

Are you prepared for the Changing Search Engine Marketing and Internet Marketing Environment?

The search engine marketing environment will continue to change as new technology becomes available to the masses. It should be a major concern for businesses of all types and sizes. Historically, small businesses have found a way to stay connected and to evolve with new technology; however, it seems to be much more difficult for large organizations to adapt. Whether or not the economy is on the road to recovery, it is still imperative that businesses evolve their marketing mix, begin to incorporate new ideas, and adapt to the needs and wants of their target marketing.

With the latest changes in search engines such as Google and Bing, it will be increasingly important for businesses to engage in search engine optimization. In our opinion, Microsoft's Bing search engine provides new search innovations that never crossed the minds of most users. Furthermore, the Bing and Yahoo "partnership" raised their position among search engine users. It was not a surprise to many in search marketing when Google announced "Google caffeine" back in August of 2009, after the Bing & Yahoo deal was completed. The big question is: how did your business adapt to these changes made to the search engines?

The changes to Google and Bing are not only important to search engine optimization but also to search engine marketing as well as pay-per-click advertising. The changes within the search engines will noticeably change the overall strategy of business campaigns. In most cases, there are several keywords and phrases that are critical to conversion results. If the search engine alters the position of a business for critical terms, then the business must effectively and accurately develop a strategy to offset these changes. Good search engine optimization takes time, which is why the most common alternative is to implement a pay-per-click campaign, targeting critical keywords and phrases that were altered with the changes to Bing or Google.

The viral marketing and social media networks are impacted by the search engine changes as well. More specifically, Google's improvements appear better at capturing breaking news. It will increase the probability of users finding new information and sharing the information through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The ability to optimize blog content will improve keyword positioning and again, increase the opportunities of information to become viral.

For years, marketers have been waiting for the mobile marketing explosion and we believe that the iPhone and natural competition were missing pieces to launching the mobile marketing explosion. Natural competition has made it possible for just about everyone to have access to the internet through their mobile phone. Businesses are developing web applications to service the needs of customers, and customers are searching for products or services through iPhone, BlackBerry, etc. This has, and will continue to have businesses develop searchable and navigable websites for mobile devices. Furthermore, it will force businesses and marketers to explore innovative ways to connect with their target audience.

With marketing and human resource budgets being reduced to a bare minimum, businesses will need to truly understand which marketing campaigns are delivering results. The most effective and accurate way to measure the success of search engine optimization, social media marketing, pay-per-click, and mobile search is through web analytics. We are not referring to click stream data, but to actionable business intelligence! It is unfortunate that not all businesses see the value in business intelligence. It is the ability to combine quantitative and qualitative information into actionable recommendations. Keep in mind that businesses are not going to get this from an analytical tool. Businesses will need to invest in the human capital as well.

Even the state of web analytics and testing is subject to changes. It is our opinion that web analytics, metrics, and testing will dramatically change in 2010-2011. Adobe will be the organization that will force a change in the landscape of creativity, optimization, and analytics. Adobe laid out the groundwork for this change in October 2009 with the acquisition of Omniture. At the time of the acquisition, Omniture was already on the verge of becoming the number one web analytics tool. Now, Adobe and Omniture join to create the most complete creative and analytical process. Eventually, marketers and designers will be able to create, deliver, engage a user, analyze, and optimize an internet marketing campaign on a single platform.

The nature of competition will surface within the marketplace and create a marketer or designer's dream. Businesses will be provided with the opportunity to voice their opinion on analytics and design products. The design and analytical vendors will be forced to deliver less expensive but more productive tools just to compete. We can only hope that some geniuses at Microsoft, WebTrends, Google, or elsewhere develop a product that can compete.

So what is the point of all this? The short answer is that technology and evolution are the keys to thriving in an internet marketing or search engine marketing

environment. None of the numerous tactics such as email marketing, search engine optimization, web analytics, search engine marketing, pay-per-click or social media marketing are going away. These tactics will simply evolve with new or enhanced technology. The challenge is that most businesses are so consumed by increasing short-term growth that they fail to notice the opportunity for long-term success. It is time for all businesses to implement these tactics into their overall marketing plan. Today's version of Facebook, Search Engine Optimization or Google AdWords will not be as simple in 2011. Keep your business or marketing team ahead of the competition. The best way to stay engaged and to evolve within an environment is to live in it.