

MarketnologySM Insights:

B2B Marketer's Guide to Getting the Most from Your Web Presence

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Analytics, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Marketing Automation, Targeted Email, Video and Mobile all should all have a role within your company's marketing strategy. In this MarketnologySM Insight, we explore each one and give you some options to consider when selecting vendors in these categories.

Introduction

If you are to believe the trade magazines and the various blogs and sites on the web, there is a relatively simple recipe for using the Internet effectively to generate qualified leads and otherwise get value from your online marketing efforts. That recipe might read as follows if found in an online marketing cookbook:

*2 c web site
1 c email marketing
1 ½ c search engine marketing
½ Tbsp RSS
1 Tbsp blogs*

Create web site. Mix in email marketing until customers either cry for mercy or seem appreciative – or both. Slowly add in search engine marketing. Add in RSS and blogs, as necessary, for flavor.

There may be some marketers who get good-enough results from such a simple formulas. The greater likelihood is that you will end up with marginal results, making you question the value of your web presence and potentially causing you to see your web site as a static representation of your business. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Your company's web site, in many cases, is your prospects' first point of contact with your products and services. Similarly, for your existing customers, your web site may be the most convenient place to get educated about new products and/or to find support for existing products. Even for organizations whose primary relationships are with distributors rather than end users or retailers, your web presence gives you an opportunity to build stronger relationships with distributors and resellers while improving brand positioning among end users. Ignoring these possibilities gives your competitors the type of advantage you would be unwilling to cede in the offline world. It is time to establish a plan that positions you to use your complete web presence (i.e. web site, emails, partnerships and all online activities) to build two-way communications with your customers.

The Technologies

Architects do not build houses. They create plans. Builders are responsible for interpreting those strategies and knowing which tools and resources they will need to build the house. The same is true in marketing. A marketer may create a great strategy, but a great marketing strategy does not lead to great results unless the marketer is knowledgeable about the tools available to implement their strategy. It is crucial that you, as a marketer, know what types of technologies are available to help you achieve your company's goals. The most successful marketers rely on wide range of tools to reach their targets and to measure those customers' responses to their marketing efforts. Below, we list a few of the most important.

Analytics / Measurement

Every visitor to your web site can be tracked. Every link on which they click, every graphic they view, the route they take to a given page, how many times they look at that page – it's all available to you. It is that very data which makes the Internet such a valuable marketing tool. Many marketers, however, still ignore it.

Analytics tools help marketers track how users interact with their web presence. From monitoring site activity to tracking behavior within emails and Flash-based marketing assets, analytics applications present marketers with a means to assess users' intent, gauge their interest and measure customers' behavior relative to the goals laid out in a marketing campaign.

There are a wide variety of analytics platforms for use by marketers, each with its own distinct benefits. The prices for these platforms ranges from free for Google Analytics, which targets the Small-Medium Business (SMB) market, to tens of thousands of dollars per year for category leaders like Omniture SiteCatalyst and Affinium NetInsight. Table 1 lists some of the most popular measurement / analytics options.

Product	Web Address	Key Features*	Audience	Cost
Omniture SiteCatalyst	www.omniture.com	Flexibility; excellent education program; powerful add-ons; tracks within rich media assets including video	ENT	\$20-40k / year
Affinium NetInsight (Unica)	netinsight.unica.com	Part of a strong online marketing software platform; outstanding scenario analysis	ENT	
Webtrends	www.webtrends.com	Patented method to measure engagement; additional marketing applications	SMB/ENT	\$5-20k/year
CoreMetrics	www.coremetrics.com	Great customer service; Balance of power and simplicity	ENT	\$12-500k / year
Google Analytics	analytics.google.com	Free (no, really); Simplified interface offers most needed features with little frills	SMB	FREE
Lyris ClickTracks	www.clicktracks.com	Excellent data visualizations; Simplified interface	SMB	\$5-20k / year

Key: ENT=Enterprise, SMB=Small and Medium Business
***Source:** The Forrester Wave: Web Analytics, Q3 2007

Table 1 -Measurement/Analytics Software

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Admittedly, SEO is not a technology in as much as it is a tactic. It is included here because it is as important as any technology included in this list. A 2007 study done by Enquiro found that "search engines are the primary research source, and one of the top influencers on purchasing decisions." In fact, results from the study, Enquiro's Business to Business Survey 2007, indicate that 65.3% of B2B users in the awareness phase of the purchase cycle start their research on a general search engine like Google or Yahoo. The question is: are they finding your web site when they perform these searches? Search Engine Optimization increases the likelihood that they do.

As defined by Wikipedia, "SEO is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via 'natural' ('organic' or 'algorithmic') search results for targeted keywords." The goal of SEO is to raise the positioning of your site in the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) listings associated with your prospect's query. This is accomplished in a number of ways that include:

- Updating your site's content to relevantly contain keywords most likely to be used by your prospects
- Intelligently use keywords in meta, description and title tags
- Verify your site URLs are human readable
- Add a sitemap to your site

SEO is especially effective when it is combined with a well-managed Search Engine Marketing (SEM) campaign. Because SEO helps ensure that your pages rank highly in natural searches, however, SEO should be considered a

slightly higher priority than SEM for most, but not all, industries.

Expert SEO resources can be found both as individuals and as search marketing companies with SEO capabilities. In Table 2, we list leading search marketing companies with resources to help you strengthen your company's approach to search engines.

Resource	URL	Description
360i	www.360i.com	OMMA 2007 Search Agency of the Year
Covario	www.covario.com	2008 finalist for "Technology Platform Search Marketers Can't Live Without" at SES awards
Outrider	www.outrider.com	Owned by advertising holding company WPP
Reprise Media	www.reprisemedia.com	Among the most highly regarded search companies – including references from Forrester and OMMA
SEOMoz	www.seomoz.org	SEO specialist which offers tools to help SEO professionals as well as SEO services for businesses

Table 2 - Search Marketing Vendors

Marketing Automation / Demand Generation

Sales teams live or die by the number and quality of leads generated. Simply having thousands of web site visitors per day as a result of great SEO is not sufficient if those users do not convert to leads. Of even greater importance is gauging the seriousness of the leads which are generated. Poor quality leads can be as detrimental to a sales team as having no leads at all. Demand generation software helps marketers use their web presence to generate, track, qualify and score leads based on user behavior so that sales teams are empowered to follow up on the leads most likely to convert.

Most demand generation software comes as part of a larger marketing automation platform. Rather than just concentrating on demand generation, which is really about leads, marketing automation focuses on the entire marketing process. The most robust marketing automation platforms offer integration with CRM applications, email and web campaign management tools, workflow as well as site reporting and analytics – all in addition to lead management. Such full featured applications give marketers the flexibility to automatically customize and monitor campaigns in ways that previously required manual intervention. For example, a frequently time consuming task such as creating a new landing page for new SEM keywords or a new email can be done in a few minutes using some marketing automation tools. Table 3 lists a few of the lead marketing automation / demand generation vendors.

Product	Web Address	Key Features	Audience	Cost
Marketo	www.marketo.com		ENT	\$18-120k / year
Vtrenz	www.vtrenz.com		ENT	\$18k+/year
Pardot	www.pardot.com		SMB/ENT	\$5k+/year
Eloqua	www.eloqua.com		ENT	\$60k+/year
Market2Lead	www.market2lead.com		SMB	\$35k+/year
Manticore	www.manticoretechnology.com		SMB	\$36k+/year
HubSpot	www.hubspot.com		SMB	\$3-9k/year

Key: ENT=Enterprise, SMB=Small and Medium Business

Table 3 - Marketing Automation / Demand Generation Vendors

Targeted Email

Everyone writes about email. Every article, every blogger, every missive from your business partners mentions email. There is a reason for this. Email is, without question, the direct marketing channel with the highest ROI. In fact, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) reports that email marketing returned an estimated \$47.65 for each dollar spent on the channel in 2007. That number decreases each year as people become more immune to messages within emails, but the sheer magnitude of the number, especially when compared to other channels (e.g., non email online

marketing = \$20.19 per dollar spent), is enough to demonstrate the importance of email. Many marketers, however, still are not putting the type of resources toward it necessary to get results.

Targeted email takes advantage of what you know about your prospects and customers to personalize the messages you send to them. This is little different from the segmentation marketers do in traditional direct marketing. Using information provided actively (e.g. filling out a business reply card, joining mailing list, etc.) or passively (e.g. making a purchase, etc.) by prospects and customers, you might separate your customers into 5 different groups so that each group receives a message refined to match their likely needs. Email marketing takes this segmentation to levels which would be prohibitively expensive in traditional direct marketing.

Modern email platforms are designed to use the data you have collected on your targets to personalize the messages you send them. Imagine prospect Bob arrives at your site from a search query, checks five pages regarding a particular type of product and then submits his contact information so he can download a whitepaper about that product family. Bob has just told you a lot about his reason for visiting your site. Your next email to Bob should be designed to use that information to engage Bob and bring him back to the site and/or get him talking to a rep. Targeted email allows you to do just that by sending recipients information most likely to appeal to them based on either past behavior or the behavior of people like them.

Many vendors offer email platforms and professional services that can help your marketing team improve the way you use email to interact with your customers. Table 4 lists a few of the most popular providers.

Company	Web Address	Key Features	Audience
Responsys	www.responsys.com	Strength with segmentation, data integration and open architecture	ENT
eDialog	www.edialog.com	Same as Responsys	ENT
Epsilon	www.epsilon.com	Platform scalability	ENT
YesMail	www.yesmail.com		ENT
Lyrus / Email Labs	www.emaillabs.com	Full marketing technology platform	SMB/ENT
iContact	www.icontact.com		SMB
Constant Contact	www.constantcontact.com		SMB

Key: ENT=Enterprise, SMB=Small and Medium Business

Table 4 - Email Vendors

Video

A picture is worth a thousand words – or so goes the old cliché. It seems no matter how well that was drilled into us over the years we, as marketers, often forget the importance of the picture. This is especially true with video. Video is one of the most compelling and engaging technologies in the marketer's toolbox. Yet, it is overlooked because of perceived expense and the challenge of production. The reality is that the engagement factor of web video makes it a compelling way to educate people about your products and increase brand awareness.

Video offers marketers options for building relationships with customers that are difficult to replicate with other media. B2B marketers across numerous industries have found success with video using techniques including 15-second commercials, series of interviews with employees, executives and key customers, as well as product demonstrations. When done intelligently, by focusing on your customers' hot button issues and delivering relevant content, you can establish your company as an industry expert – helping to build your competitive positioning.

There are different levels of quality when it comes to online video. It is easy enough to have an employee use a standard video camera to record a product demonstration and then post that to web. However, just as on television, production value matters. Most video targeting enterprise customers should be done with the help of a production team who is capable of writing copy, recording the video and editing it to achieve the desired effect. If this is not possible, you should, at the very least, assign the task of producing your video to one or two employees who are capable of learning the ropes and provide them with the resources (e.g. video equipment, video editing software,

etc.) to produce great content. Focusing on production value provides you with a couple of benefits: greater customer interest and the potential to repurpose content for other uses. Naturally, if you are running a campaign where video is submitted by customers, production quality does not have the same priority.

Once your videos are complete, they can either be posted on your web site or placed on a video serving site like YouTube. There are benefits to each approach. Video on your site can be easily managed by your IT team and allows you to have a tight reign over the content. On the other hand, should your content become popular (or if your file sizes are very large, as video tends to be), it will place significant resource demands on your company's network. Video serving sites host your videos using their own network infrastructure, freeing up your company's resources. Additionally, it may be more likely your video shows up in search queries if it is associated with a popular video hosting site.

Among video serving sites there are a number of both free and paid options which could prove to be of value to B2B marketers:

Company	Web Address	Key Features	Cost
YouTube	www.youtube.com	Popular among both consumers and businesses for hosting video	Free
Brightcove	www.brightcove.com	Popular with business publishers; Quality of video transcoding; great interface	Free or >\$20k / year w/ no ads
Veoh	www.veoh.com	Can distribute video content across numerous video sites including YouTube	Free
Yahoo! Video	video.yahoo.com	It's Yahoo...	Free
Google Video	video.google.com	It's Google...	Free
Vimeo	www.vimeo.com	Granular privacy control options	Free

Table 5 - Video Serving Sites

Mobile

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2007, 115 million smartphones (e.g. RIM Blackberry, Apple iPhone, Palm Treo, etc.), the phones most likely to be used by your customers, were sold worldwide. That number represents a 60% increase from 2006. In the United States, feature-rich smartphones represented 19% of all handheld phones sold in Q2 2008, a 9% increase over the same quarter in 2007. Additionally, mobile page views have increased 127% and research from M:Metrics shows that American smartphone users spend an average of 4.6 hours per month browsing the web on their phones. The mobile audience is large and it is growing.

If your company is not already making the best use of your web presence, adding mobile features may seem a little advanced. The truth, however, is that mobile sites are proving to be a competitive advantage in many industries. If an engineer in the field knows she can quickly get product specifications from your mobile site instead of waiting to get back to the office, her perception of your brand is augmented. The same is true for any of your customers who value the convenient access to information afforded to them by their mobile devices. Mobile sites have quickly become a necessity.

Conclusion

Regardless of how proficient your company is in taking advantage of your web presence, there is always more that can be accomplished with skilled marketing technology expertise. The technologies included in this document are

but a few B2B marketers should consider to optimize their web presence. Others include social media and web 2.0 technologies as well as customer relationship management (CRM) applications like salesforce.com, Oracle CRM and SugarCRM, to list a few. Actuan can help you use all of these marketing technologies to develop more engaging (and profitable) relationships with your customers. Call Actuan today to discuss how we can help you.

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