**Tips on Marketing Your Online Business**

In this day and age, opening an online business is only half the battle in achieving true success. Even if you have an incredibly well-designed ecommerce site with a fantastic product line, people have to come to your store before they can buy. And with millions of sites out there, it’s even more important to stand out from the crowd. This is where marketing comes in. While there are tons of ways to inform others about your business and bring them to your site, some of the most important and unique marketing tactics are done digitally.

There are three main ways to market your site digitally: search engine optimization, pay per click advertising and social media. Volusion also offers great tips on how to market your store and sell online. Check out their site where you can even try it free.

**Search Engine Optimization**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the practice of implementing tactics to help search engines find your website and move it up the rankings. The closer you get to the top of the rankings for certain search terms, the more likely you are to increase site traffic and sales. Search engines have a system that they use to rank your website. First, they crawl by deploying software (spiders) to scan through the content and links of your website. Then the spiders index by transferring the content of your website to a giant database. Finally, you are ranked according to relevancy when search engines dip into the database to determine which site delivers the most relevant information.

Here are a few tips on how to help with your sites ranking in search engines and ways to become more relevant:

-**Link Building**: This means that you are promoting content through social networking, blogging, industry-related forums, articles and press releases.

-**Keywords on Your Site**: After doing high-level keyword research, use keywords on your site in the product names, descriptions and tags (meta tag, title tag, etc.)

**Pay Per Click Advertising**

Pay per click advertising (PPC) is growing in importance to online businesses around the world. In fact, PPC has reached a $29.8 billion industry in 2010, an increase of 17% growth from 2009. And out of all aspects of internet marketing, PPC takes a whopping 50% share.

Pay per click, also known as paid search, is a model of search engine marketing where you pay a certain amount of money each time someone clicks one of your ads. These ads are displayed based on keywords entered into search engines by people looking for specific information. PPC ads appear as “sponsored links” on search engine results pages, and can usually be found at the very top of the page or on the sides.

Unlike SEO, you don’t have to rank in the search engines to be on the first page for PPC. Also, PPC usually brings more qualified leads to your site that will be more likely to convert. Finally, PPC allows you to have control over where your message appears. You can base a campaign on geographic location or other more targeted demographics.

Setting up a PPC account can be pretty easy (although many companies rely on a professional to manage the accounts). Many people use Google AdWords, Yahoo Sponsored Search, and Microsoft Ad Center. Each of these programs are relatively similar in functionality and allow you to manage your campaigns and keywords.  The basic concept is that you set up an ad with keyword rich text and then decide how much you want to pay for that keyword by bidding on it. When determining which keywords to use for PPC, keep in mind that PPC requires a much bigger focus on the long tail (3-6+ words). When bidding on keywords, make sure to use a tool that will show you the average costs and help you manage your budget.

Many times, merchants create landing pages for PPC campaigns. Think of a landing page as the place you’re sending a user from your PPC ad. This page is vital to your success as it shows people whether or not they’re in the right place and have found the information they’re looking for. If you don’t have the time, budget, or energy to create custom landing pages for various ad groups, consider sending potential customers to specific product or category pages within your online store.

**Social Media**

The ecommerce industry is aflutter with social media buzz. This is understandable – social media usage has grown faster than the adoption of television. With this in mind, many small online businesses are flocking to social media – in fact, one report states that utilization of social media by small businesses has doubled since 2009. Here’s a few reasons why:

• Social media is a cost-effective way to establish relationships with customers.

• Social media serves as a great source of open feedback and competitor intelligence.

• Fans/Followers of branded social media pages are more likely to buy from that company and recommend it to friends and family.

#### You’ll want to set some objectives as you start your social media campaign. Then, think about the outlets you want to utilize. The most popular are blog, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Next you’ll want to establish a timeline and set benchmarks on a monthly or weekly basis. This will help you stay on track! As part of this, set some metrics that are realistic. The easiest way to do so is creating key performance indicators, or KPIs, for each of your tactics. Some KPIs include: number of Twitter followers, number of YouTube views, number of blog subscribers and growth patterns for each metric.

#### Finally you can deploy, measure and adjust your strategy based on how things are going. Remember, it’s okay to shift course if things aren’t working as planned – the beauty of a true strategy is that you can make changes along the way to better achieve social media success.

#### Selling online is a fun, exciting process that allows anyone to fulfill their dream of becoming a business owner or satisfy a desire to extend their hobby to the masses, especially in this period of booming ecommerce growth. Make your marketing strategy part of this excitement and use it to grow even more.