

PREFACE

Ever wonder how to improve the effectiveness of your website in attracting new prospects? Or how to create more online sales? You're in good company; those are questions we hear every day! The constant evolution of Internet marketing, along with its increasing complexity, makes it difficult for even seasoned marketing executives to know where to invest for the best results.

The good news is, like all else in life, the more the Internet changes, the more it stays the same. By focusing on a few basic concepts, and expanding around those, you can succeed in building an online presence to help grow your business.

How This Book Is Organized

As Figure P.1 shows, we organized this book to cover the primary areas of Internet marketing that combine to create what we call an online sales engine. The beauty of this iterative process is that the end game is a measurable, repeatable sales system you can rely on to generate revenue for your business.



Figure P.1 *The five main components of Your Online Sales Engine®.*

Chapter 2, “What an Online Sales Engine Can Do,” describes in greater detail how this book is organized, chapter by chapter.

You can also look at the online sales engine in terms of the three parts of this book:

- **Part I: Building a Formula for Success**, which explains what the online sales engine is and helps you define your measurement criteria.

Metrics That Matter

- **Part II: Building the Engine**, which covers the nuts and bolts such as improving the user experience, landing pages, search engine optimization (SEO), paid search, and so on

Speak to Your Audience

Websites That Work

Make Your Message Visible

Selling Online

- **Part III: Running the Engine**, which walks you through closing the feedback loop and analyzing your results, as well as international considerations.

Metrics That Matter (revisited)

How to Use This Book

No special expertise is required to use this book, only a fundamental understanding of your business model. That said, there are a number of ways you could approach getting the most out of the information in this book.

More details about applying the methodology outlined in this book appear in Chapter 2.

If You Want to Go Step by Step

Admittedly, figuring out where to start improving your online marketing can be a bit of a chicken-or-egg situation. However, two things in particular stand out as we coach businesses through this system.

You'll need

- **To make your message visible** to get more visitors to your website
- **A website that works** to turn more of those visitors into customers

Getting Visible Given that we started out in the SEO business, our tendency is to start with visibility. And for good reason: Unless you have invested heavily in branding or advertising, you're going to need visibility to get more customers. (And

even if you have made those investments, building strong online visibility can create competitive advantage.)

There are many myths and misunderstanding about how visibility works, which we sort through for you in Chapter 8, “It’s All About Visibility.” We’ll also describe the most popular methods for improving visibility and offer direction on which methods suit different types of businesses.

Improving Your Website After you’ve improved visibility and started generating more traffic to your website, it’s time to make sure as many of those prospects as possible flow through your website and turn into a sale or a lead for your sales team.

Surprisingly small changes to your website can make a big impact on your results, which we discuss in Chapter 7, “Making Websites That Work,” and Chapter 5, “The Audience Is Listening (What Will You Say?).”

Measuring the Impact Then, to understand the impact of your changes, you’ll need to be measuring key indicators with an understanding of how to evaluate the data (how much traffic you need to make a statistically valid decision and so on).

We give you an overview of what to measure in Chapter 3, “Building a Metrics-Driven Practice,” and help you collect the data you need in Chapter 4, “Breaking Down Silos to Get the Metrics You Need.” Later, we assemble all the pieces in Chapter 9, “Running the Feedback Loop,” where you learn how to take the data you’ve collected and turn it into recommendations on which you can act immediately.

For Help in Specific Areas

We deliberately designed this book so that chapters stand alone. Feel free to jump in at any point to get help with a specific area.

For Relative Newcomers to Internet Marketing

That said, the finer points of the book can be better absorbed if you read it through sequentially. Get your feet wet in Chapter 1, “Why Online Sales Matter,” and Chapter 2, “What an Online Sales Engine Can Do,” before moving on to the chapters that are relevant to your particular business situation and goal.

For Seasoned Marketers

If there’s any one chapter that’s likely to be of interest to more seasoned Internet marketers or analysts, we suggest Chapter 3, “Building a Metrics-Driven Practice,” which should be followed by both Chapter 4, “Breaking Down Silos to Get the Metrics You Need,” and Chapter 9, “Running the Feedback Loop.”

In our experience, even some of the world's largest agencies aren't fully utilizing the awesome opportunities for measurement that the Internet creates. Chances are, no matter how long you've been marketing on the Internet or who is helping you with it, there are opportunities for improvement in measurement, ultimately leading to improvements in results!

Additional Resources

For additional information for those who want to dig deeper into certain subject areas after reading this book, here are some additional resources (mostly online). Feel free to pick and choose what works for you.

Books We Recommend

Most of these references are mentioned at different points in this book, and we found them all to be helpful:

- *Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*, by Dan Ariely
- *Blogging to Drive Business: Create and Maintain Valuable Customer Connections*, by Eric Butow and Rebecca Bollwitt
- *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum: Why High Tech Products Drive Us Crazy and How to Restore the Sanity*, by Alan Cooper
- *Website Optimization: Speed, Search Engine & Conversion Rate Secrets*, by Andy King
- *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, Second Edition*, by Steve Krug
- *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web: Designing Large-Scale Web Sites, Third Edition*, by Peter Morville and Louis Rosenfeld
- *The Non-Designers Design Book, Third Edition*, by Robin Williams

The Pure Visibility Blog

Of course, we are always adding to related topics on our corporate blog, which you can find at blog.purevisibility.com.

Three entries from the Pure Visibility blog are good starting points:

- blog.purevisibility.com/2010/04/seo-and-writing-for-the-web/

- blog.purevisibility.com/2009/10/has-your-google-ranking-suddenly-changed-dont-panic/
- blog.purevisibility.com/2008/08/why-is_flash-hard-on-seo/

Other Industry Blogs

One of the main blogs we use to follow the search engine industry is www.searchengineland.com.

A couple of useful search engine optimization blogs are

- www.seomoz.org/blog
- www.bruceclay.com/webrank.htm

An interesting analytics blog is www.kaushik.net/avinash.

Several blogs on social media, as well as paid search and SEO, are also relevant:

- googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/
- adwords.blogspot.com/
- www.searchenginejournal.com/

Some blogs out there cover the different aspects of social media:

- www.socialmediatoday.com
- www.socialmediacub.org
- www.mashable.com (also covers paid search, SEO, and IT news)

Free Resources

In this book, we mention several free resources available, largely from Google, that will help you get the most from your website investment. Most require signing up with the service. Some, such as Google Analytics, require deployment of some code on your website to initiate data collection:

- **Google AdWords Keyword Tool:** Gives you keyword suggestions supported by data on the number of searches. Provides information related to keywords you specify, or it begins by reviewing your website and suggesting keywords based on your website content. Covered in “Speak Your Audience’s Language: the Real Search Engine Optimization” in Chapter 5.

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

- **Google Analytics:** A free web analytics service that operates through a JavaScript snippet deployed on your website. It provides summary data on visits and visitor behavior on your website. Discussed in “Web Analytics: Types, Purpose, Popular Tools for Each” in Chapter 4.

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

- **Google Insights for Search:** A visualization of search popularity trends over time for a small number of keywords or keyphrases. You specify the keyphrases, a time period, and a geography, and then look at trends in popularity of these keyphrases graphed over time.

www.google.com/insights/search

- **Google Places:** Google’s directory for brick-and-mortar businesses combines mapped results with business information such as hours of operation and payment types accepted. It includes photographs, videos, and customer reviews. Covered in the most detail in “Increase your Findability: Claim and Maintain Your Local Business Listings” in Chapter 8.

www.google.com/places

- **Google Webmaster Tools:** Gives you data on how Google sees your website, lets you submit your sitemap.xml and your robots.txt files to Google, and lets you see your page load times compared to other websites. Covered in the most detail in “Crawler Control: Speak to Your Spiders” in Chapter 8.

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/home?hl=en>

- **Google Website Optimizer:** A free website optimization service that allows you to test large or small differences in website pages. By deploying its JavaScript and setting up alternative pages, it randomizes which version is shown to visitors and collects data on outcomes for each version. Discussed in “How to Measure” in Chapter 6.

www.google.com/websiteoptimizer

- **Yahoo! Web Analytics:** A free website analytics tool that operates through JavaScript deployed on your website. It summarizes data on visits to your website and includes some demographic information about visitors. Discussed in “Web Analytics: Types, Purpose, Popular Tools for Each” in Chapter 4.

<http://web.analytics.yahoo.com/>