Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Recognize how the three factors of usability, credibility and persuasion can determine the success or failure of online marketing efforts.
2. Compare the distinct usability demands of task-oriented users versus experiential users.
3. Identify page view patterns, notably the surfer model and look-ahead model, are influenced by ease of navigation and usefulness of content.
4. Identify the key credibility guidelines for web sites.
5. Analyze how online credibility and persuasiveness can be influenced by web site design and tools such as simulations and tutorials.
6. Recognize the vital role of traffic building in online marketing.
7. Explain existing hurdles to attracting new online users.
8. Identify the five main sources of web site traffic.
9. Evaluate the importance of creating a web traffic plan and how to analyze its effectiveness.
10. Describe the fundamentals of the two main forms of search engine marketing: search optimization and pay-per-click advertising.
11. Explain the persistent power of traffic by association.

Unit Summary

Achieving marketing success online requires that company web sites are at once highly usable, highly credible and fully persuasive. Chapter Seven explores how firms can try to reach those sometimes conflicting objectives while facing some daunting challenges – chiefly, the brief time most visitors spend at web sites and the broad range of users' online experiences. The chapter breaks down different approaches in delivering usable sites and content for serving both task-oriented users and experiential users. It also identifies key design and content goals that can help persuade online users and reassure them of a firm's credibility, emphasizing ease of navigation and believability of information.

The explosive growth of online content since the late 1990s has intensified the battle for attention and traffic across the Web. It also has created a multi-billion dollar industry around search engine marketing and forced an emphasis on accountability that has reverberated throughout marketing. Chapter Eight explains the inherent value in distinct traffic patterns and looks at the various tools available to attract users to a site. Building on the discussion of branding strategies, customer lifetime value and closed-loop marketing in previous chapters, the author of Chapter Eight explains the importance of a decisive web traffic plan and careful analysis of its effectiveness. The chapter also offers a precise overview of the two basic forms of search engine marketing to generate traffic: optimization and pay-per-click advertising.
Gary Nagle of Plasma Realty, LLC, is an independent broker in Fort Mill, SC. Nagle has been an agent for almost five years, during which he has devoted a great deal of time and effort—including a reasonable amount of money—to succeeding online. By his own words, he tried hard to do everything right, yet he did not really start to succeed online until he listened to a simple truth that has made all the difference.

Do you require mandatory registration? You might want to rethink that.

“More than 80 percent of my business is relocation from other parts of the county,” Nagle said in a recent interview. “And of that, nearly 80 percent of my business comes from my website. Until about the first of the year, however, despite retaining CompassSearch and a skilled Web designer to make my site more SEO and user-friendly, my site produced ‘leads’ that weren't very good ones, and no sales. I required up front registration for everyone who wanted to look at MLS Listings via my IDX. While that strategy produced lots of registrations—many bogus—the quality of the registrations was poor. Oddly enough, within five days of taking Blackwater/Compass’s advice to turn off the required registration, I received my first totally voluntary registration—sometime in January 2008—and that $325,000 contract went to closing in late February. Since I went to voluntary registration, the registrations are fewer, but the quality is much better. Fewer registrations of better quality means I also don't waste time trying to follow up bogus registrations who grudgingly signed in because they had to in order to see homes.”

So here is a man who started with his own website in 2004, but who, as he puts it, “had a good website but didn't do very well because no one could find it.” So, like so many agents, Nagle thought it was the website. He changed platforms in 2006 and says he began to learn about how a website needed to work to become effective.

Unless the website is a subdomain or not in the proper format (too much FLASH, no text, optimized for the wrong targets, etc.) it isn't the host of the website that precludes a site from being found; rather, it is the lack of proper optimization. But that's another story.

Additional Resources:

http://www.gimmiethescoop.com/search-engine-optimization-vs-pay-per-click-advertising