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Internet Marketing Intro

I remember just how frustrating it was venturing into the Internet Marketing industry.

Every Internet Marketer claimed to be the 'very best', and their methods were the "only ones worth following". I really had no idea what to do, who to believe, or where to turn for sound advice without being led around on a very short leash., with my credit card seemingly always in my hand ready to purchase the next 'map to nowhere'.

The money I spent trying to find the missing pieces, the lost chapters of what I believed to be the Blueprint to online success, nearly sent me to the poorhouse, and in the end I was still at square one, with only a slight idea of what direction to take.

Sure, I knew a bit more than when I started out. I could now construct a decent website, find potential buyers, make a few dollars from affiliate marketing and set up a Google ad campaign that was somewhat effective, but always extremely costly.

The tough part about being a newbie in the Internet Marketing world is that there are so many options available to you, that unless you figure out, early on, exactly what direction you are going to take, AND stick to, you will create a never-ending maze of opportunities and half-finished projects that go nowhere.

After all, the Internet Marketing world caters to every aspect of business online. This includes affiliate marketing, video marketing, newsletter, forums and communities, driving traffic with social sites, Web 2.0 tactics, and so on.

Then you have so many niche markets to choose from, and traffic generation and list building tactics that go on endlessly. It would take your entire lifetime to dominate every aspect of Internet Marketing, and I'm willing to bet, with so many new techniques popping up each day, you still wouldn't have tried or done it all.

Thankfully, you don't have to.

Before we sink our teeth into the basis of this book, you should understand that making money online isn't difficult, and there are many ways to do it, but it does take work.

A lot of people think it's just a matter of slapping up a website and waiting for customers to drop by, eager to snatch up your latest product and this is far from true.

I believe most of you know this already because if you did venture into the industry with this mind-set, it wouldn't be long before you realized just how bogus this idea really is.

In a forum that I frequent, one of the most popular questions asked is what are the most important skills that an Internet Marketer is required to either have, or learn. The responses were overwhelming,

and apart from the many different beliefs, one thing reigned true in nearly every single post.

You need to know how to generate traffic to your website.

The best copywriting in the world won't save you, if you don't have visitors to your site. The hottest product, the best-written e-book, and the most cutting edge software will not be profitable if no one notices it.

You need to know how to drive targeted, hungry crowds of buyers to your website, regardless of your niche or industry.

That doesn't mean that other skills aren't just as important. Being able to write is definitely a plus, copy writing is also extremely important in order to convert those visitors into buyers, and a solid product to offer is also critical.

Let's get started!

Stepping Stones: Getting Started

As a newbie, the first step you must take is to evaluate your own skill-set, what you can bring to the table, how you can put your own unique twist on existing products, and how you can harness your own creativity to eventually create new products all your own that have never released before OR if they have, you will offer them in a whole new way, while adding additional value to each and every single one.

One of the things I have seen many, many times, are newbies venturing into the industry and cloning the actions of those who are seasoned and seemingly knowledgeable.

From robotic responses, to cut and paste answers straight from the text book of "Marketing 101", they try their hardest to replicate the brand of others, and with it, entire personalities and back-stories are created that stretch the imagination and to the more seasoned, sound absolutely ridiculous.

Remember, **You can ruin a reputation faster than you can ever create one.**

You are going to avoid making this mistake, because instead of trying to be exactly like the experts you may look up to, you are going to focus on creating your own signature brand, something that people come to know you for, and remember you by.

Think about the top names in the industry. Each and every one of them, whether they use their real names , a variation, alias, or a fictional character altogether, are known for specific things.

If you do not brand yourself as an expert in a specific niche, you become the **Jack of all Trades, the Master of None** and people will NOT remember you, or ever recognize you as an authority on a specific subject.

This is a very important thing to consider, so don't overlook it. People have failed miserably because they entered the Internet Marketing world believing that they could be the resident know-it-all.

Someone claiming to be a programmer should focus on releasing programming related products. Someone who is a copywriter should offer related services. This doesn't mean that you can't do other things, but when you initially start developing your reputation (and credibility), you NEED to brand yourself as primarily, an expert on a specific market or subject.

After you are established, you can move into other areas.

The Rich Jerk is also another example of good branding. Love him or hate him, you recognize him by his mascot and his brand instantly. While he takes a completely opposite approach in how he speaks to his community than Patrick Pretty does, he is equally as memorable.

In addition to branding yourself this way, you also need to brand

yourself as someone who is knowledgeable about a specific subject. You want to become the 'go-to' guy/gal whenever someone asks about a certain topic.

Here are a few quick examples:

If you think of John Reese, what comes to mind?

If you have followed the Internet Marketing forums, your answer was probably traffic.

If you think of Paul Myers, you probably associate him with newsletters and writing.

If you think of Michel Fortin, copy writing is most likely the very first thing that comes to mind.

You need people to associate your name and brand with a specific skill or market. In fact, this is the very first task you must complete as a newbie marketer.

Think about what you want to be known for, what skill you want to focus on, what media or niche market you want to dominate and eventually, become the expert in.

If you determine that, right from the start, your entire transition from newbie to professional will be a lot easier to achieve, since regardless of your experience (or lack of) with certain subject matter, you will

need to put the time into researching and studying as much as you can about it.

This is why it's very important to decide, early on, just what you plan to tackle.

Continuing on the theme of choosing your market early on, the one downfall I have seen with newcomers is that not only do they scatter throughout different markets, they try too hard to do it all at once.

This is completely understandable, since when you first enter into the world of Internet Marketing, you may not know exactly what you want to do, and so in turn, you try a little of this and a little of that.

This is also one of the primary reasons newcomers fail, or go into debt trying to establish an online business the wrong way.

In truth, the easiest way to get your foot in the door is to determine, right from the beginning, exactly what you want to achieve. Then, you can begin to brand yourself as an expert in that specific field, and once you have established yourself, then (and only then) should you move onto other markets.

The last thing you want to appear as is someone who is fickle, shifting from topic to topic claiming to know everything about everything.

Not only will this become quite transparent to your peers, but it will make you look as if you have no real direction which will make it

difficult for others to trust you, or believe in your claims, even if they are true.

Take a few minutes to think about what it is that you are good at, passionate about, and are interested in. Are you a proficient writer? Do you enjoy learning graphic or web design? Do you think you could become a good copywriter? Do you know a lot about SEO, Blogging, Web Development, and Programming?

And don't let it stop there. Carve out your own place in the Internet Marketing industry by honing in on what you are good at, and expand on that.

If you are a parent, perhaps the parenting niche would be something you would do well with, or if you are into health, dieting, working out, recipes, the list goes on and on. You simply have to settle down and choose exactly what niche you want to venture into and ultimately dominate.

Think this is the easy part? Think again.

For many, determining exactly what they want to do is the hardest part of getting started. Since many of us know a little about all sorts of things, tying it down to one niche market can be incredibly frustrating, not to mention tedious when we may be interested in a variety of subjects.

To be clear however, you do not have to stay within one subject, just

one market (when you are starting out).

This means that if you are a Wordpress guru, you could offer ebooks on profitable blogging, or on the other end of the spectrum, offer blog template customization, themes, plugins, and so on. You will brand yourself as someone experienced and knowledgeable with WordPress, and can expand from there.

The very first thing you should do is set up a blog or website on your own domain. This will help you establish a web presence and will also give you a place to direct potential buyers to explore your products and / or services. Even if you do not yet have a product, you need to begin constructing your website.

This is why you should narrow down the niche market that you plan to move into right from the start, so that your domain name and website is structured and designed around that specific audience.

One of the easiest ways to establish a presence online is to install WordPress, a blog platform that makes it incredibly easy to set get a website up and running in just minutes. WordPress is free and is one of the most popular blogging scripts available online.

You can download a free copy at <http://www.WordPress.org>

Free WordPress Resource

If you are not experienced in installing scripts, you can find video tutorial guides and information on setting up your WordPress blog,

absolutely free at the resource site:

<http://www.WordPressNewbies.com>

Of course, before you install WordPress, you will need two things:

- 1) Domain Name**
- 2) Hosting Account**

You can get a domain name at many places online. My favorite is www.NameCheap.com, which is also one of the more affordable domain registrars. You can obtain a coupon from <http://www.RetailMeNot.com> that will help you save money on initial registrations. Of course, you can always look around for other domain registrars and choose one that you feel comfortable using, and can afford.

Wired Monitor offers a section on reviews that you may find useful: <http://www.WiredMonitor.com> . In addition, there are many domain related forums that will help you choose a reputable provider for both hosting and domain names. Some of my favorite places are <http://www.NamePros.com> and <http://www.SitePoint.com>

Hosting is also affordable these days, and the list of providers is endless. One of the more common hosting providers for new marketers is <http://www.HostGator.com> .

Once again, you should search RetailMeNot.com for a coupon to save a few dollars in the process. (There are also coupons available that will

give you your first month free).

Creating Your Website

As you may have heard, Google (and all other search engines) love content-rich blogs, and therefore if you are trying to rank at the top of the search engines, you definitely should consider starting a blog.

At the same time, some marketers feel it is more difficult to sell from a blog, as there are people who believe that blogs are time-limited, meaning that they are more likely to disappear quickly, or even overnight, rather than a website. While this doesn't make a lot of sense to me, if your selling process becomes more difficult when using a blog, this simply means you need a website as well.

Once you are experienced with running a website, you could hire a template designer to create a customized design for you, and shift from a blog to a static website, or keep both.

Another option, if you can not afford to host your own website (and I strongly recommend doing so if it is at all possible) is to create your presence by using a hosted blog service, such as <http://www.WordPress.com> or <http://www.Blogger.com>

For the record, there is no difference in terms of search engine rankings, by using Blogger.com or Wordpress.com. It's simple a matter of preference.

One thing to remember however, is that if you choose to go with a free blog hosting resource, your website is in the control of the company hosting it. In addition, you are unable to use certain plugins, or third party scripts that can help you properly manage your blog or make it more interactive.

That being said if you really can't afford to shell out \$10 a month for hosting, it's a viable option to go with until you can.

Selling 101: Exploring The Options

Once you have a domain name and a hosting account, it's time to figure out what exactly you are going to sell. There are quite a few choices available to you, but before you rush off to create a product, you should evaluate all of your options.

Here are some common terms that you will see associated with existing products that you can sell and sometimes, brand, as your own.

Resell Rights

When you purchase a product that provides Resell Rights, it means that you can sell the product on your own website, but can not claim ownership or modify it to include your name. While Resell Rights are often more affordable than other options, if you want to establish your own brand online, it's not always the best way to go.

Private Label Rights

With Private Label Rights, (known as PLR), you are able to edit the document however you like, and can add your name to it. Sometimes PLR includes the ability to pass rights onto your customers as well, although you do want to pay close attention to how limited the PLR is, since the fewer that are able to purchase it, the more the quality will be retained.

Master Resell Rights

With Master Resell Rights (MRR), you are able to sell the product on your website, and also pass along the rights to sell it to others. You cannot add your name to the document, and most often you are not provided with the source (DOC file).

Whenever you do purchase a product with any kind of rights, try to acquire a 'license' document that details what is permitted, so that in the event you are asked to show that you have rights to sell or distribute the document, you are able to do so.

If you are unclear about what certain rights apply, or what they mean, you should always contact the product author (original owner) and have them clarify, before you begin selling it on your website.

When you start your website and are unsure of how to go about creating your very own product, purchasing a package that includes either PLR or MRR is a great way to go, however with PLR, it is very important to edit the content before selling it, so that it is unique, and exclusive to your website.

If you end up selling a PLR document to a customer who has purchased it from another source without realizing it was exactly the same, you will end up with unhappy customers and a load of refund requests, so taking the time to modify the document as much as possible will enable you to offer something valuable, and essentially, your very own.

A good way to do this is to open up the doc file in your text editor program and review it before you start to re-write it.

Then, in paragraphs, start re-wording the information, adding to it by researching other products or websites for additional information.

Never copy from people's websites! You want to ensure that you put the material into your own words AND that you add to it, which will essentially add value and make it all your own.

Think of PLR as a general outline of what you are writing about. Use it as a structure, or a foundation for your own product and you'll be just fine.

When you begin to explore the marketplace for PLR products, you will quickly discover that there are many, many products out there. You want to avoid over-saturated products, meaning products that have been sold online for quite some time, and are easily found on hundreds of other websites.

You should take a few minutes to enter in the product title into your favorite search engine before purchasing it, to ensure that the distribution is limited, otherwise it will be very hard to compete with existing websites.

You also want to try to purchase only newer content, and packages that are limited to a certain number of buyers. You can find extremely

high quality PLR packages from forums such as <http://www.WarriorForum.com>, where the majority of what is available is written by seasoned and experienced professionals.

Since the Warrior Forum requires that PLR products are original, you can rest assured that when you purchase them from people on the forum, they are coming directly from the source and not merely from someone who purchased rights from someone else.

The higher quality PLR that you purchase, the easier it will be to sell once you have re-created it as your own, so be selective with the material you purchase.

When you begin your hunt for quality private label rights packages, you will find products ranging from article packages, ebooks, reports, and even scripts!

Side Note:

Make sure that if you intend on submitting PLR articles into article directories, that you first re-write large portions of them.

Article Directories such as EzineArticles.com requires that only original content be submitted otherwise you stand the risk of losing your account, so remember that articles purchased through PLR MUST be re-written, at least enough to pass what is known as CopyScape (visit <http://www.CopyScape.com> for details)

For high quality, limited PLR, check out <http://www.PriPass.com> for

their exclusive private label packages.

Selling 101

Deciding what type of product to sell is often one of the most difficult first steps that a newcomer is required to take (which ties into selecting your niche market). There is no shortage of product types that you can develop and sell, for profit.

These include ebooks, reports, scripts, software, video guides, interview audios, transcripts, designs, graphics and the list goes on. Another factor to consider is whether you will offer these packages as a digital download or whether you will ship them out on DVD's, CD's or as printed and bound material.

When determining the best route to take, here are a few things to consider.

Physical Products

Whenever a newcomer asks me what I think about offering physical products, I am very honest in saying that I rarely think it's a great idea, when starting out.

The costs associated with professionally packaging the material, shipping, and managing orders successfully to ensure prompt delivery can be extremely overwhelming if you are not used to the entire

process, and if you do it incorrectly, you can end up suffering both financially as well as with a damaged reputation as someone who does not deliver.

When you are just getting your feet wet, and you may not have a lot of money to spend on creating quality physical packages, it is always best to focus your efforts entirely online.

I have seen newbies bundle up CD's, write the titles of them in black marker and ship them off to their destinations without thought as to how unprofessional this may appear to their customers.

I have also seen poorly managed databases where orders were not promptly shipped out, mislabeled or forgotten about altogether. Worse, there are people who will create products online using self publishing websites like www.LuLu.com, spend a lot of money ordering a ton of copies to ship out to buyers, only to end up with boxes of books that no one really wants.

There are positive points to offering physical products however, one being that people often associated tangible goods to being more valuable.

In addition, most people enjoy receiving packages in the mail and so the excitement tied into this can help you sell more, as well as set a higher price point on a product, that if sold exclusively in digital format, might sell for less. Just the same, if you plan to go this route you need to be prepared, and organized.

If you are concerned that your product isn't solid enough, you can always add value to your packages by adding in bonuses, such as audio versions of your book, exclusive interviews and video tutorials.

Digital Products

Products in this category are simply ones that you distribute online via download pages or via email. Digital products include template designs and graphic packages, written content such as articles, guides, ebooks, tutorials, membership access, newsletter subscriptions, as well as video guides, audio clips, and other types of media.

Apart from the obvious reasons that digital products are easier to create is that they are also free to distribute, saving you money and time on fulfillment. In addition, unlike physical products, you can set your digital delivery on auto-pilot, using services like www.E-Junkie.com or www.Paypal.com to automatically send your customer access to a download center on your website via email or auto-return.

Digital Products also encompass **service type products** such as coaching, access to consulting services, tele-seminars, webinars and other training type services.

In addition to training modules, you can also offer SEO (Search Engine Optimization), traffic generation, advertising services, script installation services, and even custom design packages.

The list of digital products and services is extensive, and with no overhead apart from your Internet connection and time, by offering these types of products and service solutions, the bulk of what you earn will be pure profit.

Selling Digital Products

When you first got connected to the Internet, what did you spend the majority of your time doing? For many of us, the Internet is used primarily for research, to find answers to our questions and solutions to our problems.

Few of us ever come online with the intention of being sold a product or service, although if we encounter a website selling a solution to one of our problems or a product that we want or need, we are likely to consider the purchase.

As an information marketer, you need to keep this in mind. It is said that the easiest way to sell to people is to provide a solution to a specific problem. The various types of problems are never-ending including weight loss, relationships, parenting, and of course learning new skills of many kinds.

If you scout out marketplaces and forums and look specifically for common questions, problems that remain unsolved, or people asking for help with specific things, you can quickly create a lengthy list of

potential products to create. Approaching the market this way ensures that the product you do create will be in demand, since people are already looking for it.

This may sound simple to you but you may be surprised to discover just how many new marketers create the product first, and then conduct market research only to find out that their product isn't really in demand, or that there are many just like it already in existence. This is why it is so important to research first, create later.

Depending on your subject matter, you should be able to locate newsgroups, forums, chat rooms and blogs that are geared towards that specific topic.

Begin by creating a new Bookmark folder in your browser, and book marking as many of these websites as you can, paying close attention to the popular communities that caters to your topic. Community forums are one of the best places to find hungry buyers, asking questions on specific topics.

Let the market determine what product you create, and you are sure to spend your time wisely, launching products and services that people really want and need.

Paying For Content

A common question is why people pay for information that may be found freely online. While you should always try to add originality to

your product, odds are that the subject you are focusing on already has products created for it, and probably has tons of free material also available.

As an information marketer you need to realize that people aren't just paying for the information you deliver but are paying for the time that they are saving by being able to receive this information in one compilation, rather than spending hours (or days) searching for answers on multiple websites.

They also pay for a breakdown of this information; perhaps because of the way you present it or explain it to them. Obviously the more value you add to your product by setting it apart from others, the better it will sell when introduced to your market.

Outsourcing Secrets

If you think that every successful marketer in the business creates their own products, think again. Many of the popular scripts and software out there is merely presented and sold by marketers, but was developed by someone else.

This is where outsourcing comes into play. If you have a great idea for a product but are unable to develop it yourself, finding an experienced freelancer is a great way to go. There is no reason to sit on your ideas only because you can't personally bring them to life.

Outsourcing can, however, be extremely time consuming and costly. If you select freelancers that are not experienced, or who are unable to communicate clearly, you will quickly discover just how frustrating (and time consuming) the process can be.

As someone who has outsourced a great deal of projects I have envisioned over the years, here are a few tips to help you select an experienced freelancer while avoiding fraudulent and difficult bidders.

1) It Starts With Your Project Specs

When you are writing up a project spec sheet that describes exactly what you want a freelancer to do, be sure to be as detailed and clear as you can be. The more comprehensive your overview is, the easier

the process will be for both yourself and the freelancer you choose.

2) Check Reviews

When using freelance websites, don't just choose the lowest bid that comes into play. I know it's easy to do this because you want to get the most out of your money, but if you choose your freelancer strictly based on how affordable they are, you will, quite often, get exactly what you pay for.

Be sure to check the reviews to determine what other people have experienced when working with this freelancer, and more importantly, if the bids they have previously won are focused on the same or similar tasks and projects as you are looking to create. There is no sense in choosing the lowest bidder if they aren't experienced enough to see the project through to the end.

3) Start Small

When you are new to hiring freelancers, you should take baby steps. Instead of outsourcing a large project, start off by hiring freelancers to complete smaller tasks. That way you can learn the ropes and garner experience in the market so that when it comes time to hire someone to complete your larger, more important projects, you are seasoned enough to know how to choose the best person for the job.

4) Communicate Prior To Selecting

Don't commit to the first bidder that comes along. Spend some time communicating with those that bid on your project via the private message board (most freelance communities offer this option). Make

sure that they can speak English well enough to understand what you require. If you choose too quickly, you may miss out on someone that is better equipped to handle your tasks, so take your time and be selective; it's your project after all.

Outsourcing can be a great way to save time and delegate tasks to others so that you can focus on other, equally important things.

While not everyone can afford to hire freelancers when they first start out online, as soon as you are turning a profit on your existing websites and products, you should consider hiring a freelancer to take care of some of the more tedious tasks, including article writing, SEO, and design.

Affiliate Marketing

If you are unsure as to whether you want to create your own product or if you would prefer to get your feet wet first, affiliate marketing is a quick-start method to generating revenue without the requirement of having your own product.

While there are countless books written on advanced affiliate marketing techniques, we are going to cover the basics of affiliate marketing, so that you can determine whether or not, it's something that you would be interested in pursuing.

Affiliate Marketing is when you earn commissions selling other peoples products or services. You can do this by way of your own website, email campaigns (after you have developed a list), and by directing people to the product developers website using your unique affiliate ID that identifies you as the referrer.

Affiliate program owners typically offer all of the material you need in order to create a website or blog and promote their products. As an affiliate you typically have access to pre-written content, graphics, autoresponder sequences and articles.

Of course, the amount of material offered will vary depending on the developer and at times you may be required to write your own articles or email campaigns.

When you join an affiliate program you are provided with a unique link that includes your affiliate ID. All visitors are tracked using your link and sales are credited to your account.

For the most part, as an affiliate you will only be paid whenever a sale occurs. Each affiliate program will offer a different percentage or flat fee so it's important to choose wisely since being paid on a commission basis means that your earnings will completely reflect on your ability to direct buyers to specific sales pages. If you don't make a sale, you don't get paid.

While affiliate marketing is easy to get into, you will need to put a lot of work into promotion. If you are not sure how to generate traffic, it will be a struggle to turn a profit as an affiliate marketer, however since you have to learn these skills whether you plan to promote someone else's product or your own, it's an easy way to get into the game before you venture out on your own (which eventually you will want to do).

Being an affiliate marketer or a marketer of your own products involves similar building blocks. You need to learn how to generate traffic, create captivating sales pages and essentially pre-sell the visitor so that by the time they land on the product developers website, they are ready to purchase.

In addition, just as you would with your own products, you want to establish a credible reputation as someone who is knowledgeable

about the various topics you will promote, so that people trust your judgment whenever you make recommendations or write up reviews about the products you are promoting.

One mistake that newcomers often make is going out and starting a promotion based on the fact the product is a high-end offer, meaning that whenever they make a sale they will earn a higher commission.

Without properly evaluating the product themselves, they know very little about it, and to a potential customer, these glistening reviews sound like nothing more than hyped up advertisements.

That's why it's very important to spend time looking over the products that you plan to advertise, purchasing them (or requesting a review copy) and getting familiar with not only the products but also the developers who create them. The last thing you want to do is put a lot of time promoting a marketer who fails to deliver, or who is not concerned with his or her own reputation.

By association, you can destroy your own so be very careful when determining whom you want to work with.

A lot of affiliate marketers simply stick up a blog or website with a one page sales letter. This isn't the smartest thing in the world to do since as a middleman, it is your job to focus on pre-selling the customer.

The easiest way to do this is by providing help; information and resources that help them make an informed decision about whether the product is really beneficial to them.

While taking this approach may weed out a few sales you would have otherwise made, you will develop a reputation as someone who genuinely cares about their visitors, which will help you in the future when you go out on your own.

In order to develop a website that offers value to your visitors you want to set up your blog or site to offer informative content including articles, honest reviews (including the positive and negative points), and relevant information based on your specific niche market.

The more information you provide, the more genuine you are, ultimately, the more your visitors will trust you and the recommendations you suggest.

One of the great things about being an affiliate marketer is that we are able to focus on building and growing our own list while having more time available since we are not required to develop our own products.

Once you have developed a list of verified subscribers, and you have developed a relationship with your list, you will find the transition from being an affiliate marketer to focusing on your own products all the easier since you will already have a network of buyers and subscribers who know you, and what you have to offer.

Depending on the subject you will want to create information packs or a series that is offered for free. Through your autoresponder, you will be able to set up auto-responses that go out to your subscribers every few days. These emails should NOT sell anything, but instead, focus on offering free information, and tips on your subject.

For example, if you planned to promote a dog-training guide, your email campaign should send out a minimum of five emails that contain tips or tricks on dog obedience, or perhaps an article about why it's important to train your dog, as well as the benefits of doing so.

You want to get them worked up about your subject so that when you do introduce your sales pitch, they already understand the benefits that are available to them if they purchase.

Setting up an autoresponder sequence is simple and there are many services online that will enable you to add an opt-in box to your website and capture subscribers.

A few of the more popular options used by seasoned marketers and newbies alike, are:

- 1) <http://www.aweber.com>
- 2) <http://www.GetResponse.com>
- 3) <http://www.ProSender.com>

When you sign up for an autoresponder account, you are able to create unlimited campaigns (which is important when targeting

different niche markets). You want to ensure that you create a different list for each subject so you don't confuse your subscribers with emails that don't pertain to their interests.

Imagine creating just a single list that consisted of people interested in dog training as well as people interested in weight loss. Sending out an email that included tips on trimming down your waistline may not appeal (or make sense) to pet owners expecting information on training their puppy.

Focus On High Converting Affiliate Products

When you begin to scout out good, solid affiliate products to promote you want to pay attention to a few factors, including the commission percentage you are being offered, the price of the product, the demand of the product, and ultimately how well the product converts a visitor into a buyer.

For example, conversion rates are usually determined based on every 100 visitors to a site. If 1 person out of every 100 visitors buys a product, it means that the product converts at an estimated rate of 1%. If a product converts 2 out of every 200 visitors, it has a 2% conversion rate and so on.

There are many merchants who will advise you as to how well their product converts, but you should be sure to check it out for yourself if possible. One way of doing this is if their product is featured in the ClickBank marketplace, you can check for the "gravity" that their

product has. This number is located underneath their product title in the marketplace listing.

Gravity is an estimation of how many sales have been referred by affiliates. Of course, the higher the gravity, the better the product will convert a visitor into a buyer.

Here is an example of a high gravity product found at:

<http://www.ClickBank.com/marketplace.htm>

1) Convert Your Car To Burn Water + Gasoline = Double Your Mileage! High Conversion, Few Refund: People To Save Gas!!! Popular D.i.y Watercar: Run Your Car Partially On Water, Reduce Emissions/Glo Real Cars Worldwide!!!
\$/sale: \$44.33 | Future \$: - | Total \$/sale: \$44.33 | %/sale: 50.0% | %refd: 78.0% | grav: 521.18
[view niche page](#) | [create backlink](#)

You can see the gravity in the green link below reads “521.18”. Scout out the marketplace for higher gravity products to promote. (Typically, when you do a general search the products with higher gravity will appear first in search results).

You also want to take a look at the merchants website, their sales copy, and check the search engines for any complaints or problems that are unresolved. You don’t want to focus your energy on promoting a merchants product, regardless of how well it converts if they are not offering customer support or taking care of their customers.

There are many affiliate marketplaces on the Internet that feature lists of products and merchants that offer an affiliate program.

You can search through these directories for products that appeal to you. Then, check to see how well their sales page is written, how well their product converts, the commission percentage (as well as if they offer upsell products and items that you can earn a secondary commission on) and how they pay out their affiliates.

Here are a few great directories to start your search:

<http://www.AssociatePrograms.com>

<http://www.CJ.com>

<http://www.Shareasale.com>

<http://www.ClickBank.com>

<http://www.PayDotCom.com>

Be sure to keep records of the places you join as an affiliate including your username and password, a link to the affiliate login control panel, and any other information you might need to be able to check your earnings and stay on top of the program.

Hiding Your Affiliate Links

Savvy affiliate marketers know that it's important to cloak their affiliate link in order to minimize the risks of affiliate links being dropped. There are a lot of people who will not click on links they feel are affiliate ones for whatever reason, or they will remove part of your link before visiting the site so that you do not receive credit.

Cloaking your link will prevent them from doing this.

There are many sites online that offer free link cloaking, and one of the longest standing services is <http://www.TinyURL.com>

You simply enter in your affiliate link and click "Make Tiny URL!" and your link will be modified to hide your affiliate link and make it shorter.

Here are some other free services

<http://www.SnipURL.com>

<http://www.DwarfURL.com>

List Building 101

Right off the bat, one of the most important aspects of starting out as an Internet Marketer is developing a targeted list of subscribers. Those who have neglected this have regretted it years later when they finally realized just how profitable having an established list of eager buyers.

In fact, if you can manage to grow a list of active subscribers, your marketing efforts can be cut in half, literally. You can generate an ongoing profit just from the campaigns you mail to your list, as long as you work hard to offer value on a consistent basis.

This means that your advertising expenses can be eliminated completely, since if you take care of your list, they will, in turn, tell other people about you who will, in turn, subscribe to your list as well.

It's a win-win situation if you play your cards right and you learn, early on, that list building should always be the center point to your business, regardless of what market you are in.

(Yes, even those web developers whose market is on WebKinz collector's needs a list ;)

So, since list building plays such an integral part of successful online marketing, how do you go about doing it?

Let's take a closer look at what some of the most successful marketers online have grown incredibly large lists in no time at all.

There are many ways to build a list of active subscribers including:

Give It And They Will Come

Offer something free in exchange for their subscription. Be careful to focus on offering something relevant to the niche that you are focused on, instead of just giving any old thing away.

For example, if you are in the wedding planning niche, you could offer a short report on "Ten Ways To Plan The Ultimate Wedding on A Shoestring Budget", and provide a mini-report showcasing tips on saving money. Of course, you will follow this up with paid-to-use products or services focused on the wedding planning niche.

Another important thing to remember is that not all niche markets are wide-scope, meaning that you should never assume that just because someone is interested in one specific thing (wedding planning), that they will want to receive promotions on everything to do with weddings (designer gowns, etc).

Try to focus your promotions so they are laser-targeted to what your audience is looking for information on without throwing everything at them assuming something will stick.

Offer Discounts

You could offer promotional coupons to those who subscribe to your mailing list. Then, set your autoresponder to shoot them out an email containing the discount code.

It's a great way to entice your visitors to join your list and at the same time, you are growing an active list of potential buyers, rather than just freebie seekers.

Auto Responder Courses

If you are in a niche where offering training or 'how to' guides would be effective, you can encourage sign ups to your autoresponder by featuring an email-based training module, with sequences going out once a day (or once a week) that include instructions on how to accomplish a specific task.

Example: "7 Days Of Photoshop Magic eSeries"

Co-Registration

There are sites available online that will help you grow a list via co-registration. With co-registration you are able to receive confirmed subscribers that are ready to be imported into your autoresponder service. These opt-in's include all information such as first and last name, IP address and even a date stamp.

There are many services that offer co-registration. One of the more

popular choices is <http://www.ListOpt.com/listbuilder>

Another popular co-registration service website is
<http://www.CoRegistrationServices.com>

You can also purchase verified leads where the user selects to join your list and enters and confirms their information. This is far better than just purchasing a database of email addresses where you are fearful of being accused of spamming.

One of our favorite secret sources for confirmed and targeted leads is
<http://www.ListBuilderPro.com>

Newsletter Offer

If you have a lot of information to offer, or you just enjoy writing, you could offer a newsletter that goes out on specific dates or times (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc). If people like your writing style, and you are working hard to offer high quality information, you should find it easy to gather up a good size list in no time at all.

Depending on your niche market, you should be able to come up with a unique and profitable idea to focus a newsletter on.

For those in the domain industry, there are newsletters available that will offer up daily dropped domains, expiring domains and just general domain news. For those involved in the parenting niche, you could offer up parenting tips, money-saver coupons for baby supplies, and

work at home parent resources.

Try to think outside of the box and add a blend of originality and flavor to your newsletter.

Keep the subject on track and have fun with it.

The more personable and friendly you are with your list, the better of a relationship you will build with each and every one of them.

Squeeze Pages

In order to build an active list of eager buyers, you will need a way to capture them and add their information to your autoresponder.

One of the more popular ways of doing this is by creating a squeeze page on your website. Squeeze pages focus exclusively on lead capture and is simply designed to obtain names and email addresses from your visitors.

In order to do this, you need to set up a squeeze page template that includes information that would appeal to your niche market, along with the code for your autoresponder account.

Typically squeeze pages follow a simple format:

1) Opt-in Form (autoresponder code, that produces a mailing list sign

up form)

2) Sales Prompt – An introduction as to what information they will receive after subscribing.

3) Product image or author photo

4) Sign off signature (you can create your own at <http://www.vletter.com>)

5) Privacy Policy ensuring them that their information is safe and will not be distributed or sold.

6) Call to action (Subscribe! Sign Up!, etc)

Just like a sales page, you need to inject urgency into your squeeze page, motivating your visitor to hand over their name and email address, and then confirm their subscription via email.

Most of the popular autoresponder services online require double-optin which means that your subscriber first fills out your autoresponder form, and then checks their email for a verification link. This link must be clicked on to confirm their request to be added to your list.

This protects you from being accused of spamming or sending unsolicited email to your list. Once they confirm they want to receive your information, you are able to mail them with free content,

advertisements and of course, useful and valid information that will help them in some way.

Once you have generated a good size list of subscribers, you need to ensure that you retain these people, and keep them interested in the products and services you are either offering yourself or promoting as a third party (affiliate).

In order to retain these subscribers, you will need to implement an auto responder campaign, which is a series of emails that will go out on pre-determined days (every day, every week, etc).

If you are not a seasoned writer, you can hire a freelance writer to create captivating email campaigns based on your niche market. Many of the industry's top marketers use sites like www.elance.com, or www.Guru.com to find affordable writers who are experienced in creating autoresponder sequences that are effective.

You want to make sure that you send out the first email right away, so when you create your first email sequence in your autoresponder account, set the "Date for Delivery" as "0" which means that your message will be sent immediately after your subscriber confirms their request for information.

Apart from having an opt-in form on your squeeze page, there are other important factors to consider:

Have a privacy policy

Make sure you write up a privacy policy and that it is displayed where it can be read easily. This is a great way to get people to trust you.

Explain opt-in process

Explain the whole process of opting-in. Tell them what will happen after they sign up. If you have a double opt-in process then explain about them having to verify their email.

Keep everything simple

Do not make the opt-in process difficult. It really should be simple to understand and simple to do.

Let them know what they will get

It may seem obvious, but tell them what they will be getting if they sign up. Let them know exactly what it is and how often they will be getting it.

Use email validation

Make sure you have them enter their email twice. This helps to ensure that they do not incorrectly enter their email.

Have a confirmation or other security check

You should have some type of confirmation box where the person enters a word, series of letters or numbers to verify that they are a person who is filling in the form. This helps you to ensure that you are not getting false signups.

Have a way for them to opt out

Make sure you always have an option to opt-out available. This helps you to stay compliant with the SPAM laws and regulations.

Once you have crafted a high converting squeeze page, you want to make sure that your autoresponder sequence (the messages that you automatically send to subscribers) are well written and targeted specifically based on the niche market that this specific list is focused on.

Here are a few tips to building a better mailing list:

The articles that you send must be highly informative

If the information that you send has valuable information, then the customers will get an impetus to stay on your list. Not only that the customers will want to be contacted by you and will wait for your next mail.

Make your emails user friendly

Try and write in a conversational manner, it is important that you mail addresses the customer directly. Try and stick to small paragraphs. Customers lose focus if you have large paragraphs that drag on endlessly. Keep each point in a different paragraph and then spare a line between each paragraph.

Keep your customers updated

All those who have subscribed to your list are definitely interested in it, otherwise they would not have subscribed in the first place. Keep them updated about new products, news about your company etc. it will

keep the customers happy and they will appreciate this gesture of yours.

Get to the point and quick

The first thing to remember is that your customer is no fool. They understand when you lie to them, so it is no point making false promises to them .as long as you tell the truth, chances are that you will be able to bond with the customer and make a sale when the time comes.

Experiment, reach out and try different things

If you want to rise above the rest it is important that you try out different things. You should try and use different means of communication such as audio, video and anything that can help you attract customers.

Current Customers Equal Future Customers

The best and the cheapest way to get new business and potential clients, is to work on your existing customers.

Although it is a very effective way most of the business houses ignore this possibility.

Use spell checkers

Make sure your emails are free of spelling errors; make sure to use a spell check.

Test your mails

Test and see that your email looks just what it should look like to the customers.

Make friends with your subscribers

Make your subscribers your friends by keeping them happy. Provide them with a great experience. You need to be friends because these people are your customers.

You want them to feel comfortable with you and able to believe in you. Being their friend is the best way to do this. Write your newsletter in a friendly and approachable manner and you will make some friends.

Ways To Advertise Your Squeeze Pages

Online discussion group

You can have an online discussion group and even an online newsletter, to spread the word about your products and services.

Get the attention of the media

You should send press releases to all the local news papers, to find about the local newspapers you can pick up copies of papers that are sold in your area and find out the address and the web site of these media houses

Networking

You can get a list of people with the help of networking lists of all the people with whom you meet. These people could be your associates, friends.

Your Business Tools

If you plan to sell anything online you should be sure to sign up for a Paypal account, if it is available to you (based on country).

<http://www.Paypal.com>

Paypal is used all over the Internet, as you probably know, and it's an easy way to transfer funds between Paypal users, as well as an instant way to accept credit card payments for products and services sold.

Another popular payment processor online with a stable reputation is 2CheckOut.com. Unlike Paypal, you will be required to pay a one-time activation fee to utilize their payment processing, but their transaction fees are reasonable, and their customer support is really well managed.

<http://www.2CheckOut.com>

You should also sign up for a ClickBank account even if you do not have a product of your own to sell. With ClickBank's marketplace, you can locate hot products that you can promote to your list as an affiliate marketer.

You can sign up for free if you plan to promote other merchants products, and when you do decide to showcase your own product in

ClickBanks marketplace, you will have to pay a small one time fee to activate your merchant account.

<http://www.ClickBank.com>

Similar to ClickBank, PayDotCom is another online marketplace where you can either feature your own products or pick and choose products from their database to promote.

<http://www.PayDotCom.com>

Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed the "Quick Start Guide to Internet Marketing" and that you have found it useful in your quest for online success.

Whatever you do, don't be afraid to be original, to stand out from the crowd and to pave your own way, rather than follow someone's pre-determined guideline.

While it may often take you longer to get to your destination, once you do arrive, you will be equipped and experienced enough to know how to continue to the top.

All the best,

Alex Major