



SMALL BUSINESS ► MARKETING & SALES

What Is Internet Marketing?

Definition & Examples of Internet Marketing



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Internet marketing is an all-inclusive term for [marketing](#) products and services online. This includes a variety of methods and platforms for communicating with customers, such as website, email, social media, and online advertising.

Learn more about internet marketing, its role and importance in business, and how to use it to your benefit.

What Is Internet Marketing?

Internet marketing refers to the strategies used to market products and services online and through other digital means. These can include a variety of online platforms, tools, and content delivery systems, such as:

- Website content and design
- [Email marketing](#)
- Social media
- Blogging
- Video/podcasting

- Sponsornships and paid promotions

While internet marketing's apparent purpose is to sell goods and services, or advertising over the internet, it's not the only reason a business will do it.

A company may be marketing online to communicate a message about itself ([building its brand](#)) or to conduct research. Online marketing can also be an effective way to identify a target market, discover a marketing segment's wants and needs, build long-term relationships with customers, or establish authority and expertise within an industry.

- **Alternate names:** E-marketing, web marketing, digital marketing

How Internet Marketing Works

Internet marketing uses customers' online activity to connect them with a business by reaching them in a variety of places on the internet. The types of internet marketing a business uses will depend on the business model, types of products, target customers, budget, and more.

Website Content and Design

A business website allows customers to:

- Find your business online
- Learn your business's location or contact information
- Discover your products or services
- Sign up for your email list
- Request more information
- Make purchases

Websites often use [search engine optimization](#) (SEO) to ensure that their content will rank high on search engines and be easy for customers to find.

Email Marketing

You can use email for sending direct mail electronically, rather than through the post office. Collect customer emails either through purchases or

encourage purchases, and build relationships.

Email allows you to reach customers individually and personally. A 2019 retail study looking at more than one billion shopping sessions found that email marketing had a conversion rate of 2.5%, compared to only 1.1% for social media. (The highest conversation rate was direct referral, at 3.0%)^[1]

Social Media

Most consumers use some kind of social media, though the type you will focus on will depend on the behavior of your [target market](#).

More than 90% of 18 to 29-year-olds use social media of some kind, and while use decreases with age, it can still be used to reach consumers in all age brackets. More than 60% of those over age 65 use some kind of social media, and those numbers are likely to keep growing.^[2]

Older consumers are more likely to use a platform like Facebook, for example; millennials often use Instagram; and younger consumers are more interested in video platforms, such as TikTok or YouTube.

Find out where your ideal customers spend their time and focus your efforts there.

Blogging

Blogging allows you to increase your website's SEO by adding articles and posts around certain targeted keywords. This increases the likelihood that customers will find and visit your website as a result of online search.

You can also write for other people's blogs, magazines, or websites. This can increase your audience and put your business in front of more potential customers.

Video and Podcasting

Some creators who make videos or [podcasts](#) use that as their sole business. Other times, businesses use these platforms to establish expertise, connect with others in the industry, and create a funnel for new customers to find and develop an interest in their products or services.

Podcasts especially are growing in popularity. More than 100 million Americans listen to podcasts every month. [\[3\]](#)

Online Ads

Online ads can take a variety of forms.

Pay-per-click advertisements placed in search engines target particular search terms that potential customers might use. Targeted ads on social media designed to reach specific segments of the platform's users who might be interested in your business's products, services, and promotions.

You can also place sidebar ads on other people's websites or in their email marketing. Online ads are most effective when they are "congruent," or relevant to where they appear or what the target audience is searching for.

Personalization can also increase the response rate to online ads, especially at the early stages of consumers' decision-making process. However, personalization is most effective when ads appear in congruent locations. [\[4\]](#)

Sponsorships and Paid Promotions

You can take advantage of an audience that someone else has built with sponsorship or paid promotions. These marketing campaigns allow you to pay someone whose audience matches your target market to discuss, use, promote, or share your products and services with their followers.

This can both increase brand awareness and drive sales, especially if you pair the campaign with a targeted promo code or special offer.

Do I Need Internet Marketing for My Business?

Internet marketing is increasingly becoming mandatory for businesses of all types. Customers spend lots of time online every day, including checking email, browsing social media, using search engines, and visiting websites.

Consumers use a variety of online methods for finding, researching, and eventually making purchasing decisions. Over 40% of consumers report that

20% of consumers say they shop online every week.

However, traffic from social media pages and ads account for around 8% of consumers discovering retail websites.^[1] You can take advantage of all these channels by creating broad internet marketing platforms to help potential clients and customers find your business.

This is true even if your business is small and local. From 2015 to 2017, Google saw mobile "near me" searches with some variation of "to buy" or "can I buy" grow by 500%—a figure likely to continue rising.^[5]

No matter what type of business you have or where you are located, investing in internet marketing can help you build your business, connect with customers, and make sales.

Key Takeaways

- Internet marketing is an all-inclusive term for marketing products and services online.
- This can include website content, email marketing, social media, online ads, sponsorships, and more.
- The types of internet marketing a business uses will depend on the business model, types of products, target customers, and budget.
- No matter the type or size of your business, you can use multiple online platforms and ways of communicating to create a broad internet marketing plan that helps potential clients and customers find your business.

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