



Marketing Wisdom

for 2010

70 Marketers and Agencies
Share Real-Life Stories and
Lessons Learned

by the Readers of MarketingSherpa



MarketingSherpa's Marketing Wisdom for 2010

ISBN: 978-1-932353-73-0

Copyright © 2010 by MarketingSherpa LLC

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, faxing, emailing, posting online or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

To purchase additional copies of this report, please visit
<http://www.SherpaStore.com>

Bulk discounts are available for multiple copies. Contact:
Customer Service
MarketingSherpa LLC
+1 877-895-1717 (outside US call +401-247-7655)
Service@SherpaStore.com
499 Main St.
Warren, RI 02885 USA

Table of Contents

Part #1: Social Media	7
Part #2: Email	11
Part #3: Search	14
Part #4: B2B Marketing	16
Part #5: Consumer Marketing.....	21
Part #6: Testing and Metrics	23
Part #7: PR.....	26
Part #8: Running an Agency	28
Part #9: Office Politics.....	30

TABLE OF CONTRIBUTORS BY NAME WITH QUOTE NUMBERS

Altschuler, Peter.....	17
Anonymous	31
Anonymous	23
Baginski, Ron	22
Bills, Amy	23
Bogdan, Simona	31
Boudreau, Erin	9
Boyce, Shawna	19
Branstetter, Greg	12
Brooks, Holly	10
Brown, Michael A	17
Cobb, Stephen	21
Condon, Tara Flynn	30
Curran, Dan	29
Diana, Nini	13
Draper, Stuart	14
Eggers, Jana	8
Elnadi, Mo	8
Fogel, Elaine	29
Foss, Andrew	22
Garns, Tyler	18
Gendusa, Joy	25
Green, Jaren	20
Gros, Barry	18
Hager, Amanda McGuckin	31
Hallmark, David	28
Hardigree, Scott	10
Hayward, Bryan	15
Hughes, Patricia	27
Hylton, Farrah	18
James, David	29
Kennedy, Joanne	26
Kinstlinger, Michael	17
Kleinberg, Adam	30
Kleinhans Tuttle, Christa	19
Kurtz, Jill	24

Loh, Deric	15	Bethesda Emedia Marketing	29
Lutes, Robert Franklin	28	BitDefender	31
McConnell, Melissa	13	Blitz, a division of Cossette.....	12
Miller, Jon	19	Boston Web Marketing, LLC	15
Neal R.....	11	Britefire.....	10
Ogden, Jeff	16	Bulldog Solutions.....	23
Olson, David	27	Business Media.....	12
Parkin, Godfrey	10	Business To Business by Phone	17
Pease, Robert	8	BuxMont Digital.....	8
Peters, Craig	8	Covisio LLC.....	18
Pizzo, Michael.....	24	CrystalVision Inc.....	28
Poulos, Alexandros	18	Dietary Supplement Marketer	11
Power, Don	9	Direct Creative.....	15
Rieck, Dean	15	diy-marketing	7
Rizzo, Kathy	19	Dunck.....	29
Roberts, MaryLou.....	7	donpower.ME	9
Rushing, Curtis	12	ePlus Marketing, LLC	27
Scott, Stephen	22	Find New Customers.....	16
Secujski, Goran	12	Full Process Marketing	20
Severson, Scott	24	G is 4 Girl.....	9
Sholkin, Howard	7	Get Found First LLC	14
Sick, Michael	8	Gist Inc.	8
Siler, Joshua	16	GK Elite.....	22
Sinn, Uwe-Michael	12	GoMarket.....	31
Sinn, Uwe-Michael	9	Hippo Direct.....	12
Strom, Chris	29	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.....	13
Taxdahl, Jeff	22	IDG Communications	7
Tino.....	26	ImageLight.....	26
van Rijn, Jordie	29	Indiemark.....	10
Waizer, Mindy	22	Infusionsoft.....	18
Watson, Tim	11	JBS International Inc.....	10
Wolf, Scott	25	Launch Marketing	19
		Launch Marketing	19
		MaisonBrison Communications	26
		Marketo	19
		Marketplicity	29
		Monetate Inc.	21
		NGAGE	29
		Philips	8
		PostcardMania	25
		rabbit eMarketing	12
		rabbit eMarketing	9
		Sick Consulting	8
		smartFOCUS DIGITAL	11
		Solutions Marketing & Consulting	29
		Spreadshirt	8
		TeleNet Marketing Solutions	19
		Thread Logic	22

TABLE OF COMPANIES WITH QUOTE NUMBERS

Adfusion	24
Advertising That Works LLC.....	22
Agora Financial	24
Anonymous	31
Aon Consulting	18
ARANet Inc.	27
ArcaMax Publishing Inc.	25
Ariba	13
Ariba	18
Aussie Hi Fi.....	22
Babcock & Jenkins	16
Balance Interactive	24

Traction30
Transaction Publishers22
Valley Housing and Economic
Development Corporation.....28
Wordsworth & Company 17

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the eighth annual edition of our “Wisdom Report,” featuring 70 stories and lessons learned from MarketingSherpa’s readers, all in their own words.

And what a year 2009 was. Facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, marketers understood (even if their bosses sometimes didn’t) the importance of pushing ahead with their marketing strategies and staying in touch with their customers.

It was a time to focus on the fundamentals of marketing, while also testing new tactics, new channels and new ideas. This is why you’ll find stories in the report that touch on everything from traditional tactics, such as direct mail and telemarketing, to the rapidly growing role of social media.

Along those lines, here are a few themes we noticed as we compiled and edited this year’s selections.

TREND #1. SOCIAL MEDIA IS EVERYWHERE

Compared to our previous “Wisdom Report,” in which most marketers were still uncertain (but cautiously optimistic) about social media, this edition clearly shows that marketers who have employed social media are emphatic about its benefits.

Social media is becoming the dark matter of the marketing universe, filling the space between all other channels, and quietly shaping the activities that take place within them. In this report, you’ll read how your peers are using social media on its own, and how it can enhance PR, search, email, lead generation – just about everything you do as marketers.

TREND #2. ADVERSITY CREATED TESTING OPPORTUNITIES

The difficult economy meant that many established tactics and campaigns weren’t as effective as they used to be. But to mangle an old cliché: Necessity is the mother of a great test.

We heard from one marketer who avoided lowering prices by testing a new free-trial program with an automated upsell process. Elsewhere, a media company fought back against declining ad revenue by shaking up

their email templates, incorporating video and creating new text ad options. These are just a few examples of the tests forced on marketers by the recession, but for which they are thankful.

TREND #3. FREE TOOLS AND TACTICS HELPED

Not surprisingly, many marketers wanted to remind their peers about free tools, websites and other tactics that can help when budgets shrink. Some cited tools like Google’s Website Optimizer. Others praised social bookmarking sites like Digg.

But the value of “free” tactics isn’t limited to outbound campaigns. One marketer reminded us that during a year of overworked staffs and nonexistent raises, the simple act of recognizing a team member’s good work and thanking them for their efforts can go a long way.

And with that, it’s our turn to thank everyone who shared their stories for this year’s “Wisdom Report.” Your words will inspire thousands of fellow marketers, and perhaps help make 2010 even better than 2009.

Sean Donahue
Editor
seand@marketingsherpa.com

PART 1:

Social Media

CUSTOMERS WON'T SELL FOR YOU

1 The two biggest social media fallacies of the year:

- 1.** Managers who won't allow direct interaction with customers because they're afraid of what they'll say.
- 2.** Marketers who think customers will sell their products for them on social networks. Social media is a great way to build bridges with customers and prospects. But you have to first respect them, and then trust them. But don't expect them to do your work for you!

MaryLou Roberts, diy-marketing
www.marylouroberts.info

TWITTER BUILDS SITETRAFFIC

2 Sometimes the latest hot thing is really useful. I was skeptical of social media marketing. While I signed up for many of the social networks in 2008, I didn't do much with them. In the spring of 2009, we tried an experiment by opening an IDG Knowledge Hub presence in Twitter and Facebook. The Knowledge Hub site had news, research, events, and information for tech marketers and the agency pros who serve them. Within a matter of weeks Twitter became one of the top referrals to our website. And Twitter visitors would spend more time in the site than others who came from other marketing programs. If we didn't experiment, we would never have known that social media could be as helpful as paid media in drawing visitors. I think the social Web is where the Internet was 10 years ago.

Howard Sholkin, IDG Communications
www.idgknowledgehub.com

TWEET QUALITY CONTENT

3 We made Twitter part of our outreach strategy at the start of our company about a year and a half ago. Our use has matured over that time and we now have a pretty nice following across a couple different branded Twitter handles. We started out by simply "re-tweeting" what others said about us, thinking this was a good way to amplify messages. As our followers grew, we began to hear direct feedback that re-tweeting was in and of itself not

valuable to others. So we raised the bar to make sure we were providing meaningful and valuable content to this channel (as well as to our Facebook fan page). We created rich but brief product usage tips as well as shared what other domain experts were saying about CRM, professional networking, prospecting, etc.

The wisdom we gained is not necessarily new, but it's translated to new forms of communications. Listen to your customers and take every possible opportunity to engage with them. What has changed is the way in which you engage and the quality expected.

Robert Pease, Gist Inc.
www.gist.com

DON'T IGNORE TRADITIONAL MEDIA

4 Just because 90% of the buzz is about social marketing, Twitter and Facebook doesn't mean that 90% of your media should be allocated to social marketing. Traditional media is not dead but ongoing re-evaluations and re-balancing of audiences. Spending is a "best practice" that doesn't go out of style.

Michael Sick, Sick Consulting
www.GetTheSickness.com

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A SET OF TOOLS

5 Through all the hype and hyperbole and smoke and mirrors swirling around the term "social media," there are three things that need to be remembered:

1. Social media is a set of tools. Do you need to be on Facebook? Well, that depends. Do you need a screwdriver? If you're trying to hammer a nail, well, probably not. Social media success begins by defining what you specifically want to accomplish, then you can choose which items in the giant social media toolbox are most appropriate.

2. There's no such thing as a social media "expert." It's impossible to claim that label in something that changes so radically and so swiftly so often. You can be experienced in these things (and many are) but you can't really be an expert.

3. I wish I could take credit for this, but I can't; a guy named Jeff Weidner said this on a Social Media Marketing Group discussion thread on LinkedIn: "If you do it online it's social media. Do

it offline and it's a BBQ or cocktail party or movie night or just plain life in general."

Craig Peters, BuxMont Digital
www.buxmontdigital.com

TARGET GEN Y WITH FACEBOOK ADS

6 Facebook's targeted advertising is proving to be a very valuable channel that complements Google's AdWords campaigns by leveraging advanced demographics capabilities for better ROI. If you are still skeptical about monetization of social media or its efficiency to reach Generation Y, think again.

Mo Elnadi, Philips
www.philips.co.uk

EXPOSE YOURSELF

7 In two words, the wisdom I'd share from 2009 is "expose yourself." While companies used to be able to have a company face, customers expect more with the communication barriers lowered thanks to social media. They expect you to interact with them personally. If you use Twitter or Facebook as marketing channels, you don't get it. You won't expose yourself, and you will struggle getting in touch with today's and tomorrow's customers.

And just to be clear, this extends to other channels. For example, we've learned this year in our email channel that, besides the basic navigation, the most clicked on links are the ones that are about us; where we share stories about what is happening at Spreadshirt, or about our employees or teams. You can't get there without exposing your company, your team, your practices, your bumbles, or yourself.

Jana Eggers, Spreadshirt
www.spreadshirt.com

CRITICAL MASS NEEDED FOR VIRAL

8 We did a viral campaign on Facebook and tried to promote it via Facebook Ads. It did not work that well, but it really got a boost when we did a special email campaign to promote the game. It was crucial that we mentioned the word "Facebook" and the Facebook logo as often as possible. Unfortunately, we did not know which people on the email list were actually on Facebook,

so it was a bit irrelevant for them. So we added a button “If you are not on Facebook, subscribe here.” Lesson: You need to have a critical mass to start a viral effect, even if the viral campaign itself is very good.

Uwe-Michael Sinn, rabbit eMarketing
www.rabbit-emarketing.de

BLOG WITH INTEGRITY

9 More and more professionals, whether by attrition or opportunity, are creating blogs with the goal of eventually making a living through blogging. But unlike the top down corporate model of corporation/consumer that’s existed for generations, the blog now allows for more lateral business transaction – from one person to another person. As a rookie blogger, I’ve learned 3 vital lessons that will apply to anyone looking to develop a successful blog (or a successful business):

1. Start now! I found out the hard way that once you start a blog, that’s when the real work begins. You can research things until you’re blue in the face, but unless you actually start writing and developing your blog in the real world, your great ideas will never make you anything except a great daydreamer. Start now! It takes much longer than you think to actually build a blog and build an audience (and build a business!). So the sooner you start, the sooner you will get enough positive feedback to keep you going when the doubts about blogging for a living inevitably come!

2. Be ready to jump on opportunity. The prerequisite for Lesson 2 is actually Lesson 1. Get your blog going so that as opportunities for promotion, partnership and monetization come along you will be ready to jump on them. For example, I recently read a post from a new blogger who admitted to falsely accusing an established blogger of plagiarism – solely to generate controversy and drive traffic to his blog. Outraged that a new blogger would stoop so low simply to increase page views, I wrote a blog post of my own condemning the blogger and demanding, in the name of new bloggers everywhere, that he apologize to the offended party. It turned out that my article generated a great deal of interest (and traffic!) from new and experienced bloggers alike. All agreed with my basic philosophy about how to become a successful blogger. And that philosophy is in fact, Lesson 3.

3. Build your reputation with integrity. The experienced and successful professional bloggers who responded to my blog post reiterated the same message: build your audience through great content, hard work and integrity. Help yourself by helping others. And always choose truth over traffic. In the world of social media ubiquity, people are coming out of their corporate shells and transacting with each other as people, not as corporations. While people may have once been willing to accept a certain “less than perfect” facade when dealing with a business, they expect nothing but the purest of integrity when dealing with an individual. I suppose this should come as no surprise, yet look at your inbox and tell me if this lesson has been universally applied!

Don Power, donpower.ME
www.donpower.me

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE CHANNELS

10 Use as many free resources as possible (article marketing, social media, etc.) It won’t cost anything but a little bit of your time and the payoff can be big!

Erin Boudreau, G is 4 Girl
www.Gis4Girl.com

FOCUS SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS

11 Use a custom “social media lens” to magnify and focus your online presence. Here, very briefly, is how a social media lens works:

1. Put out a series of newsflashes, releases or announcements on the digital wires, making sure that the subject lines and first paragraphs are keyed in to topics that your target market is interested in or searching for. Link the newsflashes to the appropriate landing page on the website.

2. Place reduced versions of those news items in status updates on social network pages in Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and more niche networks relevant to the brand. Link those updates to the landing page.

3. Also place those news items on the announcement walls of selected groups within those social networks, and in the information sections of groups you administer, again linking back to the landing page. In most instances these become “no-follow” links for search spiders, but real people can follow them.

4. Recommend these announcements in social search sites like Digg, Delicious and Reddit, again linking back to the site. This presupposes you have developed an honest, credible presence on these services.

5. Build relationships with, and try to leverage, the bloggers and tweeters who are followed by your market, and get them to talk about the news, once again linking back to the site.

6. If the brand has a blog, post a version of the message there, once more linking to the landing page.

7. Finally, do a lot of Twitter work, following those who have a voice in your market, and getting them to follow you. Tweet about the message and the brand generally, linking again back to the site.

In all of the above, stay relevant and useful. Never spam or abuse your networks. The cumulative effect of the social media lens is to cast a very wide net on the Web, to develop links to the site from hundreds of contextually relevant sites, and to garner referrals from the louder voices that are followed by your market. This results in visitors to the site, as well as in getting search engines to give the site good rankings for those targeted search terms.

Godfrey Parkin, Britefire
www.britefire.co.za

EMAIL BEFORE SOCIAL

12 If you don't have your email marketing efforts nailed, you have no business investing in social marketing.

Scott Hardigree, Indiemark
www.indiemark.com

TAP YOUNG STAFF FOR SOCIAL EXPERTISE

13 Early in 2009, my boss and I discussed how important social media is to companies like ours, especially in terms of recruiting young talent and being known as a company that keeps current on communications tools and trends. We're in charge of corporate and marketing communications for JBS International Inc. However, our knowledge and use of social media tools was limited – to say the least. And the same was true for many of the decision makers in our firm.

So we did what all good MarComm professionals

do – went to the source.

We found two of the company's bright young professionals and asked them to lead a work group to investigate and recommend what types of social media JBS should be using, along with the reasons why we should do so. The only requirement was that team members needed to be active users of social media and be under 30 years of age. Others could be involved in support roles as needed – we currently have two senior expert advisors and I serve as the team's coach and mentor.

The JBS Social Media Group (SMG) was formed in February 2009 and in October they submitted a formal plan for implementing social media initiatives at JBS. The SMG delivered far more than we asked them to. They analyzed our competition and clients to see what types of social media they were using and how it was being used. They looked at various forms of social media and recommended where JBS should start and how we should manage it. They drafted corporate policy for employee use of social media. They developed prototypes and sample pages so executives could see what our pages and sites might look like.

In addition to a really terrific plan, we got an added benefit that we had secretly hoped for, but weren't sure would actually happen. Through the SMG, JBS challenged a group of savvy young professionals, most of whom are early in their careers, to step up and develop a corporate strategy for social media. We asked them to recommend the direction the company would take in terms of social media. That's a pretty big deal, but they came together, divided their workload, did their research, and made it happen. We're very proud of them, the work they've done, and the work they continue to do. And we're just as proud that we're part of a company that offers young people the opportunity to lead JBS in something this important.

Holly Brooks, JBS International
www.jbsinternational.com

PART 2:

Email

USE OPT-IN CONTESTS CAREFULLY

14 A client had been using competition-based subject lines to drive opens and engagement in their holiday offer emails. As part of an email multivariate optimization test plan, we decide to test use of competitions against pure offer-based content. Champion of the tests improved response to offers by 40%. The removal of competitions accounted for two thirds of that. Conclusion is that whilst a competition may get you opens, it does not always get you opens from the right people. If you want to get competition entries, do it. But if your real objective is to engage in some other offer, then focus solely on that. The people who were interested in competitions were not the people interested in booking a holiday.

Tim Watson, smartFOCUSDIGITAL
www.smartfocusdigital.com

EDUCATE WITH THIRD-PARTY LINKS

15 Consumers want learn more about a product before they buy, particularly when it comes to their health. In our emails announcing a sale on a particular herb or vitamin supplement, we always include a link to well-researched and well-written article that goes into great detail about the supplement, its traditional uses, and scientific research that supports its use. And while our emails contain a dozen or more links to our own on-line store, the link to the article (which does not go to our store) is by far the most clicked on link.

Lost sales opportunity? Not at all. We make sure we have “sponsored links” on the website where we send the customer to read more about that particular supplement, and we find a healthy proportion of our email customers come back to purchase the product after learning more about it on the other website.

Neal R., Dietary Supplement Marketer

RESEND TO NON-OPENERS LIFTS CTR

16 During 2009 we worked with one of our publishing clients on an email marketing program to offer paid subscriptions to registrants of a free online service. In addition to sending the special \$60 per year digital edition subscription

offer, one week later we re-sent subscription offers to those people on their email list who did not open the prior offer. [The tactic] created an average of 49% more total unique clicks when doing reblast.

Greg Branstetter, Hippo Direct
www.hippodirect.com

CALCULATING THE “REAL” OPEN RATE

17 We found a method for calculating the “real” opening rate of an email. We simply took the number of clicks in an email that was “officially” not opened because of image suppression (but obviously it was opened, because there were clicks). Then we took the CTOR from the “officially opened” emails and extrapolated the “Projected Opening Rate” from the “not measured but opened” emails. This showed an opening rate which was around 5%-10% higher than the traditional opening rate. In our experience, this is a better value than the one most email marketers use.

Uwe-Michael Sinn, rabbit eMarketing
www.rsbbit-emarketing.de

BANKS FAIL EMAIL RESPONSE TEST

18 In summer 2009 we did a research how banks in Serbia use email in communication with potential business clients. An email with three precise questions was sent to general email addresses available on the websites of 31 banks (out of 34 banks that currently operate in Serbia). We had three aims: first, to determine the number of banks that would respond on email; second, to determine the average time of response; and third, to analyze each answer on two aspects – sales and customer orientation.

Only 13 of 31 banks (41.9%) responded to the email of a potential client in an average time of 31 hours. Neglecting the number of banks that responded, this is quite good timing for banks. But, the answers were disappointing. Answers for all three questions were given by four banks, which is only 30.8% of total number of banks that responded on email. Six out of 13 banks (46.1%) answered only one or two questions, and only three banks (23.1%) invited potential client to visit a website or to dial the bank’s call center. In general, answers were passive, copy-paste style,

not customer oriented, even not sales oriented, which is a common orientation of Serbian banks. Few questions arose from this research.

First, why do banks publish email addresses on their websites when they do not respond to email inquiries? Second, why do banks encourage site visitors to contact them via email for additional information and then provide the same general information available on their websites? Third, do banks need new clients? Email was not recognized as an efficient and effective marketing communication tool. Each of the banks that responded practically closed the communication cycle initiated by a potential client, giving up the opportunity to make a step forward in order to convert potential to current client. From the potential client’s point of view, email communication could not be the only factor to determine which bank to choose, but according to results of this research it was definitely clear which banks should be contacted in the second round of choosing a bank for a partner. We should pay more attention on email communication as a contact point with our environment.

Goran Secujski, Business Media
www.businessmedia.ra

EMAIL STREAMLINES CONTRACT RENEWALS

19 Email is great for capturing “low hanging fruit.” In the past year we developed an email-based renewal curriculum for one of our B2B clients, building on an existing paper invoice and outbound telemarketing follow-up. This particular fairly big-ticket service had historical renewal rates of 80% or more. While we thought we could improve renewal rates slightly, the goal was to capture returns a) earlier and b) before any outbound telemarketing activity. Results have shown that this is precisely what happened. Renewal rates are up slightly over the previous year, even in a down economy, but the biggest win has been the shift in timing of proactive renewal orders received. This has allowed the call center to shift their focus to more challenging renewal customers, as well as other areas of the business.

Curtis Rushing, Blitz, a division of Cossette
www.cossette.com

A TOUGH CAN-SPAM LESSON

20 After a few years of slow movement, we were finally making moves to ramp up our email marketing program. In educational publishing, straying from traditional means of marketing communication is not commonplace and it was a delicate game trying to convince product managers to integrate more media into plans. We adopted Silverpop as our new email platform and I went off to the Sherpa conference ready to learn. And learn I did. I returned to the office armed with email marketing wisdom and ready to implement!

Most of the marketing group was prepared to submit to frequency rules, testing, segmentation, and actual thought when it came to email marketing. It took time to convince them that it wasn't just a cheap and easy solution to reaching customers, but after nearly two years we were getting there. Except for two people. One manager and her exec were not convinced that we knew what we were talking about. But I had buy-in from the VP of marketing, the president of the division! I'd studied the research, I'd applied the best practices! Everyone else believed me! They complained about every rule, insisted on huge blasts to the entire market, and were all-around non-compliers with the best practices we had explained to them over and over again. Even after a full day mini-summit with presentations of data and research, group activities, and millions of slides, they didn't buy it.

A couple of years later, our division was divested from the company and many of us scattered to the wind, left to piece together consulting work or be consumed by the huge competitor who purchased us. After several months of freelance work, I met my former nemesis (the marketing exec) for lunch. She, too, had been working freelance and told me a story about how she tried to implement an email plan for another publisher. I raised my eyebrows in what I hoped was interest and not disbelief.

She related that she had been using Constant Contact to reach an untapped market. "Oh, yes, good product," I said. "Easy to use." I inwardly cringed as she explained how she'd acquired email addresses (CAN SPAM anyone?) and how

many emails she'd tried to send at once with no apparent idea of how to throttle or gently roll out the message. "And then," she said, "they shut me down!" "Who? Constant Contact?" I said. "Yes! They said I wasn't in compliance."

Oh, the schadenfreude was glorious. It gets better. "I finally understand what you were talking about," she said.

Behold the vindication! I don't know where this email offender is now, but I am back doing battle again. I'm fighting the good fight against those who still believe batch and blast is the way email is meant to be used.

Nini Diana, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

OPT-IN IS A NO-BRAINER

21 We all know that explicit opt-in for an email campaign is a best practice. However, while the quantity versus quality rule isn't always adhered by in our company's email sends, we have limited blasting out our monthly best-practice, prospect newsletter to only those who have subscribed to receive it. It has turned out to be our best performing email campaign with open rates averaging 33% and clickthrough rates averaging nearly 12%, an astounding 200% and 500% higher performance rate than our mass, batch-and-blast campaigns respectively. To increase subscriptions for this high-performing email newsletter, we send out monthly subscription request emails (with a complimentary edition of that month's newsletter) to newly added prospects in our database. We've successfully doubled the number of subscribers over the last year through this and other online promotion tactics.

Melissa McConnell, Ariba
www.ariba.com

PART 3:

Search

REWARD CLICKS WITH A GOOD OFFER

22 We got a doctor's website on the first page of Google through paid search and watched his traffic increase by 400% in one month. He still was not getting new patients. We added a new patient form to the home page of the website. He still was not getting new patients. Remember this: No one will ever give you their name, email and phone number if they don't get anything in return.

So, if you have the new patient form on the upper-fold of the home page of your site, offer your visitors something for giving your their information. The doctor offered discounted services to those that filled out the form, and he has now had three record breaking months of new patients this year and is on track to break his record for most new patients in one year.

Stuart Draper, Get Found First LLC
www.GetFoundFirst.com

CONTENT IS STILL KING

23 As a direct marketing consultant, I manage communications and marketing for a state-based, grassroots political organization. As with most small nonprofits, the budget is tight and there is an emphasis on highly efficient (cheap) tactics. As a result, the organization has no brick and mortar presence and operates almost exclusively online with a website and a variety of online "outposts," including a forum as well as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Online tools and social media have enabled them grow rapidly with minimal cost. In 2009, the organization saw a 61% increase in website traffic over the previous year with 41% visitor loyalty (visitors who return two or more times). Donations, event attendance, and political influence have all increased dramatically and the number of supporters has grown statewide and nationally. They're now one of the most heavily trafficked sites in their category, performing better than nearly all similar organizations, even those operating on a national level. In addition, newsletter subscriptions have increased from 10 a day to as much as 450 a day, resulting in massive list growth. To achieve these results, I used a "portfolio" approach, using tactics that have the greatest effect on search engines, referral sites, and direct traffic.

1. Content is king. The client has created more than 7,000 pages of high-quality content in the form of blog posts and pages, churning out eight to 12 new, timely articles a week. This boosts the website's rank in search engines and creates a large pool of keywords to drive search traffic. Of the top 25 most popular pages on the website, 19 were created exclusively for their keyword value. News items that are timely and properly employ good keywords nearly always generate higher search traffic.

2. Social media rules referral traffic. Link trading, online directories, and links on supporters' sites are fine, but produce poor results. However, popular social media sites have the traffic and "link juice" to make links work on a regular basis. Just weeks after creating a Facebook fan page, traffic began flowing to the BFA website. Better still, social bookmarking sites have created a bonanza of traffic. In December of 2009, StumbleUpon accounted for over 25% of total website traffic.

3. Newsletters drive direct traffic. Forget "build it and they will come." The client uses a weekly, digest-style email newsletter that provides links to current blog posts. It is sent to subscribers on Tuesday morning and creates a spike in Web traffic that lasts for 48 hours. Featured articles always get higher read counts. Articles not linked to show low read counts. By every metric, traffic increases dramatically when people are "pushed" to the site.

Dean Rieck, Direct Creative
www.directcreative.com

TEST PPC DAY-PARTING

24 One of my new customers was spending several thousand dollars a month on Google AdWords. They managed several campaigns with a total of over 150 ads utilizing over 2,000 keywords. They reached their budget every day, but I wasn't sure if they were getting the most bang for their buck. I analyzed many variables to improve the focus and results of their campaigns.

One of the interesting discoveries was that I could measure the timeline of their clicks on a daily basis. Their ads were running 24/7. We found that they reached their budget every day by 6 p.m. They had no ads running between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m., their critical customer decision making hours. Since they did not wish to increase their spending budget, we changed the hours the ads

ran to 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. This change resulted in the customer getting clicks steadily throughout the day and evening, with a peak in the 7 to 11 p.m. time range. Since the business is seasonal and influenced by the economy, it is difficult to develop metrics to measure the results. Developing good metrics will be part of the ongoing project.

Bryan Hayward, Boston Web Marketing LLC
www.BostonWebMarketing.net

SEO SUCCESS IS MORE THAN RANK

25 "Ranking, ranking...I want our site to be ranked number one." Sound familiar? Many site owners fall into this. Having ranked number one for a keyword on an individual's search result doesn't correlate to that particular keyword being ranked number one or even present in the top 10 or 20 search engine results on Google – which renders ranking reports useless or irrelevant. So how do we measure the success of your SEO?

1. Define your business goals and objectives. How does SEO fit into the overall business objective plan? How do you attribute quantifiable numbers to SEO?

2. How do your business goals and objectives link to your customers? What are your customers' motivations? How does that translate to their search intent? Which keywords should you target and measure? What is the trend of the customer's engagement after implementation of SEO?

3. Is your website well optimized? Are the basic on-page elements optimized? Are your digital assets well optimized? Is your site infrastructure search engine friendly? Does the on page optimization translate to search engine robots crawlability?

4. Linkability. What's the quality of your external back-links?

5. Goals and conversion. How do you define the overall success? Registration? Web chat? Whitepaper download?

6. Education. Yes, the most important part is educating the clients or your internal team that ranking should not be the determining measure of SEO success. Also important: achieving overall business goals/objectives through the understanding of customers' motivations through quantitative data (web analytics), qualitative data (voice of customers) and business goal conversion.

Deric Loh
twitter.com/dericlo

PART 4:

B2B Marketing

REPURPOSE CAMPAIGNS FOR GLOBAL AUDIENCE

26 2009 was all about doing more with less, and we saw this work really well for our global clients. Rather than building a campaign for each region, more than ever we found ourselves leveraging great campaign material and creating 5 or 10 translated versions of every communication. If you can avoid the cultural stumbling blocks, it's a great way to get your message everywhere without duplicating effort.

Joshua Siler, Babcock & Jenkins
www.bnj.com

ATTRACT PROSPECTS WITH INSIDER CONTENT

27 Ours is a startup business in lead generation. But how do we get people interested and stand out in a noisy and complex world? We started by publishing – white papers, eBook, podcasts, case studies and more. This worked. People started consuming our content. But how do we turn casual consumers into active buyers? Enter Insiders. Insiders is a “velvet rope” strategy. We implemented it by:

1. Creating a secret, unpublished web page.
2. Adding new thought leadership content there first, for 30 days, before everyone else gets it.
3. Creating killer events. Brought in special guests every month to talk to our insiders. Made it very compelling.

What does Insiders cost? Nothing. But they have to fill out a very detailed registration form. Results: From just a few months ago, it's grown tremendously with zero advertising. And it will continue to grow in 2010. October – 4; November – 12; December – 89.

Jeff Ogden, Find New Customers
www.findnewcustomers.net

CALLS RE-ENGAGE FORMER CUSTOMERS

28 A Florida client that runs an online job board for health care professionals used to attract hundreds of inquiries from applicants and employers. Then the recession/depression all but wiped out the need for hospitals to recruit: applicants are waiting each day when the employment lobbies open. So we dramatically cut back cold-calling (terribly ineffective) and refocused the phone effort on reactivating former accounts. Thus far, that initiative has boosted the contact

reach-rate from under 2% to about 10%, and brought quite a few former customers back into the fold. We also wrote articles for a health executive journal and increased targeted email to invite and encourage health care HR execs and recruiters to visit the firm's web site. Inquiries and conversions are up again. If and when the economy truly recovers, we are convinced the new business model will substantially outperform the old.

Michael A Brown, Business To Business by Phone

REMEMBER THE 'NEXT STEP'

29 The more a client insisted on doing things the way they'd always been done, the more he complained about not getting results. Finally, after getting statistics on his target market's actual demographics (not the ones he decided were right) and getting colleagues to support the new approach that we wanted to use, we put together two separate promotions – one for a tradeshow demo session, a second for an email campaign. Both were wildly successful... and utter failures. The client anticipated 30-40 people at the demo. The promotion pulled in more than a hundred. The email, which the client was sure would be completely ignored, got a 31% clickthrough rate (which rose to 40% when we factored in multiple clicks from the same address). Yet the one thing we could not get the client to grasp was "What's the payoff? What can you offer to prospects that will put them in the pipeline?" Since they refused to acknowledge the need for anything beyond the wonderfulness of their product, the prospects came – to the demo and the website landing page – and went... because there wasn't a clear and compelling next step. So make sure that you know exactly what's expected... and that everybody understands what must be done to meet those expectations (and what will happen if those "musts" are ignored).

Peter Altschuler, Wordsworth & Company
www.wordsworthandco.com

SHARE WEBINAR MATERIALS WITH NON-ATTENDEES

30 This year, I was given the task of increasing our teleconference and webinar usage – both in registrations, people dialing in and post-event utilization. My group spent a lot time discussing

how to better get our members interested, but it was a recommendation to help interested parties who CAN'T make the event that turned out to be one of the best. On each event webpage, a link was added wherein people who were interested in the topic/event but couldn't make the event let us know and we would make sure to send them on post-event audio replays and presentation materials. We've gotten many positive responses and people thanking us "for not forgetting about them."

Michael Kinstlinger

USE TOPIC-SPECIFIC MICROSITES

31 Pension reform and pension funding relief became huge issues in the pension space at the end of 2008 and it became clear that these issues would be around for some time. With over a dozen regulatory bodies investigating ways to deal with these issues, at Aon Consulting Canada, we saw the need for a better way to meet the needs of our marketplace, our clients. The solution we arrived at was a 24/7 microsite (www.aon.ca/situationroom) that would provide the following:

1. Regular updates on what was happening with pension standards reform and pension funding relief, with the posting of the updates made within days of the relevant event
2. All relevant activity would be tracked (whereas newsletters typically previously cover only events of significant consequence)
3. Updates would be listed chronologically under specific categories
4. Links would be provided to all relevant externally produced documentation, press releases, legislation, etc.
5. Aon's perspective would be provided on the events, in addition to all of the relevant background materials
6. All information would be available in both English and French

The Situation Room microsite helped Aon Consulting achieve the following:

1. Increased accessibility to a relevant resource on key issues for our market
2. Time and resource savings through greatly reduced one-off newsletters that would have been produced
3. Major change in what was made available to the market and to the public in general with

complete leverage of internal resources, so no external costs. Despite limited budget, team capacity and serving the time-sensitive needs of a bilingual audience, Aon Situation Room not only proved to be a successful opportunity to help guide clients and prospects through refreshing opinions and perspectives, but also proved that encouraging creative solutions within a focused, determined internal team is one of the most valuable approaches that any organization should aim to adopt and foster within their own cultural environment.

Barry Gros, VP, Aon Consulting
www.aon.ca

SEGMENT LEADS BY INTEREST

32 Instead of including leads in every campaign, we decided to segment them into campaigns by their areas of interest. To do this, we divided leads by their past activities within key topics and solutions (white paper downloads, webinar registrations, previous campaign responses, etc.) then slotted them into campaigns centered on those key topics and solutions. As a result, we experienced a significant increase in conversions and more than a 300% increase in our response rates, including clickthrough rates and open rates. At the end of the day we are able to better communicate with our leads with messaging relative to what they are interested in as well as run multiple campaigns simultaneously.

Farrah Hylton, Ariba Inc.
www.ariba.com

SIMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE

33 Here at Infusionsoft we pride ourselves on the comprehensiveness of our product. Our marketing message has typically been that our software is an “all-in-one small business solution,” and it is. But that message doesn’t seem to resonate very well. People don’t want an all-in-one solution, especially small business owners and entrepreneurs. The majority of them are looking for email marketing.

So, late this year we started testing the idea of leading our message with email marketing only and why our email marketing solution is superior to what people are used to. This is a big change for us

and we were reluctant to go this route because our product is so much more than just email marketing. We’ve learned that by focusing our message on only one aspect of our product, people are much more likely to listen to the rest of the message. Conversions have increased and the new customers that have come in the door under our new message seem to be much better customers. So the lesson learned is: Even if your product is amazing and does a million wonderful things, it’s crucial to only talk about one thing at a time and start with the most relevant one.

Tyler Garns, Infusionsoft
www.infusionsoft.com

MAKE PODCASTS SOCIAL

34 Last year, Covisio ran an extremely successful podcasting program for one of our clients. Our main goal was to generate podcasting content that was valuable to our client’s target audience. If we were successful with that, we knew we would get better brand awareness, increase online reputation, demonstrate thought leadership, boost web traffic, and, ultimately, facilitate the sales process. So here’s a few things we did differently:

1. All podcast participants were industry experts (non-affiliated with our client) that shared their insights on key industry topics.
2. No promotional pitches for our client were allowed in the podcasts; rather the focus was on hot-button industry topics.
3. Each podcast was structured in a way that could provide the most value to the audience (in terms of topic, insights, length, etc.)
4. The podcasts were hosted in an openWordPress/Podpress platform allowing for social sharing, bookmarking, tagging, rating, etc. No registration forms were required to access the podcasts.
5. The podcasting program was tightly integrated into our clients marketing mix and featured on their web site, their e-newsletter, their blog, their social network presences, and so on.
6. Production costs were kept low primarily because the content itself ended up being extremely valuable.

In social media marketing, if you provide value to your community, you will get value back!

Alexandros Poulos, Covisio LLC
www.covisio.com

VIRTUAL EVENTS REQUIRE REAL PLANNING

35 If you are considering hosting a virtual event, don't underestimate the time and resource commitments required to deliver a successful, professional quality event. While days before the event may be slightly less time intensive in comparison to an in-person event, the upfront planning and technical considerations can be quite significant, and, depending on the event length and incorporated activities, can easily surpass time and resource commitments needed to plan an in-person event.

Shawna Boyce, Launch Marketing
www.launch-marketing.com

DON'T GIVE UP AFTER THREE OR FOUR CALLS

36 In 2009, we analyzed more than one million B2B telemarketing calls that our agents placed on behalf of our high-tech clients. The purpose of the analysis was to determine the average number of attempts it takes to complete a lead generation conversation with a decision-maker in the technology industry. Here are the results of our analysis: Examining 1,046,725 B2B telemarketing calls placed between August 2008 and July 2009, the average number of attempts required for a completed conversation to take place was 5.07. Furthermore, the average number of telemarketing attempts for the daily production rate to drop (point of diminishing returns) was 7.2 attempts. These statistics are from lead generation calls mainly targeting IT decision-makers. If your target market is comprised of c-level executives, the statistics are nearly double.

What's the lesson? If you are using the "old school" method of stopping after only three or four attempts, then you are not maximizing the potential from your telemarketing lists. Marketing directors have many budget constraints. Often, these constraints mean targeting prospects with minimal telemarketing attempts. However, our stats show that this strategy is not an effective approach. Instead, our advice is to clearly define your "sweet spot," focus your target list and employ a higher telemarketing attempt rate for optimal results.

Kathy Rizzo, TeleNet Marketing Solution
www.telenetmarketing.com

BUDGET FOR CONTENT CREATION

37 Over the last 10 years, we've been shifting marketing investments from brand advertising to highly measurable direct methods, but now the pendulum is swinging back to investments in brand, buzz, and awareness. However, instead of mass advertising, today we are investing more in smart ways to build brand such as social media, search engine optimization, and content marketing. What this means is that marketers should take some of the budget that you would normally allocate to trade shows and list purchases and allocate it to writers that can generate great content and the efforts to promote it. By getting your company's expertise out there, you create broad awareness and affinity for your brand. Those investments will turn into leads, but they will be very early stage leads. So don't just send them to sales: be sure to score them to identify the best ones, and nurture and develop the rest with more great content and thought leadership.

Jon Miller, Marketo
www.marketo.com

NARROW THE FOCUS TO ATTRACT WEBCAST ATTENDEES

38 In a time of marketing overload and tight budgets, we knew we needed to change things up to make our client's software solution stand out from the crowd. While broad focused, customer featured webcasts had worked well in the past, we wanted to test a more fine-focused approach that could hone in, even further, on a smaller segmented group's unique interests and roles. To do this, we introduced a webcast series featuring narrowly focused topics created to appeal to tightly targeted groups, and executed integrated promotional campaigns consisting of a strategically timed mix of pre-event email communications followed up with reminder emails and calls to registered attendees the day prior to the event. By more narrowly focusing these webcasts, we saw great results: We grew the registrant numbers per webcast and gained above average attendance rates of 60%.

Christa Kleinhans Tuttle, Launch Marketing
www.launch-marketing.com

MEASURE RESULTS FROM END TO END

39 The company where I worked had a multi-step lead generation process which I helped to manage. The key conversion points for our customers were: 1. Choose to visit the website 2. Submit Request Form part 1 (name, email, interest) 3. Submit Request Form part 2 (full contact info) 4. Be found “qualified” in a phone interview. To get more leads, we tested different versions of the Request Form in step 3. One new test form increased conversions by more than 25%. We were excited. The marketing team really wanted to celebrate this success, but the sales team was not seeing it. We then measured how many people were converting in step 4. The results were lower than before the tests. A closer look revealed that opening up the value in step 3 had actually decreased the total number of people successfully completing step 4.

We quickly returned to the original version of the form. It was counter-intuitive to choose a less-effective Request Form, but it worked. Qualified leads returned to normal. (“Fail fast” and move on, they say.) With a higher perspective on our end-to-end processes, we turned our attention to optimizing how the leads were being handled between steps 3 and 4, specifically on the speed. After a few more tests, we were able to get some modest increases. We were lucky that we did not stop and celebrate at the first signs of improvement. Marketing always struggles to be credible in the eyes of the Sales Team. End-to-end testing saved our reputations.

Jaren Green, Full Process Marketing
www.solutionpipe.com

PART 5:

Consumer Marketing

LOOK BEYOND NORTH AMERICA

40 Working with one of the hottest websites in the world of indie fashion, we were able to double their revenue from a segment that represented 20% of site traffic. These were site visitors from outside North America that were converting poorly, despite the company's willingness to process overseas orders and ship internationally. We created a set of campaigns that highlighted messaging about international shipping in the form of banners and overlays. We showed these only to visitors from locations outside North America, thus getting the point across without wasting space on the site. For added effect, campaigns targeted visitors by country, letting them know that Modcloth was happy to ship to their location.

The results? Measured against a control group, this campaign produced from the targeted segment a 100% lift in conversion rate, a 100% lift in revenue and a 167% lift in new customer acquisition. Bear in mind that this segment was one fifth of the entire site traffic and these campaigns did not include free or reduced shipping. The campaigns simply served a relevant message to the appropriate traffic segment. As a result, that segment's revenue doubled, and more than two and a half times as many visitors were converted into new customers, without the retailer having to cut prices, give up space on the site, or give something away.

Stephen Cobb, Monetate Inc.
monetate.com

TEST, ANALYZE, RETEST

41 We re-launched our website in late September with full ecommerce capabilities and have been building traffic and sales through SEO, PPC, social online marketing and email. Using the "analyze, retest" mantra, visitation has grown by 550% over the previous quarter, and sales have exceeded budget. Being always on the look-out for a new idea, I was inspired when an enews subscriber shared our Christmas promotional coupon code online. I decided to take this tactic one step further by sharing it with more coupon sites. Within 24 hours of posting the information, our visitation count had quadrupled – but on the flipside, not one sale was generated from these visitors (even though the coupon had been used by our email

subscribers).

Instead of turning my back on this avenue, I'm working on a new coupon to distribute in January. Slightly different angle, same market. If this doesn't generate a sale I'll test it one more time before walking away from this idea. After all, it's costing nothing to set up, and there's nothing wrong with learning from your "mistakes."

Stephen Scott, Aussie Hi Fi
www.aussiehifi.com.au

SIMPLER FORM LIFTS CONVERSIONS

42 Our embroidery and logowear business is one of only a few in our industry to find success using a Web-based model. I'm convinced it's because we've been able to take our key differentiators and effectively communicate them to an online audience. Initially, we relied on a heavily formatted logo-submission form to let potential customers submit their logos for evaluation prior to placing an order. When a tech issue brought it down earlier this year, we had to hurry and get something up in its place. So we quickly replaced it with a much simpler – and much more open-ended – "free logo evaluation" offer, which included a request for whatever information the potential customer felt was important, and a link to a real employee's email address.

Instantly, in addition to sending us their logos, people began providing more information about what they wanted to do, which allowed us to provide better service, and increase our orders. Conversions increased 49 percent with the new form, cementing for us the idea that people want to do business with people, not with Web sites.

Jeff Taxdahl, Thread Logic
www.Thread-Logic.com

SURVEY USERS ABOUT NEW FORMATS

43 We have begun to use page-flipping catalogue technology for our online book catalogues. This format is superior to plain PDFs of catalogues for many reasons, including: faster loading, easier searching, linked tables of contents and indexes for easier navigation, and live links from the catalogue to our books' web pages. We surveyed users early on, and their responses showed they liked the catalogue format but

hated the dingy noises that occurred whenever they rolled over a link. Some found this detail so annoying they said they stopped looking at the catalogue. This valuable feedback helped us tweak our catalogues to be more user-friendly, and avoid turning off future users. The lesson: Survey users when implementing new strategies!

Mindy Waizer, Transaction Publishers
www.transactionpub.com

CONNECT WITH EMOTIONS

44 Most advertising is just never read. You have an instant to grab their attention or you lose them. If the name of your business is the most prominent part of your ad, you're leaving money on the table. To increase response, we surveyed our client's customers to find the biggest point of agreement towards their kind of business. We also listened closely to the emotion they responded in. This idea and mood were then used as the headline and supporting copy in all print, web, email, signage, fliers etc. The customers got it between the eyes. After all, we're just feeding them back their own reality, how could they disagree. They were compelled to read the ads. Sales increased over 20%. Know before you go. Always survey first!

Ron Baginski, Advertising That Works LLC

MORE SOCIAL EQUALS LESS PPC

45 I suggest continually tracking and measuring blogging and social networking made the difference in this down economy. Our ecommerce site was as search engine optimized as it could get, given its design. Gaining search engine traffic required large expenditures in PPC. We needed a strategy to bring in traffic that would cost less!

1. Start a Blog. We have a consumer driven product that people (our customers) are interested in. But our site did not provide a good place to say it. So we started a blog.

2. Social Networking on Facebook, Myspace and Twitter – Place our name where our customers like to surf.

Results: 22% increase in traffic and 33% decrease in spending on PPC. Success in a down economy!

Andrew Foss, GK Elite
www.blog.gkelite.com

PART 6:

Testing and Metrics

BELIEVE DATA, NOT YOUR GUT

46 This year we executed a few message tests in which the results were different than we expected, and had to remind ourselves firmly of what one of our copywriters calls the “essential mindset for testing”: Pour your heart and soul into the planning, then be prepared to let go. It’s so easy to become wedded to your testing theory, and that can make it difficult to accept results that point in the other direction. Among the testing surprises this year were a subject line test that showed a higher conversion rate on a less specific subject line (our theory was that the more specific line would convert better) and a test regarding incentive offers that showed “small to all” really is a better play (we’d had an alternate theory) in this particular case.

Amy Bills, Bulldog Solutions
www.bulldogsolutions.com

TEST THE PROCESS BEFORE CUTTING PRICE

47 I had the opportunity to try a number of new marketing tactics over this last year. Given the struggling economy, I was looking for new tactics that were both affordable and effective. What I learned in a nutshell is that taking a soft-sell marketing approach can go a long way. For a particular area of my business, we saw a softening. We assumed it was based on price but instead of rushing to discount, thought we would change the marketing process to lead with a free sample, follow-up messages (communicating the value of the full product), and upselling to individuals after they consumed the sample.

Using a simple form to capture names and email addresses online, we provided access to a free sample of our product. As we created an automated dialog with the help of an autoresponder, we could see that individuals were moving successfully through our purchase decision process. Without offering a single discount, we were able to improve conversion rates by more than 12%, a significant number in our business. What I quickly learned was the “FREE” is still the most powerful word in marketing as long as you properly manage your communication and purchase process.

Anonymous

FREE TOOL HELP TESTING

48 Google Website Optimizer has radically transformed our online marketing efforts. Extensive testing has become the norm and I am regularly surprised about what resonates with our customers and what doesn't. Copy, design, layout...running multivariate or A/B split tests has resulted in some eye-popping results and incremental improvements across the board.

Michael Pizzo, Agora Financial
www.agorafinancial.com

FOCUS ON POST-CLICK METRICS

49 Counting clicks simply doesn't cut it anymore. It's becoming more and more apparent that clicks, on their own, aren't able to adequately tell the story of how well a campaign or tactic is working; what happens after the click is often just as – or even more – important. We're counseling our clients to measure results above and beyond the click by taking a number of critical steps, including: setting benchmarks and allowable costs at the beginning of a campaign; assigning unique tracking codes to measure site traffic, and then tracking it as it heads through your conversion funnel; using technology to make online ad spending more efficient, including retargeting and behavioral targeting; measuring attitude and perception shifts; and paying attention to attribution – looking at the big picture of how all online messaging and media is working together to build your brand.

Scott Severson, Adfusion
www.adfusion.com

WINNER! BUT WHY?

50 Balance was engaged with Driveway2Driveway, a new car-selling service, to optimize the organization's website to convert visitors to customers. Based on site statistics and a survey of site users, we determined that the results page for the site's car pricing tool was critical to the decision to use Driveway2Driveway's services. Based on available data, we created two landing pages and then conducted A/B testing to determine which one achieved the highest conversion rate. Our protocol was designed to look at several issues:

- Do certain terms make users feel more comfortable using the service?
- Do certain terms help users understand how to proceed?

- Do users have questions that have not been answered, thus making them unlikely to proceed?
- Does the placement of elements help users proceed to use the service?

We selected test subjects that matched target audiences: women aged 30-45 who are single and/or stay-at-home moms and who are concerned about security; men and women, aged 60-75 who have sold a car privately and don't like negotiating price; and men and women, aged 50-60, selling cars for parents but don't have time to do it themselves.

As we asked the test questions, we found little difference in the comprehension of the content of results page A and results page B. Users understood the results which offered numbers for typical trade-in value versus typical private-sale value. They understood the value proposition. They understood what the next step would be to sell their cars. It seemed that there was no difference in the effectiveness of page A and page B. However, the question "what step would you take next" resulted in users of page A being much more likely to say, "Sign up to sell my car." While the reason for the preference was not clear, the results certainly were. This testing experience, while not elaborate, clearly demonstrated the intangibles of marketing. We had two pages that clearly communicated the same message, yet one was much better at the goal of converting visitors to customers.

Jill Kurtz, Balance Interactive
www.balanceinteractive.com

ADVERSITY CREATES TESTING OPPORTUNITIES

51 As an online content publisher, we are hyper-focused on defining and refining our place in the market. Allocating resources to testing and ongoing analysis allowed us to make moves that most companies, especially publishers, were not able to execute in such a challenging market. When ad revenue dropped, instead of focusing solely on our rates we looked to our format. Combating ad blindness, we switched several of our online newsletters to a text format. This instantly increased revenue without adjusting rates. When we recognized the increase in video viewership online we transformed several of our newsletter formats to include instructional video. This not only enhanced the reader experience but also increased our subscriber list. Our mission, our expertise is in delivering outstanding news and entertainment by email.

Knowing what we do best, allowed us to GO; even when most were still stuck at the light. Lesson from 2009: Stay focused, forecast, and build solid! So you too can go!

Scott Wolf, President & CEO
ArcaMax Publishing Inc.

NEVER STOP MEASURING AND ANALYZING

52 Have you been making assumptions on old data? Things you knew about your customers this time last year may not be the same this year. Buying tendencies, price points and even purchase desires may not be same. The point: You need to track and analyze your past and current customer data regularly. Start by asking these simple questions: How did they hear about you? (most important!) What did they buy? How much did they spend? What criteria describe them? In the end, you'll have a picture of your best customers and you'll know how to find them (no more guessing games). Whatever you find brings in the best leads and customers, figure out how to expand that action to strengthen your repeat business. Track everything. When every penny counts, look at what is bringing in the best return on investment and get rid of other marketing that's not bringing in money; possibly your outdated yellow page ad.

Joy Gendusa, CEO, PostcardMania
www.postcardmania.com

PART 7: PR

SUPPORT PR WITH ONLINE PRESENCE

53 Working on public relations projects we have learned that developing a great online presence will gain you much attention in the media world. What I mean by this is that you can send multiple articles about your company to a publication and see no results. One of the reasons is the person you're sending this article to will then turn to the Internet and search your company. If there is no online presence, such as blogs, articles, press releases, and so on, then most likely that person is going to ignore your submissions. Your company must be relevant and newsworthy.

Tino, ImageLight
www.imagelight360.com

STICK TO YOUR PLAN

54 Corporate communicators need to stick to their guns in the face of helpful suggestions, legal critics and aggressive advertisers if they want to truly create a recognizable brand, corporate image and positive reputation. In early 2009, MaisonBrison Communications, was engaged to develop the brand, marketing and PR plans for a new state-of-the-art, upscale residential complex for active seniors, in the heart of Montreal, Canada.

The company did its research, held focus groups, created the brand objectives, logo, visuals and brand promise and then developed a full marketing, advertising and public relations campaign – VISTA was born. Along the way, creative insiders suggested slightly modified graphical representations – ones that did not meet logo and graphic guides. Good intentioned sales staff pushed for advertising placement for “popular” journals that did not match brand and market demographics. Staff were hired, but not always informed of the marketing objectives and how they meshed with VISTA's ethics and values.

Fortunately, the team helped VISTA make the right decisions and correct some of the erroneous, albeit good intentioned actions. It required constantly returning to the brand promise and consistently reviewing VISTA's communications objectives. The results? Occupancy rates three times faster than anticipated...impressed and satisfied residents...a good reputation in the making. The moral of the story? Stand firm to your brand principles.

Joanne Kennedy, MaisonBrison Communications
www.maisonbrison.com

HEADLINES MATTER, BUT SO DOES LUCK

55 We learned that an article headline could make or break a campaign. With one article we were able to generate over 500,000 visits to our site. With the second article we saw about a 2% increase in traffic. When the second article was renamed we saw a dramatic increase, but it never registered as well as the first article. Next, we tried the same approach in a different industry and never received the same impact as the first article – regardless of the title.

When developing our article we researched the best methods and practices in article marketing. The experts explained how articles that have titles like “3 best tips,” or using the word “secret” or “surprise” will generate more traffic to your site. We decided to put this to a test. Our first article was “5 Simple Ways to Improve Your Web Site.” This article was submitted to less than ten Web directories late one afternoon. By the next morning our inbox was full of requests for our free online marketing analysis and the phone was ringing with potential customers. The analytics showed that in three days we had close to 300,000 unique visitors and in one week we had over 500,000.

This turned out to be somewhat of beginners luck. The second article we wrote was on a topic that is actually more important than the five tips we gave in the first article. This article was how people forget to monitor their domain names and if it’s lost it can cost you thousand or hundreds or thousands of dollars. It could also have severe security issues. We titled this article “Don’t Lose Your Domain Name.” When this article was submitted to over 20 article directories it produced less than 2% increase in traffic.

We were perplexed until it dawned on us that people don’t believe they can lose their domain name and do not equate it to security problems or a financial loss. We then had to wait to re-write the article because we didn’t want to take the chance of duplication of content. Plus we renamed the article to “Avoid the Most Costly Internet Marketing Blunder.” With the new title and rewrite, we waited over 6 months and resubmitted the article again to about 20 online directories. It did improve site traffic about 10% but never had the impact of the first article.

Our lesson: headlines do matter and that the first

test of a new idea doesn’t mean it will always work that way. There is such a thing as beginners luck.

Patricia Hughes, ePlus Marketing
www.eplusm.com

DON’T OVERLOOK COMMUNITY PAPERS

56 While daily newspapers continue to struggle, a portion of the publishing industry is not only surviving, it’s thriving. And yet community papers are often overlooked by marketers. This year in particular, community newspapers offered a major opportunity. As resources continue to get cut, many papers are increasingly turning to outside sources for content, including public relations agencies and trusted article-placement services. Marketers who are able to deliver compelling content and story ideas can take advantage of the loyal audience, hyper-local focus and popular online presence that community papers provide.

David Olson, ARAnet Inc.
www.aranetonline.com

PART 8:

Running an Agency

CHEAP ISN'T ALWAYS A GOOD DEAL

57 On educating your clients, the best and simplest motto that we must teach them that, "Just because it is cheap, doesn't make it a good deal!" And the added axiom is equally true: "Just because it is free doesn't make it a better deal either!"

Robert Franklin Lutes
Valley Housing and Economic Development Corporation

ALIGN YOUR GOALS

58 In three months we took a client's "less than optimum" website and improved traffic 142%, with over 20 top-tier keyword terms and countless long-tail terms on Google. Quarterly review: the client was furious with the results! What they said they wanted – and what they meant they wanted – were two different things.

Yes, every keyword term we kicked out as ranking in the top 10 and 20 positions were great, but they didn't get as many Web forms and phone calls as they expected to receive! Prior to coming to us they had a massive (and very expensive) PPC campaign running and were used to tracking leads based on daily dollars spent. We applied a smaller portion to PPC and aggressively went after organic results, knowing results would be more consistent and longer lasting.

Though we considered the campaign a success, the client did not. Damage control tactics, we moved a larger portion of monthly "SEO" funds to PPC and are relaxing the organic work in an attempt to balance the client's need for immediate results and results that will continue to draw when PPC dollars are used in other marketing arenas.

Lesson learned, again, during 2009: The client is always right but don't assume they speak your language when tossing terms around. The methods used would have been the same but the goals were different. We need to make sure the goals line up exactly, and not let methods interfere with the path.

David Hallmark, CrystalVision Inc.
www.cvwpp.com

TRACK CAMPAIGN CHANGES

60 Getting the offers just right takes time and patience. All too often over the year clients changed things so often it was difficult

for them to figure out which version they finally transmitted to their clients. We instituted an Email Knowledge System and the frantic calls and emails have dwindled. The system remembers and, more importantly is a vault showing all the details of the campaign.

David James, Bethesda Email Marketing
www.BethesdaEmailMarketing.com

MAINTAIN BUDGETS IN A TOUGH ECONOMY

61 With the economic situation being what it was in 2009, growth was a challenging objective, especially for a boutique agency like ours. Regardless, we added promotional products to our business mix and focused on a marketing strategy to merge the product line with our existing services.

In many ways, it was the perfect year to do this – while the economy was in flux and organizations were in transition. We stayed the course by purging our database of weak prospects and developing integrated marketing communications that targeted one major market segment. As we head into 2010, we are ready with a renewed strategy and tactics, some of which will build upon our activities from this year, and others that will bring innovation.

The key was to keep top of mind in the most cost-effective and creative ways we could, both electronically and with print direct mail. This approach, coupled with our social media participation, professional association volunteering, and my blogging, helped build even more awareness in our marketplace. It has already led to an increase in inquiries and bookings for speaking engagements and consulting and increased orders for promotional products.

Drastically cutting back on marketing during a bad economy is the last thing one should do. As a relatively young agency (almost five years) being very strategic helped us stay focused on building upon our existing foundation. We often shared our expertise and experience without expectation, hoping to help others through their struggles. Hopefully, as they recover and require marketing assistance, our agency will be one they consider.

Elaine Fogel, Solutions Marketing & Consulting
www.solutionsmc.net

QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

62 “Just because you believe something is true does not make it so.” I have started and grown two successful agencies over the past ten years based on the premise of this quote. It is imperative that those of us in the agency business are always questioning industry assumptions. We should all focus more on innovation and quickly move away from the “Mad Men” dogma that sadly still has a stronghold on many.

Dan Curran, NGAGE
www.NGAGENOW.com

INBOUND LEADS ARE AWESOME

63 As a digital and new media marketing consultant, I am constantly pushing the envelope with new technologies for my clients. As many marketers know, there isn't a tried and trusted guidebook for the new marketing tools available today and the best way to learn is to do. I launched a new website for one of my clients at the end of 2009. The client represents over 200 community centers across North America that all needed to update their location's profile through a CMS. I spread the message through the client's email listserv, intranet and other communication systems they have set up to communicate with the community centers. The week after our big internal marketing push, I got a total of 12 of the more than 200 profiles updated. I was less than enthusiastic about the results.

Dismayed but not defeated, I focused on my second opportunity to spread the word at an emarketing workshop I was conducting later in the week for approximately 20 of the community centers. Two days after educating the workshop participants to update their profile on the new site, the completed profiles nearly doubled. I learned a valuable lesson with this project. Despite the advances in communication technology, nothing will ever replace spreading the word in person.

Chris Strom, Marketplicity
www.marketplicity.com

KEEP CLIENTS ENTHUSED

64 We don't settle for “approval” of an email campaign. If a client isn't enthusiastic about it, last minute changes and breaking deadlines will be inevitable.

Jordie van Rijn, Dunck

PART 9:

Office Politics

RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE GOOD WORK

65 Consistently recognize the individual efforts of team members. Be specific. Be appreciative. Especially this year – when budgets are tight, tensions are high, and pay raises but a dream – affirmation and acknowledgement becomes even more meaningful. Making it a point to do this can positively alter the culture of an organization. I've seen it happen!

Tara Flynn Condon

MAINTAIN POSITIVE FEEDBACK

66 Your people need feedback all the time. They crave it, whether they realize it or not. But feedback does not equal criticism. Letting people know when they do something right is even more important than telling them when they do something wrong.

Positive feedback motivates. Negative feedback de-motivates. As a manager, it's not your job to show your employees who is boss. They already know that. It's your job to produce results. You cannot de-motivate results. So instead of looking for opportunities to catch your people doing something wrong, catch them doing something right. Tell them they've done something right and then watch them do it again and again. When you want to move them to adjust their behavior, look for what they've done well and start with that, then add on what they could do differently and why. They'll be much more receptive to the feedback you give. And results will follow. In the words of the Vito Corleone, "It is better to be loved than feared."

Adam Kleinberg, Traction
www.tractionco.com

PR AND MARKETING MUST WORK AS ONE

67 Even though it's a rule as old as time, many professionals do not apply it: PR and marketing **MUST** work together, for the same purpose. It's mandatory for any healthy organization to have a synergy between these two "heads" and try to align all their strategic objectives to run at the same speed. People in marketing/PR teams need to understand that lack of communication between them it only damages the company's image,

the corporate message loses its continuity and strength and the market is flooded with ambiguous actions that do not return any profit for anybody.

Simona Bogdan, BitDefender
simonabogdan.wordpress.com

TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION OF MARKETERS

69 The book “Good to Great” touches on how great companies include succession plans in their leadership. The same goes for marketing communities.

Great marketing communities build in succession plans for the next generation of college grads and entry level marketers. When it’s old news to more seasoned marketers, it might just be new to the next generation. Don’t take your wisdom for granted. Give it back to the next generation.

Amanda McGuckin Hager, GoMarket
www.gomarket.me

THE GOLDEN RULE

70 Never undermine people who are working for/with you, and who you are working for...

Anonymous

About MarketingSherpa

MarketingSherpa is a research firm publishing Case Studies, benchmark data and how-to information read by hundreds of thousands of advertising, marketing and PR professionals every week.

Praised by The Economist, Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge Site, and Entrepreneur.com, MarketingSherpa is distinguished by offering practical, results-based marketing information researched and written by a staff of in-house reporters.

MarketingSherpa's publications, available at www.MarketingSherpa.com, include:

- 840+ Case Studies on marketing from Agilent Technologies to Xerox, searchable by company or topic.
- Annual Benchmark Guides featuring primary research and collected "best of" secondary research on statistics related to search marketing, email marketing, online advertising, ecommerce and business technology marketing.

MarketingSherpa Newsletters

Visitors to MarketingSherpa.com may sign up for their choice of 7 newsletters, including specific offerings for business-to-business and business-to-consumer marketers, email marketing studies and our Career Climber newsletter – the best way to find a great marketer or a great marketing job.

Get the Weekly:

Best-of Weekly

100 Case Studies and 50 book contest giveaways per year, plus weekly links to research, awards and jobs.

Or choose by topic:

- Business-to-Business Marketing
- Marketing to Consumers
- Great Minds: Interviews
- Email Marketing
- Job Classifieds
- SherpaStore
- Chart of the Week

Sign up for any of our newsletters at www.marketingsherpa.com.

MarketingSherpa Summits

MarketingSherpa also hosts annual summits and workshops. This year's include:

B2B Marketing Summit 2010 - San Francisco: October 4-5
- Boston: October 25-26

Email Essentials Training Workshops:

<i>New York City - March 25, 2010</i>	<i>Chapel Hill, NC - June 21, 2010</i>
<i>Philadelphia - April 6, 2010</i>	<i>Atlanta - June 25, 2010</i>
<i>Washington, D.C - April 20, 2010</i>	<i>Minneapolis - July 20, 2010</i>
<i>Denver - May 11, 2010</i>	<i>San Diego - August 10, 2010</i>
<i>Seattle - May 13, 2010</i>	<i>Phoenix - August 13, 2010</i>

Contact MarketingSherpa:

Customer Service available M-F, 9-5 (ET)

Service@MarketingSherpa.com

(877) 895-1717 (outside the U.S. call 401-247-7655)

Practical Reports For You From MarketingSherpa



MarketingSherpa 2010 Email Marketing Benchmark Guide

Newly updated for 2010, MarketingSherpa's 7th Annual '2010 Email Marketing Benchmark Report' offers practical data to improve your budgeting, list growth, deliverability, testing, and ROI. Plus, you'll find out how connecting email and social media tactics to meet list growth, brand building and revenue goals are becoming more prevalent to help companies grow their overall business. Features 172 charts & tables, 3 Special Reports, and research from 1,493 real-life marketers. Published October 2009 by MarketingSherpa; \$397 for instant PDF download plus printed copy!



Best Practices in Email Marketing Handbook

This 568 page practical handbook is the single most comprehensive work on the tactics and best practices of email marketing ever written. It is designed to support senior staff in developing strategies to maximize email ROI. Its practical and step-by-step approach makes it an ideal handbook to train those less experienced in getting the fundamentals that they need. With 7 chapters, 86 case studies, 75+ Sherpa tips, and 150+ creative samples, this is a must have for all marketing departments who want to learn how to successfully grow, nurture, segment, measure, deliver and optimize your email marketing. Published March 2009 by MarketingSherpa; \$497 for instant PDF download!



The 2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report

MarketingSherpa's 2nd edition of the Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report comes at a critical point in the emergence of social media marketing as it evolves from a tactical approach to a more strategically-focused practice. To achieve social media success, marketers need to graduate from tactical novice to strategic practitioner. This benchmark report provides the data and insights for achieving this goal. The benchmark report data, derived from 2,317 marketing experts with a wide range of expertise, provides powerful charts and insights to help B2B and B2C marketers assess what works (and what doesn't) in social media marketing. This report includes 188 charts and tables and 8 critical challenges to achieving success. Published January 2010 by MarketingSherpa; \$397 for instant PDF download!

For more information, contact Customer Service at (877) 895-1717 or service@sherpastore.com

Practical Reports For You From MarketingSherpa



Search Marketing Benchmark Report 2009-10

MarketingSherpa's Search Marketing Benchmark Report 2010 is the sixth annual edition, and has been completely re-researched and rewritten to accurately reflect today's search marketing landscape. This real data will help companies better plan budgets and forecast results. Search marketing is evolving rapidly. Despite the difficult economy, search marketing continues to grow, ROI is on the rise, and technology continues to change what works and what doesn't. This report includes 176 Charts and Tables, 4 Special Sections, and research from 679 real-life marketers. Published July 2009 by MarketingSherpa; \$397 for instant PDF download!



Landing Page Handbook

MarketingSherpa's bestselling Landing Page Handbook helps you raise conversions by up to 55% or more for search, email, and ad campaigns for lead generation, ecommerce, and even blogs. Includes: page design & copy instructions; 54 stat & data charts; 114 samples of landing pages to copy; help for search, email, B-to-B, ecommerce, blogs & lead generation conversions

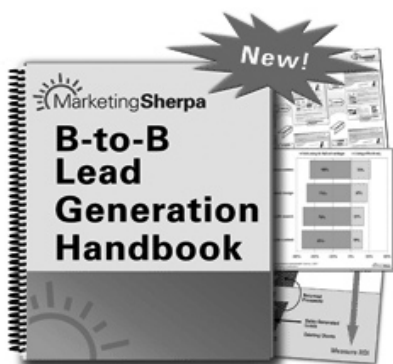
273 pages. Published November 2007 by MarketingSherpa; \$497 for instant PDF download plus printed copy!



6th Annual 'B2B Marketing Benchmark Report 2009-10'

MarketingSherpa's bestselling Landing Page Handbook helps you raise conversions by up to 55% or more for search, email, and ad campaigns for lead generation, ecommerce, and even blogs. Includes: page design & copy instructions; 54 stat & data charts; 114 samples of landing pages to copy; help for search, email, B-to-B, ecommerce, blogs & lead generation conversions

273 pages. Published November 2007 by MarketingSherpa; \$497 for instant PDF download plus printed copy!



MarketingSherpa B-to-B Lead Generation Handbook

Practical instructions to generate, qualify and nurture new business leads. Features dozens of case studies and real-life samples you can use to inspire your own demand generation campaigns. Includes proven marketing for high tech, professional services, and manufacturing, via traditional media, the Internet and Web 2.0. Plus bonus tips on how to make the Sales Department your best friends.

531 pages. Published June 2008 by MarketingSherpa; \$697 for instant PDF download plus printed copy!