



Business growth through online marketing

It is easy to overlook the value of your Web site as a source of new business. If you are looking for new ways to grow, the Web may be the ultimate resource for cost-effectively attracting new customers. But online business success doesn't happen automatically. Achieving and optimizing results from your Internet investment requires consistent, ongoing analysis and enhancement.

Consider the following:

When was the last time you updated the look, layout or content of your Web site?

How are you using the Internet to market your products or services and communicate with prospects, clients and referral sources?

How do you measure results from your online sales and marketing activities?

If you haven't asked yourself these questions, you're overlooking important opportunities to grow your business. **Pierpont Communications** has teamed up with **Steve Latham, president of Spur Digital**, to explore some proven Web marketing tactics for attracting new customers.

Listed below are some valuable tips on updating your Web site and attracting prospective customers. The excerpts below are from a series of white papers by Spur Digital that examine online marketing opportunities and tactics to grow your business. These reports are available to you at [Spur Digital](#).

Updating your Web site

1) Re-assess your Web site's layout, look-and-feel and usability

Make sure your site is customer-centric. Here are some things to look at:

- Layout and navigation must be intuitive and consistent; make it easy for visitors to find what they are looking for.
- Don't overload your site with content, ads, graphics, offers, or other items that will distract from the important information on each page. Your Web site should be visually interesting, but visitors go there for one thing -- information.
- Evaluate your Web site for usability and look-and-feel at least every six months.
- If you are selling products directly from the Web site, hire a professional to conduct usability testing.

2) Make it interactive

Communicate with prospective customers and get them to tell you who they are.

- Entice visitors to join your mailing list or request information.

Spur Digital is a Houston-based provider of Web marketing strategies and solutions. Spur helps clients leverage the Internet to drive revenue, improve customer loyalty and build brand awareness, delivering compelling value and high ROI. For more information visit [Spur Digital](#).

Pierpont Communications is one of the largest PR and marketing firms in Texas. The company has helped a variety of clients create and update their Internet presence. Pierpont develops key messages, writes content, and oversees Web site graphic design, development and production. For more about Pierpont, visit our [Web site](#).

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- Make it easy for them to contact you through "contact us" pages or email links on your site.
- Set up a protocol to confirm receipt of their information and to ensure follow up to visitor requests.

3) Designate landing pages for click-through visitors

Send click-through visitors to a designated page that is relevant to the ad that prompted them to visit you.

- If you want customers to submit their information to you, put the form on the landing page.
- Remember: the less visitors have to search your site for information or to contact you, the more likely they are to act.

4) Track and analyze visitor behavior

You can learn a lot about your customers by analyzing their behavior on your site. Here are two ways to do it:

- Macro-level analysis -- Analyze the number of visits, visitors, repeat visits, most popular pages, etc. to see what visitors are doing on your site. Analyze visits to important pages (e.g. products, services, etc.) to better understand how and when visitors view them.
- Micro-level analysis -- Analyze visits of individuals to determine what they are interested in. Use this information to personalize how you market to them.

contact information at our [Web site](#).

Visit our [Privacy Statement](#).

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Proven tactics for attracting prospects

1) Search engine marketing

Search engine marketing is one of the most effective ways to attract visitors to your site. Here are some secrets to effective use of this marketing channel:

- Register your site -- most search engines such as Yahoo, Google, Overture, etc. accept submissions. To register, submit your site's title, key words, key word descriptions and other information.
- Optimize your site to be spidered. Search engines use programs called spiders to search Web sites and look for titles, keywords and keyword descriptions. Some tips to being "found" include:
 - . Using text vs. images for important messages.
 - . Site popularity. Engines such as Google rank your site based partially on its popularity.
 - . Avoid trying to trick the spiders. Search engines will penalize you.
- Buy advertising on search engine sites. Purchase keywords that relate to your company, your products or your services. The more you pay, the higher you appear in the search results.

2) Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing (placing ads on complementary sites) is effective for targeting audiences and personalizing your message at a low cost. Here are a few tips to consider:

- Choose the right partner based on the audience, traffic volume and cost to advertise.
- Designate specific landing pages for each affiliate with relevant information to each audience.
- Make sure partners follow through.
- Measure results and communicate to partners.

3) E-mail marketing

E-mail marketing offers relatively high response rates, low cost and ability to track results. But it should be carefully pursued. Here are some tips:

- Send only to those recipients that have given you permission to contact them

- Personalize your message and the content of your email. The more you personalize, the better.
 - Avoid appearance of spam. Personalize the To and From fields, and avoid all caps, or titles that "shout" at recipients in the subject field. Make your subject interesting and specific to the message.
- Use an email service to be sure your message gets through spam filters looking for large volumes of messages.
- Make it easy to unsubscribe and include a link to your privacy statement.
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4) Measure and analyze results

Assess results of each campaign and determine which programs are most effective. Track the following:

- Initial responses: impressions, click-throughs, response rates, conversion rates, bounce-backs
- Business results: number of new leads, qualified opportunities, transactions, revenue.
- Average revenue and cost for each impression, lead and transaction
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5) Personalize customer communications

Given the increase in spam, personalization is becoming increasingly important. There are many ways to track responses, analyze visitors and personalize your messages. One-to-one marketing is now affordable and profitable for many companies.

6) Test, Test, Test

Before launching a campaign, test different variables to determine what works best. Use different ads, text, colors, placement, Web sites, landing pages, etc. Measure and compare results to determine what works best.

