PRESENTERNET

The Online Interactive Presentation Company

Interactive Insight Report Series

SEVEN STEPS TO SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING SUCCESS

- Using low-cost technology to create high-impact results.

SEVEN STEPS TO SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION:

The greatest challenge for any small business is finding new customers. Whether a small business is a one-person, home-based operation or a fully developed company with a professional sales force; it constantly needs new prospects, while it retains and expands its existing customer base.

Until recently, all small businesses faced tough choices. They could spend significant amounts of money on marketing and advertising services; or they could knock on doors until they found enough customers. Some promising technologies have more recently become available to help small businesses in this vital area. However, in most cases they require investments in technology, as well as specialized skills beyond the reach of most businesses.

During the past year or two however, the picture has brightened dramatically. Small businesses are discovering technologies that require virtually NO SPECIAL SKILLS; can be set up with virtually NO UP-FRONT INVESTMENT; and require only modest pay-as-you-go expenses.

This publication offers a step by step approach to putting together the pieces of an ongoing marketing program that produces low cost, high productivity sales for virtually any entrepreneur. It begins with marketing strategies and planning, then gets down to practical "how to" methods that have driven success for thousands of small companies and startups.

STEP ONE: CREATING A MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing strategies do not have to be complex. In most cases, the simplest ones are the best. A marketing strategy is a basic plan on how a business will attract potential customers to engage with it. It determines how the company will reach the marketplace, and what communication vehicles will get results.

Small businesses especially start-ups, have very small marketing budgets. This means that every vehicle chosen as part of their marketing strategies must be highly cost-effective. Every dollar spent must return $10 or more in actual sales. Using this rule-of-thumb, companies soon discover that most traditional marketing methods are completely out-of-bounds. For example, print advertising, broadcast media, mass mailing, and broad-based telemarketing are not feasible choices.

Online marketing in its many forms has emerged to offer the most cost-effective media available to small businesses. But even in this area, businesses must be wary of methods that require high investment, with modest return. For example, mass email campaigns, especially broad based SPAM-style approaches, offer limited return unless targeted to highly qualified lists. Display ads placed on multiple sites may also require high-ticket investments, yet attract little attention from any definable, highly qualified audience.

Web Site Marketing

Web sites can be important tools for online marketing. In fact many companies that sponsor business like real estate sales, network marketing and franchises, automatically provide Web sites to all of their independent business members. These sites however, are sharply limited in their effectiveness for many reasons. In most cases, users do not have the skills or access to create timely, personalized messaging on these sites. Even if users have full skills and control of content, Web sites themselves do not deliver detailed, focused messaging. Numerous studies have shown that Web site visitors spend only a few seconds on any page as they click around a site. Unless they are motivated to dig deep for information on specific topics, they typically leave new sites in less than a minute, and retain virtually none of the marketing messages offered.

Three Basic Questions

Most small businesses choosing online methods must therefore answer three basic questions.

1. How can we attract people who actually want to hear our message?

2. How can we get those people to focus on a logical, set of facts that will interest them, and turn them into sales prospects?

3. Once we have those prospects, how can we convert them into closed sales?

Web Conferencing and Online Presentations

Web conferencing with companies like PresenterNet has become an important tool for a great many small businesses. However, Web conferencing alone is only part of a successful strategy.

Web conferencing—especially Webinars and Webcasts—have become extremely attractive to small businesses, since they permit any presenter to reach audience members anywhere in the world without traveling to sell to them face to face. Speaking over a conference call connection while displaying slides onto audience screens, businesses transcend geography and reach interested people anywhere, anytime.

Using Web conferencing means that salespeople can reach customers who would not otherwise hear their message. Web presentations may also provide a way of pre-qualifying prospects, concentrating direct selling effort on people who are truly interested, while sorting out people who are only casual information collectors.

Though they offer significant advantages, Webinars alone do not provide a complete marketing strategy. For Webinars to work, businesses must determine how they will attract interested attendees. They must also determine how to engage people who are unable to attend or uninterested in participating. After any presentation, they need a method of qualifying the results, and following up with the best opportunities. To follow-up, they need a way to reach people with a selling presentation, while still eliminating the time and expense of business travel.

In delivering Web conferencing services to small businesses, PresenterNet has therefore integrated tools that meet these objectives without additional expenditures.

STEP TWO: DEVELOP COMPELLING MARKETING MESSAGES

To capture the attention of potential prospects, every business needs clear, compelling marketing messages. To develop them, entrepreneurs need to figure out exactly who are their prospects, and what needs or solutions their products or services must fulfill. From that definition they should write a simple description of necessary messages, by answering these questions:

1. What problem can we solve, or what need can we fill for our prospects?

2. Why should a prospect be interested in our company, rather than a competitor?

3. If the prospect buys from our company what benefits will he and his company gain?

4. What will spur a prospect to action, and what action would we like the prospect to take?

All of these questions all deal with the needs of potential customers, NOT with our product or service. Writing a description of what we actually offer now becomes easier. It's important, to keep it simple and understandable. Eliminate details that are not necessary for a prospect's initial understanding. And always remember that customers buy for their own reasons, NOT ours!

STEP THREE: CREATING THE MEDIA

A long-range, online marketing strategy may utilize several different kinds of media. Online brochures, newsletters, ongoing blogs, and standard email messaging are only a few examples. However, the very first marketing piece needed by virtually any company marketing online, is a basic PowerPoint presentation.

In creating a company's PowerPoint presentation, managers and sales people must be clear about their objectives. The role of the presentation is seldom to close business. That's the job of a salesperson or business owner. The presentation can however, provide clear information that is interesting and

informative and focused on the marketing messages. It therefore will attract people, further their interest, and launch an effective sales discussion.

Following are some of the best practices for creating effective presentations.

1. Keep the presentation as short as possible. Most marketing messages can be delivered in 20 slides or less.

2. Whenever appropriate, include a photo pf the presenter to help online audiences to connect with the presenter's voice.

3. Use a consistent format, with the look and feel of the company's brand.

4. Whenever possible, avoid using text bullets. Never use full paragraphs of text. Few viewers can read and absorb printed text while also listening to the presenter's voice.

5. Use pictures and graphics liberally to tell the story.

6. Structure the presentation with four logical steps.

   - The <u>Attention Step</u> creates immediate interest. This step is also a promise of what the audience members will see and hear for the remainder of the presentation.

   - The <u>Information Step</u> describes the product or service offered, often by articulating a common problem, and explaining how the product provides a solution.

   - The <u>Benefits Step</u> lists the advantages of the product or service, and may sometimes emphasize advantages over competitive offerings.

   - The <u>Call-to-Action Step</u> states the action requested from the audience member, such as: ordering the product; opening an account; calling for more information; or contacting a salesperson. It is usually wrapped up into a brief summary to end the presentation.

7. Use features like animations, and bright colors sparingly, and only as tools to emphasize important points.

8. Pay meticulous attention to mechanics, particularly spelling, grammar and punctuation. Remember that many viewers judge the company's professionalism and integrity by its attention to details like these.

STEP FOUR: CONNECTING WITH THE MARKETPLACE

Online presentations in Webinar format are an inexpensive but effective method of telling the story of any company, product or service. Nevertheless, attracting audiences to attend these events requires a great deal of preparation, and often calls for multiple approaches.

For PresenterNet users, the Showroom can be an effective tool for attracting audiences. For others, a traditional Website can be a part of the initial strategy.

First step for most companies is to build a list with email addresses of people who have expressed an interest in receiving ongoing information. One

obvious source for building this list is existing customers and Web site visitors who have submitted their names to receive additional information.

Search engine advertising can also be very effective in gathering names of people interested in a company or product offering. Small ads on search engines like Google, Yahoo, MSN or Ask can attract people conducting searches. This approach can offer an extremely cost effective medium, since the services charge only for people who actually click the ad to reach your destination. The cost-per-click can be very modest (often less than $1), and users can set daily limits to control costs. If companies want to restrict their flow of prospects to a specific region, the search ads can be limited exclusively to a tightly targeted geography.

Whether attracting people via email or low-cost search engine advertising, the online destination reached by prospects must continue to catch their interest, and move them to the next step. If the Web site can focus them on an especially sophisticated and compelling information page, then inviting visitors to attend a Webinar can be successful. In many cases however, Web site visitors become easily distracted and may never become focused on the a specific event like a Webinar.

Showroom users can provide a short PowerPoint presentation that focuses visitors sharply on the messages to be delivered. Similar to Web sites in some respects, each Showroom has a unique Web address. Ads or promotional email can link prospects to them directly. Users can capture additional prospects by setting up their Showrooms for Web searches, defining keywords that searchers are likely to enter, and creating descriptions that search engines will index. Users can also choose to embed their Showroom in a public Web site like MySpace.com, or in business oriented sites like Ecademy.com, Fastpitch.com or Ryze.com.

Whether the destination "landing page" is on a traditional Web site or on a Showroom, the objective is to quickly create interest; offer just enough information to explain a Webinar's content; and a call to action to sign up for the actual event.

For Showroom users, this can be a 3-4 slide presentation. The final slide typically includes a sign-up area, in which the prospect enters name and email address onscreen. With that information captured in the PresenterNet database, the host of the upcoming Webinar has everything needed to mount a follow-up email campaign with reminders, until the day before the event.

STEP FIVE: CREATING SALES LEADS

The most important objective of an effective Webinar is to create leads, NOT to sell products. A true sales lead is a direct contact or a request for a sales contact, by a prospective customer with resources to become a future customer. In most cases, a "product pitch" does not result in many leads. Audiences typically give it the same level of attention as a TV infomercial. To make the Webinar more compelling therefore, the host presenter needs to offer valuable information on how to solve a widespread problem or meet a common set of customer objectives. By selling a solution and its benefits the Webinar creates credibility for the presenter and the company, and leaves audience members interested in furthering the discussion directly.

No matter how effective the invitation process may have been in targeting the right audiences, a significant percentage of attendees usually turn out to be weak prospects, even if they request a sales contact. A secondary objective of the Webinar should therefore be to further qualify interested prospects and identify the hot opportunities to be pursued most aggressively.

One approach is to simply contact all attendees during the first few days after the program to identify and qualify ongoing interest. However, PresenterNet users can immediately qualify the best prospects during the Webinar, by using interactive slides that capture audience responses onscreen and store them in the system database.

Presenters who make their slides interactive can request audience responses at points in the presentation when participants are engaged in discussion. For example: A presenter discussing cost savings on mortgages might ask his audience members to respond on screen, to these questions like these:

- What's your current mortgage term?

- What is your interest rate?

- Is it fixed or adjustable?

- Would you like a free analysis showing how much you can save?

How Much Extra is Your Mortgage Costing Each Month?

Please enter your information below

Mortgage Amount

Term

Interest rate

Fixed Rate ☐   **Adjustable** ☐

Submit

Interactive slide sample

These are qualifying questions. Presenters can view them during the Webinar and comment to the audience. Or they may prefer to scrutinize the responses after the program, to create their follow-up plan.

STEP SIX: CONVERTING LEADS INTO SALES

Timeliness is the most critical success factor in converting Webinar leads into actual sales. Audience members forget 50% of what they heard within 24 hours of a presentation. Within 48 hours they have forgotten 75-80%. One important exception however, is that audience members will remember much

more and for somewhat longer periods if they have participated with hands-on, interactive responses.

All audience members who have logged into a Webinar should receive an email message thanking them and reminding them to call or email for more information. If appropriate, they should have access to key slides from the presentation for reference and follow-up. PresenterNet users can post key slides or the full presentation to be accessed online through their Showrooms. The thank you message can then contain a link to the Showroom inviting people to view the slides. In some cases, presenters may post an alternate version with voice narration on the slides, permitting participants to re-experience key parts of the presentation.

As soon as possible, presenters who have used interactive slides should access a report showing responses, and create a list of qualified prospects. In many cases it is possible to include specific details of interactive responses in follow-up email or telephone contact. This information often helps prospects to feel that they have evolved from a Webinar attendee to a business relationship with a knowledgeable expert.

STEP SEVEN: DEVELOPING AND CONTINUALLY GROWING THE BUSINESS

The most effective marketing programs for small businesses are those that become part of an ongoing process. Webinars benefit the overall quantity and quality of business in many ways. By continually promoting Webinars on a range of new subjects, the invitation process itself helps to keep the marketplace aware of the company's name and expertise. Numerous prospects will not necessarily respond to a company's first few Webinars, but eventually attend after they have received compelling announcements and email invitations over time. Using low-cost services like PresenterNet coupled with email programs and low-cost search engine advertising enables companies to minimize marketing expenses. With extra effort, companies can then present an increasing number of programs with only tiny increases in cost.

Following are best practices for launching a continuous marketing program based on Webinars:

1. Offer each program multiple times within a few days of each other. This increases the total number of attendees, even if some sessions reach smaller audiences.

2. Schedule the program on the same days and times each week. Provide times, links and login information at multiple locations including printing them on the reverse of business cards used for networking.

3. Position each Webinar as a scheuled media program similar to a radio or TV discussion. Position the host presenter as an expert, highlighting personal background, and displaying a photo to create a mental connection in audience minds.

4. Choose and promote subjects that contribute information and ideas that are interesting and important to a broad population of potential attendees. Reference the company's products or services only to build the story, while keeping focused on the program as educational information.

5. Create interactive slides wherever appropriate, asking questions to create qualifying responses. Provide at least one interactive slide for audience members to enter their names and contact information for requesting sales contact or additional information.

6. Follow-up every program within 24 hour or less with a thank you email.

7. Use interactive responses to qualifying questions to identify the best prospects and follow-up with them directly within 48 hours.

8. Setup an extra Showroom to market scheduled Webinars 24 X 7. Use the extra Showroom as a landing page for both natural searches and search engine advertising. Create a Showroom presentation with voice narration to deliver a short, powerful presentation of what audiences can learn from each upcoming Webinar.

9. Provide an interactive slide within the Showroom, enabling people to enter contact information to sign up to attend a program.

CONCLUSION

Small and medium business can now market aggressively to build their customer bases, thanks to Internet tools and technologies. Used appropriately, these tools can have a strong impact, enabling even one-person companies to develop prospects anywhere in the world.

Marketing programs built around online presentations continually provide extraordinary results, at the lowest possible cost. For programs to deliver high-impact however, they must provide content that is interesting to a broad population of potential customers.

Another critical success factor is using an effective mix of email and low-cost advertising, to contininually attract new audience members.

Long term effectiveness requires constant effort, treating marketing as an ongoing process. Like all key processes, it must be continually improved, with results regularly evaluated, to identify adjustments that maximize success.

For more information on PresenterNet, click on the link below:

http://www.presenternet.com