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when your small business needs big results

Bad Practice in Online Marketing & How to Avoid It

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

How you optimize your website will dictate how successful your website ranks in a search. Some of the things to avoid are hiding text on web pages or stuffing keywords onto your pages. It looks awful and will do nothing for rankings.

Paying for repeat submissions to the search engines is also unnecessary - once a website is in the search engines' databases, it will stay there. Remember that it's the visitors to your website who you're trying to impress and who will ultimately buy from you - not the search engines!

For more information on what is acceptable to the search engines, you can read Google's webmaster guidelines [here](#).

Email Marketing

Having a big list to promote your services is what all small businesses want, but you need to be careful how you go about gathering email addresses.

Avoid buying in lists as people on those lists will know nothing about your products or services and are likely to see your email as spam, which will give your business a bad reputation.

Repeating the message as often as you can is also bad practice. It's unlikely your list wants to hear from you all the time, particularly if all you're doing is sending out the same email with the same offer. Make your newsletter worthy of being opened and read and use it to build loyalty with your customers.

Blogs & Forums

Commenting on other people's blogs and taking part in conversations on forums is a great way to increase your visibility. It's also an opportunity to show off your area of expertise. The purpose is to enhance your reputation, so be aware how easily it could be damaged and advance with caution!

Don't be a steam roller. Barging into conversations online is just like interrupting and shouting down everyone else in an offline conversation. Web 2.0 is about exchanging ideas and interaction so make sure you contribute value, not spam.

Don't be a 'me too'. If all you can say when you comment on a blog is that you agree with the blogger, then it's better not to bother.

Social Networking

The key word here is 'networking'. It isn't called Social Selling and yet that's what so many people try to do. Sites like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Ecademy are all about making new contacts and getting to know them.

Resist constant self-promotion. You may well have a solution that would be ideal for people on the forum or blog, but if all you do is to keep repeating your offer like a broken record, you'll just alienate people and could risk having your membership suspended.



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Don't send lots of mass mailings. This is just as annoying as having unsolicited emails arrive in your Inbox. Just because you can reach a larger audience, it's still important to target your mailings.

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(This article first appeared in the 'Savvy Marketing Tips' newsletter in January 2009.)