

# Internet/Digital Marketing: Dazed and Confused



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## **Internet/Digital Marketing: Dazed and Confused**

Social media, blogs, contextual ads, banner ads, RSS, mobile apps, widgets, mobile marketing, SEO, organic search, viral marketing, pay per click, affiliate marketing, Wi-Fi marketing...the list continues ad infinitum. No wonder so many marketers are dazed and confused about digital and Internet-based marketing.

Adding to the confusion is an endless army of so-called “experts” who make outlandish claims of success or who believe that they are social media marketing experts just because they set up their own profiles on Facebook. In truth, in order to be successful in Internet and digital marketing, one must have a solid background in general marketing as well as practical Internet marketing experience. It is easy to set up a Facebook page, but much harder to work it for business success.

The goal of this white paper is to cut through the confusion and provide you with solid marketing information that can successfully be put into immediate practice. Keep in mind that this is general information and specific businesses may require more customized approaches.

One more point before we continue: The best overall approach is integrated marketing. For most companies, effective traditional methods should not be abandoned in favor of Internet-only marketing. Conversely, it is folly to focus solely on traditional methods. Successful marketing communications has always been based on the premise that it is best to go where your target customers go. Most customers are going to the Internet to conduct searches, log in at social networks for human interaction, and message others through mobile devices.

Please be aware that I may not cover every conceivable digital tool in this white paper. I will focus, instead, on the tools that I believe are most effective.

### **Search Engine Advertising**

When a person visits a general Web site or engages in social media, he or she is focused on the information on those sites rather than on the ads that are displayed. Therefore, ads that appear on these sites are similar to ads in magazines or newspapers. If the astrological signs and the planets line up just right, these ads provide leads. This form of advertising, however, takes longer and costs more than search engine advertising.

When people visit a search engine, they are on a mission. They want specific information about something that interests them, something that is “top of mind.” For this reason, search engine advertising is about as targeted as you can get. It is no accident that contextual ads do a better job than banner ads. Contextual ads appear in text form, which is identical to the organic search information. If created properly, these ads have a title that creates interest and body copy that generates a click. The proper use of keywords (phrases, really) place your ads in the results of targeted searches.



I work on consumer and business-to-business (B2B) Google ad projects, and both are capable of generating good results. One of my clients sells used diesel engines. On a daily basis, this client receives telephone calls that are generated by the Google ads I created. These calls have turned into transactions of items that sell for \$15,000 to \$50,000.

### **Email Marketing**

Some people believe that email is dying. *The Wall Street Journal* even wrote an article which said that, because of text messaging and social networks, email is useless. What a bunch of exaggerated nonsense designed to help sell a newspaper. If you are using email, you know this prediction is utterly untrue. Yes, people are texting, and yes, social media sites are extremely popular, but email still pulls great results. What that article should have pointed out is that all marketing media results are dropping. People now spread their time between many types of entertainment and information vehicles.

Just 15 years ago we had magazines, TV, radio, and newspapers. Now we have added a host of other forms of digital media. Last time I looked, there are still 24 hours in a day so, of course, we are spending less time on each of these forms of media. Email is not dead and it still has value. It is just less effective than it once was.

Here is an interesting example of why I am still bullish on email. A client of mine started her retail apparel-buying business just one year ago, and built it solely on email marketing. Sales have grown every month, despite the hard realities of the retail industry.

### **Social Networks**

Depending on your business, there are hundreds of social media and network sites from which to choose. The biggest and most popular are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube. You may choose to use one or all four, depending on your product or service. Facebook, which is adding new marketing-oriented features, makes it easy for businesses to create their own profiles that are called pages. MySpace's user agreement doesn't technically allow business profiles unless you pay a fortune, but the company has turned a blind eye to them for years. Twitter is all about business and whatever else you want to say as long as you do it in 142 characters. YouTube is also business friendly.

As I previously mentioned, marketing communications is all about being where your customers are going, and they are going online to social networks. If you want to use these mediums, you cannot just post a profile and hope it works. Instead, you have to become part of the customer's community and offer value to that community. Take a look at the latest statistics from the following top sites:

Facebook	More than 300 million active users worldwide
MySpace	125 million unique worldwide visitors per month
Twitter	21,000 Tweets (messages) per minute (for now)
YouTube	225 million video streams per day



I manage the social media efforts for a client that is able to generate approximately 150 messages per month using Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. It is impossible to accomplish such results at the same cost with any other form of media.

### ***A Newcomer You Should Explore*** **Wi-Fi Marketing**

Wi-Fi has been around for a while. Most new laptop computers are equipped for wireless networking. In almost any coffee shop, you can see legions of students and business people glued to their laptop screens, tapping on the keyboard with one hand and drinking a \$4.00 cup of coffee with the other. They are buying coffee in those shops because, generally speaking, the Wi-Fi connections are free. While this is certainly a marketing opportunity for the coffee shops, it has been a somewhat limited opportunity for retail consumer and service companies. That has now changed.

A couple of years ago, Apple Computer introduced a game-changer to Wi-Fi marketing: **the iPhone**. Since then, numerous handheld devices that offer Wi-Fi connections have been introduced and adopted by the public. According to *BusinessWeek*, there are now more than 74 million Wi-Fi users in the U.S. As predicted by ABI Research, the number of Wi-Fi-enabled mobile phones shipped per year, worldwide, will reach 141 million in 2009 and 520 million by 2014.

This means that a great number of people are carrying, in their pockets, devices that they use numerous times a day to connect to the Internet from wherever they happen to be. In addition, a majority of these people would prefer to make that connection via Wi-Fi. When Devicescape asked users whether they preferred to connect to the Internet through Wi-Fi or through cellular connections, 82% responded that they prefer Wi-Fi.

Another game-changer is the **Netbook**. A Netbook is a very small version of a laptop computer that is stripped down to weigh about 2.5 pounds and fits in a pocketbook. Reasonably priced from \$250 to \$500, Netbooks are becoming very popular. Once again, the computer industry is responding to consumers' desire to be "connected" wherever they go.

So, we know that the rapidly-growing number of Wi-Fi users is already high and we know that people with mobile devices prefer to connect via Wi-Fi. From the study by Devicescape, we also know that 84% of people surveyed want to have citywide access to Wi-Fi.

This is a need that B2B, retail consumer, and service companies can fill. By filling this need, goodwill will be generated among consumers and solid business marketing opportunities will be created.

B2B marketers might consider setting up Wi-Fi hot spots within a trade show booth. This strategy will attract attendees who will see your information when they log in. The information you present can include new products, seminar schedules, news, and so on. By requesting registration before log-in, you can build your prospect list. You can also set up



Wi-Fi hot spots in high-traffic areas outside trade show buildings. Doing so allows you to attract attendees and direct them to your booth. Again, when they log in, you can present information and ask them to register.

Wi-Fi hot spots at concerts, golf tournaments, races, and other popular events will attract people. When they log in to your Wi-Fi connection, they will receive your marketing message. Your information can include free offers, discounts, or other promotional messages to drive traffic to event booths or retail locations.

In restaurants, salons, cafes, and other retail establishments where customers spend long periods of time, free Wi-Fi is a marketing tool in itself. Offering something that people want gives you a competitive advantage. It also offers you a new opportunity to communicate with those customers.

Product manufacturers could sponsor free Wi-Fi in retail establishments in order to create goodwill with the establishment (their client) and receive the added benefit of connecting with consumers to offer information and present promotions. For instance, a salon that sells a popular line of hair care products would make an ideal target for the product manufacturer. Customers in the salon who use the Wi-Fi connection would see reminders and promotional information that would drive additional sales for both the salon and the manufacturer.

My client C-Channel deeply understands the power of Wi-Fi marketing and has created a great service that is designed to allow local retailers to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity. For a small monthly fee, retailers are able to offer their customers free Wi-Fi connections and have their ads displayed on a city-wide network. When a consumer connects via C-Channel Free Wi-Fi anywhere in the city, the retailer's ads appear. It's a one-two marketing punch. Free Wi-Fi attracts consumers and the ads project the retailer's message throughout the city which, in turn, helps to drive business.

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If you are looking for guide to help you traverse this brave new world of digital marketing, call me to discuss how I can help you to identify and use the best tools for your business.

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