

Not being top in search results pages nowadays is like not being at the trade shows in the 70-90's.

There is no question whether you SHOULD spend a large portion of your marketing/advertising dollars on the web. The question is, why isn't your company moving more of its budget to online marketing?

Is your company scared of the detailed statistical feedback including insights to individual behaviors? The web can help your company obtain visibility in front of the right people - those who are looking for exactly what you sell.

The web can also reinforce brand recognition and prevent your company from losing market share. A sad but true story follows... one of my friends who is not an avid internet user (but when he does use the internet, he often researches products and buys online) said something that shocked me. We were discussing how being at the top of the search engines is very important to businesses worldwide and he said, "well, aren't the largest and best companies on top of the 1st page?". This basically means he was giving product legitimacy to companies who came up at the top of the search engines. Needless to say, this blew me away but then I started thinking.... If the largest companies actually spent what they should on the internet, he would probably be right. However, this is not the case and small companies are eroding brand power and market share away from the 'big boys' that don't invest in the internet the way they should.

So, why haven't budgets shifted more to the web, sooner? Is it because Internet marketing is the least expensive means of spending advertising dollars? Is it because of all the wonderful statistics available? Again, we don't get why the paradigm shift is taking so long other than the fact that people are 'set in their ways'.

The facts are undeniable as far as getting in front of new customers and yet companies with millions of dollars in marketing budgets can't spend money to do the basics of search engine marketing for their website(s)? Yet, these same companies can bring 4-5 pieces of huge equipment and/or a large team of people to a trade show? Why not leave 1 or 2 of these pieces along with some of the staff at the office and spend the extra money to pay for an investment that will shine for YEARS to come - the web? How about those expensive print ads in trade magazines, shown 6 times a year for 20k+? Do those ads give you feedback as to who has seen them? Do you know that everyone who got the magazine even opened it? If they did open the magazine, what do you think the odds are they saw your ad? Either way, YOU DON'T GET ANY STATISTICS on this therefore you cannot make effective decisions going forward to improve your marketing efforts. ARGHH!!

Let's quickly compare the statistical feedback you can get from a magazine ad vs. a website visitor (this assumes your company has necessary statistics programs in place). A print magazine can give you 'circulation' of their magazines whereas a website can tell you how many visitors, how many repeat visitors, how long visitors spent on each page, paths users took to browse your products and services on your website, etc. Does a magazine tell you if your ad actually was seen by a human eye? Can it tell you how many times? Notwithstanding the horse and pony version of the 'punch card', can a magazine tell you that a user was interested in the ad? Of course a banner ad that gets clicked shows 'interest' by the user.

There are companies combining print/web to capture feedback. One way this is done is in the form of 'visit our website and sign up for a free brochure, presentation, etc.'. If you must use print, then this is a great idea. The question is how much print advertising do you really need when the facts say virtually 100% of all new product and service decisions involve a search on the web? It seems to this writer that being found in the search engines for a wide variety of terms related to my business would be my 1st priority since virtually 100% of major purchase decisions involve a search sometime during the buying process.

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