

What You Must Absolutely Know Before You Start Marketing Your Business Online



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Being too loud with your ads?

People don't want to be aggressed when they enter a site.

When asking for feed back from my audience, this is a theme that was recurrent!

They complained a lot about sites that literally assault them visually.

People don't like it.

They prefer clear and simple designs!

Think the google home page!

Nothing!

Just a window to type in your search and a logo!

That's it!

The reason they do it is because they checked, tested and asked for tons of feed back!

They listen!

They are the most visited site on the net!

It's NOT a coincidence!

People want to relax when they enter a site.

They want this visit to be their agenda not yours!

Aggressive and loud marketing might expose them once but they won't come back to the site!

You need to be smart and understand the needs of your audience!

So, what does that mean for you?

That your ads need to be subtle... That's even if you want to put ads on your site!

Think about the adsense ads you see everywhere!

How do you respond to them?

Do you like them?

I don't know about you, but these ads are now synonyms of poor content in my mind.

When I enter a site and I see them on top of the page, begging me to click on them for some pennies, I simply run away!

In fact, I feel I now boycott sites that shows them!

It's instinctual!

On my own sites, in the beginning, I was showing my own ads.

On free content pages like articles or embedded videos, I would put a call for action on the side bar!

I would put a list or related products people could buy

Guess what!

The results and conversions linked with those ads were extremely poor!

I progressively removed them and now 10 years later, my site is almost 100% clear from ads.

Here and there, I test that again to see if my audience's response changed.

It doesn't.

I often run a test for a month and the result is always the same!

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Hardly any clicks on the ads!

It's logical!

Internet users have developed ad blindness!

They just don't see them any more.

The problem is that fighting against your ads takes energy.

...And it's annoying!

So, my own personal choice is simply to list what's available and let visitors click on what they want.

That's for my website which is coaching.

Of course, you need to experiment for yourself and see what works best.

Remember your own emotional reaction when you open an email which is just another sales page.

How do you respond?

Do you like it?

Or do you unsubscribe on the spot?

It's likely that your audience will respond the way you do.

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Promises from SEO firms? Can you trust them?

Here are some examples of my own experiences and my client's experiences that will save you lots of time.

What wastes a lot of energy is the experimentation! It is trying costly tactics without knowing if they will work or not!

In fact, if we could all benefit from each other's experience and gather all marketing knowledge we gained, we would speed up our learning curve exponentially.

The information I am about to share with you is the result of 6 months in depth trials I did run in the first semester of 2011.

I launched a SEO campaign in January 2011.

This campaign was targeting a specific product on my site, one URL and 63 keyphrases for that page.

The goal? Get my page to score in the top 10 to top 3 for these 63 keyphrases.

The SEO firm I decided to work with was promising to get 80% of my keyphrases in the top 10 within 3 months.

They were willing to take the project and get paid only once my keywords would hit the top 10.

I selected that firm after posting this project on a freelancing site.

I got around 40 offers!

The offer I selected was the most promising and the firm had tons of positive feedback.

I paid about 20% upfront to get them started on their work.

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After 2 months, I still had close to no results.

They didn't send me the reports they promised.

They didn't call me back when they said they would.

I contacted them and told them that now was the time to show me what they had.

I gave them one month to prove to me that their service was of value.

3 Months after the beginning of the project, only 5% of the targets had been reached.

I saw some of my keywords climbing the ranks on goggle and score in the top 100 or even top 20.

4 keywords reached the top 10 for a short period of time.

I checked the stats and the extra income and sales I got from this campaign didn't even cover the initial upfront payment I sent them.

6 months after the beginning of this campaign, that's today!

It was an interesting experience because I fully went with it.

If they had been successful I would have paid them a few thousand \$\$ for their services.

The overall increase in traffic to that specific page went from 150 hits/month to 300 hits/month.

I know, not much...

It's a small project and small experiment.

But it's a test that gave me some priceless insights!

First, I discovered that the promises from this SEO firm were not fulfilled... By far!

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They simply didn't deliver what they promised.

If I had paid more upfront, I would have lost lots of money in the process.

Now, you might think that this is an isolated example?

It is not!

When I started my campaign, I had a couple of my clients starting on a similar quest with other SEO firms and totally different products and offers.

What happened to them?

Exact same results!

After 3 months of SEO work, the pages of my clients were NOT ranking higher.

They had as well invested some money upfront and their SEO firm were even asking for more to continue their work.

Look... I am like you!

I want to believe in SEO!

In fact, I do believe that SEO works.

This experiment was not a failure.

On the contrary!

I got some results but these results were only 5% of what had been promised.

My expectations were way higher.

When I contacted my project manager at this firm, his excuse was that google probably changed their algorithm and this is why their link building and promotional SEO steps were not that successful.

Yeah! Right!!!

Google changed their algorithm?

Guess what?

They do that all the time!!!

It's part of the game!

That's what they do for a living!

It is because they are able to annihilate SEO efforts that their adwords system gains credibility.

Goggle doesn't want you to succeed with your SEO efforts!

Why? Because they want you to use adwords instead!!!

It is really that simple.

An SEO firm is small.

Google is an army of trained and super skilled engineers!

It's hard to compete!

What's my conclusion?

That right now, for me, SEO still works.

The results of that campaign just covered my costs.

In other terms, I don't make much profit but don't lose money either.

The reason I am not actively pursuing SEO campaigns right now is simply because I have other marketing avenues that work way better for me at this stage.

Link building strategies? What's the point?

Let's dive deeper on more SEO strategies!

Nowadays, when you post a SEO project on a freelance site, the offers you get have a lot to do with link building!

SEO firms want to sell you links!

Lots of links!

They say things like:

"We'll give you 200 social sites links for \$500"

That's a good deal, right?

Not it's not!

Why?

Because you really don't care about links!!!

What you care about is rank on google!

These links won't generate traffic!

No one see them!

They are lost in internet limbo!

The assumption is that if you have links, you will rank high!

That's 100% wrong!

Put yourself in google's shoes!

They know what you are trying to do!

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They know they want to stop you!

They know you can easily get links from social networking sites!

They can easily set a new rule in their algorithm for links originating in these sites to have poor value.

It takes them 5 min to set it up!

Literally!

I think that most SEO firms highly underestimate google's power and understanding of SEO tactics.

In fact, I believe that google is 10 steps ahead then most SEO firms.

SEO firms are still working on strategies that have been tackled by google months or years ago!

Understand this again!!!

Google doesn't want your SEO strategies to be successful!

They want you to fail!

This is not some form of conspiracy to make you miserable!

They need to tackle SEO efforts for their adwords program to be credible!

It is really that simple!

Adwords represents 90% of google's income.

They make money because of these ads they put on top and to the right of search results.

They reason google shares sky rocketed is because of the success of their adwords program.

Now, back to link building...

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More links does NOT equal higher rank.

This is why when you simply buy links, it doesn't guarantee you higher ranks on google.

Many of these strategies are pretty much useless.

In most cases, return on investment is very low.

You might not even cover the costs of your campaigns.

Again, I am not giving up on SEO tactics.

I do believe that you can get some results.

But after seeing people failing over and over again, I realize that expectations are way too high.

Many SEO firms promise you results they have no way of delivering!

You must keep that in mind!

Do you need to direct traffic to your site? Is there another way?

You can get tons of exposure to your products and services and a lot of this exposure has nothing to do with people visiting your site.

These days, I get around 5000 people/day exposed to my coaching and content.

Only 10% of these people actually access my website.

50% discover me on Youtube.

Around 30% download my MP3's on Itunes.

I get around 60'000 MP3 downloads/month.

I have as well tons of traffic on other video sites.

Right now, I have 70+ books in digital and paperback format that sell on various sites like Amazon and B&N.

You see... Most of the exposure I get doesn't come from visits to my site.

If I was relying on visits to my site, I would mainly be relying on goggle sending me traffic.

The good news is that you have tools like Itunes, Amazon or Youtube with an audience that wants your stuff!!!

For some of my products, the search on Amazon for targeted keywords, returns 700 results.

This means that I am competing with 700 other products.

The same search on google returns 3'000'000 results.

The competition is way higher on google.

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The same with Youtube or Itunes.

Itunes has an audience packed with people who want my audios!

If I post any audio on any of my 12 podcasts, I see 200-500 downloads within days.

If I create a new article and post it on my blog and wait for search engines to send traffic to that page, I will see nothing for months or even years.

If you want to gain exposure, you need to find your audience and give them what you have in a format they want.

I know what you are thinking...

Am I talking mainly about free content?

Not at all!!!

Of course my podcasts and Youtube power kick videos are in free access.

But these videos are exposure.

They are not ads!

They are solid content.

Some of the people who see these videos will hire me as their coach because they like what they see.

I reach an audience and I like giving away for free anyway!

For me it is a great satisfaction to have a positive impact whether I get financially rewarded or not.

The money I will sometimes make is an extra, not a condition for me to give.

So back to free or fee products.

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On Amazon, my books sell.

Right now I have 70+ books on their site.

The same books on my site sell only a fraction of the copies I sell on their site.

Why is that?

Traffic!!!

It is really that simple!

Building traffic to the pages and products on my site takes time and energy!

It is hard work!

On amazon, I post a new book and the whole system including traffic is part of the deal.

All I have to do is create the content!

They do the rest!

See how it works?

Unhook yourself from the idea that you need to build traffic to YOUR site.

It's not necessary to be successful!

If you take this one step further, you notice that some big brands don't even advertise their site on their billboards anymore! They advertise their Facebook page!

A known public figure might get way more exposure from their tweets than anything else!

You need to be smart!!!

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Really smart!

The internet is an environment you need to master!

To do that, you need to keep in mind the real targets!

What's your target, really?

Is it the prestige to have your site rank high on Alexa or is it to reach your audience in the most effective way?

Focus first on what matters!

Word of mouth? Does it work?

When you start online, you often live in a romantic reality.

Here is the story that many people tell themselves:

“I have a product or a service. I will put it out there. Because people will like it, they will tell their friends. This will create buzz and the viral effect of this process will be enough to launch my success!”

Ok, here are some new from you:

That’s a dream!!!

In reality, how many products did you refer to your friends in the last year?

How many people did you reach through that?

Do you spend your time scanning the net looking for useful stuff or are you already busy and overloaded with other priorities?

You get my point, right?

Word of mouth works in some very isolated cases.

70% of the traffic to my site comes from google.

That’s not word of mouth!

That’s people using a simple tool to find the information they need!

Of course, big brands like apple found a way to create buzz and have armies of consumers following their every move.

This is because their products make their users dream!

If you can score really high in your clients or customers minds of course word of mouth will work for you.

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It will work for you as well if you are local and offer a service that people really need.

For instance if you are a fantastic lawyer, people will naturally refer you to their friends.

If you know the perfect plumber, you will tell your neighbours.

Online, that's a bit different!

Why?

Because most people are saturated with info!

They don't want to overload their friends either.

I honestly can't recall buying a product in this last year because of a referral from friend or colleague.

There is another element that plays a core role in these referral dynamics.

It's a competitive response!

Most people resist contributing to the commercial success of something they can't fully sponsor.

If you create a product that is aimed at making money, your audience can resist it or back it up.

If they resist it, they will most likely not refer you to their friends.

Again, these dynamics are very subtle!

Overall, I believe that 99% of online commercial successes are not linked with word of mouth.

That's my conclusion after 10 years of online marketing experience.

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Save you lots of time and money!

If you start marketing anything online, it could easily take you a year to get results!

Why?

Because the tools and techniques are complex!

You need to:

- **Know where to put your ads**
- **Phrase them right**
- **Identify the exact price you can pay for them**
- **Work on your landing pages**
- **Package your product right**
- **Target the right audience**
- **Identify the right keyword phrases**
- **Etc!**

And this is only for ads on Google or Yahoo!

If you look at the whole SEO – search engine optimization – field, you have another new set of challenges and skills you need to develop.

5 years ago, the minimum bet price for an ad on Goggle was \$0.05.

Now, this price tag has shifted and most advertisers pay \$0.20 - \$1.00 per click!

The market is 10 times more competitive than it was!

Yes! You can succeed in that landscape but you need to be super smart and avoid some key pitfalls!

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That's exactly what I want to explore with you in this short power kick book!

I want to show you some short cuts and tell you about what you can realistically expect from online marketing.

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Are you local or global?

That's the first question to ask yourself!

Why?

Because this will determine your marketing strategy.

If your audience is anywhere and you can easily sell your products to prospects on the other side of the planet, then marketing online is an essential key!

This applies to you if you sell books, software or information products like books, downloadable audios or videos for instance.

It works for you as well if you offer consulting by phone for instance and you can share your advice via phone or skype for instance.

If your business is local and you own for instance a restaurant or a gym, your online efforts will only be a small fraction of your marketing strategy.

Here is how it works:

When you want to put an ad on Google adwords (the ad placement system for Google), you need to identify keywords that will trigger the display of your ad when people search online.

If you own a Chinese restaurant in Manhattan, your list of key phrases will look like:

- **Restaurant Manhattan**
- **Dining out Manhattan**
- **Chinese dining Manhattan**
- **Chinese restaurant Manhattan**
- **Restaurant New York**

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- **Dining out New York**
- **Etc.**

With a bit of research, you can easily identify 100+ key phrases that will match your audience's requests.

So far, so good!

Now, you will want your ads to display only for an audience located in New York, right?

You don't want to show your ad for people located in Japan ;)

Logical!

This restriction of the size of your audience means that the number of searches displaying your ads will be much smaller than if you were global.

One of the limiting factors is the number of searches for these various keywords.

The phrase "Dining out New York" might be searched 10 times/day.

Suppose that 10 searches is the average search volume for each of your 100 key phrases and your target area.

100 key phrases x 10 = 1000 searches /day match your key phrases.

This means that your ad will be displayed 1000 times.

So far, you paid nothing because your ad was only displayed and no one clicked on your ad yet!

You start paying once some one clicks on your ad.

So, how many people will click?

If your ad is appealing, a reasonable click through rate to expect is 1%.

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Click through rate or CTR is the percentage of clicks per ad display.

A CTR of 1% means that for 100 ads displays, you get one click on your ad and 1 person visits your page.

You might say that 1% is not much?

Well, 1% is actually good!

Many ads get much less than that, especially if your ad is competing with 10 more listings + all the organic search results.

On Goggle, you have two types of results being returned when you make a search.

You have the organic listings which are simply the natural search results.

And then, you have the paid ads which show above and on the right of the organic results.

But let's get back to your 1% CTR – Click through rate.

Believe me! This number is VERY realistic.

Don't make the mistake of pipe dreaming and believing that your ads will do much better!

That was the reality check minute ;))

Ok, so 1000 impressions with a 1% CTR gives you 10 visits to your site in one day!

100 key phrases!

10 visits!

This is it!

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If google represents maybe 50% of the search volume of all the online searches for these key phrases, this means that you can get a few more hits if you advertise on Yahoo and other search engines as well.

Suppose that you get 20 visits/day to your website as a result of your advertising in all search engines.

From these 20 visits suppose that 5% of visitors to your site actually come to your restaurant.

That's 1 visitor or one couple or one family in one day.

Now, you've got things in perspective!

Are these numbers realistic?

Absolutely!

Now, let's run another quick reality check!

Restaurants are a highly competitive market!

You have lots of choice, right?

Clicks on Goggle might sell for \$0.50/click

That's the PPC or Price Per Click

If you got 10 clicks, you already paid \$5 in ads for this single customer, couple or family who came through your door.

You get that quickly, right?

It's all about numbers and stats!

If you want to have a good return on investment or ROI, you need to make sure that your advertising budget is not burned in a channel that gives you back very little.

Even if you get one family showing up as a result of their online visit to your site, it is only just one family.

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This could work if they come back frequently + tell their friends.

What if you are global?

Well, your story is radically different because the number of searches returning your ads is much bigger!

Suppose that you promote an information product on nutrition.

The number of ad impressions for your key phrases will probably be 1000 times higher than if you are targeting a local audience like in the example of the Chinese restaurant in Manhattan.

What does that mean practically?

It means that:

- **If your business is local, your online marketing budget should ideally be 10% or less than your total marketing efforts.**
- **If your business is global, your online marketing budget can be 90% or even more than your total marketing efforts.**

Call this a guideline, ok?

It is not an absolute written-on-stone rule!

But, it's definitely a guideline I would keep in mind, especially if you have little to no experience with online advertising.

If you are local, invest 90% of your efforts in offline forms of advertising.

Yes! You could as well target local sites and establish partnerships with local directories and other portals.

Yes! That's a possibility as well!

Website strategies

If you don't have a website, here is what I would recommend:

Invest \$500 in a simple site.

If you want to design it yourself it is possible as well.

If you have no website design experience, designing it yourself will probably take you a month of solid work if you are good at it.

Most of it will be invested in learning to use the design software.

Your website is only a fraction of your online marketing strategy.

Most people who start online get a website up and running and simply wait.

Nothing happens!

Why?

Because website traffic is missing!

A website without traffic is like a shop without customers!

It is super frustrating!

You can spend a month discussing the details of your pages, colours and navigation and forget about the most important part of your site!

Traffic!

This is where most online businesses get stacked!

If your website is simply an online flyer you want to refer prospects to, that's ok of course!

You don't have to engage into a whole online marketing campaign if it is not adapted to your business.

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If you hire a website designer, remember that the design itself will be only a small fraction of your online marketing budget.

If you have a small business, count:

- **10% - 20% for website design**
- **80% - 90% for traffic building**

This is where many people get burned with online campaigns.

They highly underestimate what it takes to get visitors to their site.

Don't rely on hope and wishful thinking!

You need much more than that!

Next point!

Can you host your site with a free system on a big portal?

Not recommended at all!

Why?

Because usually these free hosting systems will post ads on your pages which heavily clutters your content.

On top of that, you can't use your own domain name which destroys your credibility and brand.

Get your own domain name and set up your site on a \$500 budget.

This is definitely the option I would recommend!

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Traffic building!

No visitors! = No sales!

Right?

If you sell a product on your site and you manage to build targeted traffic – For instance by using Google ads – you can expect a conversion rate between 0.5% - 2%

This is if your landing pages are highly optimized for visitors and your traffic is targeted.

This means that you will get one sale for every 50 to 200 visitor.

If you get that type of conversion rate, you can already consider yourself relatively successful online.

If you have non targeted traffic, this conversion rate can drop to 0.1% - 0.5%

This means that you get one sale for every 200 to 1000 visitors.

Quick math!

If you get 100 visitors to your site/month, this could mean 0 to 2 sales.

Keep these figures in mind!

They are essential!

This is really how it works online.

If you want to get 100 sales/month, you will need 5'000 to 100'000 visitors/month!

Got that?

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Suppose that your sales page is super effective, your visitors are targeted and that you are building traffic with google ads, here is what you will pay for that traffic:

Suppose that you pay \$0.20/click.

5000 visitors will cost you \$1000.

If you sell a product which is \$50, you make a \$5'000/month.

\$1000 goes into advertising.

You end up with \$4'000.

That's the ideal picture!

Your ROI is 500%

This means that for every \$ you invested, you get 5 dollars back!

Now, imagine that you are in a competitive field and you need to pay \$1 for your clicks.

5000 visitors at \$1/click = \$5'000

Your ROI just melted down to 100%

This means that you just covered your costs but made zero profit!

These are the type of dynamics you need to keep in mind with online advertising.

If you are very smart you can make a fortune!

If you miss the point, you can instantly burn your budget + your motivation!

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Targeted and non targeted traffic

Targeted traffic is 5 to 100 times more precious than non targeted traffic.

Online, you have cheap ways to buy traffic.

You can buy 5000 visitors for \$50

Yes! Some sites sell traffic!

Now, this traffic will be of such poor quality that you will get 0 conversions and simply lose your money!

It would be too long to go into it but some sites pay people to surf!

They say: if you visit 10000 sites, we'll give you \$10.

This is the type of traffic you get on your site when you buy that type of very cheap traffic.

What is even worse is that when you check your log files for your site, you'll notice that 90% of that traffic came from China for instance.

100% of that traffic had absolutely no buying intention!

Yes, it is traffic!

Does it have any value to you?

Absolutely not!

So, what is the best traffic you can get?

The top sources are:

- **Visitors who have been referred to your site by a reliable source they do trust.**
- **Visitors who made a search and found your site in the search results.**

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If people land on your site when they are not searching for anything special, this is what we call non targeted traffic.

It will result in the lowest conversion rate.

Visitors who are referred to your site by a reliable source are top quality traffic because they are already pre sold by another source.

It means that they will buy much more easily.

If you are global, another key tempting idea is to advertise your services or products in India or China for instance.

I tried!

The results where very poor!

There is a whole lot of hype about the buying power in these countries.

Unfortunately, the reality is very disconcerting!

If you advertise your global products in these areas, your conversion rate will probably be 100 times lower than if you advertise in the US or UK for instance.

The math is easy, right?

Don't spend your advertising budget on that type of very poor traffic!

You will get broke in no time!

Sorry!

SEO strategies

This is the big chunk of your marketing strategy!

SEO = Search Engine Optimisation

It is the art of getting your website to appear as high as possible in the search results.

Let's get back to the example of your Chinese restaurant in Manhattan.

If you type "Chinese restaurant Manhattan" in your search box and your site appears in position 3 in the search engines, that's a very good result!

Your site will get lots of traffic, maybe 5 to 20 visitors/day (Estimation, ok? ;)).

That's "free" traffic!

If you are position 53, the traffic you will get will be much less.

Probably 100 to 1000 times less than if you are in the top 3 positions.

It means that ranking high in search engines is one of the keys to online success!

Now, this is such a complex field for the newbie that many businesses never have the time to dive into it!

You need to get the on page optimization elements right!

You need to know exactly for what key phrases to optimize your pages + exactly how to do it.

In theory, you need as well to build links with other sites which is going to boost your credibility in the eyes of the search engines.

All that is very complex!

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Internet Marketing

It is a profession in itself!

Thousands of SEO experts promote their services online and want to help you do just that: rank high in search engines!

One of the key challenges with SEO is the fact that changes you make to your site can take months to appear in search engines.

This means that you might work on SEO strategies for months and see no results.

Then, suddenly, your site starts ranking higher with no apparent reason.

Nowadays, there are ways to get search engines to visit your site and index your pages faster.

You can for instance create a site map which is a list of the pages on your site to make sure that the search engines crawl (visit or spider) your site.

Spiders crawling your site

Your site is visited by spiders or bots.

Basically, it is an automatic visit to your site from a specific software (robot or spider).

This bot will gather all the specific information from your site and index it in a mega directory!

The Google search index for instance already contains billions of pages.

This number keeps growing as new websites are created.

After a few hours, days or months depending on the size of your site and its popularity, this spider comes back and checks for changes and new pages since their last visit.

All this happens automatically while you sleep ;)

That's one of the great blessings of being online!

You have so many automated processes that help you promote your site!

This whole process is called site indexing.

List building myths

Let's shift to another topic!

List building!

You build a list when you gather visitor's email addresses so that you can email them later with info or promotions.

To do that, you'll usually use an auto responder or list building service.

You can sign up for a year subscription (\$100 - \$200 range).

This system allows you to post a simple form on your web pages where visitors can leave their name and email.

This system will then collect these email addresses and allow you to load a series of follow up messages to send to these prospects.

When visitors come to your site, you have various possible choices.

You can:

- **Let them enjoy your free content**
- **Get them to leave you their email**
- **Try to sell them a product directly**
- **Etc.**

If you want to collect email addresses, here is the type of conversion you can expect:

1% - 20% depending on how much they value what you will send them if they sign up.

This means that for that if you get 100 visitors on your site, you might collect 1 to 20 email addresses.

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Some people claim to have achieved conversion rates of up to 80% sign ups with extremely targeted audiences

Now, the challenge with mailing lists is to get your prospects to open your emails.

How many newsletters and mailing lists are you subscribed to?

How many emails do you actually open?

How many of these emails do you actually read?

In my experience, the first couple of emails you send to new prospects will have an opening rate of 50% – 80%.

This is good!

These are fresh prospects who are eager to find out about your products.

Now, this opening rate can decline quickly.

If your mailing list knows you well already and got used to receiving emails from you, the opening rate can be 5% - 20%

This means that for 100 emails you send, only 5 to 20 prospects will actually open your message.

The rest will be deleted without opening.

How do you know that?

The auto responder system you use tells you about these opening rates.

They have a system in place which allows you to measure who opens the email or not.

Another essential hindrance to your mailing list success is the fact that your emails will often get delivered to spam or junk mail folders in free email providers.

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This happens with hotmail, yahoo and aol for instance.

Another challenge is bouncing of emails.

Basically, your email does not make it to your prospects inbox because of spam filters or other technical glitches.

In a year period, you can easily lose 30% of your prospects because of this type of technical issues.

If you have a mailing list of 5000 members, this list can easily shrink over time and you end up with 200 emails opened when you send a new mailing.

I agree! That's not much!

This is part of the list building challenges you won't hear about because it destroys the credibility of all these list building systems.

Now, if you know that before you start building a list, you can take steps to prevent some of these issues.

It's a tough and challenging issue though!

If you want to be successful with marketing to a list, you have to aim at gathering 30'000 email addresses minimum.

This is the turning point where your list starts having real value.

If you have a list of a 1000 emails for instance, you can easily email people and get 100 people to read your mails but you won't make too much money with such a small list.

That's unless you have a very targeted niche with an audience that really needs whatever you have to offer.

What opening rates can you expect for your emails?

How many promotional emails do you get in your inbox every day?

What fraction of these emails do you actually open?

I don't know about you but in my case, it is probably around 1%.

I only open 1% of the promotional emails I receive.

Why?

Here are a few reasons:

- Shallow content
- Nothing new
- No time

My guess is that you function more or less the way I do.

And guess what? Most of the people you will promote anything to function in a similar way:

They are flooded daily by dozens of offers they don't even have the time to check.

Want to get an idea of the stats for one of my campaigns?

I had a simple sign up page.

Subscribers would receive an instant email via one of my autoresponders.

I had 11 follow up emails.

The % represents the opening rate (that's the percentage of people that actually opened the email they received).

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Here we go!

- Message 1: 81%
- Message 2: 61%
- Message 3: 59%
- Message 4: 49%
- Message 5: 54%
- Message 6: 60%
- Message 7: 46%
- Message 8: 51%
- Message 9: 36%
- Message 10: 31%
- Message 11: 23%

The trend is clear, right?

When they first opt in, the interest is high. First message scores 81% opening rate.

By the end of the campaign, the opening rate has dropped to 23%.

In my experience, open rates for already established mailing lists are around 10-20%.

This means that if people already know you for a while and what you send is a simple newsletter, that's the type of open rate you can expect.

Of course, any of these performances can be increased.

You can have better subject lines, more solid content, incentives to take action and much more.

Yes! I agree! The numbers could go up.

I simply want to warn you that for better results you will need a VERY solid strategy for your campaign.

Landing pages

Once you get targeted traffic to your site, the next step is for your prospects to take action!

Suppose that you want to sell a product, not just offer free content, your visitors arrive on one of your site's pages, right?

That's your landing page!

If you are selling a product, this landing page is a sales page!

On that page you have an offer!

This is another one of the key aspects of your marketing campaign that you must get right!

Your prospects won't do all the work for you!

You need to be good at selling whatever you want to sell.

Now, again, the landing page strategies are a whole new topic I won't fully cover here.

It is vast! Very vast!

I can give you a set of quick hints though!

You need to decide what action you want your visitors to take!

Do you want them to:

- **Leave you their email address?**
- **Buy a product from you?**
- **Simply enjoy your free information?**
- **Take a quiz?**
- **Etc!**

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You need to be very clear about what you want them to do!

What should be your priority?

It highly depends on what you sell and the price of what you sell.

If you promote a \$20 product, you can easily focus on selling your product straight away.

If you promote a service, you'll need to build relationship and get their email address.

You definitely need to experiment with that one and find out what works best for your unique business.

Word of mouth? – Will they tell their friends?

This is another big myth when you go online.

You have a product, post it online and hope that everyone will start talking about it!

People are busy and everyone is competing for attention online.

The only way, people will talk about what you offer is if what you offer is exceptional or unusual!

Yes!

You will probably get some referrals!

Now, how much of the traffic your get to your site will be because someone got a link from a friend?

Ask yourself...

In the last week, how many websites or web pages did you visit?

How many pages did you visit because someone emailed you a link?

See how it works?

On average, you can expect maybe 1% of your visitors to find you by referral!

That's only a very vague estimation but the scale gives you an idea of how referral works.

Affiliate program?

These referral numbers are of course radically different if you set up an affiliate program.

You offer partners a fraction of your sales for every prospect they refer who buys one of your products.

This is done a lot with information products.

Many marketers make a living selling other people's products!

They easily get 20% - 50% affiliate fee depending on the product.

Now, if you sell a \$20 product and the affiliate fee is \$10, that's not much for an affiliate.

If you sell a \$1000 software and your affiliate gets \$500, it starts getting quite interesting for them, right?

Affiliate programs can work really well when you promote digital products for instance.

The main challenge though is that building a list of dedicated affiliates can be very challenging!

If you check the main affiliate portals where people gather to check each others offers, you will see thousands of products listed!

Building a list of affiliates is another key challenge.

Honestly, unless your presence is already strong online, it is not the first avenue I would recommend.

If you are thinking about it, it's an option I would keep for later, once you have been online for a couple of years and want to strengthen your promotional options.

Great product!

Many people start online with the idea of making a few quick bucks!

That's not the way it works at all!

People are smart!

The best way to be successful is to offer incredible value!

That's the best way to boost your success!

You need to develop a product which is simply super high quality and value!

Those who are very successful online combine very effective strategies with a product that people need!

That's the key!

Realistic learning curve

Any of the topics I cover in this book take a few months to master!

If you have one product with one simple site, you could be up and running within 30 days.

After that, you can focus on fine tuning your sales page and your traffic for instance.

Now, if you really want to master for instance the SEO field or develop a few google ad campaigns, it takes time!

Keep that in mind when designing your marketing strategy!

If you only have a small product which has limited potential, learning most of the skills yourself will definitely boost your return on investment.

A SEO firm for instance can easily charge you \$1000 to optimize a few of your pages for a limited set of keywords.

Questions!

- **Should you hire professionals to do the work for you?**
- **What should you launch first?**
- **Should you advertise or focus on SEO strategies?**
- **Online or offline? What is more profitable for you?**
- **Etc!**

These questions and answers are essential!

You don't want to go to battle without a solid plan!

Remember that online, competition is fierce!

Marketing success

The following keys are designed mainly for small business ventures.

Responding to these questions and applying these simple points is a major step in developing a successful promotion strategy.

Launching a business without a marketing strategy is like building a house without a roof!

Yes!

You can rely on luck or word of mouth if that suits your business.

If you offer a service, your product is very high quality and there is a demand, yes, word of mouth could be enough! Maybe you will never have to invest in any form of marketing strategy.

Now, in my experience, this is very rarely the case.

I know so many creative people with great ideas who totally struggle because they did not integrate a marketing strategy in their vision.

We live in a time where it is not enough to have an idea and create a product.

You usually need to start at the other end!

You observe a target audience and identify a need.

Then you create a product which responds to that need.

If you have already product in mind, identify your target audience and find out what they want.

Packaging your product right is one of your keys to success!

There is a big difference between a marketing step - for instance an ad in the local paper – and a marketing strategy.

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A marketing strategy is a vision and that vision contains many steps.

It is a coherent battle plan!

Yes!

To succeed with your business you need a battle plan!

One simple marketing step is not enough!

You need the full picture!

A couple of marketing steps might be missing in the beginning.

That's okay as long as you know it and want to find answers as soon as possible.

You will need a budget as well to experiment with marketing steps in the beginning.

Investing in online or offline ads for instance might not pay off in the beginning.

Yes! You might make some mistakes but that's ok as long as you learn from it and make appropriate shifts.

It can be the words in your ads, the place where you post, the packaging of your product or the ad pricing which is too high.

If a certain step does not give you the results you expect, sit down for 5 min and identify exactly what can be shifted.

Analyze your competition

Ask yourself:

- **Who are your competitors?**
- **Where are they?**
- **What are the successful ones doing?**
- **How are they marketing?**
- **What do they offer?**
- **How successful are they?**
- **Would you buy from them?**
- **Why yes?**
- **Why not?**

Business and marketing are highly competitive fields.

You need to know what others are up to if you want to succeed!

What is your market?

Analyze your target audience:

- **Who are your potential clients?**
- **Where are they?**
- **What is the size of your target audience?**
- **Where are they located?**
- **What is their age?**
- **What is their gender?**

You need to know as much as you can about your target audience.

You need to know how they function + their exact needs!

Know your product!

Another essential step! – You need to know your product in depth!

- **What are its main components?**
- **What are its major qualities?**
- **Why do your customers need it?**
- **What will they get from it?**

Your customers will ask you questions!

You need to have all the answers for them!

Market yourself!

Clients deal with you in so many ways.

It's not just your product they buy, it is you!

- **Are you friendly, approachable and open?**
- **Do you have any unsolved issues?**
- **How do you present yourself?**
- **Would you like to know yourself if you could?**

Those who buy from you contribute to your success!

If they like you, they are happy to help you win!

Here are some quick tips to market yourself better!

- **Smile!**
- **Practice self confidence**
- **Make eye contact**
- **Follow up with a call or email**
- **Introduce yourself**
- **Have some role models - These are public figures, actors, etc. - Are they doing very well with that skill? - Learn from them - Analyze how they do it.**
- **Be outgoing**
- **Be interested - Offer your undivided attention.**
- **Get their contact details**
- **Give people what they want - Ask direct questions to find out what that is.**

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Package it right!

Package includes pricing + how you offer your product.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- **Is the price right?**
- **What are the different packaging options?**
- **How should I package what I offer?**
- **Do I need to diversify my offer?**

Suppose you own a gym.

You can offer various types of memberships with various pricings.

You can offer free intro classes or remove the set up fee.

To make the right choices, you need to experiment a bit and as well check your competition.

Did any of them get it right?

Why?

Another key question is diversification.

Do you need just one offer with one package?

Or do you need to offer various products or different packages?

Diversification is one of the major ways of expanding your business.

- **Can you develop further products on the long term?**
- **Are you willing to do that?**
- **What would a new product mean for your business?**

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What are your marketing tools?

- **Website + Internet?**
- **Paper ads?**
- **Word of mouth?**
- **Affiliates or referrals?**
- **Are you being successful?**
- **Are there any other tools you should be using?**
- **Are you in touch with the right people?**
- **Do you need extra help or advice?**

Choosing the right marketing tools is again an essential key to your success.

What works best is to experiment with various marketing avenues for three months.

You can for instance post ads online and in magazines.

You can advertise and open house day.

You can reward referrals and establish partnerships.

You will quickly notice that one of these marketing directions gives you solid results while other directions strongly under perform.

Identify the one to three marketing directions that work best for you and stick with them.

Not all types of marketing will work for what you offer.

Many business owners miss the point in identifying the right marketing tools.

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They keep investing time, energy and money in marketing avenues that don't work for them.

You have to keep your ROI – Return On Investment in check.

For instance any form of advertising has the potential to ruin your business if it's done poorly.

The best is to take small steps and carefully measure results.

Take one step!

Observe what happens for a week or a month.

Perfect that strategy or shift to another one.

It can easily take a few months to master a marketing tool and get results.

If it does not work the first time, it can either be because that marketing tool is not right for your business or because the way you use it is not yet efficient.

This is probably one of the top business challenges you can face.

Handling it right can mean success!

Are the offer and the demand meeting?

You might have a great idea but is there a demand for it?

- **Do people need your product?**
- **If not, why?**
- **If yes, why?**
- **Is your product adapted to the demand?**

Last time I checked the business success rate was at around 5% in The US.

This means that 95% of businesses fail within 1 year!

If you want to succeed you need to be super smart.

The first key is to have a product people need and are willing to pay for!

As I said earlier, check as well the packaging of your product of course!

A price which is too low or too high can be a killer!

What is the product your audience wants to buy?

What are your marketing targets?

You need to have at least an idea of the results you expect and as well what it takes to succeed!

- **What are your short and long term marketing goals?**
- **If those goals were reached, would it give your business a total success?**
- **What is the size of the audience you want to reach?**
- **Where are they?**
- **How are you going to reach them?**
- **What type of conversion rate can you expect?**
- **What else do you need to take care of to succeed?**

Be real!

For instance, when you market online, it is very common to get a conversion rate between 0.5% - 2%.

This means that you get one sale for 50 to 200 visitors!

This is when your traffic is already very targeted and your visitors did for instance a search on the keywords you are advertising.

If your visitors are poorly targeted, this conversion rate can drop even much lower!

Many people underestimate these numbers.

They can easily be too optimistic.

Get solid reality checks on your marketing strategy before you start.

Pipe dreams and wishful thinking can easily burn your efforts!

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The business world is real!

How much are you willing to invest in your marketing?

- **Money?**
- **Time?**
- **Energy?**

You need to have an idea of what you can invest!

For instance, if you have a small local business and you print flyers, where and how are you going to distribute them?

Who will do it?

Is this part of your budget?

Many entrepreneurs have a marketing idea but underestimate what it takes to follow through.

Suppose that you market online and want to work on your SEO – Search engine optimization - Strategies.

You might start working on it without realizing that it takes 3 to 6 months to be really good at it.

Suppose you hire a SEO firm to do that for you.

You need to know exactly what budget you have available for that marketing step.

Is this enough?

Will it cover all the costs?

Marketing success means following up on your marketing strategy!

If you want to succeed, it is essential that you don't stop half way!

Should you develop any new skills?

- **Are you ready right now or should you gain new experience, knowledge or skills?**
- **How or where can you get those extra skills?**
- **What does it take to develop these skills?**

Why ask yourself these questions?

Because when you create a business you can decide to delegate part of your marketing to your team.

- **What part?**
- **Do you need to hire new people just for that?**
- **Is it worth it?**

These are key strategic question you need answers for!

Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed this book!

Feed back? Questions? Success stories?

Email me at francisco@vitalcoaching.com

For coaching:

<http://vitalcoaching.com/coaching.htm>

For more:

<http://vitalcoaching.com>

To your power!

Francisco Bujan