

Using Internet Prospecting to Drive Your Revenue

The Internet has become a staple in the business world today - advertising, research, competitive analysis and prospecting. Locating appropriate prospecting groups via the Internet (and having prospects find you) can be challenging, to say the least. As with most marketing tactics, there are numerous ways to approach internet prospecting, and the right way is the one that works for you and your business or service. Experimentation is key – don't get “stuck” doing the same thing over and over if you are not getting the results you want – change it up and track your success!

Here are a few things you can do to start the process in determining how Internet prospecting will work best for you:

1. Search key words on Google, Yahoo, etc. for leads you are looking for (local charities, financial companies, schools, businesses, whoever your target market is). This becomes your “call list” for daily prospecting. How you are communicating with these leads is critical! Read on for more on communication. . .
2. Search key words that prospects use to find you (weddings, catered events, business meetings, golf tournaments, reception, auctions, charity events, etc., and include the city in which you are located). This is what your prospects are seeing when they are searching for you – are you well represented? Can you find yourself? If you can't, the prospects can't either.
3. Lead Lists – many companies offer (sell) lead lists based on demographics, industry type, size of company, buying patterns, even if they host events throughout the year. Do your homework to ensure the company you choose specializes in the types of leads you are looking for, and that their databases are updated frequently otherwise the information will be outdated. Also, it is helpful when the leads come with phone numbers, not just email addresses, so that follow-up can be accomplished more effectively.

The How, What and Why of Communication

Once you have identified a lead list and are ready to prospect, how are you communicating with your prospects? More often than not, the first communication is an e-blast to an entire prospecting group. Why do we love email so much? It's cheap, it's easy, it's fast and it reaches many people at once. Recipients are accustomed to getting Information via email, so many people scan their emails quickly and delete more than they read. So, the rule of thumb for sending an email is this - **be brief, be brilliant, be gone!**

Proper follow-up consists of a phone call if you have the phone number, and 3-4 more emails about the same subject. You do not want to be a pest, but you cannot give up too easy, either. It sometimes takes a prospect 4-5 times of seeing something in order for it to sink in.

To increase your chance of getting more “opens”:

- ✓ avoid “spammy” subject lines containing ALL CAPS, exclamation points, words like “special”, “price”, “deal” and “save”.
- ✓ Send on Tuesday or Wednesday. Avoid weekends.
- ✓ DON'T OVERSEND. 3-4 times for the same subject max!
- ✓ Stick to once per week at the most and preferably on the same day each week.
- ✓ Make the email “from” your business name, not your own name
- ✓ Think about your subject line – make it count!
- ✓ Provide VALUABLE CONTENT EVERY TIME

Content – Keep it Professional!

You are not typing an email to a friend, so keep your content professional, short and to the point. Include a table of contents when necessary, and organize information logically. It's ok, and preferable, to link to a website for more information. And please - don't forget the UNSUBSCRIBE language!!

Track Your Success!

The calls and emails are now pouring in. . . how are you tracking the results? Don't drop the ball by not tracking which of your advertising/marketing ventures is yielding you the most success. You want to know what to repeat. And, what to NOT do again! Evaluate your results on a regular basis and compare print media versus internet marketing.

Next month, we will talk about email's "reach" and collection procedures for building your database! Stay tuned!

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