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A short course in internet marketing

ABMA
American Brush Manufacturers Association

Part 2
HOW TO MARKET USING THE INTERNET PART 2

There is more to having a web site than just putting information on a page. Your site must standout among the clutter of the Internet. Making your site interactive and keeping it fresh with new information is going to not only make your site standout, but increase the number of potential sales that only the Internet could provide.

Here’s how you do it.

ADVANTAGES

Customer Relations
Establishes one-to-one relationships with customers and prospects from a distance. Builds long-term relationships by responding to initial requests and then sending newsletters and notes about new products, upgrades, features and benefits.

Collateral
Instead of sending out expensive literature or to reinforce the literature you do send out, refer people to your web site for in-depth information.

Sales
Quickly and easily distributes time-sensitive information about technological advancements, price changes, sales promotions and new products just when someone is making a decision to purchase. At the same time, you can test prices and products more accurately through customer response.

Immediate Response
Information can be accessed immediately. Viewers no longer have to wait for product brochures or catalogs to arrive in the mail; everything is available on our web site.

Cost to Change
The cost to change information on your web site compared to changing other forms of media is much more economical because you only pay for the time it takes your employee to reenter data.

Increase Visibility
Reaches existing and potential customers who are not aware of your products and services worldwide. It also supplies information to customers and prospects who want to learn more about your company.

Accessibility
Information is readily available about specific products for interested customers to keep them informed about your company. Anyone with access to a computer has the ability to access your site.

Suggestion: Trade publications, and other sites, can be sponsored by your company and linked to your site. Just ask them.

DRAWBACKS

Getting Visitors
One of the most difficult things is getting people who are really interested in your products to visit your site. Many decision-makers still rely on other media to receive their information about companies and products. Searching the web is not always one of their strengths.

Dedicated Effort
You must have the staff to keep the information on the site changing and up-to-date. To effectively manage your site may require additional staff members and/or departments, which may not be in the budget.

Too Complicated
Once you begin making your site interactive, the temptation to add too much is always there. Site can become too cluttered and too difficult to navigate from page to page. People will not want to return!

Web Site Placement
Now that your web site is up and running, the next step is to get your web page seen. One way is through search engines. Search engines enable people to search the World Wide Web for key words, phrases, page titles or a combination of each. When you register your web site with a search engine you’ll be given the opportunity to define your products, services, markets served, etc. A search engine creates an index and provides a list of web pages that have or use key words or phrases. For example, a person looking for corn brooms would type in "corn brooms" and you’re a corn broom manufacturer, your web page will be indexed. It is also beneficial to attach other key words like broomcorn, brooms, brush machinery, packaging machinery, etc. to search engines.

To improve the number of relevant people visiting your web site, you will want your site on the first page of the search engine results. By being on the first page of results, the customer is more likely to see your products. So, when you register your web site with search engines, use plurals, varying forms for words and phrases. Another example, a person looking for a "horse hair paint brush" might try "Artist brushes" or "Natural bristle paint brushes." By using varying key words attached to your site, a person is more likely to see your company’s web page because not everybody thinks the same way. Taking advantage of promoting your web site on different search engines is the most important thing you can do to market your web site.

Another way of getting noticed is by placing your site on an industry hub web site. Industry hubs bring together related businesses for the convenience of the consumers. Industry hubs are usually easier to find than individual sites and are often better equipped to generate publicity for your site. An example of a hub is BrushCommerce.com. More information about this new hub for the brush, broom and mop industry will be forthcoming.
MARKETING STRATEGIES

The following questions need to be asked and answered about your site: Does my web site meet my marketing goals? Does it sell and create interest? Does it provide customer support? Does it build and enhance the relationship between the customer and my company? Your web site is just another distribution channel for providing information and service to prospects and customers. There are three key elements to successful marketing.

1. **Message Consistency** - The message, colors, logos and typefaces are identical, regardless of the medium used, to create credibility and a solid, familiar feeling with customers.

2. **Interactivity** - Answer customer questions quickly, accurately and personally through meaningful dialog.

3. **Mission Marketing** - Everything you do should be traced back to what your company is and its purpose.

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WEB SITE CONTENT

**Company Overview** - include location(s), number of years in business, history, mission statement, company philosophy, technological advancements, capabilities, etc.

**Product Information** - A brief description of products, features, benefits and specifications. More information can be provided upon request or on other dedicated pages.

**Distribution** - Offer links to your distributor sites if they have one. Set up links from your distributor sites to yours. Create a map of the U.S. and show geographic boundaries held by your distributors and/or a listing of distributor locations, include phone and fax numbers. Identify your direct sales force and how to get in touch with them, etc.

**Testimonials** - Post thoughts, comments or praises about your products from customers who use them.

**Newsletters/New Releases** - Display all pertinent information about the company, technology, new products, services, future endeavors.

**Articles** - Post recent articles that have appeared in trade publications or newspapers that highlight your company or have an effect on your customer’s business. Remember to keep the site fresh.

**Archives** - Archive articles, news releases and other information as new information comes about. This keeps your site fresh, but previous information can still be accessed.

**Problem Solving** - Troubleshoot potential problems customers may have with certain products or operations. This is a convenient place to start when customers are having trouble.

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GETTING RETURN VISITORS

Your ultimate goal is to have a high-traffic web site. One way of achieving this is by providing highly useful information. Another is to frequently update the information so people will want to come back to your web site again and again to see what's new. By updating your web site, people feel you are dedicated to providing customers with current information. An additional option is by implementing a Guest Book. A guest book acts like an answering machine. You're able to see who has visited your web site and visitors can leave messages. They can even suggest ways to make your web site better or tell you what they like or don't like about your site.

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INTERACTIVE/MULTIMEDIA

90% of the web’s power is feedback and interaction. So don't think of your web site being just another print medium. People want to see your site come alive and do something meaningful. And they want it now!

**Interactive** - a bi-directional input/feedback process between a human and preprogrammed digital content.

**Multimedia** - A set of digital capabilities that support the use of audio, photo-realistic images and video, in addition to text, graphics and animation, to enhance the communication of information and knowledge.

Interactive/Multimedia allows for tailored information to be delivered for the performance, learning and communication needs of individuals and groups in business. By adding all of the above to your web site, your site can look exciting and professional. Potential customers can click-on pictures to get in-depth information about technical specifications of products, obtain pricing, download video product demonstrations or read an interactive newsletter. The ability to interact with potential customers via the internet increases the chances of future sales because people are able to view your web site and products on their own time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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KEEPING THE SITE FRESH

Unlike other media, the content of your web site can be changed and ready for viewing within moments. And nothing is ever “Final.” The look, the content or the capabilities can be changed accordingly to the growth of your company. To keep people coming back, it is a must to change and update your web site. The reason people read newspapers every day is because the world is changing every day. The same is true for web sites. Keeping current with your site’s information, especially if you post products and prices, is as important as any other form of marketing you do. And ask visitors what else they want to see on your site.
BUILDING A BETTER WEB SITE

One thing to always keep in mind is the competition. It won’t hurt to visit the competition’s web site to see what they’re doing or not doing and use them as a reference when developing a expanding your web site. Do what they are not doing or expand on something they are doing. Here’s a few ideas for making your web site better than your competitor:

**Incentives**

Offering special incentives for visiting your site, like coupons, special price on products (by mentioning they saw the product online) or giveaways are simple ways to make customers come back often. To restrict customers to only one coupon, price or giveaway, have them complete a registration survey. This does two things: it tracks and controls incentives and it is a means to collect valuable customer information for your database.

**Events and Promotions**

Here’s an opportunity to create contests, random drawings and trivia quizzes. These activities entertain the viewer while they are experiencing your web site. Not everything on your site has to be company driven. Keeping a person on your site or making them feel good about your site and company is just as important as the information you provide.

**Advice Columns**

Customers want to see you as experts, so by providing an advice column about frequently asked questions or about tips on how to use your produce better, you create trust and confidence.

**SOME EFFECTIVE INTERACTIVE WEB SITES**

To get an idea of how your company can improve marketing on the Internet, the following sites can help give you some consumer ideas about how you can enhance your site:

- **Product information**
  - www.kodak.com
  - www.goodyear.com

- **Product recommendations**
  - www.llbean.com
  - www.pinggolf.com

- **Encouraging repeat visits**
  - www.mtv.com
  - www.travelchannel.com

- **Dialog**
  - www.epson.com
  - www.snapple.com

- **Targeting**
  - www.compbellsoup.com
  - www.kellogs.com

- **Building an environment**
  - www.vw.com
  - www.nabisco.com

- **Events and promotions**
  - www.crayola.com
  - www.dietcoke.com

DON’T FORGET YOUR WEB SITE ADDRESS...

Now that you have taken on a web site of your own and use it as a marketing tool, don’t forget to add your site address to everything: letterhead, business cards, invoices, proposals, advertisements, brochures, press releases, catalogs, everywhere you would put your phone number or mailing address, your web site address should be right there also. Your web site address is one more way customers can communicate with your company.

**Final Thoughts**

By and by, the Internet is a perfect medium, suitable for any company or industry, big or small! It is a combination of radio, television and print all rolled up into one and is relatively inexpensive. The Internet will become as standard of a tool as the telephone. It will be the way business is done and as valuable as a handshake.

**Resources**

The following resources were used to help provide the information found in this pamphlet and can be used for additional information about topics discussed. They can provide step-by-step paths to making your web site come alive and more useful as a marketing tool. Check your local bookstore or library for these and the numerous other books of useful information.

- *NetMarketing™... your guide to profit & success on the net*, Bruce Judson, Copyright 1996
  Published by Wolff New Media LLC.

- *The Interactive Corporation*, Roger Fetterman, Copyright 1997
  Published by Random House, Inc.

  Published by International Thomson Publishing Co.

- *The Internet Business Book*, Jill H. Ellsworth & Matthew V. Ellsworth, Copyright 1994
  Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- *Setting Up An Internet Site for Dummies*, Jason Coombs & Ted Coombs, Copyright 1997
  Published by IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.

- *Running A Perfect Web Site*, David Chandler, Copyright 199
  Published by Que® Corporation