it could be just one or more posts within a blog where the blogger has included a fake testimonial, often for payment. See the Wikipedia page about flogging [here](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_blog), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake\\_blog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_blog). We've seen other types of blog spam, such as posts that are obviously machine generated, sometimes complete gibberish, that include links to company product pages. It's easy to watch your competitors for flogging and blog spam. We setup Google Alerts to watch for mentions of our client's competitors, domain name(s), product names, etc. Google then sends us links to anything it indexes that mention them. We examine everything. As I mentioned, we've seen competitors seeding blogs with obvious machine generated messages including links to their site. Usually we get alerts on 3 to as much as 10 similar posts all within a few days. Flogging, fake testimonials, is a bit harder to detect as they are often well crafted and each one unique. We have to read each post.

George Aspland, eVision, <http://www.eVisionSEM.com>

## LEARNING WITH BLOGS

**20** For the last three years, I had been consuming around 50 blogs a day - the ultimate blog consumer. Taking in all of this great knowledge and distributing it with colleagues and clients that would find it of interest. It got to September last year and I got an urge to start sharing my knowledge and learnings from advertising and digital marketing. The reasons I started a blog were: consolidating my thoughts in one location and influencing search results for my name. I have been updating my blog religiously for four months and it has taught me so much: what social networks are best at driving traffic, how print influences blog traffic, how word of mouth helps with awareness, how involvement in like-minded blogs drives readership. I thought I was a pretty savvy digital marketer, but I have learned so much from my blog that I recommend everyone set one up to use it as a test and learn marketing platform. A blog puts you in a campaign mentality: set-up, monitor and optimize.

Leo Burnett, <http://dominiquehind.wordpress.com>

## SOCIAL NETWORKS PRODUCE RESULTS

**21** Lesson 1: Social networking is better than Digg. I have made an eBook, and to promote it I used to use a lot of the Digg, but this year I saw that it was more and more difficult to be visible. So I tried to use the social networking websites like Facebook & Viadeo (Number one social network in business in France). And surprisingly they became the number two and number four sites that gave me visitors! The secret is simple: 1. Create a specific group, and apply the "Give to Get" tactic: offer free advice, free value added articles and people will visit your site. 2. Post non-selling information in other top members groups to make known you company. 3. Post your links in the "news sections." 4. Reply to questions & answers. 5. Add friends: Visit the other people in your business. It gives you targeted contacts. Lesson 2: Use your network to promote your business. When I released my eBook, I posted the info in social networking websites, using all tools (groups, direct message to contacts, create an event) and it gave me hundreds of visitors. I also used Twitter: I just followed 500 targeted people. I now send every day some news messages, and it gave me a few visits every day!

Frederic Canevet, [ConseilsMarketing.fr](http://www.conseilsmarketing.fr),  
<http://www.conseilsmarketing.fr>

## LINKEDIN GARNERS OPT-INS

**22** I learned that the LinkedIn group function provides the best permission-based prospect gathering service available. We launched a group for the Search Engine Strategies events series in November '06. With some seeding and active promotion, the list had attracted nearly 5,000 opt-in members in five months.

Rory Brown, <http://www.rorybrown.wordpress.com>

## INTEGRATE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

**23** I presented a case study in which a small business was able to increase qualified leads by 7% while cutting their marketing budget by 24%. So, let me offer three cost effective initiatives based on that case study that may help you bootstrap your 2009 marketing strategy. 1. Blog: Create thought-leadership content by leveraging your in-house subject matter experts to craft blogs that focus on building customer trust, rapport and credibility, while still supporting the sales cycle. Make sure all the content is search-engine optimized so certain keywords are likely to be picked up in industry-specific searches. 2. LinkedIn: Accept the use of social networking tools and encourage your employees to join. Form groups on LinkedIn that are relevant to your business (like user groups – but make sure you maintain control through a moderator) and encourage your customers to also join. Coach your employees to respond to questions that surface in the group discussions and encourage your business development organization to use LinkedIn much like they would use a contact management tool. 3. Twitter: Use twitter for micro-blogging and micro-selling. You can automatically feed Twitter your blogs, press releases, etc. and Twitter can then feed your LinkedIn profile. As the process matures, it takes on the characteristics of an integrated lead generation/lead nurturing system. By integrating a social media focused marketing strategy, you can make a cost effective difference in both your lead generation and lead nurturing programs. It will also help you maintain your customer-focus while you're doing everything possible to manage your cash flow in a very tough economy.

Alan See, University of Phoenix,  
[http://customerthink.com/user/alan\\_see](http://customerthink.com/user/alan_see)

## PART 3:

# Search Marketing

## MANAGE SEARCH COMPLEXITY

**24** We fManaging paid search campaigns is more difficult than ever. Depending on the campaign, upwards of 20-25 distinct variables can influence performance and ROI. What worked last week, might not work this week. Based on our research and observations, focusing on four fundamental areas can give a real boost to paid search campaigns. We recently adopted a paid search program for an entertainment client and within a matter of three months reduced the cost-per-click by more than 80% and increased traffic by 300% by applying a mix of these basic ideas. 1. Understand the complexity and the relationships between variables and performance by implementing tests to isolate the variables with the greatest impact on performance. You must segregate winners from losers using a scientific method and statistical significance. Hire a scientist, if you must. 2. Make iterative improvements to campaigns with active management on a daily and weekly basis. Over-reliance on technologies that act like an autopilot is a sure way to overpay and under-deliver. Every week should show incremental improvements. 3. Messaging relevancy is the consistent and meaningful link between keywords, consumer motive/intent, queries, ad words, and landing pages. There is no better way to increase conversion rates and quality score. Messaging is how paid search connects with the consumer. 4. Avoid the natural inclination to organize ad groups in campaigns by theme. Instead focus on organizing them into performance tiers. When properly structured this way, campaign managers have far more control over budget allocations to winners and losers.

Joe Van Remortel, Red Bricks Media,  
<http://www.redbricksmedia.com>

## MAKE EVERY PAGE YOUR HOMEPAGE

**25** A client of ours was frustrated. This pet supply retailer had invested tens of thousands of dollars in search engine optimization (SEO), but the traffic was yielding less than ½% conversion. This happens more often than even we anticipate. Our client's organic traffic was targeted. So, how could this be? Our first step was to go back to marketing fundamentals. I asked the client, "Do you have an offer?" They proudly said, "Yes, Free Shipping!" I said, "Where is it?" They pointed to a very small banner in the middle of the home

page. That was it. As my team and I analyzed their website, we came up with a few ways to optimize the site. The optimization didn't require sophisticated A/B split or multivariate testing. What it really required was good old-fashioned marketing. We recommended having prominent offers on every Web page, reinforcing brand and "shop-with-confidence" messages through the checkout process, easy-to-understand ways to convey savings and other benefits, an 800 phone number on every Web page, etc. From this two-week optimization review and implementation, we were able to increase sales 900% within a month. Not coincidentally, their pay-per-click search engine marketing improved also. Tip: Every Web page is a home page, especially if your website has many pages and many pages are indexing well on the search engines. You would be surprised how many sites are not taking this into account.

Deborah Kania, Brightworks Interactive,  
<http://www.brightworksinteractive.com>

#### GET BACK TO BASICS

**26** With SEM constantly evolving and technology becoming increasingly prolific, a la automated bid management, ad creation tools and the like, it appears as though that most basic nuance of paid search marketing—campaign structure—has taken a back seat to other, flashier methods of optimization. To me, this is akin to painting a racing stripe down the side a broken-down automobile. While it may look good to your audience, it's ultimately not going anywhere. When taking over a new account several months ago, I immediately identified the top keywords, across metrics. Unsurprisingly, the top 50 keywords – in terms of conversions - - were lumped together into but four ad groups. As a result, the ad copy was widely irrelevant, which adversely affected clickthrough rates, thereby raising the cost per click and diminishing quality scores. In addition, visibility into keyword/theme-level average positions was restricted to engine reports, which required subsequent back-end segmentation. As a result, optimizing the top keywords in the account was not only laborious, but essentially ineffective. By creating a separate ad group for each of these top keywords, we were able to better tailor the ad copy, as well as utilize keyword insertion in basically everything but the destination URL. Moreover, in Google (specifically), we were able to test multiple match type variants for each keyword, while dynamically bidding on

each. The end result was a consistent improvement in click through rate, coupled with a reduction in cost per click. Overall conversion rate doubled and cost per conversion was halved, enabling us to drive double the amount of conversions within the existing budget.

Todd Silverstein, Razorfish, [todd.silverstein@razorfish.com](mailto:todd.silverstein@razorfish.com)

#### TRIAL AND ERROR

**27** I've been running Google AdWords campaigns for a while now, with mixed but acceptable results. I have ads keyed on what I feel are relevant words relating to my product: dental health, dental floss, teeth cleaning, etc., as well as my competitor's product name. One day I noticed that I had a fair number of teeth-whitening companies as customers. They use my product to clean and floss patients' teeth before performing the teeth-whitening process. Eureka! A new market! I changed all of my AdWords to focus on this new 'teeth whitening' angle and got zero clicks. A week later, zero clicks. A month later, zero clicks. Oops! Even though there is a valid market there, it doesn't seem that many people are searching for that specific combination. I changed back my keywords and watch the clickthrough rate go back up. I reminded myself that "nothing ventured, nothing gained" and moved on.

Russell L. Magidson, Altean, Inc., <http://FlossAndWipe.com>

#### SEO WORKS

**28** I have been in marketing, sales, and PR or over 25 years and dabbled in the Web world for about six years, but this last year was a turning point! For a few years, I had heard about SEO, but the beginning of 2008 I suddenly was struck by the enormity of the world of Search Engine Optimization and how important it is to companies trying to break the code. Through launching four websites this year and working with about seven next year, I had to quickly learn how to develop a SEO strategy and wrap my brain around how SEO works. I took classes...and had several "masters" train me on SEO development so that now I have shifted my marketing mind set and business to this process. What better way to analyze a business than from what customers are looking for on the internet through keyword research. SEO is the way to go.

Cindy Woudenberg, Owner, LuCorp Marketing,  
<http://www.lucorpmarketing.com>

### CONCENTRATE ON NICHE KEYWORDS

**29** Find your niche, and then leverage the snot out of it. As a branding practitioner, I knew it was folly to try to achieve search engine success with a broad keyword like “branding” or wide-net phrase like “brand strategy.” Through online keyword optimizing tools, I discovered that a valuable (high demand, low supply) search phrase in my field was “affordable branding.” This phrase was nicely aligned with my offerings and positioning; so I concentrated on using the phrase in my keywords, page title, description, navigation, and content (where appropriate). While [www.How-to-Branding.com](http://www.How-to-Branding.com) is only four months old, my blog is already number 11, top of page 2 on Google and my entry page is currently showing up at number 24 on page 3.

Michael DiFrisco, <http://www.How-to-Branding.com>

### FOREIGN PPC MORE AFFORDABLE

**30** Six months ago, I launched some PPC campaigns targeting a French-Canadian target market and a Spanish-American target market and I was really surprised at the results. First, CPC on French and Spanish sites are less expensive than English. Second, there is less competition on SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages). Third, conversion rate is higher.

Hernan Cespedes, Amauta Internet Marketing,  
<http://www.amautamarketing.com>

### LINK KEYWORDS TO RIGHT PAGES

**31** A good client came to me with a failed AdWords campaign. There were many issues, but the main one was destination URLs. Google has become very serious about the Quality Score of the URL. After fixing the URLs to specific product pages and weeding out non-performers, the campaign increased revenue by 27%, while decreasing cost by 18% with a resulting ROI improvement of 650%. Be sure to link your keywords to the right pages!

Bob Schneider, G-Team Marketing,  
<http://www.gteammarketing.com>

### ADVOCATE FOR SEARCH

**32** Whether you are an in-house search marketing strategist at a large organization or an agency who has a search marketing champion, there is a common barrier: Establishing priority for search

marketing in conjunction with getting buy-in from required stake holders. Below are five ways you can push search marketing strategies along more effectively within big corporations. 1. Relationships: Establishing strong working relationships with team members in marketing, IT, and design is extremely beneficial in understanding the corporate structure as well as the flow for strategic processes. 2. Quick Wins and Tips: Once you have established some decent relationships, it's a good idea to understand each individual's priorities/responsibilities. From there you should begin to pass along occasional quick wins and tips allowing these individuals to be more effective with their day-to-day tasks. This idea will really help build your trust level. 3. Training: This is a technique I have had great success with. In order to get buy-in on the implementation of SEO and PPC strategies from my marketing team, I designed one hour SEO/PPC training sessions for intimate groups of 5-7. With a better understanding in both SEO and PPC, the marketing team was more open to asking for my help in future strategies. I kept the groups small to help promote questions and conversation during the training sessions. 4. Get Involved: If you see an opportunity to help out or add insight, take it. Suggest an A/B test for an email marketing campaign, a missing competitive term in a PPC campaign, an important tweak to a landing page or missing meta tags for a prominent product page. 5. Long Term: Once you have established relationships and received some buy-in, continue to evangelize search marketing with ongoing strategies. Find yourself a seat at meetings related to new website designs, CMS selection and online campaigns so that you can continue to give search marketing a voice at the table.

Manoj Jasra, Web Analytics World,  
<http://www.webanalyticsworld.net>

## PART 4:

# Mobile Marketing

### ATTRACT JOB CANDIDATES

**33** Mobile marketing is a highly effective strategy for recruitment marketing – an extremely niche industry that is increasingly relying on interactive tactics to reach both active and passive candidates. UPS partnered with TMP to develop a mobile marketing campaign that would create an increase of online applications and the viral buzz they desired to communicate their hiring needs, as well as showcase their innovative use of mobile technology. The recruitment marketing plan included text messaging, a new WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) site, HTML emails, and traditional media elements (e.g. TV and radio ads, direct mail, and collegiate newspaper ads), which served as “drivers” for the mobile campaign. The text message campaign prompted interested candidates to reply with their email address or visit the UPS jobs mobile website for additional information. The WAP sites were created to capture a candidate’s name, email address, zip code, and phone number. These leads were then sent an HTML email offering them more detailed information on working with UPS, as well as driving them to the UPS Careers website to apply online. The FIVE-month mobile marketing campaign provided great success, engaging more than 900 potential candidates in the first month of the launch. There was an exceptionally strong second-engagement rate of 44.1% and more than 100 unique visitors to the WAP sites, which were able to capture candidate data at the rate of 62.1%. The HTML email blast reached 365 candidates at an open rate of 27.2% and a nearly unheard of clickthrough rate of 92% since the launch of the campaign.

Kathleen LaRoque, TMP Worldwide Advertising & Communications, <http://www.tmp.com>

## PART 5:

# Landing Page & Website Design

### ENHANCE SEARCH FEATURES

**34** A recent site re-design resulted in significant increases in online search and traffic activity. We launched a new site search feature which dramatically enhances the ability of users to find what they are looking for on the site. Each of our college and university bookstore websites has its own URL and the product assortment is unique to each store and site which presented us with a challenging merchandising situation. The new design has improved navigation and the enhanced search feature has improved customer service.

Mark G Hammerschick, Follett Higher Education Group, <http://www.efollett.com>

### KEEP LANDING PAGES SHORT

**35** Moving from a two-column, 16-question form to a three-column, 12-question form increased landing page conversion rates by 14 percentage points.

Teri Barrows, White Rhino, <http://www.whiterhino.com>

### SIMPLETEXT LINKS WORK

**36** While big, colorful buttons that scream “do this or that” make excellent calls to action, never underestimate the power of using a simple text link. Traditional text links may not seem very flashy, but they’re highly recognizable by a Web visitor and can be used with equal effectiveness as a call to action when set apart on their own or within the body copy of a Web page. Some of our best converting pages use a combination of both buttons and text links that perform the same call to action. Try it yourself. Supplement a primary call-to-action button, which will typically appear at the top of a Web page, with one or more text links that can be integrated within context of the page’s body copy.

Steven Lamberti, Creative Labs, <http://www.Creative.com>

### KEEP IT ABOVE THE FOLD

**37** There are very few “truisms” in Conversion Optimization. Best practices vary by industry, product, season, target market, etc., and you need to run your own conversion experiments to determine what works best for you and your company’s offering – at this point in time. However, one factor we have found to work every single time is this: If you want to increase conversions on

your Web pages, you must make sure the call to action is visible to the highest possible number of Web visitors, that is, "above the fold." "Above the fold" refers to the section of your Web page that is visible without scrolling. What most Web users do is glance at each new page, scan some of the text, and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely resembles the thing they are looking for.

In other words, because web visitors don't scroll, the call to action MUST be above the fold. Always.

Raquel Hirsch, WiderFunnel Marketing,  
<http://www.WiderFunnel.com>

### TEST LANDING PAGES

**38** Most search marketers focus on rigorously testing ad text and keywords. However, according to the Marketing Sherpa Landing Page Survey (September 2007), only 30% of marketers are constantly testing aspects for improving landing pages. With budgets tightening, this is an instant way to improve your campaign efficiency without increasing keyword costs. This year we conducted a multivariate landing page test and saw over a 200% increase in a client's lead rate. Since we were not spending any more on clicks, this drove instant ROI improvement.

Katie Jerden, One to One Interactive,  
<http://www.onetooneinteractive.com>

## PART 6:

# Top Tests

### TEST EVERYTHING

**39** Paid search is no longer “all about the bids.” As marketers, we know it’s more than just keyword bids that impact campaign performance. Beyond looking at the account quality score, ranking and clickthrough rate to determine campaign performance, we conducted several tests during 2008 to further improve our success. Testing ranged from simple keyword match type tests to more complex multivariate landing page tests. Through these tests, we gained valuable knowledge that has since been incorporated into our current campaign management. The main lesson learned is to test everything. More insight yields greater optimization opportunities and better results.

Stephanie Gildart, One to One Interactive,  
<http://www.onetooneinteractive.com>

### AD PLACEMENT TEST LIFTS PROFIT

**40** As an online publisher, we frequently test our layouts. Whether it is striking that perfect balance between our editorial and ad space or tweaking to improve user functionality, testing is integral to our growth. Recently, our sales and marketing teams worked together to retest the ad offers in our cartoon newsletters. The control version had four ads placed around the content (the cartoon). The test version included a single larger ad above and below the cartoon. We also tested several key variables such as the subject line. After two testing cycles, we quickly learned that the single ad outperformed the control by 2 to 1. These results allowed us to immediately add a new ad package with increased ad rates as well as position the buy as an exclusive, which pleased many of our advertisers. In addition, our internal sales team earned larger profits with fewer advertisers. How’s that for team motivation? Without a doubt, never stop testing. Cultivating a culture of consistent testing is imperative to the growth and ongoing success of a company. Once one test is complete, the next is certainly waiting in the wings.

Scott Wolf, ArcaMax Publishing, Inc.,  
<http://www.ArcaMax.com>

### TEST BIG BEFORE SMALL

**41** You will see the best results by taking a site-wide perspective before testing granular page-specific elements. There’s a lot of excitement around multivariate testing, but it should be

engaged late in the conversion optimization plan to maximize results. To start with multivariate testing is like starting a home renovation by painting the walls before you decide which walls need to move. Here's a general sequence to follow: 1. Traffic segmentation tests (i.e. Targeting). 2. Conversion funnel path tests (i.e. Page flow). 3. Page layout tests (i.e. A/B/n). 4. Page section tests (i.e. Multivariate). Start by writing a conversion optimization plan to provide structure and priorities to your testing and you will be in a better position to maximize your results.

Chris Goward, WiderFunnel Marketing,  
<http://www.widerfunnel.com/blog>

### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

**42** The greatest lesson Firecracker has learned in 2008 is that when it comes to pay-per-click campaigns, the only best practice is testing. One best practice is that sending PPC visitors to a landing page is superior to sending them directly to the homepage. What we found for a yearbook publishing client was exactly the opposite. While total conversion numbers were higher, the quality of leads plummeted. Sales teams spent too much time dealing with unqualified or crank leads. While total leads fell by 50%, the dramatic improvement in the quality of leads led to a happier sales team and improved revenues. Our hypothesis was that the complexity of the service did not lend itself well to a single landing page. Prospects wanted to learn more before filling out a contact form, and the ones that made it to the form were thus more qualified. Another best practice is that ads running on Google's Search Network perform better than the Content Network. Testing the Content Network for a call routing marketing services client, ads running on Content Network have generated three times the conversions of those on the Search Network. The cost per conversion for ads on Content Network are 34% less, and the cost per click is about 50% less as well. Sometimes there is no rhyme or reason to why something works for PPC campaigns. The only constant is to test, test, test.

Edward Yang, Firecracker, <http://www.firecrackerpr.com>

### TEST TACTICS ACROSS CHANNELS

**43** One of our retail customers decided to test a new online product launch using our software. The test used two groups and a control group. Group A served as the control group and

never saw the new product creative in an email or on the company's homepage. Group B opened the email from the company and saw the new product creative, in addition to visiting the company's homepage and seeing the same new product creative again. Group C never saw the new product creative in the email, but did visit the homepage and saw the new product creative for the first time there. The testing campaign gave us both predictable and unpredictable results. We weren't surprised to find that reinforcing messaging works. We were surprised, though, to find that showing the new product creative to those who didn't see the new product creative in the email accounted for a drop in sales of nearly 25 percent. The test really showed how critical optimizing tactics across channels is to successful online marketing.

Brian Deagan, Knotice, <http://www.knotice.com>

### REVEAL DIFFERENT SEGMENTS

**44** Tracking and optimizing for phone conversions or any offline conversion can be difficult but really rewarding, as one of my clients learned. I helped them to test a lead-gen page that allowed users to request information via an online form or to call in and talk to a representative. To my client, the call-ins were much more valuable than the form submissions, so they were looking to maximize offline call-ins, even at the expense of some or all of their online leads. Using multivariate testing, I set up a test to increase phone conversions. Along with testing the headline, button, images and testimonials, I tested the form hidden and shown. This allowed us to find out if only showing the phone number increased call-ins compared to showing both the phone number and the form. What we found was that the same number of users called in, regardless if the form was shown or not. With some additional analysis, I also found that the page that form conversion users liked differed from the form that phone conversion users. Essentially we found two distinct segments with different optimal pages. This test exemplifies the power of testing to not only raise conversions, but to reveal segments and provide actionable next steps. Beyond the lift we already received from this test, with some targeting and additional testing we will continue to drive even better results.

Billy Shih, Widemile, <http://testingblog.widemile.com>

## PART 7:

# Business-to-Business

### SELF-SERVICE PRICING WORKS

**45** We are a B2B product reseller that sells complex hardware and software solutions to commercial and government organizations. We are in a highly competitive space with over 600 direct competitors that resell the same products. Our sales cycle is lengthy; anywhere from 60 days to 24 months. To succeed, we must find new opportunities before our competition so we can deliver our value proposition first. We accomplish this by using a variety of Web-based techniques like blogging and SEO to generate inbound traffic to our website(s). We then use a new conversion strategy to filter and qualify sales-ready leads so we're only working on the best prospects. 100% of our inbound conversions are provided by our own internally developed SaaS (Software as a Service) platform and its self-service pricing service. When prospects arrive at our site, we present the traditional white papers and blogs but most serious prospects go directly to our self-service pricing options (we place them everywhere). As prospects request pricing, we capture their email, company and phone number and push the information into Salesforce.com using a Web-to-lead form. Every lead captured is followed up as a "sales-ready lead" until it is proved otherwise. This eliminates missing deals. Non-ready deals go into our nurturing process. We began using self-service pricing as our call to action in 2007 so the following results reflect our entire experience (about 22 months). Unique Email Addresses Captured: 1,542. Total Quotes Requested: 1,958. Total Quotes Denied: 156. Total Quotes Approved: 1,802. Total Approved Quote Value: \$143,336,688.

Dale Underwood, CEO, Federal Appliance,  
<http://www.federalappliance.com>

### TRY MARKETING AUTOMATION

**46** When I talk with prospects about marketing automation, most often their minds go to lead generation. Our philosophy, on the other hand, is that applying marketing automation to the entire customer lifecycle – including lead generation, lead nurturing and customer retention – increases end revenue more than addressing each stage individually. During 2008, one of our clients' results further verified this belief. The client, a medium-size B2B organization, was targeting qualified leads and new customers, with goals of increasing conversion rates and increasing new customer revenue more quickly. After helping

them develop programs with content relevant to each group, we set up a multi-track campaign that automatically nurtured their qualified leads with consistent communications, and then transferred converted leads to the automated new customer assimilation campaign. Results of this six-month campaign included a leads-to-sales conversion rate of 22.8%, a new client revenue growth of 187%, and a combined ROI of 225%.

Karen Wilcox, Engagement Systems,  
<http://www.EngagementSystems.com>

#### UTILIZE HOUSE LISTS

**47** As we were reviewing results from a multi-channel campaign designed to generate new leads, we noticed that new leads generated through search and trade advertising were 99% and 95%. What surprised us was to find that 40% of the leads generated from emailing the house list were new! As we dug deeper, we found that some were from new people at a known company (either passed along or picked up by the replacement person) while others were from new people at companies new to our database (passed along through forwarding.) While using the house list as a primary means to generate new leads is not a solid strategy, making sure that the email is suitable for forwarding and the offer is easy and inviting enough for new leads will perform double duty.

Jack Felsheim, Ovation Marketing,  
<http://www.ovationmarketing.com>

#### HOME PAGE BETTER THAN LANDING PAGE

**48** Given the current rage around landing page utilization, testing and optimization, I've made it a major area of focus for my clients. Having said that, I've learned quantifiably that the landing page strategy sometimes simply doesn't work as well as driving traffic to the home page. There is a good segment of B2B traffic that doesn't want to be jammed into a white paper or free trial squeeze page, but rather have the opportunity to do their own research and browsing around the site. In a pretty sizable split-test, we found in many cases the home page approach brought in a higher quality prospect with no significant reduction in quantity. Through this process, I've definitely learned to keep an open mind when kicking off a campaign and not assuming the landing page approach is automatically the way to go. Test, measure, learn!

Todd Miechiels, Todd Miechiels + Partners,  
<http://www.miechiels.com>

#### BE DILIGENT

**49** This year we focused on strengthening our agency brand. In the agency world, new business development heavily relies on referrals and blind outreach programs such as cold calling and introductory letters. These are effective tactics as part of an overall marketing tool kit, but they fall short if they are the only tactics an agency uses to generate new business. To fill in the gaps left by the traditional approach, we have implemented an extensive content marketing program to communicate the substance of our service; it includes targeted emails, blogs, link building, newsletters, surveys, LinkedIn discussions, social networking and our own proprietary research to uncover consumer insights from which we can draw actionable items and recommendations for our prospects. It all started with a clear positioning that resonates in every aspect of our brand. The beauty of content marketing is that once you are clear and focused on your brand DNA, the content you create and put out there does the selling for you. We are diligent about getting the content out there, which is quite labor intensive and requires team work and leadership buy-in.

Brenda B. Gelston, Mascola Group, <http://www.mascola.com>

#### MOVE INTO SOCIAL MEDIA

**50** How much should you spend each year on media? For B2B marketers, this can be quite a quandary. B2B Magazine compiled a list of the Top 100 B2B advertisers and how much they are spending on each. Knowing how much the big boys spend on their media and the distribution of that media doesn't really help me right now in budget season. But knowing how much they spend as a percent of their overall revenue can. IDC coined a term – Marketing Budget Ratio (MBR) – which is the percentage of marketing budget to overall revenues. The MBR for most technology software and hardware firms is typically 3-5%. In technology pure play services firms, you typically see 1.5% or even lower. I have adapted that idea to create the "Media Budget Ratio." This is the percentage of media spend to overall revenue. I took the B2B Magazine report and pulled out some data points. I chose IBM, Cisco and Accenture to match their media spend against their 2007 revenues. These few top B2B firms are spending about .2% of their revenues on pure media (Note: no costs of marketing staff, marketing programs, field marketing, PR or ad production are included in these costs). There is great efficiency that large firms have when

branding with traditional media. Take IBM at \$195 million – more than enough money to spend online, in airports, on TV etc. Accenture reportedly spends \$60 just to promote the Tiger relationship you see everywhere. But what if you are only in the single billions of dollars in total revenue? Perhaps with a \$2 to \$4 million dollar media spend - you might find it hard to compete with the big boys. To me this chart, while depressing, is yet another wake-up call for marketers to move aggressively into social media – where your customers and prospects can amplify your message for you!

Paul Dunay, BearingPoint,  
<http://buzzmarketingfortech.blogspot.com>

## INTEGRATE METRICS FOR BETTER LEADS

**51** For our B-to-B clients, 2008 was the year that we finally got a significant number of them across the dividing line between marketing and sales from an integrated metrics perspective. In other words, to take a specific example, we passed our SEM and SEO analytics tracking from Omniture into a Salesforce.com field, and were able to track each website generated lead (and its associated source code ID) all the way through a multi-stage, multi-month sales process from qualification to demo to quote to close. In this particular publicly-traded B-to-B technology company's case, doing our PPC optimizations based on "cost per qualified lead" (in other words, a human had talked to the Web "lead" and had giving it a thumbs up or thumbs down) rather than on "cost per raw Web lead" changed the way we invested money on Google and Yahoo! by more than 46%. Many keywords and phrases that previously looked great turned out to be generating junk leads, and many keywords and phrases that looked costly (on a "raw Web form" basis) turned out to be bargains, and we were able to cost-justify significantly increasing our position on the engines, which resulted in a sizable increase in lead volumes for those keywords and phrases. All it took was a little bit of integration code, and a little more data sharing between client and agency, combined with the right mindset, and we were able to take multiple campaigns up to a completely different and better level of performance. We strongly believe this is the future of any well run B-to-B lead generation campaign.

William Leake, Apogee Search Marketing,  
<http://www.apogee-search.com>

## PART 8:

# Lead Generation

### LEAD NURTURING IS KEY

**52** To support its rapid customer acquisition goals, Marketo needed to implement a high-volume, low-cost revenue cycle. A continuous flow of high-quality marketing-driven leads was essential to this strategy, meaning the company needed to nurture prospects and prioritize leads for the sales team. The company struggled to identify new leads as: 1. Unqualified. 2. In-profile but not yet in an active buying cycle. 3. “Hot” and ready to engage with sales. As a result, the sales team didn’t know which leads to follow-up on. Qualified leads ended up falling through the cracks. Now, Marketo highlights hot leads and sends them instantly to the sales team for follow-up in under five minutes. Other qualified “in-profile” prospects that are not yet sales ready get automatically nurtured with a 15-step nurturing program designed to educate the prospect and help Marketo stay top-of-mind. At the same time, lead scoring rules prioritize leads that show key buying behaviors, helping the sales team focus their time on the most engaged, educated, and sales-ready leads. Lead nurturing has resulted in a 4x improvement in the number of prospects that become sales ready within 12 months of acquisition. Combined with lead scoring, this integrated revenue cycle has helped the “lead to opportunity” rate go from 7% to 15% and the “opportunity win rate” to go from 25% to 40%, enabling the company’s lean inside sales team to sign up more than 100 new customers in just eight months.

Kelly Abner, Marketo, [kelly@marketo.com](mailto:kelly@marketo.com)

### PUT A FORM ON EVERY PAGE

**53** The simplest strategies are always the better. Use a lead-generation form in every page of your website and you can increase your conversion rate by 400% or more. We’ve used many different tactics but nothing beats the simple form – we’ve been using it for years to great success.

Gustavo Arizpe, Area, <http://www.areaestrategica.com>

### USE AUTOMATED PRICE QUOTES

**54** The leads from RFQ (Request For Quote) requests are superior to leads generated by white paper or newsletter opt-ins because the prospect is actively weighing the cost of purchasing. As such, users are identifying themselves at a

decision point rather than at a curiosity point. Additionally, the contact information provided by the prospects in an RFQ is usually accurate because they want a response. MarketingSage sees tens of thousands of sales leads every year from a variety of clients. All have RFQ forms. However, one savvy client did something different that boosted RFQs 250% to 300%. They added an RFQ button that offered an automated price quote from a third party. They did not remove the existing house RFQ form. To get the quote, the prospect completes a form that captures their contact information and product interest. The quote is automatically delivered by email after a human reviews the request.

David X. Lamont, MarketingSage,  
<http://www.marketingsage.com>

### ENGAGE WITH LEADS

**55** From writing and marketing countless white papers, case studies, and similar lead generation materials, here are three things I've learned you should add at the end of the document to earn the greatest response. 1. Ask the reader to pass your document to others they know. 2. Ask the reader to subscribe to something. I like to add a call to action to register for something that continues the discussion. A newsletter or e-course of some type is nice because it leads to a series of future contacts. 3. Ask the reader to contact you for a discussion. When I'm contacted from this offer, I send the person making the request for a meeting a questionnaire to prepare for our call. The questionnaire asks basic questions about their business and marketing and sales efforts to date. I tailor the questionnaire to the topic of the lead generation document they're responding to. This questionnaire further qualifies them as a prospective customer and gives me the necessary background to jumpstart our conversation. When making this offer, it's important to keep your promise of not conducting the meeting like a sales call. Instead, you should focus the conversation on adding value to the person you're speaking with. Using the three calls to action above, I've extended the reach of my lead generation documents and put in place a system for qualified prospects to engage with me.

Jim Logan, <http://b2brainmaker.com>

### TRAIN TRADE SHOW LISTENERS

**56** I finally convinced a client that while they wanted to be very concerned about the look, location and logistics of the booth, they should really be concerned about who is at the edge of the booth meeting attendees. While controlling the other factors, the biggest and most measurable factor are the people working the booth. The result was a massive amount of good information including new contacts, leads and even two ideas for new products. Train the people working the booth to be "Trade Show Listeners"

Jim Savage, Dean Houston, Inc.,  
[jsavage@deanhouston.com](mailto:jsavage@deanhouston.com)

## PART 9:

# Direct Mail

### DON'T USE ONE COMPANY

**57** One of the most expensive and involved - and yet profitable - marketing campaigns I ever tried was a direct mail - full-color - postcard to attract prospects for 'Unsecured Business Loans.' Here is why I made five times the return on my investment: I did not entrust leads, design, printing and mail fulfillment to one company. I sought a professional to edit my wording strategy on the card. I sourced the design to a graphics artist. I sought a printer who guaranteed a good delivery time and price. I selected a mail delivery company that only made money on address labeling the card and product delivery and provided me the receipt of delivery. I found a good lead company who guaranteed no more than 5% inaccurate leads. Here is why I made \$ 19,000 profit on an \$1,800 endeavor: 1. I was not nice to the people who called. When it comes to finance, you must understand that nice is equal to non-credible. 2. Our product had no fee unless we get results, but our fee was high enough to justify the cause. 3. We made the clients sign a closing agreement before we got started on our services. This is how the campaign worked for another year: 1. People called months later - they found the card buried on their desk! 2. We used the 5,000 leads and cold called about 200 names and closed yet another client who said they never saw the card.

Robert Kaplan, Frontier Funding,  
<http://www.frontierfunding.com>

### CURIOSITY IMPROVES RESPONSE

**58** Non-promotional Business Outer Envelops generate a 10% to 15% lift over Promotional Envelopes in head-to-head tests among numerous vertical small business market segments, ranging from car washes to beauty salons. Test after test showed that more calls and sales were generated from those direct mail packages that had no promotional message or graphic on the outer surface. The winning package carried just the logo of a well-known company and the address of the recipient. The lesson learned from this test is: Revealing too much about the nature of the message, or presenting the offer in some clever "creative" way gave a business person enough information to make an open or toss decision. Using plain white No. 10 envelopes that give the recipient no incremental information beside the value of the brand increases the opening rates.

Russell Kern, The Kern Organization,  
<http://www.thekernorg.com>

## TIPS FOR THESE TIMES

**59** To maintain or improve response to your direct mail in today's difficult market, consider these five key principles: 1. Economy – Maximize the earning potential of every element of your direct mail. This means knowing what makes a difference and what doesn't so you can trim the fat. But don't use cheap formats just because they're cheap. ROI is always the deciding factor. 2. Clarity – Deliver simple, direct messages that people understand instantly. This concept is now imperative. Confusion kills sales. 3. Credibility – Eliminate fear and reduce perceived risk. Try free trial offers. Emphasize your money-back guarantee. Use your trusted brand name to differentiate yourself from less well-known competitors. 4. Immediacy – Find ways to overcome inertia, encourage buying decisions, and discourage the "I'll think about it" reaction. Use involvement, repetition, and information to lay the groundwork for saying "yes" to your offers. 5. Value – Demonstrate the money-saving value in what you offer. After you entice people to want your products and services, give them the logical justification they need to complete a transaction.

Dean Rieck, Direct Creative, <http://www.directcreative.com/>

## PERSONALIZE AND ADD PURLS

**60** Our company has worked with GASC (Graphic Arts Show Company) to market a number of the trade shows that GASC produces, including GRAPH EXPO, and the international exhibition, PRINT. Over the years, GASC had employed a variety of marketing techniques, including email marketing and direct mail (both with variable data printing and without). In 2008, GASC approached us about applying sophisticated VDP (Variable Data Publishing) technologies and PURLs (Personal URLs) in a comprehensive cross-media strategy to promote GRAPH EXPO 2008. We prepared the data submitted in each of GASC's seven list segments, and designed a detailed workflow chart/plan to execute the printing of each variable data printed postcard. Each recipient received a distinctive 5.5" by 8.5" full-color postcard, which was personalized by name, address, and first-name salutation. Further personalization included boldface copy developed by GASC's out-of-house vendor, which addressed the recipient according to his/her interest area. A race car image on the postcard was individualized with the name of the recipient's company emblazoned

on the hood. In order to push postcard recipients to their PURL, GASC offered a chance to win one of 13 free gasoline prizes, with \$1,000 being the grand prize. To enter the drawing, recipients had to visit the PURL and complete a short survey. Nearly 218,000 personalized postcards with PURLs drove 2,857 respondents to the web (a 1.3% response). Upon landing, 2,476 of those respondents (86.6%) completed the survey. Of the respondents who visited their PURLs, 121 (about 5%) clicked over to the registration link.

Crystal Uppercue, EU Services, <http://www.euservices.com>

## PART 10:

# Customer Service

## TURN ADVOCATES INTO CHAMPIONS

**61** Chances are your company and products have a fair share of advocates. These are devoted individuals - maybe they're customers, or business partners, or just fans - that dedicate an inordinate amount of time informing people about, educating them on and promoting your solutions on your behalf. Are you doing everything you should do to support and recognize these dedicated volunteers? We recently launched the IBM Data Champion program to recognize and build tighter relationships with our biggest advocates. Doing so involved a relatively small investment on our part, especially compared to the benefit we see from the community contributions of our champions. We recognized them on stage at our annual user conference and awarded them plaques. We set up a dedicated web page to highlight our champions and their experience. And we're working to build tighter relationships between our product teams and our champions, giving them things like early access to products and private briefings. The benefits we get are expected to easily reach into the millions of dollars as our champions - and those working to distinguish themselves in the community on their way to becoming champions - help spread the word and educate people on our solutions. More than that, the program provides us a way to give back to our community leaders and the people that are such a valuable part of our broad ecosystem.

Amit Patel, IBM,  
<http://www.ibm.com/software/data/champion>

## THANK CUSTOMERS WITH HOLIDAY GREETINGS

**62** Internet marketing at holiday time isn't just about percentages off and free-shipping coupon codes. Sometimes customers are content with a greeting that simply shows a measure of gratitude for their loyalty. The holiday message we sent was for a new client called Air Charter Services. ACS approached us with a general idea for a humorous greeting. After our illustrator created the art - a huge turkey coming in for an airport-runway landing - we wrote several funny tag lines, ultimately settling on "In-flight Meal." The open rate for this email was also good by any standard at 28.9%. Even more exciting is that recipients liked the message so much that some of them forwarded it to friends. The last greeting we sent was on behalf of GolfEtail, an online retailer that

specializes in golf equipment. While the greeting was a simple "Happy Holidays" message, we included links to a few regular-priced items from the store to remind customers that GolfEtail has the gift ideas they may be looking for. This email received a nearly 22% open rate, helping kick the retailer's online shopping season into high gear.

Michael Knipp, Visible Shops, <http://www.visibleshops.com>

#### REMIND CLIENTS WHAT YOU DO

**63** Several times this year we've stumbled upon the simple value of reminding clients and prospects about what we do. We are a staffing firm and most frequently our clients will use us in one niche area, for a time-specific need. Even though we've been doing business with the same target market for over 20 years, we've had at least a half-dozen conversations this year with existing or former clients who, upon being reminded of our temporary staffing services, exclaimed, "I didn't know you did that!" We haven't changed, but we too often assume that everyone knows our story, our services, and our benefits. This year we have perhaps benefited most of all from this revelation that we need to keep re-telling our story, and in that way we can always be placing ourselves in the path of opportunity.

Kathryn Lorenzen, LandaJob Advertising & Marketing Talent, <http://www.landajobnow.com>

#### STAY CLOSE TO CUSTOMERS

**64** We find that the most important thing you can do is stay close to your customers, take superb care of them, go the extra mile and turn them into "fans." If your customers are the kinds of companies you want to and like working with, then they will often know other companies similar to themselves. We hold customer appreciation lunches and send out fun mailings. We do NOT use email to market to existing customers because we find most of them already receive more emails than they'd like. There is no substitute for taking a customer to lunch, sending them a thank you gift, calling them up and checking in regularly.

Suzanne Tucker, One Stop Graphics, <http://www.onestopgraphics.com>

#### OFFER FLEXIBLE PAYMENT OPTIONS

**65** In these tough economic times, my business has found that offering more flexible length/time of payment has kept sales flowing steadily. Specifically, offering a customer the ability to pay in chunks instead of all upfront. Spread out your fees over a 3 to 6 month window and make it more digestible for a customer to click that buy button. Especially when you're dealing in costs that go over \$1,000. People are still buying; they're just not so willing to spend it all in one big lump sum.

Jim Kukral, TheBizWebCoach, <http://www.thebizwebcoach.com>

#### CUSTOMERS LOVE CUSTOMER EVENTS

**66** At jobs.ac.uk, we market ourselves with PPC, SEO, online PR, email marketing, blogging, podcasting, videos on YouTube, photos on Flickr, link building, direct mail, article writing, speech giving, tradeshow and giveaways. But you know what works best? Do you know what gets the most positive feedback from our clients and always brings in the best results? Customer events. Plain, old-fashioned, honest-to-goodness customer events. That's what hits the mark every time. When we hold an event, we work real hard to make them valuable for the attendees. We think about our customers and the issues and challenges they're facing. We then pull together the best speakers and content we can find that will really help them in their day-to-day jobs. Then, when they attend, we make sure that the day goes as smoothly as possible and that they have a really useful and enjoyable time. We achieve this in lots of ways including using high quality venues in central locations, having lots of the team on hand during the day (to look after our 'guests') and encouraging our speakers to be as interactive with their presentations as they can be. Any selling we do is low-key. After these events we soon see a real financial ROI. Customers who attend our events tend to go on to buy more of our products. They stay with us longer and spend more money with us.

Andrew Gordon, jobs.ac.uk, <http://www.jobs.ac.uk>

#### PERSISTANCE PAYS OFF

**67** During a nine-day power outage in Ohio, all I had were three windows with bright light and our phone lines. So we went to our files with flashlights and called all of our accounts. We were

able to sell to people we might not have had time to reach during regular times. And we were able to ship also. We started monthly mass emails using Constant Contact for our wholesale customers. We added a large number of items to our eBay store and rewrote titles to utilize every word allowed, trying to think outside the box with words to draw people to our site. And as every year, great, not just good customer service was our mantra.

Linda McTaggart, McDarlins & McWags,  
<http://www.mcdarlins.com>

### TARGET,TARGET,TARGET

**68** We did a fantastic job of recruiting new donors and child sponsors online and via direct response TV. We knew the challenge was to limit the questions up front. Every extra question causes fall-off on the signup process. We also knew that follow up surveys don't work very well either, with donors. Fortunately, we worked with a data demographic and social value firm that helped us paint the picture of who we were able to recruit as donor and sponsors. It has meant that we can now target much better, we understand who is likely to respond to our cause, orphaned children, and where we can reach others like them. Three years of 40% compounded growth has meant we are able to raise more orphaned and abandoned children around the world. If you are a marketer, consider helping a charity do better next year.

Daniel Loftus, SOS Children's Villages Canada,  
<http://www.soschildrensvillages.ca>

## PART 11:

# Metrics

### QUANTIFY THE FUNNEL

**69** To get a seat at the big table, focus on quantifying your marketing funnel. Typical statistics and metrics are important but try to find a way to directly correlate lead value directly to your products or services. Here's how. Does your company sell high-tech widgets for an average of \$50,000? 30 good leads in a month means your marketing funnel has grown by \$1.5 million. Stop trying to map your efforts back to actual closed deals. Marketing is paid for the potential it generates and your marketing funnel should always reflect 5 to 10 times the closed sales revenue number.

Dale Underwood, EchoQuote, <http://www.echoquote.com>

### BUILD A PR DASHBOARD

**70** We've been challenged by our CEO to ramp up the effectiveness of our PR efforts. Given that many execs view PR effectiveness subjectively, and with a bias as to whether we got good coverage, the team decided to create an objective-based dashboard. We've used outsourced PR metrics in the past, but given our limited resources, we wanted to spend our budget on coverage-producing tactics instead of expensive tools. That said, you can't manage what you don't measure so the PR team came up with a simple homemade dashboard that tracks interviews, bylined articles secured, coverage, press releases, speaking engagements, and pitches across the business, government and trade press. The first tab provides a summary of all activity and each subsequent tab contains the underlying details. For example, the feature coverage tab contains the details of all coverage, including publication, headline, reporter, spokesperson quoted and URL of the article. We're just getting started with this tool but I find it to be a great way to set goals for each tactical area of PR and then track the effectiveness of our efforts... all without costing us much except for some staff time. Now we can measure our effectiveness on a week-to-week basis and make course corrections more rapidly.

Todd Ebert, Entrust, <http://www.entrust.com>

### QUESTION EVERY SITE STATISTIC

**71** Many print media sales reps have been forced to also sell online media, and I am constantly amazed how many of them do not understand the difference between page views

and unique visitors. Question and confirm every site statistic they provide.

Chris Schorre, Emergo Group Inc.,  
<http://www.emergogroup.com>

#### TRACK CAMPAIGNS WITH ONLINETOOLS

**72** A great tool I learned about this year involves the URL Builder tool to track all online marketing campaigns in Google. This allows you to build tracking links that integrate with your Google Analytics account, providing granular detail about your traffic segmented by very specific campaigns. In addition, you can even use it for email campaigns or newsletters to track response and precise ROI. It's a great tool to evaluate and compare campaigns, whether they are singular events or an ongoing, evolving campaign.

Michael Epstein, eDimensional,  
<http://www.eDimensional.com>

# Advertising

## USE THE RIGHT METRICS

**73** Online publishers are under siege, with some financial analysts now predicting dramatic declines in display ad prices in 2009. Some publishers are fearful of the future as display ad prices decline. I believe that one of the main reasons for this is that, in these challenging economic times, advertisers and publishers are not always using the right measures to analyze advertising effectiveness. With average click rates on display ads falling under 0.1%, the correct metric to use is clearly NOT the click. Failure to recognize that exposure to the ad has measurable benefits in terms of consumer awareness and behavior — even without a clickthrough — can lead advertisers and publishers to significantly undervalue display advertising. Use of the click alone to evaluate the effectiveness of display advertising could be one of the main reasons why display ad dollars are under pressure. Needless to say, it's critical that advertisers and publishers use the right metrics. They need to use view-through metrics not clicks. Advertisers that display ad campaigns are delivering real value in terms of substantial lift in site visitation (+46%), lift in trademark search queries (+38%) and increases in both e-commerce (+27%) and offline sales (+17%).

Gian Fulgoni, comScore, <http://www.comscore.com>

## START WITH INTERMEDIATE OFFERS

**74** When you're trying to generate a lead through a webinar, make sure your initial offer isn't too intimidating. Many companies buy Web ads or e-newsletter ads to directly promote a webinar, which can be a big mistake. We saw the clickthrough rates for webinar-specific ad campaigns lag far behind other non-webinar ads in 2008. Asking a brand new prospect to give up an hour of their time to attend a webinar is a large commitment to communicate in a small ad, and that's why the ads often generate such a weak clickthrough rate and response. Instead, come up with an intermediate offer to promote in the web ad or e-newsletter ad, then offer the webinar later. For example, offer a free research report within the ad. Once the prospect has clicked on your ad and responded to that low-commitment offer, then you can invite them to your webinar. Your ad clickthrough rates will increase dramatically. And while adding an intermediate step into the process sounds counter-intuitive, with this tactic you should

see an increase in overall registrations – because you're bringing more people into the first stage of the marketing funnel.

Michael Madej, <http://www.michaelmadej.com>

### ADWORDSTRICKS

**75** These are some (Google) AdWords tricks you can actually use: 1. When geo-targeting, try not to use radii or self-defined areas, use the location targeting offered by Google as this will add a fourth line of text to your ad and will dramatically increase CRT, quality scores and drive more visitors who convert better. I have seen a 100% increase in conversions with a 30% drop in conversion rates by switching to this strategy with some clients. 2. Experiment with banner ads in placement targeting on the content network. There is a reason Google has recently created a banner building tool inside their platform – they have massive inventory holes for banner space due to the economic downturn. A smart user of AdWords can find great placements and can send out targeted messages with banners. I have seen good conversions from this strategy lately. 3. All AdWords users need to be aware the AdWords data they see inside Google Analytics that are associated with specific keywords are NOT accurate. Google Analytics does not show actual search queries in their AdWords reporting, instead they show the keywords inside your campaign that pulled the visitor to the site. There can be an enormous difference between these two pieces of data. You must use either a filter to grab this data or use a third-party tool like HitTail. 4. Make sure you make your bidding decisions based upon statistically significant data. Learn what statistical significance is, make a decision about what you want your confidence level to be and try to stick to that plan. I have seen many people make permanent decisions about ads, about keywords and about Google Optimizer tests based on data that was not significant. Even if you choose 95% confidence you have a 1-in-20 chance of making a WRONG decision that will permanently affect your campaign's performance.

David S. Foreman, Interactive Limited,  
<http://www.interactivelimited.com>

### UTILIZE PERFORMANCE REPORTS

**76** We're seeing a movement towards transparency in the search marketing field. Google, in particular, has been actively taking steps to improve insight for search marketers into where our ads are being served. After years of requests from agencies for more detail into ad placements, Google launched the Placement Performance report, which shows impressions, clicks, and cost by domain for their content network. Google now also offers demographic reports for content networks, geographical reports for all ads, and search query reports that shows the search terms which triggered ads. Traditionally, search engines have been concerned about showing this much detail because they did not want to increase questions about the validity of the data. However, after viewing these reports, we have additional confidence in the tactics. We have seen placement performance reports that show our ads being served on great, relevant sites. The geographic reports confirm that our ads are only being shown in the correct areas, and the demographic reports share valuable information about the age and gender of the users clicking. Search marketers should utilize reports provided by the engines to further educate themselves on campaign placements and performance.

Katie Jerden, One to One Interactive,  
<http://www.onetooneinteractive.com>

## PART 13:

# Business-to-Consumer

### DON'T DISREGARD BANNER ADS

**77** When it comes to Internet campaigns, there are lots of established truths. For example, it is common sense that the Web banners should be simple and with short steps to lead to the website for the sake of the clickthrough rate (CTR). Our client was launching its digital cable TV service and our challenge was to communicate the features in a very entertaining way but with the focus on the clicks. We dared to propose a banner campaign using rich media that required many customer interactions with the banners before leading them to the receptive website. We expected that the users would spend quite a long time “playing” with the Internet banner, but would they click and visit the receptive website after that? Or they would just leave the banner, resulting in a disastrous CTR? The stakes were high but the client was confident with the strategy and creative solution. As a result, the campaign achieved one of the most successful results ever. The lesson we’ve learned this year: No matter how long the interaction is, if the message is delivered, they will click.

Plinio Okamoto, RAPP Brazil, <http://www.rappbrasil.com.br>

### PURLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**78** We helped our client, Barbour Publishing, promote its line of Christian-inspired mystery novels through a targeted direct mail campaign that featured variable data printing (VDP) and personalized URLs (PURLs). The direct mail package included a 6x9 carrier in which the address flies the package, a personalized letter, and a matching personalized reply form. In a test, PURLs were included to drive respondents to a personal website, where they could join the “Mystery Book of the Month Club” and choose from four free titles. The client was pleased by the number of sign-ups they received through the PURLs and that the PURLs allowed them to collect each customer’s information automatically. Moreover, no key coding was necessary because PURLs capture list information automatically, which resulted in more accurate response data.

Crystal Uppercue, EU Services, <http://www.euservices.com>

### COMBINE DATA

**79** In a recent initiative for one of our B-to-C customers, we discovered that by combining site search data with information about individual

customer preferences and purchasing histories, marketers can create highly targeted, personalized email campaigns that produce dramatic results: a 250% increase in open rates, a 400% clickthrough increase, a 300% increase in sales and 200% higher revenue per visit.

Geoff Brash, SLI Systems, <http://www.sli-systems.com>

#### LOWER PRICE POINTS

**80** Starting in early summer, we found that subscribers were showing decreased demand for our existing 12-month subscription product. They weren't tolerating the high one-time charge, even though prorated monthly cost was a better deal than our month-to-month rates. By offering a shorter six-month term, we were able to lower the price point to a level that was more palatable to customers, without sacrificing margin. We offered the new term to existing qualified month-to-month customers as a special promotion and shifted over 10% of them to a longer term with a higher lifetime value!

Sharron Jones, Simply Audiobooks, <http://www.simplyaudiobooks.com>

#### WHAT NOT TO DO

**81** How better to blow your budget overnight? Setting a newly revised daily budget and going for a holiday, ignoring the budget over the weekend. Keywords: Bidding on high clickthrough keywords which have zero or very low conversion rates. Overbidding on keywords without having taken into consideration revenue or profit-per-conversion. Paying for negative keywords without knowing. Failure to run the reports in identifying the negative keywords which are costing you money but zero/low conversions. Lumping all your keywords all onto a single ad group when you should be segmenting them individually onto respective relevant ad groups. ZERO testing: Simply just running your only ad copy without any alternative copy in testing which has a better conversion rate. Generic Landing Page: Simply send all your potential customers to a generic page without a goal in mind; paying for all the clicks but zero conversions when you should be sending them to respective product/promotions/information page.

Deric Loh, <http://rock-your-boat.blogspot.com>

#### RESPOND TO TRENDS

**82** In the midst of researching new digital marketing strategies and tactics, I also make sure to remain very conscious of our economy and how the market is feeling and behaving. In this economy, the market is concerned about finances. In the fourth quarter, traffic to financial websites and bank websites increased by 10%. Our team evaluated the following: If our product would fit nicely on a financial site? And does our message communicate that we can help in some way with financial concerns in the market? We could provide a benefit to the consumer and we launched a few online ads on various financial sites. Our monthly unique visitors increased 1% bringing us 700 new visitors that wouldn't have visited us otherwise. It's early to determine conversion to sales; however, the job in generating the traffic was successful.

Marissa Buckley, Security First Insurance Company, <http://www.SecurityFirstFlorida.com>

#### CHOICE KILLS RESPONSE

**83** To sell a time share, you sell a very low-cost tour. We learned that 10% of the folks who took a tour bought a time share. The goal was to get them to take a tour. We had been using a good pitch: "A weekend (two nights in a luxury condo) in Fort Lauderdale on the beach for only \$69 for the whole family. Pick any weekend from July 13 to September 18 and the weekend is yours." We were getting one quarter of one percent response rate. One of the salesmen tried a different approach. His message: "We have only one weekend left in Fort Lauderdale. \$69 for the whole family in a deluxe condo July 13-14. Click or call right away before it is gone" His message was four times as effective as the one that gave consumers a choice. If you give recipients a choice, they will think, "Hmm, I wonder which weekend would work best for us?" And they never answer. With no choice, they think, "We better grab this before it is gone."

Arthur Middleton Hughes, The Database Marketing Institute, <http://www.dbmarketing.com>

#### LISTEN TO CUSTOMERS' WANTS

**84** The lesson is simple, "Sell what your customers want to buy, at the price they want to pay, instead of what you want to get rid of at the profit you want to earn." Working with a home builder this year, I transformed his focus

and perspective and now instead of having empty homes and negative cash flow, we switched to a “Lease Now, Buy Later” program that includes lower monthly payments and no long-term commitments. As a result, he now has a waiting list and is building more to fulfill the demand.

Scott Howard, ScLoHo.net,  
<http://sclohonet-thebook.blogspot.com/>

PART 14:

# Office Politics

## CREATE A CULTURE OF MARKETING

**85** I am currently developing a marketing plan for the third largest chamber of commerce in the state of Minnesota. One of the guiding principles of this plan is how important it is to instill a culture of marketing within an organization so that it changes the way it views marketing, and, indeed, how it markets itself. Too often I deliver a marketing plan to a client and, in spite of their promises and earnestness, they do not properly implement the plan. Something more pressing comes up. They lose interest. They reallocate the money from marketing to another function. This time around, I'm bound and determined to communicate not only the technical strategies and tasks that must be pursued, but also to educate them on what the culture of a successful marketing company feels like. So I'm training the board, staff and volunteers in understanding the value of: 1. Top leadership support of marketing. 2. Project meetings that bring everyone up to speed on marketing progress. 3. An acceptance of failure. 4. A philosophy of testing. 5. An appreciation of ongoing dialogues with members vs. one-shot surveys. I'm convinced that too many marketing efforts fail because the organization doesn't work to imbue marketing into its culture. I can already see that my insistence on developing a culture of marketing is sinking in with select members of the organization.

Jay Lipe, Emerge Marketing,  
<http://www.emergemarketing.com>

## EMOTIONS GET IN THE WAY

**86** The less emotionally involved I am in a project, the more money I stand to make.

Rebecca Coggan, Exalt Creativity,  
<http://www.exaltcreativity.com>

## GET IT DONE

**87** Earth Day 2008 was approaching. I had an idea for a campaign in my head but there was limited time to get it ready, approved, and out the door. This happens quite a bit. We come up with a marketing idea, but there just doesn't seem to be enough time to go through all the proper channels, and get it done. A lot of those end up where they started, as ideas. But I really believed in this one. We worked late to come up with the content for the email blast. We built the landing page early the next morning. We still did not have all the approval

that is needed for a typical campaign but the time to send it was now! And we did. This turned out to be one of our most successful campaigns of the year. For that whole week, we saw nearly 55% of people click through on the email to the landing page. Our sales team, which may not have seen the creative beforehand, certainly didn't care at this point. They were busy chasing the leads! So, the lesson learned: there will always seem to be a lot of reasons why we can't get a campaign out the door but marketing is essential, and deserves a high priority. So just get it done!

Jason Pinto, interlinkONE, <http://www.interlinkONE.com>

## JUST SAY NO

**88** This year, I learned and put into practice the power of no. I gave up the "I'm a solo-preneur and I have to take on every project and client" mentality. And while I learned that at the end of the day, this puts more money in my pocket, I also saw firsthand how some people don't like being told no. Even in this last month of 2008, I had an email exchange with someone who decided to personally attack me because I told him, quite objectively and professionally, that I was not interested in his project. This is what I have learned about trusting myself and the power of no in marketing and in business: A red flag is a red flag. Respect your intuition, and don't feel inclined to do anything you don't want to do. Not every client or project is for you. Recognizing that and knowing when to say "no" will actually open up more possibilities for you – the only thing that will close you off is to work with clients and projects that ooze bad energy. Let it slide. Some people are put on our path to show us what we don't want and who we don't want to work with, and that's it. Take the lessons for what they are worth and then move on.

Allison Nazarian, Get It In Writing, Inc.,  
<http://www.GetItInWriting.biz> and  
<http://www.AllisonNazarian.com>

## PART 15:

# Public Relations

### BLOGGER RULES

**89** While working on a client's viral eBook campaign earlier in the year, I made a list of bloggers to "pitch" about my client's eBook. My client did get some good press via a few blog posts, but I knew that I wasn't doing something right because the response could have been better. Over the ensuing months, as my reputation continued to grow as a blogger in my own right, I started to receive dozens of untargeted pitches from companies and PR flaks who wanted me to write about them. That is when I realized that a successful blogging PR campaign must have the following components: 1. You must find the right blogs and follow them months before the campaign goes live. 2. You must make yourself known to the blogger via comments and personal emails as in, "Loved that post" or "Loved your Tweet about such and such today." 3. You must use the blogger's name. 4. You must only pitch on-target ideas to the blogger and show why your idea/news will appeal to the blogger and his/her audience. 5. You must get to the point – fast – and you must have real news, not fake news. 6. You must be polite. Don't use language that makes it sound like the blogger owes you press. 7. You must not spam bloggers. Nothing is worse than getting an email from a PR flak that was obviously sent to a bunch of people.

Dianna Huff, DH Communications, Inc.,  
<http://www.dhcommunications.com>

### SAYTHANKYOU

**90** In 2008, I began to fully appreciate the importance of two simple words: Thank You. In working with editors, reporters, and other members of the media, I've found that even the most seasoned media pros want feedback. Tell them that you or your client enjoyed the interview, saw the story, or noticed what a great job they did with the segment. As with all effective communications, it must be genuine and personal.

Rachel Hunt, DPR Group Inc., <http://www.dprgroup.com>

### TRY PAY-PER-CLIP MODEL

**91** One of the best things we did this year involved moving our PR efforts from a retainer-based model to a "Pay-Per-Clip" model – a decision that has netted us outstanding results. Under this model, our company only pays for PR "hits" that are actually generated in the press, versus our old model that paid out a monthly retainer

that may or may not have resulted in coverage. This new approach allows us to better quantify the value of our PR in terms of “hits” and conventional PR valuations. It also allows us to better track those “hits” against PR fees to determine a more meaningful return on investment (ROI) for our PR dollars. From an executive level, it is far easier to justify this results-based approach. Even when a company is as committed to PR and marketing as we are, those executive level discussions about the overall value of our PR investments still take place. Now, there are hard numbers matched to results that make those discussions more understandable – and the overall results more tangible – for everyone involved. Especially the accountants!

Brad Sugars, CEO, ActionCOACH,  
<http://www.actioncoach.com>

# Video

## DON'T FORGET THE LINKS

**92** Would you consider handing out business cards without a phone number or email address? Would you send out a solicitation email without including your Web address on it? Of course not. And yet time and time again, I see this happening with videos on YouTube. You invest time and money creating a “viral” video, post it online, and if you are lucky even attract an audience. But if your viewers don’t know where to find more information about your product or solution, all that work will be for nothing. To make sure people can find you, at a minimum you need to be sure to include a clickable URL in the video description. To maximize your investment in online videos, you need to make sure that you send your viewers somewhere worthwhile. When we posted some humorous product-related videos online, we didn’t just send people to our product home page. Instead, we took just a little extra time and created a dedicated landing page for our video series. Since we knew exactly where visitors to that Web page were coming from, we built continuity by following through on the theme of the video, presented visitors with a message tailored to the video they just viewed, and finished with a specific call to action. By doing so, we were able to better introduce them to our solutions and hand-hold them through an action path, rather than taking the much longer odds that if we sent them to our home page, they would actually stay and click around.

Adam Gartenberg, IBM

## VIDEO GETS RESPONSE

**93** We’re a non-profit organization and our weekly magazine content site was hacked several times last May. We do periodic fundraising appeals to our 250,000 subscribers, generally in the form of an email letter. When we were attacked, we ran an emergency campaign to upgrade the back-end of our site. Instead of using our standard letter format, we made a short, 1.5-minute video of the editor explaining the situation and soliciting the funds to upgrade the site. The results were a campaign that was about 70% more profitable than anything we had ever done. The two lessons were: 1. People respond to emergencies. 2. Video gets a better response than a letter.

Jack Kalla, Aish.com, <http://www.aish.com>

## GET CREATIVE

**94** We were setting up a new website for GrandpasCoffeeCakes.com, which was going to start selling his cakes all over the country. We looked at competitors online and started filling out all the details on the site. We realized that to replicate everything was to be the same. So we glommed onto an idea using videos. We found a video of “The Three Stooges” baking cakes. We showcased this video and supplemented it with a headline reading, “If Curly can do it, so can Grandpa.” The response was great. Next step is to have customers submit videos of all the ways they “eat” or “present” the cake at parties.

Jason Ciment, LaDezign.com, <http://www.ladezign.com>

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- B-to-B East Coast 2009 Summit – October 4-6, 2009 – Boston, MA

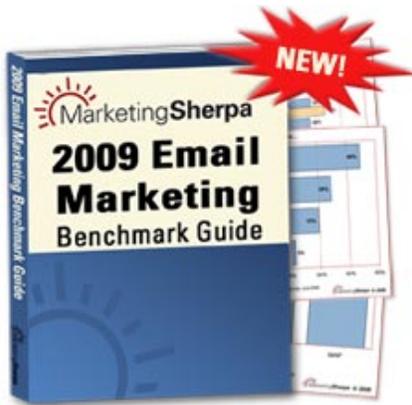
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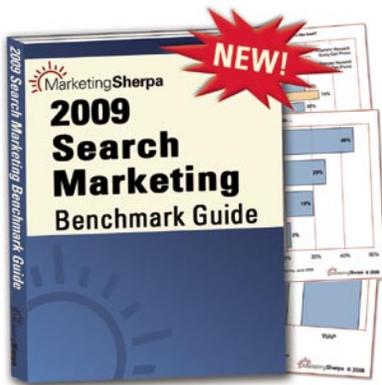
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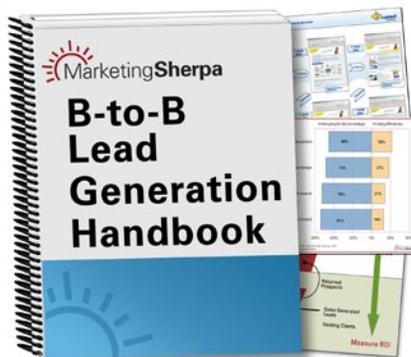
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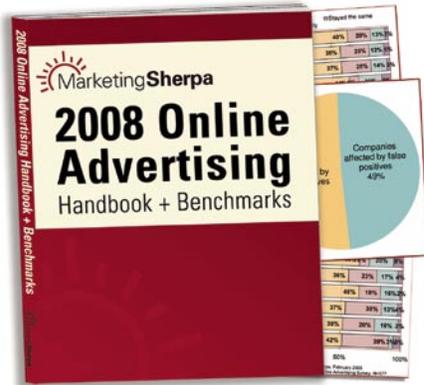
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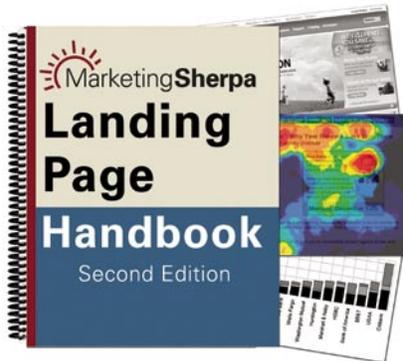
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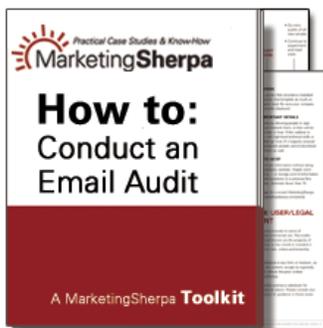


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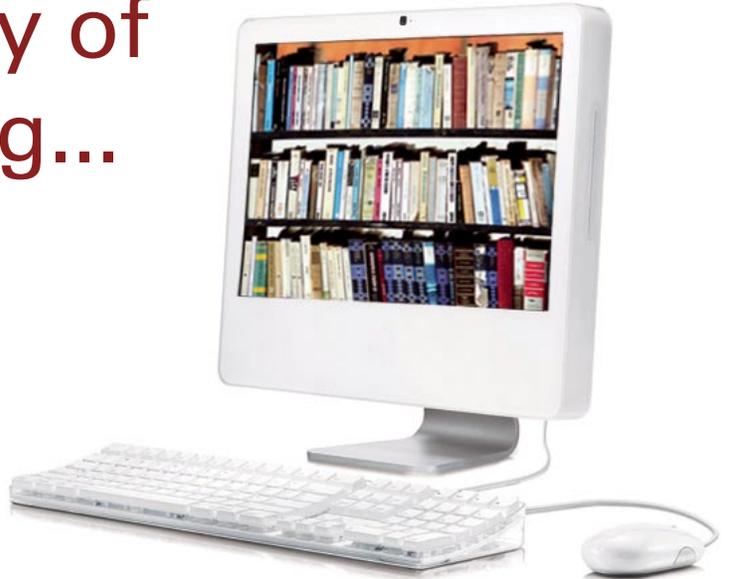
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