

Blurring the lines

An introduction to the changing face of online/offline marketing integration

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Moving the goalposts

The big moment is finally here... your service or product has launched. It's out there. Everything looks good. You've had your marketing strategy developed by a reputable agency, and you just know that you're going to hit this one right out of the park.

Fast-forward one year. Your competitor had a better time with their marketing. It went so well that they've stolen all those customers you thought were going to beat down the doors to buy from you. Your perfect marketing plan seems just a distant memory. Now, only one question rings in your mind:

"Where did we go wrong?"

Sadly, it's a fact of life that the world of marketing is changing, and many companies are being left behind. There would have been nothing wrong with your launch, even up to a year ago. However, today you're so far out of the game you may as well not be playing at all.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

So, what does today's marketing campaign involve? Should you throw out the old, and come in with the new? The simple answer is no. Tried and tested marketing methods such as direct mailing, television and radio promotion, and press releases are still just as important today as they ever have been.

However, in today's marketplace, there are a whole slew of new techniques that

you're going to need to get to grips with, if you're going to succeed. So where's the game headed?

Online marketing has exploded over the last few years. Pay-per-click is the fastest growing marketing medium ever; pay-per-action is looking to revolutionise the game again; and new methods are coming through that most people haven't even heard of yet.

Unfortunately, simply having a website isn't enough anymore. While most companies have some form of online presence, for many this is woefully inadequate. The sad fact is, if you aren't promoting your site correctly, it may as well not be there.

Raising your game

To resolve this, you need to know where online marketing is headed over the next 12 to 36 months. Currently, four techniques stand out as future mainstays in the online marketer's toolkit. Make no mistake - this is the cutting edge of online marketing practice as it stands today.

Blogging

With public figures such as Michael Moore, William Shatner and Ms Spears herself, and respected niche personalities such as Google employee Matt Cutts, copywriter Michel Fortin or personal development coach Mum Wendy Piersall all blogging, the days of this being considered a "geeks only" clique are well and truly over.

Blogs are a great way of drawing traffic, building brand recognition, and establishing credibility. Regularly updated,

compelling, and occasionally controversial content can hook users, keeping them coming back to your site, and turning the casual browser into a solid customer.

Email marketing lead generation via co-registration, shared mailing and list renting

Co-registration, shared mailing and list renting are re-writing the book on email marketing. These methods allow you to build in-house mailing lists faster than ever before.

Spammers and virus emails have given email marketing a bad reputation. It's worth taking a second look – the results speak for themselves:

- Email penetration is at an all-time high of 91% among Internet users between the ages of 18 and 64 ¹
- Email ROI per \$1US spent: \$51.45 ²
- Search has the second highest penetration among Internet users ³
- More than two thirds of companies using email marketing reported a profit from it, with a third reporting ROI of 500% or greater ⁴

Article archiving and distribution

The number one reason that people use the internet is to find information and answers. During this process it's likely they'll use a search engine – allowing you to get creative and get ahead.

By creating articles, you create keyword rich, informative content. In short, you create the kind of content that people are looking for when searching for your site. And, not only will it help your

search rankings for your chosen area, it will also enhance your profile throughout your niche market, reinforcing your site's expertise and professional foundations.

But it doesn't stop there; you can lead people to your site by distributing articles too, increasing your reach and allowing you to increase your exposure even further!

Press release distribution and optimisation

Putting out a press release is nothing new. But optimising it to be found online, is.

Journalists now find a large quantity of the reported news online. Breaking stories can get to people faster through newswires than through any other means. For this reason, it's important that your news is optimised to be found, and sent to the right places. It isn't quick, and it isn't cheap, but for national and international news coverage, it's worth it. Here's the proof:

- 98% of journalists go online daily
- 92% for article research
- 81% for general searching
- 76% to find new sources or experts
- 73% to find press releases ⁵

A well written press release, optimised and distributed properly, can create global interest and attention, putting you in front of the world's media.

Advanced link acquisition

Today, a skilled search engine optimiser should also be a skilled copywriter. The ability to craft compelling, remarkable content, which will attract interest, visitors and links, is essential. The ability to write content that will get people talking and referring others to the site gives you the chance to rank for high-traffic keywords in niches where previously you couldn't go.

Further to this, the use of directories is still as strong as ever. The major directories have become first stop shops to buy links for new websites. By positioning themselves as trusted resources, and making the cost of inclusion too high to spam, they've leveraged their position to grow into names that every search marketer should be familiar with. Links from these kinds of places are a must.

In similar theme, links from vertical directories have become more important. We're now seeing an increasing trend away from horizontal methodology, where a site is compared to the rest of the web in terms of its links and content, and more towards a vertical, niche-based system of ranking.

These niche directories provide the framework upon which search engines are starting to build. As before, listings in the right directories, in the right places, can help define a site's theme, and niche, and thus improve search rankings.

Aiming to win

The time has come to decide how serious you are about your online marketing efforts. But remember, these new technologies are not here to replace traditional marketing; they're here to enhance it. They provide you with the tools to interact with your customers on a more personal level, and to engage with them in a way that would have been impossible just two or three years ago. We can work with you to identify opportunities and bring the future to your marketing campaign.

References

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2. Direct Marketing Association Power of Direct report October 2006.
3. eMarketer
4. E-consultancy Email Marketing Industry Census 2007
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About Adams Creative

Adams Creative is one of the South East's leading online/offline marketing agencies. With a strong London client base and offices in Maidstone, Ashford and Hastings, the agency manages online and offline marketing campaigns. Specialist in-house teams provide expertise in new media, online marketing, advertising, graphics, media buying, public relations, direct mail, event and exhibition management, telemarketing and crisis management for many of the South East's leading Blue Chip companies.

Adams Creative works with clients in both the consumer and business-to-business sectors, creating bespoke campaigns to suit each client's specific objectives. Clients include Eurotunnel, ING, United Trust Bank, Balfour Beatty, Hilton Hotels, Novotel and The Kings Ferry.

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