



eCommerce Small Business TIPS Newsletter - (*Targeted Internet Promotion Strategies*)



Promoting Your Business Online and Offline to Boost Sales

In today's business world, people expect that you would have a website. This means either having an eCommerce online store, or just a basic "brochure" website about your business. Even if your business does not sell a great deal online, it will lead new business to your doorstep.

In one case study we did for a company, who did not sell a great deal through their online store, their e-catalogue store did indeed develop new business for them!

What they found out by asking new customer contacts is that many of the customers had visited their web site. But, did not purchase online. In their particular case the website lead the customer to call directly and start asking further questions about their products. Because all their products were of high value (over \$100.00), some customers preferred to call and make contact - allowing the closing of the sale to take place quicker over the phone. Those customers who did not purchase online also said they liked the idea of having the option to buy online as it positively reinforced their perception that they were dealing with a viable company.

This is where the sales process becomes easier for the company. The case study also showed that most customers, once they purchased their initial product, did return to the online store to purchase consumable and service goods for the product they owned. Some customers said it was convenient and quick. Others still preferred to call orders in over the phone. Those customers who phoned in their subsequent orders - *had the company's website up on their computer* when they called to provide the part number to the sales representative.

The interesting thing about this study is that through either purchase process, whether online, or on the phone, the customer had accessed the company's products and inventory "online" with each contact. Once the marketing figures were completed it was found that 64% of new customers had first come through the online store, while only 7% of that business actually purchased online with out contact. 24% purchased service products online later on with-out phone contact.

Of the 64% of new business, only 9% found the company by way of a search engines.

So where did the additional new business come from if not from search engines? Well - through other offline marketing activities like referrals (to the website), printed material and direct mail marketing.

QUARTERLY ISSUE

Issue 1 - November 2006

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Important Website T.I.P.S.

Common S.E.O. Mistakes:

Focus on "keyword phrases" in your meta tags. Just adding key "words" is incorrect. Studies show most people do searches for phrases - not single words.

Use separated, descriptive wording in naming your site images: "image1.jpg" will not work for your search engine exposure. Use file names like:

The important factor in marketing any business is not to rely on just one form of advertising and promotion. Marketing is made up of a mix of these things and having a website with or without an online store or catalogue is just part of that mix. But as the above study showed - having a website is a very important part of the marketing mix. The website lead their customers to initiate contact through other means, the by-product of that was they were able to close sales more quickly over the phone and earn their customers trust and future business.

What was not expected from this company's study was this: of the 64% of new business - 76% of the new customers said they would have gone elsewhere had the company not had a website catalogue to browse through and talk about with the sales rep. on the phone.

Home Business Blues

By: David Cohen, Radio Host of [The Small Business - Big Ideas Show](#)

So what do we do when sales are flat? I say you have to dig those heels in a little and get re-focused. Yes, there is no doubt that slow selling times bring forth anxiety and fears. Although anxiety and fear can seem real to you...I assure you it's not. The real way to get over these feelings is to get into action. Take time to analyze all areas of your business and make a strategic action plan.

I was working with one business owner who has all kinds of thoughts and areas to focus on in their business and they just don't seem to be accomplishing anything. There is just too much to do in their business and it has them on "overwhelm" mode.

My recommendation is take it all on, but manage each area of the business separately and divide them up into smaller projects. For example, your sales, web site, accounting, marketing, production can be broken down into categories and headings. The next step is to assign the necessary tasks to accomplish the goals and address the issues in each area of your business.

I do this on a large piece of Bristol board and use 3M post-it-notes to write down each action step I need. On the Post-it-notes are the tasks or goals. Once completed, I remove each note and put up a new task that needs to be done.

The post-it-notes act as big reminders for me and give me focus. On each note are the actions I need to take in each area of my business. The Bristol board can be decorated and fun. If you want, you can include motivational sayings and pictures as decorations and to help keep you motivated during the lean times. (continued on part two...)

[Part two of our eCommerce TIPS Quarterly Newsletter release...](#)

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"e_marketing_book.jpg" to describe your image. Use the "_" (underscore), not a space on all web file names.

Put alt. tags on both your images and links. If your web site software program allows it - alt. tag your linked images as well.

Spelling counts for search engines. Ah, I mean "spelling" counts. Always double check and recheck your content and meta tags for correct spelling.

Double check that ALL YOUR LINKS work. These lead search engines to other pages in your site and if you have a broken link, the search engine robots will not be able to find those pages. Simply publishing a web page to your hosting server without proper linking from other pages will not allow the page to be found.

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Home Business Blues (Continued from page 1...)

Once you are re-focused to the tasks you need to take on in your business, you start to feel good because you are always in action around key areas of your business. And trust me...when you are in action, those results will come!

So work on creating your "Action Board". It's amazing when you think about things to do in your business, write down your goals and actions and see it in front of you every day, what can happen. I use a board similar to this and I find it keeps me focused.

I have an example of an "Action Board" for you to see what I am talking about. So don't get panicky about slow sales. Just take action and stay in action. You will love the results!

Marketing	Sales	Accounting	New Projects
Create Brochures	Develop Contact List	Set up Books and systems	Volunteer with a charity
Host an info session	Meet 10 new clients/month	Buy an accounting system	Set up a success team
Get some "Free" publicity	Call at least 10-15 clients/day	Throw out the shoe box	Find a mentor

As you can see above, the chart lists each key goal or task. Use post-it-notes so that once one task is complete you can remove it and identify another task, goal or action step.

Create the problem:

One other key thing you can do to beef up sales during a slow time is to create the problem. Now I can't take credit for this kind of thinking. I read and follow the advice of one of North America's top marketing minds. Chet Holmes. You can find out more about Chet by logging onto www.chetholmes.com

Here is what I mean when I say to create a problem. In your marketing, you are probably dazzling and amazing your customers on how good you are or how cheap you are. Maybe you are having a sale or are pitching a new product or service? These are all good things to be promoting...however, in this day and age of immense clutter and information overload, you have to show up and be different.

So how can you be different? Well one way is to create the problem. Use studies, facts, research and reports to help accentuate the problems your business solves for your client. Focus too on the end game or the benefits you offer your client. Now

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don't be lame with your benefits and just state that you offer good service or are the best price, because if I got something like that on my desk, I would say, "PROVE IT"!

But if you quoted a study or report to back up what it is you do...then you have just created something more tangible for your clients to work with. I worked with one client who operated a Computer Cleaning Business. (He's the nicest guy there is and if you want your computers cleaned after reading this...let me know and I will get you in touch with him).

So it's all well and good to offer someone the cleanest computers and the best prices. In fact, it's probably the route most of us would take when it comes to marketing our own businesses. Now here is the rub... My client obtained a University study that showed that there were more germs on your keyboard at work than there are on the average toilet seat.

Studies have actually been done on this. Think about it! Someone with a bad cold could rub their nose and then use the keyboard. Or you could be having lunch and we all know that breadcrumbs can be found within the keys themselves.

Now I am not trying to gross you out...but using that one study in your marketing "Pitch", just created a whole new set of images and problems in your mind.

You can actually compare a toilet seat to your keyboard and can well imagine how many germs maybe contained within. For the \$50.00 fee it is a month to have your technical equipment running smoothly and having it cleaned, it would be well worth it to have your computer cleaned, wouldn't it?

Now get this. What's the cost to having germs on your keyboard? Maybe your employees are getting sick, taking time off work and you lose some of that productivity. Makes you think even more, that the \$50.00 cleaning service is well worth its weight in gold.

Do you see the difference? If you can create the problem in the client's mind by using data, facts, figures, research and reports, you can really get your client to take action faster and probably with you.

In another case, used by "Home and Office Organizers", studies within that industry show that the average business owner spends 150 hours a year looking for lost or misplaced files. 150 hours is about a week of lost time. What's that worth to you? What would you do if you had an extra week in your year? Do you think it now becomes more imperative to hire an organizer for a few hundred dollars so that you don't waste that kind of time on finding lost files?

So read up on anything by Chet Holmes or Jay Abraham and use some facts, data, reports and research to help you accentuate problems in your client's mind. I guarantee it will get them to really take note and take action to correct it.

Happy Marketing!

David Cohen

(David Cohen is the host of [The Small Business - Big Ideas Show](#) and can be heard through Webcast and on Air Sunday Mornings, 9:00 AM EST, click on his link to find out more!)

Promoting Your Business Offline

There are a number of very effective and cost efficient ways to promote your online business offline. Quite often it is the simple and least creative ways that provide the biggest return in sales. Obviously you should make sure your website is on all your printed material, or even part of your company name or logo. One entrepreneur we talked to even hands out business cards with only his name, his website address and tagline on it - simple message.

Another tried, tested and true sure fire idea is to put your website on everyone's lips in the morning. Put your company on a coffee mug and hand it out to potential and regular customers for free. What it does is allows your customer to see you even when they're not thinking about your products or services. The idea is to create a subconscious link between your company and the customer when they do need your products or services. Because your company is literally on their lips in the morning (and for some of us in the afternoon and late evening), you are in effect reinforcing your company with those products and services they may need. You'll again end up being the first one on their lips when someone asks: Where can I get a cool coffee mug like that? Or, relatively put: Where do we get widgets from? (subconscious will say - Aaaaahhh, from the people on my coffee mug!).

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