Turn Clicks Into Customers

Proven Marketing Techniques for Converting Online Traffic into Revenue

by Duane Forrester
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Focus

Take-Aways

- Internet marketing's prime goals are to direct traffic to your website and to convert visitors into customers.
- For this you need a solid, simply designed and easy to understand website.
- Make sure your visitors can find the content they want with no difficulty.
- A quality "search marketing" program involves two types of searching activities: "organic search" and "paid search."
- Make your ad banners as big as possible. Run them "above the fold" – high up on your web page.
- Marketing through social networks means engaging with online community members.
- Online video marketing can be effective. Provide sufficient contextual information with your videos so search engines can find them.
- Create your own email list rather than buying lists from vendors.
- To facilitate online purchasing, offer multiple payment options.
- Successful online marketing depends on testing, testing and more testing.

Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
8	9	8	7

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compressed knowledge

Relevance

What You Will Learn
In this Abstract, you will learn: 1) How to make your website more discoverable on the internet; 2) How to convert visitors into customers; and 3) How to make money through email campaigns, internet videos, blogs, online advertising placements, webinars and other internet commercial activities.

Recommendation
Google and other search engine companies carefully guard their algorithms – the precious crown jewels that compute at least 200 different search factors in mysterious ways. In any company, only a handful of select search engine professionals have access to their firms' "algorithmic string[s]." Such abstruse information incarnates the concealed technical elements of the internet. To succeed online, businesspeople need to understand the internet's arcana. Search engine optimization guru Duane Forrester proves a seasoned and savvy guide. His comprehensive, minutely detailed book will help you knowledgeably navigate online to realize the maximum return from your internet activities and expenditures. Forrester shows you how to convert web page visitors into paying customers, and how to make money with email campaigns, online videos, blogs, online advertising placements, webinars and more. *getAbstract* finds that his book is ideal for this purpose. Read it and reap!

Abstract

"Search engines are where information seekers, shoppers and businesses all go to find what they're looking for."

Get Them to Visit, Then Close The Deal
Some 30% to 70% of all the people who visit your website want to purchase what you have to sell. If you can convert only 50% of them into buyers on a regular basis, your online operations can become immensely profitable. Monetizing your website involves two primary activities: 1) maximizing the number of visitors and 2) converting as many as possible into customers. To turn lookers into buyers, you must build and maintain a good website. Visitors to compelling, educational and simple websites spend more time at those sites. This impresses search engines. Visitors who click "the 'back' button" do not impress them. Search engines translate rapid departures to mean that visitors did not find what they want. This negatively affects a website's rankings by search engines.

"Search Marketing"
Search marketing involves search engine optimization through both "organic search marketing," which delivers results over an extended period, and "paid search marketing," which provides quick results. A quality search-marketing program involves both organic and paid search marketing.

Organic search is built on "the five pillars of trust":

"Keyword research is the best place to start any online project."

1. **"Authority"** – Provide comprehensive content – details, pictures, product specifications, and so on – on your website to establish your credibility.

2. **"Explanations"** – The more detailed information a website provides, the better it will do. Offer up-to-date knowledge on the latest trends. Include a comprehensive FAQ list that answers your visitors' questions. Update this list regularly.

3. **"Simplicity"** – Although your website must be "comprehensive" and "detailed," keep it simple and easy to find and follow.

4. **"Follow-up"** – Visitors represent potential sales now and later. Encourage them to make future sales by providing a "wish lists" function to enable people to indicate what purchases they might make the next time they visit your website.

5. **"Security"** – Assure your visitors that you can protect their vital personal information: "names, addresses, contact numbers and credit card information."

Begin your online marketing with keyword research. Such research reveals what potential customers look for when they search online. Some worthwhile research tools include Wordtracker, Keyword Discovery, AdWords by Google and HitTail.

Paid searches involve paying for bids to move your ad up as prominently as possible in a cost-based system. Your bid corresponds to the value of a specific keyword. Google tries to ensure that advertisers get the most from their paid search campaigns. When you pay to have your ad prioritized based on keywords, Google positions it prominently among relevant search results. Plan your attack. With some keywords costing from $5 to $20 for each click, a scattershot approach costs dearly. Take heart, though; some keywords can be had for a dime.

Local online search helps users find businesses in their area, like a local gunsmith or a Chinese food store. This is different from localization, which involves websites that focus on a localized phenomenon, like the weather in San Diego. Websites providing such targeted information may not be sited in the place they report upon; information about any city's weather could appear on a national weather site. But local search concerns only businesses and entities in a specific place. You do not have to have a website for local search to find you. All you need to do is provide as much information to search engines as you can, including contact data and "photographs of your business, products or services in action."

Experts say paid searches should always lead to "dedicated landing pages." A landing page is the page that searchers reach when they click on an ad. The content of your landing page should perfectly match your ad's message. Having a dedicated landing page provides a clear pathway to convert website visitors to customers. Test your landing pages to make sure they deliver the best results. Use search engine tools and systems to track your results. For the best sell-through, make the visitor's "sales process" path as simple as possible.

Your domain name drives your online marketing. The best domain name addresses end in .com. Smart "content location" helps improve your search engine optimization (SEO) results. Visitors should not have to click through numerous levels to get to the content they want, so connect your content as closely as possible to the "root of the domain." Good web design calls for limiting "folder depths on your own website to fewer than four from the home page." The "structure" of your URL also is important. Make your URLs "keyword-rich." Place at least 250 words of content on your Web pages, and post "at least 100 pages of content." Each page should be unique. Develop quality pages and keep an "editorial calendar" to remind you when to create and add fresh material. Develop as many links to your website as possible. Request that other websites link to yours. The more the merrier, but go for quality instead of quantity.

"Most businesses will find it is much easier to double their conversion rates than to double their traffic." (Bryan Eisenberg, author of Call to Action)

"No visitors equals no sales."

"Sites built to be search friendly are usually also very people friendly."

"Don't make the mistake of assuming that the domain you want is available."

"Videos and Webinars"

People respond well to video, which can be a powerful tool for driving viewers to your website. Make sure you have good "content tags, related keywords and transcription information," that is, the contextual data that search engines rely on to classify videos. Using video, you can tell great stories quickly, so limit your films to three minutes or less. Short videos load faster, though longer video product reviews can be effective. Include a written transcript of your video. Use webinars as online educational tools to demonstrate your expertise. Webinars are great business builders because anyone who signs up is already interested in your products or services. Keep the sales message in your webinars subtle. If you come on too strong, webinar participants will feel that you've taken advantage of them. Get a third-party expert to host your webinar.

"Internet Advertising Banners"

The larger, better-known websites belong to networks, which you must contact to place ad banners on their sites. However, numerous smaller websites offer direct purchase of ad space. Bigger ad banners work best. "Above the fold" is the preferred location – the higher up on the web page, the more effective your banner. Include images of your products in your banner ads, as well as a direct "call to action." Always "show users what they want, when they want it." You can employ "day-parting" with your ad banners, that is, having the ads appear at specific times when more people visit the specific website. Test your ads for at least a week. Google's AdSense lets you "select the size, shape and number of ads that appear in a given ad unit," which helps increase your monetization.

"Social Networking and Blogging"

Plan in advance for marketing on social networks. Have firm targets. Do not employ "overt, direct sales tactics." Social media is all about engagement. Become active in social networks by participating in conversations that take place in online forums and on "discussion boards." Be helpful with your comments, and online users will embrace you. Customize the information you provide via the social media. For example, in Twitter, change your profile's "background image." Keep your blog totally transparent. Google's AdSense program can be useful if your blog is in a website format. AdSense offers helpful information on where to place ads on your blog. Limit the number of posts on each page so viewers will be more inclined to "click to the next grouping of posts, generating another page view and showing more ads for you."

"Email Marketing"

Email allows you to completely personalize your marketing communications. Your email list will shape your outcome. The best list is one you create yourself at the "point of sale or though sign-up forms" available on your site. Purchased lists can be a waste of money. Microsoft Outlook and Google Gmail work well with small email lists. Use an email vendor once you start emailing thousands of people. Numerous vendors are online. Always test your email and refine the series of messages you send out. Make sure you have a strong subject line, a personalized salutation, compelling body copy and an effective sign-off (your name works best). Be aware of potential legal problems with email marketing, such as state laws on mass emailing, any claims for your product that you can't back up, or any inaccurate statements about competitors' products or services.

"Shopping Carts"

Make your shopping and purchasing process as simple as possible. You can buy full shopping-cart systems and software from expert vendors. Test your package before full

implementation. Customize anything that slows your online customers' progress. Make things easy for them. For example, buyers welcome the check-off option that allows them to "quickly copy their shipping information as their billing information."

"Shopping cart abandonment" – when visitors put items in their carts but don't complete the purchase – is a big problem. Often, abandonment is a reaction to high prices. To get around this problem, offer a "price match guarantee." People may not finish shopping if you do not offer the payment option they prefer. Make sure that payment can be made via "credit cards, direct-to-bank options and PayPal." People will abandon their carts if they learn at checkout that the items they want are "back-ordered or sold out." Alert them to any issues early in the buying process.

"Analytics"

Numerous analytics systems are available to help you gauge your website's effectiveness. The most important criteria to track are: "unique views, page views, time spent on site, entry and exit points, conversions, and return on investment (ROI)." If you have a small or medium-size website, Google Analytics can supply you with the information you need. If your website enjoys millions of daily page views, get help from Omniture or Webtrends. Insist on A/B and split testing (tracking multiple options). Conductor and Enquisite offer search marketing platforms.

Expert Online Marketing Tips

Some of the biggest "names in search, online marketing and conversion optimization" offer these tips:

- **Jeremy Schoemaker, founder, ShoeMoney Capital and shoppingads** – Optimize your website for searches and for conversions. To do so, test, test and test some more.

- **Khalid Saleh, founder, Invesp** – Converting visitors into purchasers involves both art and science, the "intersection of the creative, marketing and analytical disciplines." Unless you have a brand name everyone knows, you must establish trust, which represents more than "70 or so factors" affecting how people feel about your website.

- **Ben Jesson and Karl Blanks, cofounders, Conversion Rate Experts** – Effective online marketing is about far more than simply getting large numbers of visitors. The only winners who follow this formula will be those who can afford to outbid everyone else to secure traffic. Use tools like Live Chat to find out what is important to your visitors.

- **Rand Fishkin, founder, SEOMoz** – Keep your online message clear and concise. Understand that "conversion rate optimization" takes a lot of work.

- **Rae Hoffman, director of Outspoken Media and bbgeeks** – Don't waste "above the fold" space on your website "on a graphic or Adobe Flash display."

- **Stephan Spencer, founder, Netconcepts** – Get the best software to power your "content management" or e-commerce. Include plenty of testimonials on your landing page.

About the Author

Duane Forrester, a Microsoft senior program manager, heads up the internal SEO program for MSN. A SearchEngineLand.com contributor, he also wrote *How to Make Money with Your Blog*.