

SA websites not ready for 2010

In recent months I have done some research into South Africa's readiness for 2010, in terms of Internet marketing. The majority of businesses seem to think that, by having a website, they have all the visibility they need to be found by the thousands of soccer supporters that will flock the country in 2010. Some even think they have a lot of time to get their web presence sorted out, as the event is only in 2010. Nothing can be further from the truth.

By [Roelof Vermeulen](#) 14 Nov 2007



To a great extent, the Internet will be the most powerful marketing strategy that any company can have for the largest sports event in the world. The markets targeted are wide and most continents will need to find information about businesses in SA. The roll-on effect of the event is even greater than most of us can comprehend and the opportunities even bigger.

So what is the big fuss about?

South Africa can expect more than 55 000 football fans from countries such as Germany, Holland, France Italy, Brazil, UK and many more. These fans will need to get their information now! Not in 2010, but now! Ticket sales are expected to open next year (2008), and fans that want to ensure that they have transport and accommodation will have to start booking now, else they risk losing the best spots. One can only imagine the frustration you will have because they couldn't find your business on their most reliable source of information, the Internet.

Here is a bit of statistics about estimated Internet users in those countries.

Country	Internet users	% of population
Asia	459 476 825	12.4%
Europe	337 878 613	41.7%
North America	232 655 287	69.5%
South America	77 978 800	21.1%
South Africa	5 100 000	10.3%
World including Africa	1 244 449 601	18.9%

Source: [internetworldstats.com](#)

When looking at the percentages of Internet users, it is clear that other countries make use of the Internet on a much larger scale than we are used to in SA. By not being visible we are losing money.

Which businesses need to be ready?

When looking at the different opportunities the event holds for SA it is amazing to realise the real impact it will have on South Africa and the different business segments. For example, sports pubs have a great opportunity to make this event work for them. Many fans will not be able to obtain tickets for their team matches. They will need to watch it somewhere social – do they know about your sports pub?

With an estimated four matches in Nelspruit and Polokwane, the tourism industries there can expect a shocker of tourism influx – will they know about your guest house or lodge? Will Johannesburg, Pretoria, Rustenburg and Nelspruit be able to handle the accommodation needs of these visitors?

Definitely, but will they know about the places we as South Africans do? They will have to be able to find your business online. How many fans will want to buy property here?

The facts are that there are many industries that will be impacted by tourist needs; is your business one of them? Building a chain of events, you will be shocked to realise that your beauty salon urgently needs a website!

Why is South Africa not ready?

The clear fact that the majority of websites within the country are not designed to be found on search engines are probably our biggest concern, but here are other concerns that business owners should have with regards to their websites:

- Websites not engaging in social media optimisation (SMO) and lack the ability of utilising SMO in order to grow their referrals.
- The lack of usability on SA websites. People need information but the usability issues of most sites being designed from the business perspective and not the visitor's perspective make it nearly impossible to find information.
- Lack of information pages. The majority of people visiting the websites from abroad will need information relevant to the 2010 event. They will need to know distances from the different matches; travel etc. and the websites locally do not provide this information.
- Lack of Internet marketing techniques. There are so many companies that simply do not engage in an Internet marketing technique to make supporters aware of their whereabouts.
- Retention strategies are not being used
- Lack of conversion methods.
- Use of social media marketing (SMM). A lot has been said about how sites such as Facebook can be utilised to market businesses. Ironically, there is not a single South African 2010 group on Facebook the moment.

A quick summary of marketing strategies

There are 12 main categories of Internet marketing. Here are a few marketing strategies that are simple to use and should make a great impact on your online presence.

- Affiliate programs – introducing an affiliate program whereby websites containing information about the tournament can promote your site by means of banners or email marketing at a commission.
- Viral Campaigns – certainly one of the most powerful marketing strategies out there that can start with

simple refer-a-friend facility or more advanced flash soccer game.

- Banner advertising – launching a banner advertising campaign on sites that get targeted traffic.
- SEO – ensuring your site is visible on Google for targeted keywords. Remember ranking for your brand name doesn't mean anything to Europeans that do not know your brand. You will need to rank for keyword phrases related to the tournament and your business.
- Search engine advertising – by buying advertising space through Google Adwords, you can ensure your website's presence within keywords your site doesn't rank for naturally.
- Applying SMO to your site – supporters move around in similar social circles online. By ensuring you have information and demographics about them, you can naturally source them for referrals from within their social groups.

There are several other methods that a website owner can utilise to ensure their cut in the web cake, and it's certainly worthwhile obtaining more information about online marketing. Is your website ready?

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