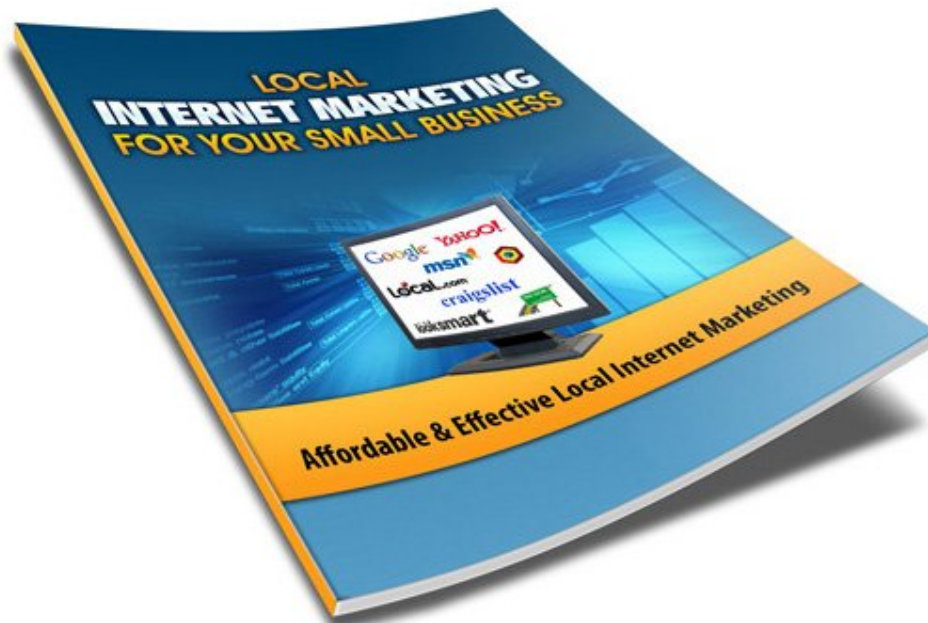


LOCAL INTERNET MARKETING FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS



Presented by:
Cline Online Marketing, LLC
Dave Cline, Owner
7635 West Ontario Place
Littleton, CO 80128
Tel: 720-312-9196
Fax: 303-933-5266

How The Internet Is Changing The Way Consumers Find Local Businesses

Introduction

When the Internet first began to grow in popularity, it was generally thought to be a means of connecting people from around the world, to share data and information, and to improve communication. As these things became second nature, big businesses grabbed onto the notion of the Internet and took it to a whole new level. Soon every major corporation had an online presence, and even the most traditional businesses were forced to embrace the new technology to remain competitive.

People used to think that the Internet could only be utilized properly by large companies with huge marketing budgets. In 2000, millions of dollars were spent on both online and offline advertising trying to drive people to certain websites. This wasn't a particularly viable business model, because the Internet simply hadn't grown enough to accommodate such huge spending. Suddenly everything fell apart, and in the wake of the dot com crash it seemed that even big businesses were going to struggle on the Internet.

Over the last few years, however, things have changed dramatically. Technology has improved and the Internet has become more popular. Instead of only being used by college students and the younger generation, the Internet is now a powerful tool to connect with almost any customer base you can think of. Every day, thousands of new people discover the Internet, and a certain percentage of them are in your immediate area.

Today's more mature technology and better developed infrastructure to support ecommerce is of particular benefit to small businesses. No longer are multi-million dollar enterprises the only ones able to afford to build a sophisticated online presence. There's also the recent emphasis by major search engines to improve their local search capabilities.

Everyone using the Internet these days is familiar with search engines, and most people browse various websites regularly. Because of this, there is less emphasis on brand building and trying to become a household name. As long as you have an online presence that takes advantage of the latest small business marketing techniques, people are going to find your business.

There are various ways you can do this, and we'll look at the different marketing strategies that can be used to take your business to the next level in a moment. Just remember, there's a myriad of consumers out there who want to find your product or service, and the Internet is the best way for them to do that. If you can build a stronger online presence than your local competitors, you've won a major battle and can look forward to a profitable future as your business grows exponentially.

Fortunately this isn't particularly difficult to do, as most small businesses aren't aware of the latest online marketing strategies for local businesses and therefore aren't putting them to use. With

millions of people on the web every day, and the Internet now a trillion dollar industry, every small business owner would be well advised to harness this new technology to their advantage.

Building an online presence

Your first port of call when building your online presence will probably be to build a website to showcase your business. Chances are all you need is a simple website which will give clear information about the product or service you provide. There's no need to fill your website with pages and pages about the industry your business is part of, because this just isn't interesting to most people visiting your site. The important thing is to appeal to your audience and make sure you anticipate and answer any questions they may have.

Your local business website doesn't need to be elaborate. It's all about building trust, and the best way to do that is to get straight to the point of who you are and what you offer, without filling your site with boring copy and extraneous information about your company.

As you can see from the graph below, building your website can have a remarkable effect on your potential customers. (IYP in the key below refers to Internet Yellow Pages.)



Harnessing the search engines

The most popular way for someone to find a website is by going through a search engine. Google is the most popular, so it's important to target their results more than other search engines. Here are some incredible stats about search engines that you may not know:

- 75% of Americans use search engines on a regular basis.
- 56% of all Americans use one every single day.
- 40% of all searches are for local businesses and services.
- 54% of Americans regularly use the Internet instead of the phone book to find local services
- 92% of all local searches will eventually convert into a sale

The search engine industry used to be about very short “keywords” that would lead people to the website they were looking for. Everyone used to type things like “New York Real Estate” into a search engine, check out the first few results and then make a decision.

However, these days consumers are becoming much better at searching with Google, so keywords have progressively become longer and more detailed in order to return more relevant results. For example, instead of just “New York Real Estate” which may give us some good generic websites for that keyword phrase, we might type “New York Low Price Apartments”.

The reason we would do this is because we're fed up with searching through websites that don't offer us the chance to see any low priced housing. So we're using Google to narrow our search results rather than clicking on a gazillion websites.

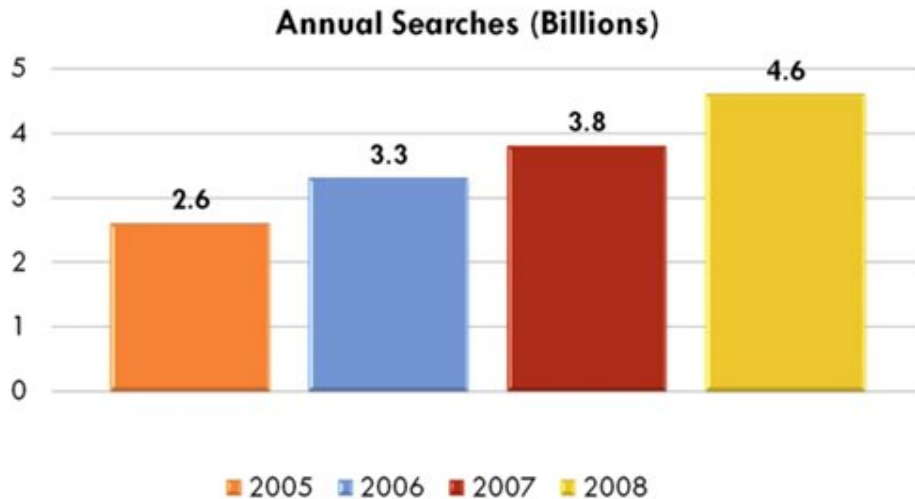
The leading search engines are aware of this, and have recently given increased attention to improving their local search capabilities. By coupling more targeted search results with online mapping technology, small businesses now have access to powerful tools to help them attract potential customers and guide them to their location.

All this has revitalized the world of small businesses online. Instead of just searching for a product or service, people now search for a niche product or service in a particular area. This means that, instead of massive chains dominating the search results, small business websites are flourishing.

Be advised, however, that effective local Internet marketing requires a completely different approach than traditional SEO (Search Engine Optimization). It's a highly specialized field of endeavour, with a fairly substantial learning curve required to both master the required online promotional techniques and also keep up with the latest technological developments. Without these skills, you simply aren't going to know how to get your business found on the front page of Google when local customers search for your product or service.

With more people moving towards local searches, you're going to need to target your Internet Marketing to specific keywords and phrases. If you fail to do this, you'll be competing with the major players in your industry nationally, and it's a battle you almost certainly won't win.

The graph below shows the massive increases the local search industry is seeing.

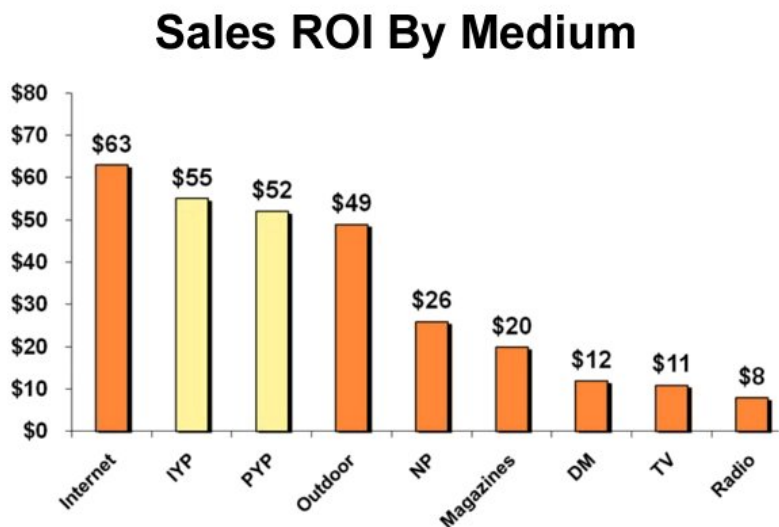


Building a captive audience

When local customers start searching for products or services in their area, they will most likely be very clear of their intentions. They are generally ready to buy. One of the most powerful parts of Internet marketing is the ability to build a relationship with someone without ever speaking to them personally.

Different people perform searches in different ways. By allowing consumers to find your business in different locations throughout the Internet, you can be sure to reach the widest possible audience, all of whom will be interested in your product or service.

As we can see from the graph below, the Internet is an incredibly effective way of selling your product in comparison to other advertising media. Never before have businesses been able to communicate so effectively with their potential customers.



Clearly, the Internet represents the greatest return on investment for your advertising dollar.

Being found on the Internet

People use the Internet in very diverse ways, and you can't possibly hope to capture every single person who might be looking for a product like yours. However, you can maximize your odds of being found by making sure your business is listed in a variety of key online locations.

With so many different types of content and various ways of receiving information, there are limitless possibilities for marketing your business on the Internet. Whether this is in the form of search engine placement, local business directories, online classifieds, or videos about your product posted on popular websites, you're sure to find people who are looking for your product or service.

Internet marketing is essentially about being "found" online by the people who will become customers. They will be looking for what you are selling, so all you have to do is make it as easy as possible for them to find you. Once your business can be located all over the Internet in classifieds, directories, and search engines, there'll be a flood of people wanting to do business with you.

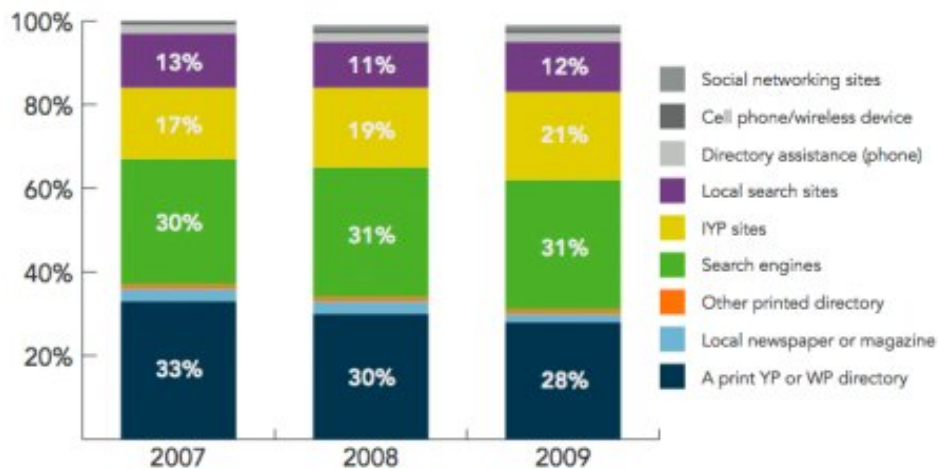
Building links to your business

One of the most important parts of Internet Marketing is listing your business on websites with high levels of traffic that will give you the best opportunity to be seen by local customers, and therefore make plenty of sales.

There are local directories on the Internet that showcase only businesses in a particular area. These are excellent resources for you to use because they allow your business to be shown in a highly targeted manner. Local directories also tend to be used by people who are struggling to find what they're looking for, so if your site is listed properly in the right categories, you're bound to entice people towards your business.

Conclusion

As we can see from the graph below, the Internet is dominating the way people find local businesses. The graph shows the breakdown for the primary source of finding local business information:



As we've seen throughout this report, the Internet is taking over as the most important way to market your business. If you embrace it now, your business will survive and probably flourish even in the most difficult times.

Given that local search has only become truly popular in the last few years, and assuming the trend continues, its importance is likely to grow even more in the future.

There are so many different ways of building up a good online presence that you can't fail to succeed. By putting your business in front of a highly targeted audience, increased profits are almost guaranteed.

If you would like further assistance to put your business in all the right places where local consumers are looking most, please contact me:

Dave Cline, Owner
Cline Online Marketing, LLC
7635 West Ontario Place
Littleton, CO 80128

Tel: 720-312-9196
Fax: 303-933-5266

Visit: www.ClineOnlineMarketing.com
Email: Dave@ClineOnlineMarketing.com