

KEEPING UP WITH THE EVOLVING WORLD OF INTERNET MARKETING



It's incredible how quickly the landscape of internet marketing changes. With so many factors at play, companies are finding that their visibility online shifts almost daily. New innovations in technology; accessibility to the internet; the emerging world of social networking; these factors all play a role in how we use the internet today. Mastering the art of search engine optimization (SEO) used to be the Holy Grail of internet marketing. It's still important, but there are so many additional online platforms getting traffic these days; it's almost impossible to cite any one as being more important than another.

For starters, before the dawn of social networking, search was the driving force behind acquiring online business. Organic traffic was one of the best ways around to attract new customers. Search guided the display of Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising. It was basically the only way for people to navigate the internet. Search is still a key player in attracting new online business, but today's user has more resources at hand for navigating the web. Social networking has created a more personalized online experience. Instead of Google offering results based on your search criteria, it can show you listings that have been recommended by your friends.

The personalized web experience is definitely one of the more exciting online trends from a marketing standpoint. People load their social networking sites with so much personal information, it makes targeting the right audience for your product or service easier than ever. The indexing methods and algorithms utilized by search

engines have made incredible progress; they are able to provide a user with results based on that user's geographical location, past selections, social networking information, age, marital status and a host of other personal statistics.

What made social networking so exciting in the past was a brand's ability to communicate directly with its customers. As recently as eighteen months ago, activity taking place on Facebook had no bearing on the Search Engine Result. Like Vegas, what happened on Facebook, stayed on Facebook. But as Facebook has grown and extended its reach, it has begun to have an impact outside of itself. Facebook is no longer simply a tool effective in building brand loyalty; it has become a platform for attracting new customers.

What we found really interesting about 2011 though, was the almost universal shift to mobile internet usage. The holiday season saw sales of mobile devices skyrocket; while PC sales were stagnant. This evolution has created a huge market for local internet advertising. Users today are looking for products and services when they're on the go; sites like Google Places allow business owners to create visibility for themselves in their communities. It's amazing how much revenue can be generated from claiming listings in prominent local directories.

No matter how people are using the internet, the opportunities for advertising are everywhere. Whether you are connecting with your fans via social network, catching a potential customer's eye in a local listing or you're attracting traffic through search; internet

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