

The Tweet Smell of Success: New Technologies Offer Great Online Marketing Opportunities

By David Hoffman, Search Smart Marketing

Have you “Binged” any information today? Sent a “Tweet” to your “followers”? Or “friended” someone new on “Facebook”?

If you can answer “yes” to at least two of these questions, you probably have a good sense of where the Internet is today and the communications opportunities the latest technologies offer to marketers. But if you’re still getting comfortable with the idea of “Googling” someone in public, it’s probably time to become acquainted with the apps your kids grew tired of months ago when businesses began discovering ways to use them to speak to their audiences.

The fast-paced evolution of the Internet has historically made it challenging for marketers to develop effective plans which incorporate newer media; case in point - just as advertisers discovered banner positions on MySpace, the social networking crowd departed to Facebook which quickly became the preferred online meeting place.

Companies large and small now recognize that while the Internet is a crucial component of running their business, it’s also an integral part in the lives of their customers who use it daily to research products and services and make purchase decisions. This is evidenced by the latest study released by the research firm eMarketer that projects an annual 10% increase in Internet advertising while nearly every other media type is expected to be flat at best in the current economy.

An early promise of Internet advertising was that of a “level playing field” which allowed companies to take on marketing Goliaths with the budget of a David. And while the big brands have claimed a large stake in online marketing, many of the newest technologies make good on that promise and provide marketers with the opportunity to reach their audiences at little or no cost:

Social Media – In addition to a company web site, customers now regularly turn to social media such as blogs, Business Facebooks and LinkedIn for a more interactive relationship. There’s often no cost associated with maintaining these web presences but they do require time and commitment to keep the lines of communication flowing on an ongoing basis. Active, high-profiles on Facebook and LinkedIn can be great for building awareness, making introductions and developing relationships.

Twitter - While categorized as social media, the communications are one-way from User to followers. As the company is still figuring out how to monetize their 20 million monthly visitors (*May, 2009; Compete.com*), savvy marketers have discovered how to use those 140 characters for communications other than “I’m in a long line in Dunkin’ Donuts”. For example, Dell computer Twitters prospective customers about specials on new PCs and reported that its [@DellOutlet](#) Twitter account has brought more than \$1 million in revenue in six months.

Search Engine Marketing - If you’ve spent advertising budget on Google’s Adwords and found the Pay-per-Click solution wanting, a new Search Engine Marketing (SEM) option was recently introduced by an unlikely source; Microsoft. The latest incarnation of their search engine, Bing, holds promise, possibly benefitting from a Google backlash. Bing deviates from the sparse Google page with a well-designed, graphical interface and returns listings from diverse categories related to a user’s search. Internet monitoring service StatCounter reported that Bing quickly leapfrogged Yahoo as the number two search engine in the U.S. with the help of a \$100 million

advertising blitz. Advertisers can set spends to what their budget allows and the average Cost-per-Click on Bing can be significantly lower than Google AdWords.

Google Universal Search – In the past year, Google introduced the concept that, in addition to web site listings, users want search results to include relevant online content such as videos, news releases and blogs. Businesses have found that adding a video to their site – such as product training or demos – and making it available on YouTube can help them gain audience and higher ranking on search engines. Many now regard YouTube as a search engine for videos; if you think it's still a repository for clips of cats riding bicycles, there's that too but take another look.

While not every company has the time or resources to instantly adopt all of the opportunities outlined here, there are few businesses that won't benefit from exploring the technologies that make sense for them and determine ways to leverage these opportunities to achieve 2009 business objectives. At a minimum, they'll be better positioned for 2010 when there will undoubtedly be a whole new set of technologies that our kids are enthralled with now but will be sending our way by year's end.

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