

Tools for Generating Web Site Traffic

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Abstract. Internet is very powerful tool for creating marketing image of the company. Internet marketing connects the creative and technical aspects of internet including design, development, advertising and selling.

The opportunities that electronic marketing tools provide for the companies today are discussed by many distinguished marketing and communication experts for the purpose of seeing in what way the companies can connect products and customers, how companies can create loyal customers, image, identity and its own story that customers will spread and how companies can increase traffic on their web sites.

At online marketplace, Macedonia is still far behind the other countries in the world, so the goal and subject of this paperwork are electronic marketing tools for generating traffic on the web sites, with hope to help Macedonian firms to become both more present on the internet and more familiar with advantages of using the electronic marketing tools in their everyday work and communication with the customers.

The research is based on this methodology: literature from domestic and world known authors, domestic and foreign web sites, comparative analysis, qualitative and quantitative analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's modern society, innovations and new technologies have very important place in people's every day life. One of the most significant technological achievements in the world is information technology. Nowadays, the internet is available everywhere and facilitates people's lives. With the internet people can do different businesses such as sell products and services, communicate with customers, or advertise themselves. Electronic business has swept the world and with his help the most ordinary people that are not in the business world but have entrepreneurial skills, can work, earn a lot of money and can extend the business all over the world.

Internet has dominant importance in the formation of the company's market image. By using different electronic marketing tools company promotes itself, presents its products and services to the global market, communicates with customers, creates trust and loyalty between the company and the customers, creates brand and habit of buying. Based on this, every company should make a right choice between traditional and new media, taking into account the important role of the internet in establishing the company's image. Internet is more efficient and

cheaper than television or radio, because the potential market is global, not local and the number of publications or broadcasts is unlimited. This means that if the product is published on the web, it is presented at the world market, to a very big number of customers, in any time of the day, twenty four hours, seven days a week, whether at work or at home, customers can analyse the supplied products via different technological solutions, specifications, pictures and videos.

Internet marketing refers to all activities for achieving marketing goals by using digital technologies: search engines, public relations, e-mail marketing, banner advertising, web 2.0 strategies. Thanks to the big number of internet users, internet marketing becomes the most suitable tool which enables companies from different industries get closer to the target clients.

Despite the fact that there is a huge interest in electronic commerce and internet marketing in Macedonia, it has not still reached the desired level. In the developed countries everything can be purchased via the internet: books, clothes, pills, software solutions, music, the bills can be electronically paid, parking place can be booked. In Macedonia, only the big companies implement digital solutions in their business processes, while small companies implement partial solutions in their work, by which they digitize only the parts of the operations they perform. Because of this, it is very important for small and medium enterprises to be involved in electronic commerce and internet marketing in order to become more competitive on the global market.

II. TOOLS FOR GENERATING WEB SITE TRAFFIC

Generally, traffic on the web site is very important for achieving electronic marketing goals, whether they concern sell, serve, speak, save or sizzle. There are three aspects for generating web traffic:¹

a) Specific goals for generating traffic that refers to tactics for achieving bigger electronic marketing goals. Typical traffic goals are focused on quantity, which means number of web visitors, quality of the web site, its content and services and costs for attracting visitors on the site.

b) Combination of on-line digital media channels and traditional offline communication techniques for promoting the web site and stimulating the visits.

¹Dave Chaffey and PR Smith " eMarketing eXcellence: Planning and optimizing your digital marketing " 3th edition, Oxford, 2008, p:278

c) The time when it is the most appropriate to generate traffic on the web site

Most widely used tools for generating web site traffic are:

A. Search Engine Marketing

Search engine marketing is the most important digital marketing channel for customer acquisition. All customers when seeking for new product, service or entertainment naturally turn to a search engine. If the customer knows the company or the product he is looking for, search engines are used for typing the web address of the company into the search box. Search engines give opportunities to web sites' owner to offer its products, services or brands to a big number of customers at the time they are looking for them. The main focus of search engines is on providing quick, relevant and on time search results for the users. Search engine marketing consists of two parts: search engine optimization and pay per click.

Search engine optimization (SEO) involves achieving the highest position or ranking practical in the natural or organic listings on the search engine results' pages after a specific combination of keywords (or keyphrase) has been typed in. In search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and MSN Search, the natural listings are on the left side of result page, although there may also be sponsored links above these. The position or ranking is dependent on an algorithm used by each search engine to match relevant site page content with the keyphrase entered. There is no charge for these listings to be displayed. The most important here is which company will have first positions on the search engine result page. This depends on key words and phrases that web sites have, popularity of different links set on the web sites and large selection of products and services that web sites offer. Search engines to give qualitative and on time results to the users must include indexing and crawling in the work. Crawling is the spider (bot) job, the spider goes to website and crawls it in pretty similar way like users would have done. The spider reads the page and follows the links on the page. Indexing is entirely different process that supposes to gather information about the webpage. For successful search engine optimization of the web site some rules must be respected such as key phrase research, page optimization and content development, link building. Keyword phrase research involves identifying a group of keyword phrases that will be used in optimization. This step is critical and requires a considerable amount of time to find a good set of phrases that offer a balanced combination of two important factors: high usage by searchers and relatively low competition within the search engines. Page optimization and content development are critical to search engine success. Content is king in search engine optimization. The search engines love text with high volume and high-quality content related to the business that company does.

Paid search marketing or Pay Per Click (PPC) is similar to conventional advertising. Here a relevant text ad with a link to a company page is displayed when the user of a search engine types in a specific phrase. A series of text ads usually labelled as sponsored links are displayed to the right of the natural listings. Although many

searchers prefer to click on the natural listings, a sufficient number do click on the paid listings (typically around a quarter or a third of all clicks) so that they are highly profitable for companies such as Google and a well designed paid search campaign can drive a significant amount of business for the search companies. Advantages of using pay per click are: 3

- a) With the right tracking system, the return on investment for individual keywords can be calculated.
- b) Traffic, rankings and results are generally stable and predictable. This contrasts with search engine optimization.
- c) Technically simpler than search engine optimization. Position is based on a combination of bid amount and quality score, whereas search engine optimization requires long-term, technically complex work on page optimization, site restructuring and link-building.
- d) Pay per click listings get posted quickly, usually in a few days. Search engine optimization results can take weeks or months to be achieved.
- e) When a website is revised for search engine optimization, rankings will initially drop while the site is reindexed by the search engines.
- f) Tests have shown that there is a branding effect with pay per click, even if users do not click on the ad. This can be useful for the launch of products or major campaigns.

B. Online Public Relations

Today consumers are choosing how, when and where they get news and information that is important to them. And, if the company needs to reach out to a younger demographic, or a global marketplace, target audience will only see the message online, so the best way to communicate is directly to that target market using the web. Successful public relations today means moving beyond media relations and into direct to customer relations. Online, public relation practitioners need to begin to think like word of mouth marketers. This can be frightening at first—but it is absolutely necessary that company's public relation department or public relation agency have the skills to reach individuals on the web and to engage them, without the comforting cushion of mediators they have relied on in print, radio and TV.

Consumers increasingly turned away from traditional media because of the following reasons:⁴

²Kristopher B. Jones "Search engine optimization" 2nd edition, Indiana, 2010, p:18

³Damian Ryan and Calvin Jones, "Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing

strategies for engaging the digital generation" 1st edition, USA, 2009, p: 72

⁴David Phillips and Philip Young "Online public relations: a practical guide to developing an online strategy in the world of social media" 2nd edition, USA,

2009, p: 3

- a) Convenience. Consumers can get news and information on any screen at any time they want, on multiple platforms, such as an iPod, mobile phone or text pager.
- b) Relevance. Consumers can choose the news that is most interesting to them during any time of the day; they no longer have to wait a morning newspaper. Customer can sign up for email alerts for a particular industry, and surf the web to shop on a lunch hour.
- c) Depth. Consumers can drill down to the level of detail they want on a particular topic. Using search, it's possible to amass quantities of information; links and tags on news stories allow skimming related stories with a single click.

There are four key differences between online public relations and traditional public relations: ⁵

- a) The audience is connected to organizations. Previously, there was detachment – public relations people issued press releases which were distributed over the newswires, picked up by the media and then published in their outlets.
- b) The members of the audience are connected to each other. Through publishing their own web sites or through e-mail, information can be rapidly distributed from person to person and group to group. Today, a company's activity can be discussed and debated over the internet, with or without the knowledge of that organization. In the new environment everybody is a communicator, and the institution is just part of the network.
- c) The audience has access to other information. Often in the past, the communicator was able to make a statement that it would be difficult for the average audience member to challenge the Internet facilitates rapid comparison of statements. It takes a matter of minutes to access multiple sources of information over the Internet. Any statement made can be dissected, analyzed, discussed and challenged within hours by interested individuals. In the connected world, information does not exist in a vacuum.
- d) Audiences pull information. This point is similar to the last one. Previously there were limited channels in terms of television and press. Today there are many sources and channels of information. This makes it more difficult for the message to be seen.

Web site in many ways presents online face of every company and it is the most important thing for creating online relationships. Web site should even be mostly focused on public relations besides the fact that there are so many other ways in which a company can create

internet relationships with the costumers such as e-mail, social network or blog.

E-mail marketing is cost-effective communication with market in a way that it is immediate and relevant. ⁶ E-mail is more editorial than advertising, and it is powerful because it can support and even drive a sales process. However, like any other medium, it has its challenges. Business people get hundreds of emails each day, so the company needs to get the message past spam filters and give them a reason to read. Company also needs a strong offer, valuable editorial content, appropriate design and a good fulfillment and measurement process. It should think of e-mail as a one-to-one communication – personalized, relevant, timely – not a blast.

Social networks are built around site platforms that enable members to develop identity profiles, interact with other members, and participate in various site activities. ⁷ Although interactions with others can seemingly approximate synchronous real time communication, the messaging structure is static rather than dynamic. Networks can be thought of as utility based tools. They are an elegant but fun way to organize content, socialize, and promote one's self-identity. Despite this, social networks have grown in popularity from their ability to provide a platform for information sharing, communication, and relationship development and maintenance. In a world where individuals may have reduced physical contact and heightened time spent interacting with electronic devices, social networks have evolved to provide an online platform for personal, intimate, informal neighborhood and office chatter. They offer a sense of contact comfort in a society where many of us spend less time with actual people than we do with machines. Contact comfort helps to meet individual needs for affiliation and socialization. Social networks meet customer's need for contact comfort while also providing entertainment and information sharing. Social networks are above all else communication hubs. While they all offer the core product of networking capabilities, networks do find ways to differentiate themselves. MySpace and Facebook support relationship building and maintenance. YouTube offers a venue for sharing and promoting videos and related opinions. Flickr enables photo sharing and reviewing. LinkedIn provides a form of self promotion and career networking. There are niche sites as well focused on any number of hobbies and personal interests. Catster, for example, offers tips and information on caring for one's feline companion with the added benefit of being able to talk with others who define themselves in part by the pets they love.

Blogs provide a window to the world of individuals. For some, like artists or innercity youth who tag buildings and vehicles with graffiti to make their mark and get noticed, a personal blog represents an escape from anonymity.

⁵Alison Theaker "The public relations handbook " 2nd edition, USA, 2004, p:18

⁶Rob Stokes "eMarketing: the essential guide to online marketing ", 2nd edition, USA, 2008, p: 7

For others, a blog is their private journal, open to the world. By posting their innermost thoughts and concerns, they are perhaps hoping that others with similar thoughts and struggles will connect with them. Naturally, bloggers with perspicacity and a clear voice have emerged and obtained a following. Some of these have become a new breed of citizen journalist who wields as much power as any major newspaper columnist.

There are several advantages to creating and maintaining a blog. Provide unfiltered information that are directly available to the audience. There are no mediators interpreting, or misinterpreting the information. The salient points get through. Enjoy direct access to consumers' focus. By allowing readers to post feedback, or comments to the blog entries, company will invariably gain valuable insight into the likes and dislikes of the consumers. Company can learn how they relate to its product, and what modifications they would most like to see. A blog helps to position the company as experts in the field. Increase ranking in the world of search engines. One metric search engines measure when determining the relevance of a particular site is the number of inbound links to that site. The more inbound links, the higher the site ranks on the search engine. Blogs create links to the site by others linking to and referencing a blog, and by creating links to company's site within company's blog.⁸

C. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is an internet based marketing practice in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought about by the affiliate's marketing efforts.⁹ Affiliate marketing is also the name of the industry where a number of different types of companies and individuals are performing this form of internet marketing, including affiliate networks, affiliate management companies, and in-house affiliate managers, specialized third party vendors, and various types of affiliates/publishers who promote the products and services of their partners. Affiliate marketing overlaps with other internet marketing methods to some degree, because affiliates often use regular advertising methods. Those methods include organic search engine optimization, e-mail marketing, and in some sense display advertising. On the other hand, affiliates sometimes use less orthodox techniques, such as publishing reviews of products or services offered by a partner. Affiliate marketing using one website to drive traffic to another—is a form of online marketing, which is frequently overlooked by advertisers. While e-mail, and website syndication capture much of the attention of online retailers, affiliate marketing carries a much lower revenue. Still, affiliates continue to play a significant role in e-retailers' marketing strategies.

D. Viral Marketing

Viral marketing describes any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence.¹⁰ Like viruses, such strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication to explode the message to thousands, to millions. Consumers are also more involved than ever before in controlling

communications and message delivery at a global level, thanks to the aforementioned rise of digital media, such as blogs and forums. Consequently, advertisers are finding it more and more difficult to reach marketing-shy, fragmented audiences, let alone engage with them. Unlike traditional 'top-down', marketer-to-consumer techniques, viral marketing focuses on personal experience of the brand and taps into the new power of the consumer. One of the reasons consumers find viral marketing campaigns appealing is because the campaigns tend to be non-interruptive, so they enable consumers to choose to interact proactively with a communication (and the brand behind it), or not, other than be passively dictated to. This 'bottom-up' approach respects that the consumer is in control; viral marketing campaigns are ultimately driven (or derailed) by consumers themselves. The result of this user-driven process is ultimately very valuable exponential brand endorsement by influencers and consumers – if the campaign is successful. The difference between one campaign succeeding and another failing is dependent on the campaign's ability to connect with consumers and inspire them to engage and interact with the advertising material, the brand and ultimately the product or service. Viral marketing is being used for two main purposes: to maintain or boost a cost-effective level of brand awareness during mainstream media spend 'downtime', usually by releasing Web-exclusive viral material that retains brand and campaign themes and to kick-start consumer-driven interest in new marketing communications activity – which often means pre-launching a mainstream admirally (perhaps using a Web-exclusive edit) before it hits TV, in order to create buzz and exploit exclusivity. Other purposes and benefits specific to each campaign may include: reach well beyond a business's core target market, create buzz around products and brands that have no compelling, 'wow' factor (so the agent itself must have the 'wow' factor), accelerate and amplify natural buzz and viral ability for products that do have a 'wow' factor, reinforce existing advertising and branding messages, extend other marketing communications activities, provide accountability when tracked, thereby measuring and proving return on investment and help add to the bottom line in terms of response and/or increasing recommendation rates.

III. INTERNET MARKETING IN MACEDONIA

When we are talking about Macedonia, the greater part of internet marketing includes banners. On many macedonian portals the only option in marketing menu is booking advertising space for banner.

⁷Tharon W. Howard "Design to thrive: creating social networks and online communities that last" 1st edition, USA, 2010, p: 29
⁸Susan Sweeney, C. A "101 ways to promote your real estate web site" 1st edition, Canada, 2008, p: 89

⁹Jeremy Palmer "High performance affiliate marketing" ebook edition, UK, 2006, p:10

¹⁰Justin Kirby and Paul Marsden "Connected marketing: the viral, buzz and word of mouth revolution" 1st edition, UK, 2006, p:87

For now, there are several companies in Macedonia specialized for offering profesional services for internet marketing, such as: prepriemac.com, seebiznis.com.mk, httpool.com.mk, emarketing.com.mk, ideaplus.com.mk. Internet marketing as advertising option is offered along the way, as part of big campaigns that include advertising on billboard, in magazines, on television or radio.

Regular clients of internet advertising in Macedonia are telecommunication firms or distributors of new cars, probably because of standards imposed from abroad within their firms or groups of franchisees. Their campaigns are mainly focused on banner advertising at local portals.

Macedonian companies have recently started advertising on social networks. In Macedonia there are 793 640 or 38,30% users of Facebook, that stimulates Macedonian companies to use Facebook as promotional tool and Avon is favorite brand on Facebook, with 30 692 fans in Macedonia. 11 Based on a research about advertisements of macedonian companies on Facebook and the users clicking on them, the conclusions are: 27% of the respondents responded that they never note the advertisements on Facebook, 6% responded that they deliberately do not click on advertisements, 37% rarely click on advertisements, 25,3% sometimes click on advertisements and 4,4% often click on advertisements on Facebook. 12

Based on the other research made in February 2010 about Macedonian users of search engines, the conclusions are: 78% of respondents use search engines more than 4 times a day, 73% responded that rarely or never use Macedonian search engines, 97,4% responded that use Google as favorite search engine on internet. The most used Macedonian search engines are najdi.org.mk, pogodok.com.mk, nabu.com.mk and borg.mk. 13

According to the Macedonian institute for media, online newspapers in Macedonia operate exclusively as a copy of traditional newspapers. Today, web presentations of television in Macedonia is with bigger dynamics than before and the most influential are A1 TV, Sitel and Kanal5 with the greatest visits. 14

About the blogging in Macedonia, the most famous are komunikacii.net, razvigor.com.mk, blog.com.mk. Bloggers think that social networks killed the blogs in Macedonia and because of that in the country there are a few qualitative blogs. 15

Unlike Facebook, Twitter in Macedonia has lower number of users, but it is noticeable that highly educated and intense intellectual structure of people use Twitter. This group of people are characterized by critical and sarcastic attitude towards society.

11 www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistic/macedonia

12 www.novamakedonija.com.mk

13 www.newmedia.mk/download/

14 Emilija Petreska- Kamenjarova, Zoran Riclev, Snezana Trpevska " Sostojbata na onlajn mediumi I onlajn novinarstvo vo Makedonija " Skopje, dekemvri 2010, str:23

15 Emilija Petreska- Kamenjarova, Zoran Riclev, Snezana Trpevska " Sostojbata na onlajn mediumi I onlajn novinarstvo vo Makedonija " Skopje, dekemvri 2010, str:26

I. CONCLUSION

Considering the fact that on the global network we are all equal and there are no physical or political limitations,

every company should find a solution for presenting its products and services to a big audience, specially suited to their needs. On the other hand, relatively expensive classic marketing that big number of companies cannot afford, contribute towards increasing the positive effects that electronic marketing is offering.

Regarding the fact that new changes are occurring in the digital world and diverse developments also occur in technology, it is good to know that if companies do not keep pace with changes they cannot hope for successful operation.

Limited use of electronic marketing and electronic commerce in Macedonia is due to a lack of expertise and capability of staff in the companies, specially in small and medium-sized firms. The most of the companies still have not reorganized and digitalized their processes according the world trends and standards of electronic commerce. Only through electronic marketing companies can present themselves on their own to the global market and to the million of customers, and that will enable them to promote their results, to share their experiences and to gather foreign experiences relevant for their work.

The best companies in the world despite traditional marketing, big part of their budget invest in electronic marketing. Electronic marketing helps them to create loyal customers, to connect customers with company's products, to create emotional benefits for the customers and sense that the right choice is made, security in terms of quality, services and features that are hard to forget. All these things can be achieved with electronic marketing tools: search engines, public relations, viral marketing, affiliate marketing. Therefore, Macedonian companies must include strategies for winning the online market and becoming recognizable all over the world.

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