



Pictures In Motion

Lisa L. Trager ♦ 29 William Street ♦ Hillsdale, NJ 07642

E-mail: lisa@picturesinmotion.net ♦ Phone: 201-722-8941

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Using the Internet as a Promotional Tool

In today's information driven marketplace, most people wouldn't know you exist without a website—and the promotional plan needed to drive traffic there. As the internet grows in leaps and bounds, a solid marketing strategy for your online initiatives and your brand is becoming increasingly critical for a strong return on your investment.

Today, a successful initiative demands the implementation of new marketing tools and online technologies to connect your programs and services with the right audience. There are those who choose the slow lane, and just do the minimum. They use their website as little more than an online brochure peppered with pictures and descriptions of their products and services.

Then there are those who've gotten behind the wheel and are already in the fast lane. They embrace the unique capabilities of the Internet to collect and disseminate information at lightning speed. They're on the cutting edge, using their website as an effective communication tool to stay connected with their users. As a result, they can target specific groups, get feedback, increase their return on investment, and grow in an ever-changing marketplace.

With all of the options out there today, the key challenge is how to best spend your money in this dynamic marketplace. Although studies have shown that SERP (search engine results paid) listings are read and clicked significantly more often than banners or tile ads, there are still times and specific situations where banner ads are effective.

The key is relevance and respect of the audience. David Hallerman, senior analyst at eMarketer, said, "Paid search has brought to the fore the cliché 'the consumer is in control,' and there is no going back." Brian McAndrews, the head of aQuantive, the parent of Avenue A/Razorfish, continues, "I've evolved my thinking. The key is no longer intrusiveness; today the mantra is relevance.... No ad is more relevant to a user than that linked to a Web search."

The following are some ideas to consider as you embark upon the information superhighway.

Online Advertising Strategies

Online advertising is a great way to attract people to your website as well as promote corporate events, CME opportunities, or advertise products or services. There are six main ways of advertising or promoting your site, service and/or product online:

- A. Paid Search Engine Marketing Listings
- B. Organic Search Engine Listings (search engine optimization)
- C. Email/E-Newsletters
- D. Banner ads
- E. Text ads
- F. Blog Advertising

- A. **Search Engine Marketing.** There are two main ways to get the most out of search engines: Organic listings and paid strategies. Organic listings focus on optimizing your website to get the highest ranking in free listings on the major search engines, while paid strategies allow you to pay for placement and text ads on search engines as well as on other websites.
- B. **Organic listings** are the way that search engines list sites using a logarithm of key words, descriptions, robots, etc. Surveys have determined that over 60% of Google and Yahoo respondents trust organic listings over paid search engine listings. Since this same study also states that most people don't look past the first page of organic listings, how do you get your site to appear in the first 10 spots for a given keyword?

In addition to choosing the right key words, title, and description, the success of organic listings has also been proven to be dependent upon the landing page. Do you have the right "call to action" to increase the conversion rate once a prospect has landed on your site?

Paid search requires research and understanding of the complex marketplace of search engines. Use of the right keywords and descriptions will make a difference. Should one choose the obvious keyword for your product or service, or one that is really unique to winnow down traffic to those who are most likely to follow through? Our professional staff can help you to determine the right blend of SEM and other forms of online advertising to fit your budget and needs. You don't want to waste your advertising budget on website advertising campaigns where you have little or no control. With the right research and experience, we can steer you to the sites that have the audience you are looking to attract. Many sites charge flat rates. Some charge cost per click. Working together, we can determine the right blend to get the traffic to your site or respond to your campaign.

- C. **Email / E-Newsletters.** E-newsletters campaigns are among the best and most cost-effective methods to reach a specific market based on demographics, user interests, or region. Your marketing message can be displayed as text within the email itself or presented in a banner alongside or above the main content. The most successful e-newsletter campaigns are highly targeted to offer users relevant information they can use.

Benefits of using email campaigns can include:

- **Cost savings.** Broadcasting to a targeted e-mail list is much less expensive per recipient than direct mail campaigns.
 - **Targeted market.** We have access to lists that represent thousands of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. All of our lists comply with CAN-SPAM legislation.
 - **Follow-through.** Higher rate of conversion using email marketing than direct mail or phone marketing.
- D. **Banner Ads.** Usually found as a horizontal box at the top of the page or a vertical box on the right side of the page, banner ads can be an effective way to attract users. Most use graphics or animation along with text to get a website visitor's attention. The more successful banner advertising campaigns make use of behavioral targeted marketing. This means that the personal tastes or choices of either an individual user or group of users are matched to content and advertising that they would most likely be interested in.

Banner ads are sold either as Cost-Per-Click (CPC) meaning that every time a user clicks on the ad the client is charged a set amount (from approximately \$.05 - \$5.00). Other sites sell banner advertising at set rates according to page placement.

- E. **Text Ads.** Similar to Banner ads, text ads appear on the top or left side of a website page. Instead of graphics or animation, these ads rely on compelling text to attract a user's interest. Text ads can either be sold as CPC or set rates according to page placement. Using behavioral marketing techniques with text ad placement also results in higher conversion rates.
- F. **Blog Advertising.** One of the newest trends in internet promotions is blog advertising. "It's a brand new space, but when you get the right kind of messaging in it, the results can be astonishing," said Brian Clark, who has bought blog ads for agencies Weiden+Kennedy and McKinney-Silver, including the Audi campaign. Generally, blog advertising is more subtle and entertaining, and using intriguing pictures or messages that invite or seduce a user to click through.

What one finds on the other side can be as entertaining as Audi's interactive game on <http://www.stolena3.com/archives/001189.html>, or it can be as practical as a direct link for an immediate sale.

Free Online Promotional Opportunities

The following are several techniques that the majority of businesses ignore when using the Internet as a promotional vehicle. Dowden Health Media can help position, guide, or create blogs, discussion groups, and other products that help you connect with the most valuable resource the web can offer—access to your community.

1. **Blogs.** From its inception, the Web promised a forum where everyone could actively participate. Rather than being the passive listener, reader or viewer of traditional mass-communication methods, the Internet promised that everyone could have a voice online.
2. Today, according to a recent study by Pew Internet and American Life Project, 8 million Americans have created blogs to post their own thoughts, ideas, or promote an area of interest. The study also found that 27 per cent of US Internet users say they read blogs.
3. Having a spokesperson for your company, product or service start a blog of their own will connect you to other individuals who share your interests—as well as opponents who will respond to your face without mincing words. Market research never came so quick or so cheap.
4. **RSS Feeds.** Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is a lightweight XML format designed for sharing headlines and other Web content. RSS democratizes news distribution by making everyone a potential news producer or publisher. Internet users subscribe to feeds offered by an RSS enabled website. A program known as a feed reader or aggregator checks RSS-enabled webpages on behalf of a user and displays updated articles that it finds.
5. The use of this technology leverages the Web's most valuable asset, content, and makes it simple to either display high-quality relevant news on your site or create a feed that is exported to other sites on the Internet. Feeds typically list the latest headlines or full text, and can even attach multimedia files
6. **Discussion Groups, Discussion Lists, and Newsgroups.** Similar to blogs, either forming or participating in an online discussion group or newsgroup can give you insight into the thoughts, complaints, and pulse of your targeted audience.
7. **Reciprocal Links** (includes banner exchanges and links with related sites). What's better than free? Often other websites, use-net groups and blogs will welcome listing your site or banner ad if it relates to a specific topic or interest of the group. It helps to offer to reciprocate.
8. **Press Releases.** Many forget the value of continuing to produce old fashioned press releases. Whether you deliver your press releases via snail mail, fax or email, continuing to inform the media with updated news about your website, services or products is an important promotional tool to continue using.

Other Online Tools

1. One of the primary factors that differentiate the web from print is the ability to use multi-media tools.
2. **Streaming Media** refers to audio or video that is being consumed (read, heard, viewed) while it is being delivered. Streaming relates more to the delivery system employed than the specific type of media, but the overall usage is similar: providing your audience with instance access to your valuable content.
3. **Podcasting** is a blanket term used to describe a collection of technologies for automatically distributing audio and video programs over the internet via a publishing or subscription model. Podcasting enables independent producers to create self-published, syndicated "radio shows," and gives broadcast radio or television programs a new distribution method.

Although any computer with audio and/or video software can view or listen to a podcast, downloadable versions of these files can be transferred to a portable player and taken on the road.

Aware of that misleading association from the beginning, some writers have suggested alternative names or reinterpretations of the letters "p-o-d". One alternative is "blogcasting", which implies content based on, or similar in format to, blogs. Another is "audioblogging." Yet another is "rsscasting".

4. **Webinars** are great ways to connect to a targeted audience while also promoting your products and services. Online seminars have the potential to draw a huge audience interested in learning something from a panel of professional speakers. Revenue can be produced by either charging a nominal fee to participants or by having the webinar sponsored. Often the sponsor is a company with a vested interest in the subject matter and is represented as one of the panel speakers.
5. **Games/Web-based Instructional Learning.** The new strategy for instructional learning is to implement interactive games within the educational structure. According to the latest thinking in web-based learning, games are not only providing a means to building new information schema but also provide room for failure for the participant. According to research published in the book *Web-Based Instructional Learning*, "A person who is attentive, emotionally involved and engaged in discovery within a learning environment is more likely to learn and enjoy the experience. "