Digital marketing

Confidence Action

The issue for many businesses at the moment is that they don't know the size of the future demand for their products or services. Last years figures seem useless. The High St retailers are already struggling while some online companies are thriving.

The beauty of marketing products and services online is that potential customers are sat at their computers, looking for answers. If they have a demand for your services they'll contact you.

If these potential customers have a demand but haven't heard of you, make sure your promotional activity and website are in tip top condition to get on their radar. Once you're thinking positively and are being more creative, you'll sharpen your confidence to give a more effective marketing edge.

Digital marketing can be stand alone but it'll work better when used in conjunction with conventional offline techniques. Remember, 1/3 of all online leads are generated from offline sources, so harmonising this potential seems to make good sense.

In fact, a strong marketing strategy will give you that edge. It is reported that a coherent marketing strategy, is likely to be 7X more effective than the ad hoc, "itty bitty" approaches used by most SMEs.

Increased effectiveness comes from co-ordination, using the strategy to continually build on successful campaigns and probe new ways to makes sales and awareness grow. Such a strategy looks at which activities (website, email, blog, RSS, etc) are working to facilitate and maximise the desired outcomes.

It is no coincidence that online marketing works better because accurate results and statistical trends are almost instantly available. Changes take minutes rather than months (compare to a printed brochure).

But all the technology in the world fails if your potential customer doesn't buy into it.

The word congruence means everything being aligned. Congruence is critical because it creates a smooth path to follow in the mind of the online visitor. If they're keen to buy, don't interrupt their flowing thoughts with distractions that add nothing to the sale.

Any friction from poor copy, inappropriate design or anxiety caused by an ambiguous message, and you're shooting yourself in the foot.

While it's fine to be keen, there's nothing more damaging to a sale then pushing too hard. That over eagerness that makes you go one step too far. The potential buyer has one problem and one solution in mind, and while a free gift will certainly increase their interest, bringing in some completely new product (that you think might sell) could be a deal breaker. They weren't expecting it and probably don't want it.

If you've already got commitment for the first sale then explaining an additional benefit is okay – it's when you hit them with a second product when they haven't digested the first, that's the problem. In challenging times, this happens a lot.

So marketing is about relationships. These are fragile and personal. There is another person on the end of your internet connection even if you can't see them.

It explains why good design and navigation only work if your website's content is already relevant and appropriate, and focused on what the ideal customer wants. But the Home page is primarily for new prospects so needs to carry a different message and reflect a different marketing strategy to the inner pages, where, by and large, you're speaking to the converted.

If you've got confidence, shoot a short video and make sure it'll appeal those prospects who may have never heard of you. As video is the nearest thing (to date) to a face to face conversation and will give you that edge over competitors who continue to rely on a plain 2-D website.

People like to interact with people hence the rise in social networking and the increased SME advertising taking place within its pages. Weave this hot feedback into your research and operational strategies.

Surviving the recession is going to be about forging new relationships with new clients – probably at a lower margin, and this can only happen via a confident, effective marketing approach in everything you do to promote your products and yourself.

Compelling, co-ordination, congruence and relevance are your watch words.

Your customers confidence grows as yours grows. Make it happen.

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