



EFFECTIVE ONLINE MARKETING TECHNIQUES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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Contents

- Effective Online Marketing Techniques for Small Businesses 1
- Google Analytics..... 2
- Email Marketing 3
- Keywords and Messages..... 4
- The Blog 5
- Linking 6
- In Conclusion..... 7

Effective Online Marketing Techniques for Small Businesses

Small businesses are amid a very exciting time. Though challenges will always occur, the Internet makes it easier than ever for a business with even a limited budget to begin accessing some remarkable tools for success.

In this report, we are going to take into consideration the following techniques in which we believe a small business should direct energy and resources. These tactics were chosen because they:

- overlap well
- form the basis for a very solid marketing campaign
- allow you to leverage all your assets
- are cost effective

What are these techniques and tools? In this guide, we'll consider:

1. Google Analytics
2. Email Marketing
3. Keywords and Messages
4. The Blog
5. Linking

Many of these things you may have already heard about, and some may be entirely new. The best thing about them is that they are readily accessible to you AND the best ways to implement them have already been discovered. This means that it is almost a "plug and play" tactic that you can consider.

One word of warning, however, is that you must avoid going into the use of these techniques without plans. This is a recipe for disaster. If you don't believe that you can accurately formulate plans for the use of things such as Google Analytics, we would highly recommend that you consider hiring a good business consulting and marketing team.

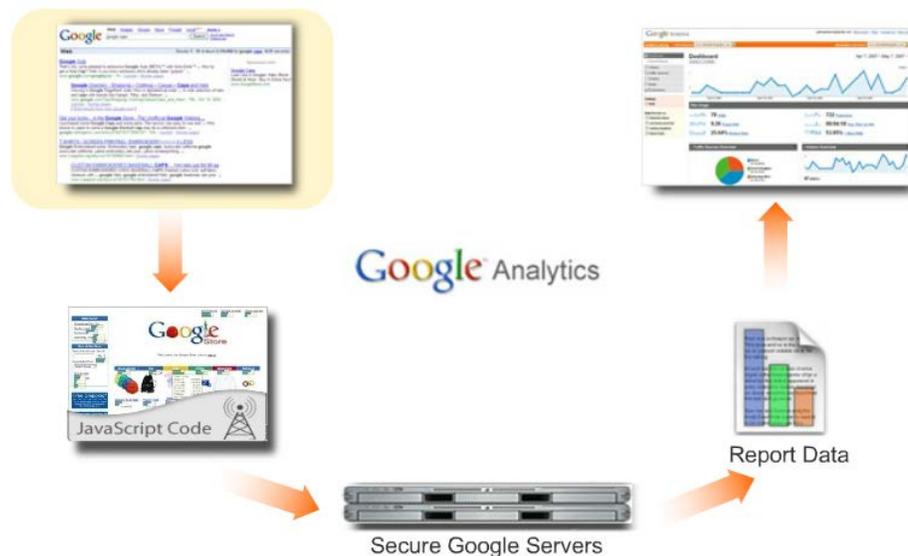
This is not something that has to kill the budget, and you should be able to use a "pick and choose" menu of services to get the best results. There are many marketing companies that represent a good example of a firm that can demonstrate the best ways for a small business to use these techniques, and they understand the most cost effective methods for marketing.

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How is that? They are firms that will allow you to access knowledgeable staff without the need for full time employment of a marketing person. They also allow you to get marketing immediately while using all the elements discussed throughout this guide.

Use such expertise to get moving in your small business marketing and you will be able to realize the benefits in only a short period, and with very little commitment of time and energy of your own. Now that's efficiency!

Google Analytics



Imagine having someone on your staff that could know whenever a link of any kind was used to take a visitor to your website. That staff member could then note the ways that the visitor navigated around the site, what keywords they might have used to get there, what they were looking for, and if they left the site without converting to a client or customer for any reason.

Imagine if this person could also generate very easy to read reports on an hourly basis and if he or she could give you very specific information in seconds. This is exactly what Google Analytics does for small and large business website owners. It lets you understand everything that is going on related to a website or landing page. It then helps you to make the best choices possible about the ways that you direct traffic to the pages and how they work (or don't work) for the visitors.

No matter what the goals of the pages, the Google Analytics data is always going to be able to tell you what you are doing right, and what you are doing in a weak manner.

Naturally, the trick is to leverage the data received, and that is where you may want to consider the use of a consulting firm or a marketing firm that can really take the material and jump start the marketing campaign.

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Email Marketing

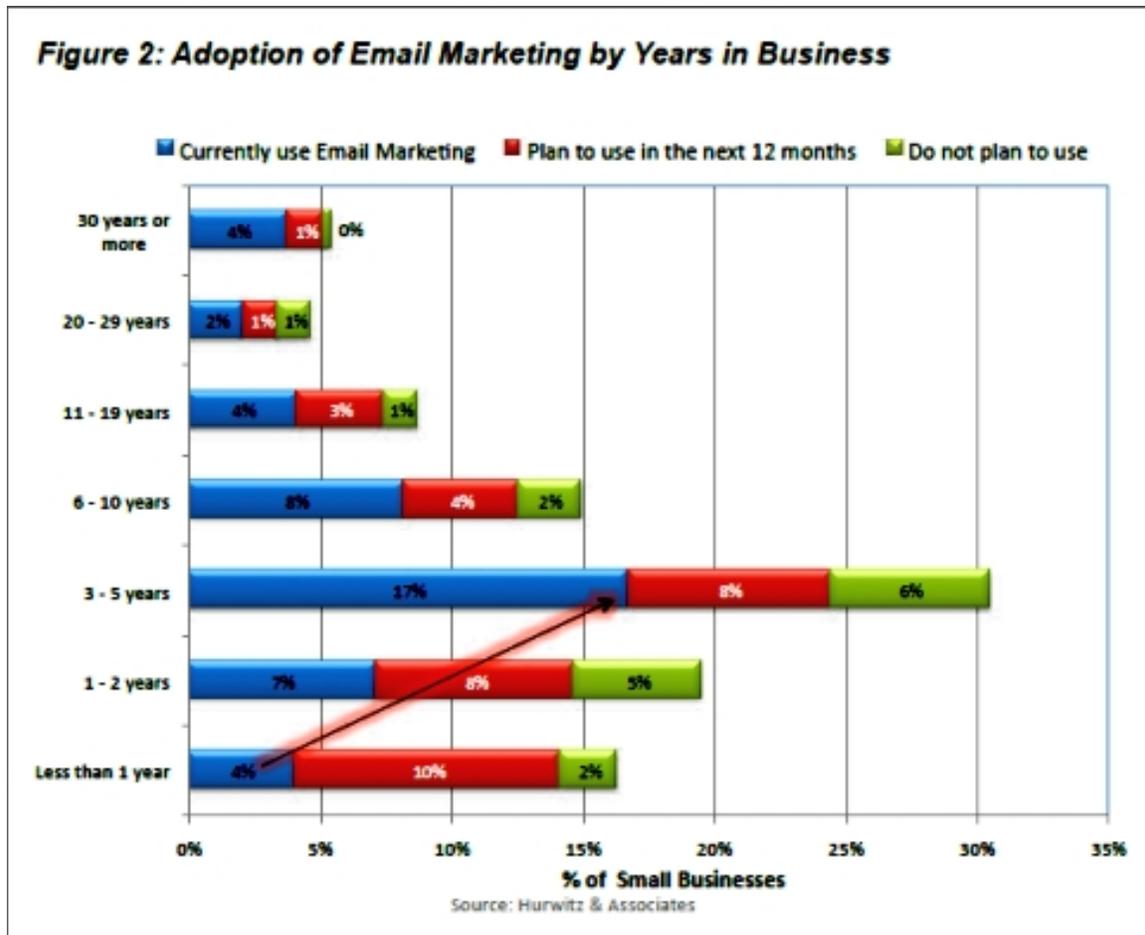
Sending out SPAM is a definitive "no-no", but sending out carefully crafted email messages is a huge way to begin succeeding like never before. For one thing, it is a very targeted method of communication. No one is going to hand over an email address unless they do want to hear from you. If you give "opt out" opportunities, you are also allowing your potential customers to avoid feeling irritated and to instead give the materials a read.

Unlike other methods of business promotion, emails are one of the few ways in which the client doesn't have to go out and find you. You are sending a very specific message and keeping that message always in front of your clients or potential customers. The trick is to understand the pacing of the messages (once a week? twice?) and the actual "actionable" things that the messages contain.

What does that mean? Well, if you have a website, blog, social media, or sales page that is going to relate directly to the material in the email, you should link the message to it. For instance, you are putting an item on sale. You send emails to interested parties and include the link to the landing page. You can then optimize that landing page using the data from Google Analytics and from your other marketing efforts.

You have directly contacted your local, national, or global customers; sent them an actionable message, and then sent them to a place where their previous patterns and behaviors have shown you how to optimize it for their use.

Again, if this seems beyond your reach, know two things: It is not beyond your reach AND providers like thinkBIG can give you an excellent email marketing package.



Keywords and Messages

We used the word "optimize" above, but not in the sense that most modern business professionals consider optimization. What we mean is that most business owners think of optimizing their websites and their materials in a way that gives them the best search engine results. This is known as SEO and it is something you want to invest time and effort in doing.

The way to start is to refine a few key messages and to then use what you discover during this process to choose the most effective keywords for your future marketing campaigns. For instance, ask yourself:

What do we do?

Who do we do this for?

What do these people need most?

Is there only one major benefit they seek or are there many benefits?

Use the answers to these questions to begin developing a profile for your "ideal customer". For instance, if you sell electronic books that you fill with original illustrations and unique artwork, you have a narrow

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audience. If, on the other hand, you sell baby supplies, well you have a much broader audience. Take the time to define the ideal customer to the greatest extent possible.

Once you have some ideas in mind, we suggest you plug in the answers to the following "equation":

"My business (list a verb here such as makes, provides, builds, etc.) (insert the benefit such as books, baby supplies) to (explain who, readers of the gothic classics, new parents, etc.)."

So, as an example: "My business creates electronic art books for readers of Gothic horror stories."

You can now use those essential terms to begin developing lists of effective keywords such as eBooks, Gothic horror, Edgar Allen Poe, etchings, illustrated books, etc.

Creating one's key message can be a challenge and its advised that you work on it as a team or hire a professional to work with you in creating your key message. You will soon learn that the key message is transferrable in all matters of marketing. Things such as email, online marketing, developing mission statement, developing online messages and more.

The Blog

Do you have a blog yet? Are you getting any business from it? If not, you are missing out on one of the primary methods for "driving traffic" to your site. The blog is becoming more than just a way of communicating thoughts and ideas, it is quickly becoming a primary marketing tool.

Why? A good blog is going to be frequently updated with relevant information. This information is going to be original and authoritative. That means that a wide array of people are going to read the content and either post it to another spot, "like" it, share it or spread it widely. This is going to work wonders for linking (the next subject we cover) and it is going to deliver a massive boost to your SEO.

This is because the new algorithms in places like Google look at the dates of the original material and reward only the creator for the appearance. Thus, if you use the blog to launch quality content you are going to reap continual benefits from it.

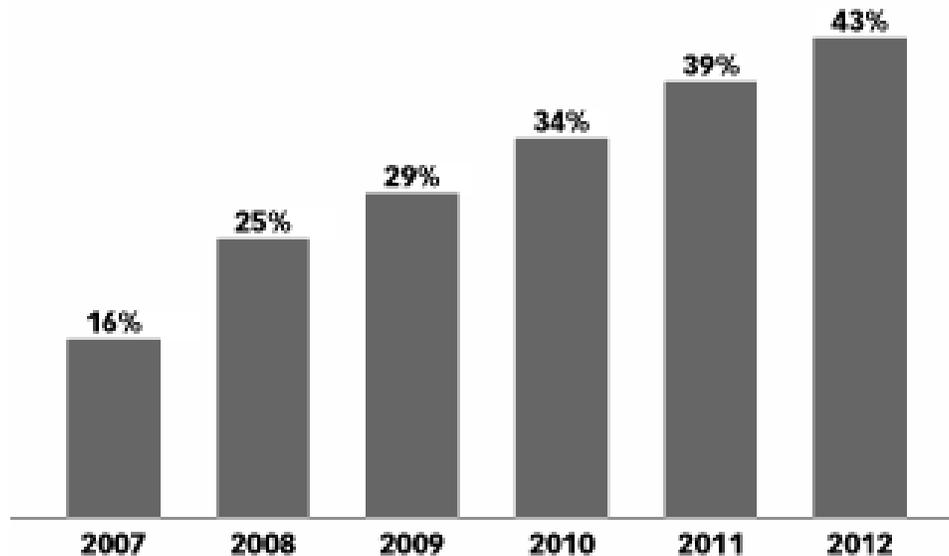
You can also use the killer content to attract readers through outside channels. For instance, use social media to drive readers to the blog. Then use the blog to send them to the home page or the landing page.

Do you think that small businesses are not doing this? Check out the figures from eMarketer.com below:

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US Companies Using Blogs for Marketing Purposes, 2007-2012

% of total



Note: includes only proprietary public-facing blogs used for marketing purposes; excludes blogs on social networks and microblogs

Source: eMarketer, Aug 2010

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www.eMarketer.com

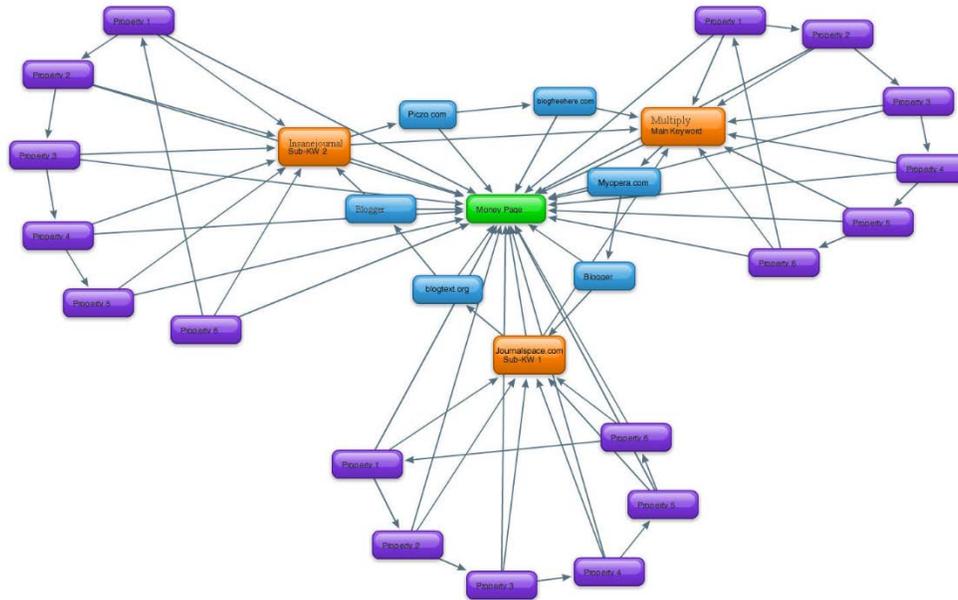
Half of the "competition" is already using a blog...it is time for you to do so as well.

If you are finding that you don't know how to make a schedule of new content or if you are feeling overwhelmed by the process, remember to consult with marketing experts. From creating a plan to ghost writing, a professional marketing team can assist you in driving more business to your organization in traditional and non-traditional ways.

Linking

The last thing we are going to cover in terms of effective small business marketing techniques is strategic linking. Take a look at the image below:

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Though it looks like a spider's web, it is a good basic model for the ways that links can function. For instance, that central green figure is your website or landing page. All the other boxes and blocks can be things such as blogs, articles, social media comments, forum comments, etc.

Any of these things may point to one another and appear in similar places, but they all point or link back to that central figure. When a web crawler reviews and follows those lines and arrows it is going to see that there are many valid and relevant items directing attention back to the central figure or the website. This is translated to "authority" by the search engines, and this means that a higher place in the search engine results occurs.

How is this done? You can make a very targeted list of places and materials to post such as blogs, articles, comments and more. You can then be sure that you are keeping to a steady schedule of these things. You can also partner with a marketing team that can pursue this issue and ensure that you are getting "pointed out" by a lot of valid websites and resources.

In Conclusion

You now have a good array of simple and effective methods for enhancing and nurturing your business. Yes, they all have to do with online marketing, but that is the way of the future.

When you get, the ball rolling with any of these techniques you are going to see results almost immediately. We suggest hiring some help in the form of a marketing firm, making strict schedules, and finding ways to measure results because you will certainly get a good ROI when you use modern and effective techniques for your small business marketing.

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