

Internet Marketing in SA is misunderstood by a lot of people

There seems to be a tremendous misperception amongst marketers, especially, that Internet Marketing is somehow related to the offline world. It is key to a successful website that this association is not made. The argument is perfectly logical and simple one.

By [William Kelly](#) 11 Nov 2004

One cannot help but wonder what marketing directors and CEOs are thinking, or have been bamboozled into thinking, when adopting the approach to their websites that they have.

The argument is simply this. If a customer knows who you are before sitting down in front of a keyboard, the chances are good that this customer will know the location of your website, ie, [www.yourcompany.com](#) or marginally worse, [www.yourcompany.co.za](#). These are customers you already have.

Internet marketing has NO role to play in this scenario. However, if a customer who has not heard of you, or perhaps more importantly, was not thinking of you and comes across your site whilst browsing the Internet in search of specific information (that your company just happens to be able to supply), then Internet Marketing is very much a factor.

The sad thing is that in the vast majority of South African websites, companies waste, and I do mean waste, millions of rands annually on their websites which will never be encountered by any surfer for any search phrase whatsoever, save perhaps that of the company's brand name. What then, is the point of having a website? With a few simple, and I do mean simple, valid techniques these companies can all boost their traffic to their sites dramatically. Yet, they stubbornly persist in throwing hordes of cash at billboards, TV, radio, print, etc, when for free, they could boost their traffic dramatically, as well as their online credibility, I might add, at zero cost - simply by doing it right first time.

Facts of Internet life:

1. If it takes 5 minutes to make an on-line purchase and the average user of the Internet is online 10 hours per week THEN the Internet User buying 12 items per hour when NOT emailing or banking on the web?
2. If you agree that the user is not buying 12 items per hour, then what is she doing for the rest of the time she is not emailing or banking?
3. If your website's home page is doing the heavy sell bit (flash, prices, specials, banner ads etc) do you think this is wise based upon the correct answer to the first 2 questions?

I'm not complaining mind you. Knowing what I do, allows me to easily out compete much bigger companies for THEIR customers. And then they have to pay me for sending them their own customers! It's money for jam... and I'd hate to have to be the one to explain to Raymond Ackerman why I couldn't get a visitor to my site who was looking for an 'online shop selling bread and milk in South Africa'....

As an example, on Ananzi, who ranks well for Internet Banking? Think about this before you try it. Think about who should be right there at the very top. Internet Banking after all is a massively important reason as to why most South Africans 'hook up' to the Internet - second only to email as it happens.

The results as they are today, shouldn't be there if Internet Marketing was working for these very big companies. I challenge you in fact to try and find a 'not so new' up and coming orange and black Internet based bank in South Africa without using their brand name. Internet Marketing, if understood and implemented correctly would have these guys being found for search phrases such as "online banking services south Africa" or "banks South Africa" or even "what happened to icanonline?", given that there is suddenly an additional 12 000 people without their online bank.

Far from Internet Marketing being 'old hat' in South Africa, it is very much 'new hat'. I think that you ignore it at your peril.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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