

Tips For Marketing An eCommerce Business

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Hewlett-Packard CEO Meg Whitman once said “Communications is at the heart of e-commerce and community.” And marketing is all about good communications. So how do you communicate the value and desirability of your e-commerce brand to consumers? Here are a few good tips:

Site Optimization

Optimizing your e-commerce site for SEO and ease of use is a vital first step in getting your business off the ground. Make sure page load times are as fast as you can get them. Consumers on the internet are extremely impatient — a wait of a second or two can make all the difference between a purchase and an abandoned shopping cart. Jim Yu, the CEO of BrightEdge, says “Search marketing is the most effective source of acquiring new customers in 2014 — and that means site optimization is top priority.”

Are You Visible Where Your Customer Is Looking?

A lot of marketers adopt strategies like social media marketing and content marketing solely because others are doing it. Anand Srinivasan, the founder of LeadJoint, a lead generation company for SEO agencies explains, “For our clients, we always start by profiling the customer demographic. It is a good idea for jewelry store to invest in Pinterest marketing because a lot of their audience is active on the network. On the other hand, it makes sense for a travel booking website to advertise on in-flight magazines since a good number of the readers may be interested in the service.”



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Can Your E-Commerce Store Stand Up to Review?

88% of consumers now trust online reviews as much as they do word-of-mouth. There are sites dedicated to offering consumers an easy way to vent their frustrations, or say a good word, about an e-commerce site. Make sure you're keeping track of your reviews, and have a solid strategy in place to deal with negative reviews.

K.I.S.S.

Yes, you should always *keep it simple, stupid*. Along with site optimization, make sure your landing page is simple and comprehensible at a single glance. Whether your e-commerce site converts YouTube to MP3 or sells survival kits, keep the graphics clear and the content to the point. If you make your customers work for information they will migrate to the competition as sure as Bill Gates doesn't need to cut coupons.

Know and Use the 80/20 Rule for Social Media

As explained by Nick Whitmore, who runs a successful cosmetics e-commerce site, "On my own social media campaigns I work to a ratio of 80/20 – that's 80% topical industry news, and 20% plugging my site or products. If you just plug your site or products in every status update or tweet, you'll find it very hard to engage fans and stoke interaction, which is the ultimate goal on social media."

Narrow Your Focus

Erica Trevis is a dynamic wedding supplies e-retailer and frequent blogger. Her advice is straightforward: "E-commerce entrepreneurs should focus on where their traffic comes from, what social media outlets their target customers use, and other sites their customers tend to visit. A B2B e-commerce site may find LinkedIn to be a good source; a jewelry site may find Wanelo generates the most leads; furniture retailers may find that Houzz generates the most traffic; and a wedding business could find Pinterest as a top source."

It's a Mobile Device World

2014 was the year that more consumers used mobile phones and tablets to access e-stores than they did personal computers. A report from July of 2014 gives more specific details: US mobile e-commerce has passed 40 billion dollars in annual sales; and over 1/3 of visits to online stores emanate from mobile devices. Does your e-commerce site take mobile payments? Giants like Starbucks and McDonalds are doing it; why not you? As the Brits so aptly put it, it's like money for old rope.

Partnerships

Do you know a business owner who sells a complementary product or service? Why not try partnering with another business? You can place an ad on another business owner's blog or offer bundled services along with your partner. The possibilities are endless, and the more ways you can market your e-commerce business, the more opportunities you'll have to reach directly to your customers. Whatever you decide to do, partnering with a complimentary business is worth the investment.

During a recent interview about how the medical sector is marketing their e-commerce services, I chatted with the CEO of Second Opinions, Michael Yuz, MD. As the director of the Florida based medical company that provides online services for second opinion medical consultation, he stated that one of the biggest secrets of their success is that they always find opportunities even in competitors using partnerships and win-win situations. He further said "we are partnering with several reputed organizations globally to offer our services online in over 40 countries."