

TAKING THE BRAND ONLINE

TAKING YOUR SMALL BUSINESS BRAND ONLINE

[Duct Tape Marketing Coach](#) | March 18th, 2009



I was shocked the other day to read that only 44% of small businesses have a website. This amazing statistic came from a WebVisible / Nielsen Online study released last month (February 2009).

The study also reported that when looking for local (yes, local) products or services, buyers go first to internet search engines.

That means if you don't have an effective internet presence you are, plain and simple, losing sales.

Here are a few more reasons to take your brand online:

1. The internet is big, really big. You might be able to significantly expand your business to other geographies
2. The internet makes it easy to market niche products and services.
3. A website is much less expensive than a physical store front
4. Your sales/prospecting machine can operate 24/7
5. The internet can make your offline marketing more effective (e.g. your direct mail campaign can send prospects to your website where you can guide them through the sales process)
6. Parts of the sales process can be automated

Once you decide to invest more of your marketing dollars into harnessing the internet you'll need a plan. A good place to begin is to develop an effective website. This means you should learn how to:

1. Attract visitors
2. Keep your visitors and help them accomplish their goals
3. Capture leads or sales

ATTRACTING VISITORS

Your website will get visitors from a variety of sources including:

- People you send from your offline marketing such as advertising, direct mail, etc.
- Visitors who arrive by clicking on links to your site found in other places on the internet — e.g. partner websites, directories, articles you have submitted to online libraries, social networking sites, signature link in your emails, etc.
- Search engines as a result of a keyword search
- Search engines as a result of pay-per-click advertising ("sponsored links" in Google)
- Online advertising

All of the above you can either buy or strongly influence.

For example, you can ask other businesses with whom you network to place a link on their website. Associations you belong to often have a directory with a link.

You can also optimize your website to be ranked more highly in the search engines.

KEEP VISITORS STICKY

Once a visitor has arrived at your site, your job is to persuade them to stay. Unfortunately you have perhaps 5 seconds to convince them.

Here's how:

1. Design your site to look "right" e.g. if you are a financial planner then your site should ooze trust!
2. Make sure you have a strong headline that touches on something of importance. So, instead of "Welcome to our site" try "Worried About Growing Your Small Business in 2009?"

3. Provide a site structure and navigation that makes it obvious how visitors can accomplish the tasks they came to your site to do.

COLLECTING LEADS

Most likely an important goal for you is to collect qualified leads. Your visitor, however, came to accomplish their own goals so obviously there is a balance needed to achieve both objectives.

On each page suggest the next step.

Make it easy for the visitor to be able to contact you or to sign up for a white paper, podcast or other item of value. That means your phone number should be in an obvious place on each page. Please don't hide it.

If you have to ask for information keep it short.

When you do collect a lead, make sure that you follow-up promptly. Many hosting services will give you the capability to automatically reply or send requested information.

We've just touched on the basics of getting your brand online. It may seem like a big hill to climb but you can do it. And please, don't be too distracted with the social media buzz. Get the basics done first.

See you online!

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