

Marketing in Vancouver

Insider Secrets to Successful Local Marketing

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www.MarketinginVancouver.com

Compliments of
Vancouver Marketing Services

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.

Regardless of what type of a business you may be operating I promise that you'll find some ideas in here that you can implement immediately.

If you would like to take advantage of our **free marketing analysis** you may do so by clicking the 'Free Analysis' button on the top right hand corner of our site and completing the very short questionnaire on the page that appears. We will review your answers and return a customized analysis to you within **2 business days**.

Thanks again and best of luck with all of your marketing efforts.

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Foreword

Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night with an idea in your head that just doesn't go away? Of course you have. In fact, I bet that your business started that way.

That happened to me on April 18th, 2010. The idea of a book called Marketing in Vancouver just popped into my head and it wouldn't go away. I obsessed about it non-stop for five or six days until I finally had to flesh out the concept.

Basically, this is what was going through my mind. I'm a marketing guy and my marketing mantra is to give customers and prospective customers outstanding information. I often give it away for free for three reasons. First, so that they can see that I know what I'm doing. Second, to allow them to educate themselves about everything I'm able to do. Finally, I want them to contact me once they know what I do, believe I can do it and are comfortable enough with me to discuss a deeper business relationship.

In fact, the marketing system I outlined in my first book, *Nice People Can Sell* is predominantly built around this concept of giving away secrets for free. It is also a central theme to this book.

I know that you are the expert in your field. Almost every small business owner I've ever met has enough information in their head about their business to fill an entire Wikipedia. Yes, their friends and family may know this but the only people that matter – customers and potential customers – may not.

That's a big problem.

The whole idea of being perceived as the expert is another central theme to this book. When everything in your marketing is built to establish your credibility, your job of selling becomes much easier.

All of this ties in to the flash of insight I had on April 18th in many ways. First, I wanted to provide Vancouver small business owners with a valuable resource for making significant improvements in their marketing efforts. I wanted to do this because I'm tired of seeing small business owners struggle with sales.

Just as importantly, it bothered me that there is so much marketing knowledge contained locally but nobody seemed to be sharing it. The natural tendency for any business owner is to hold on to his or her secrets or risk competitors stealing them or potential clients simply doing things themselves.

That is bound to happen in isolated cases but it rarely does. Instead, by sharing information freely, customers can see that you do indeed know what you're talking about and they will come to view you as the expert in your field.

By working with a number of local business owners (and in some cases having to pry their trade secrets out of them) with this book and our site at MarketinginVancouver.com, I've attempted to provide you with the best information possible to help you improve the marketing of your business.

I've also tried to make this information as easy to follow and implement as possible. I know that you are busy and that you may not be as enthusiastic about marketing as I am. You don't need to know the 'whys' behind every marketing campaign but

you do just want to implement ideas as quickly and in the least risky manner possible.

For these reasons this book is a very easy read. The ideas can be quickly and easily implemented. However, by coupling this book with the resources area on our site, you can also dive deeper into the details of why these ideas work if you so desire.

Introduction

Welcome fellow Vancouverite and small business owner. Congratulations on taking the time and making the effort to improve the effectiveness your marketing.

Regardless of what type of business you run you will find something in this book that pertains to you.

At the 30,000 foot level what you can expect to find in this book are two things. First is an automated system for building your business. This is a proven system of:

- building your credibility as the expert in your field
- finding prospects that have some interest in what you're selling
- educating those prospects about what you do and why they should do business with you and finally,
- making it as easy as possible for them to buy from you.

And, as mentioned, we're going to do this in a way that is practically fully automated so you don't have to spend your valuable time either searching out prospects for your business or speaking with unqualified sales prospects.

The other thing you'll find here is a rolodex of invaluable resources to make some or all of these marketing concepts work for you. You are a business owner. As such, you are the expert at whatever it is that you do. However, chances are that you're not an expert at sales or marketing and you may not even like going out and soliciting new customers.

That's ok. This book will give you an approach to setting up your marketing system and within the resources section of our site you'll find companies and individuals that are the experts at marketing and promotion. You'll be able to gain access to their expertise and suggestions through videos and audios that are free to download in our resources area.

Please be sure to make good use of these resources as you will find them to be invaluable to the success of your business.

Speaking of the success of your business, there are a number of great ideas contained in this book but I'll start by saying that these concepts will only have any value to your business if you apply them. The greatest ideas in the world are useless unless you implement them in your own business.

How often have you thought of something you should try but then life gets in the way and you forget about it? It happens all the time but as we've all heard a million times, "If you want the results to change you have to change what you're doing."

Nowhere is this more applicable than in marketing your business.

However, many of us put off taking action because we're afraid that something won't work or because something isn't perfect yet. We don't try new things because we're not 100% sure of the outcome.

Well, the good news is that marketing is never perfect. When done properly it is a process of constant improvement. This improvement is achieved by following two essential pieces of advice that I'll refer to throughout this book.

First, test everything. Almost any type of marketing concept or tactic can be tested on a small scale and then rolled out once it begins to show positive results.

The second idea is to measure everything. You're a small business owner in Vancouver and chances are you don't have the unlimited marketing budgets of McDonalds or Nike. As such, you always want to test small and track or measure everything that you do.

When you're measuring everything you'll know where you're making money and where you're losing money. This is essential to building successful marketing campaigns over the long term.

So to summarize, test small and measure everything. That really is the recipe for winning the marketing game. Your losses will be minor but when you do find something that works for you, you'll be able to ramp it up into a big winner.

But again, only if you apply it.

PART 1: Key Concepts to Understand

Before we get into what to actually do I'd like to cover why we're doing specific things in specific ways. I know you want to jump right in to the various ideas presented here but I strongly encourage you to go through these basic concepts and get them engrained in your mind first.

Everything presented in this book is modular. That means you can pick and choose what you think is best for your particular business. However, when your marketing system is set up properly right from the get-go these concepts can also build on one another very nicely.

When you have a strong foundation for your marketing (something I'll be referring to as your 'sales funnel'), you'll be in a much better position to grow your business without many of the stresses and complications that often pester the owner of a business that is growing too quickly.

Once you understand why you should be doing something and you can see the long-term benefits of a good marketing system, all of the other things will make sense and it will be much easier to break through the inertia of getting started.

The Importance of Credibility

I've already said this once and you'll hear me mention numerous times before the end of this book. You are the expert in your field and the more people that know this and recognize your expertise the more successful both yourself and your business will be.

The fact is that our society loves experts and we have no problem paying for advice, help or services from those we perceive as experts.

Notice that I used the word 'perceive' in that sentence. You don't have to be the de-facto, global expert in your industry. You only have to be the perceived expert in your local market. In fact, most people would agree that being the expert at something means that you know more about it than the majority of your customers.

Like it or hate it, if you own a business you're selling something. Guess what? Selling becomes a whole lot easier when your prospective customers consider you to be the expert in your field. They will seek you out (no more cold-calling for you) and they're more apt to pay your asking price.

If you question this, think about the last time you went to the dentist or brought your pet to a veterinarian. Did you haggle over the bill or did you just pay it?

Chances are you just paid it because that is the way society operates. The degrees on their wall and those white smocks (does anyone say that anymore?) instill expert status in these professionals. We take their advice and we pay what they ask.

This is an important concept to understand because it is critical to the success of your business. The less doubt your customers have in their minds that you know what you're doing and that you're the right person for the job, the more likely they are to do business with you and pay what you ask.

And unless you sell something that is a complete and total commodity, this concept definitely applies to you and your business.

As such, you'll notice that nearly every marketing approach – from building your website and sales funnel down to how you first get the attention of your prospects – is directed around branding you as the expert at whatever it is that you do.

That said, if you think that we're talking about brand-building here you're both right and wrong. We're not talking about brand-marketing like McDonald's or Nike practice. Just leave all that nonsense to companies with more dollars than sense.

What we are talking about here is building the brand of YOU. People do business with other people – not businesses.

People also do business with people that they know, like and trust. Your marketing system is going to be built so that people feel as though they know you, recognize you as the only choice for your products or services and actually have an affinity towards doing business with you – all before they even meet you.

This will all happen thanks to your marketing system.

The Marketing Success Formula

As a business owner you likely already know what makes a business successful. However, I'm willing to bet that you've never seen it broken down like this before. If you really understand this formula, everything in this book will make total

sense. You'll also be better able to spot problem areas in your marketing system as they arise.

This is what I call the marketing success formula:

Traffic x Conversion x Life Time Value = Revenue

Traffic = Number of people that know about your business

Conversion = Percentage of people that take some sort of measurable, positive action

Life Time Value = The total bottom-line profit your average customer is worth to you from the time they begin buying to the time they go away.

Revenue = What we're all after.

All of these concepts are fairly straight-forward but I'll explain them anyway.

Traffic can be thought of as visitors to your store or website, readers of an ad or a press release, watchers of a TV ad or openers of a direct mail piece. For the purposes of this book and because we're going to emphasize the importance of driving visitors to your website, we'll use website visitors to measure the traffic portion of our formula.

Conversion can be measured in a number of different ways and how you measure it is totally up to you. Conversion might represent the percentage of people that walk into your store and buy something. Or it could be the percentage of sales presentations that you make resulting in a sale. But because you likely have a product or service that you sell off-line (ie. you must either meet with a prospect face to face or talk to him or her on the phone to make a sale) we're going to consider conversion as the percentage of your website visitors that become sales leads for your business.

Life Time Value is something that you may not have given enough thought to calculating. You have a certain number of customers. You also likely have a certain number of products or services all priced differently. However, life time value is the average figure in net profits that each customer is worth to your business from the time she becomes your customer to the time she stops spending money with you.

I don't think revenue needs any explanation, right?

Ok, now when we take a closer look at the formula you'll notice two things may catch your eye. First, none of the components of the formula can equal zero or any business is dead.

Second, by increasing any of the three components on the left side of the equation we increase revenue. So, if traffic and conversion remain constant but each customer is spending more with us, we become more profitable. If traffic and LTV remain the same but our conversion increases, we become more profitable.

At the same time, minor improvements in each of the three components on the left result in a significant increase in revenue.

I hope you're seeing the importance of this formula. Most small business websites are not profitable and most small business owners think that traffic is the culprit. That could be the case, but it could also be that your site simply isn't converting visitors to sales leads for you. If you don't get any sales leads to follow-up with you'll never generate any revenue.

However, if you're not testing new things and measuring everything, you'll never know that. Remember earlier when I mentioned how we're going to test small and measure?

In the following chapters and as you go about piecing together your marketing strategy, you're going to be seeing how all of these basic concepts fit together. However, for now just burn in your mind, the importance of testing, measuring, traffic, conversion and life time value. These are all things that you intrinsically know as a business owner but sometimes we all need a little reminder about what is important.

Oh, in case you're thinking the credibility and expertise status doesn't fit into the equation, it does.

Credibility is a multiplier. It will make everything you do easier and more effective. A whole lot more fun too.

And with that, we're going to move onto the hub that is going to make your whole marketing engine tick...

Your Small Business Website

Though I can talk about this topic for hours, I'm going to keep this brief. You either have a website already or you don't. If you do have a site, it is either profitable or it isn't.

Whatever the case, you're going to love this section because it is likely going to be the complete opposite everyone has ever told you about having a website.

The sad fact is that most websites are not profitable. Sure, we all hear about the success of eBay and Craigslist but nobody ever mentions that 98% of small business sites never make a

dime. I'm pulling that number out of the air by the way but I'm sure it is pretty close to reality.

The reason that most small business websites fail is because they're not built with the Success Formula in mind (I told you we'd be coming back to this, right?).

If you're a small business owner you don't have a website to impress your friends or colleagues. You have a website to generate revenue and revenue is generated using the Success Formula.

In case this isn't clear most small businesses have a website to accomplish three main objectives:

1. To attract visitors (sales prospects) for your business
2. To convert those visitors to sales leads that you can follow-up with automatically
3. To build your credibility as the expert in your field

That is it. Unless you either offer a product for sale on your site or sell advertising on your site, the only reason that you have a site is to accomplish the three objectives above.

As you can imagine, you don't need to spend a fortune having a site designed and built to accomplish these simple tasks. Yes, depending on your industry your site must look professional and it can't be a complete eyesore. At the end of the day, your site is a direct reflection of your business.

However, it doesn't need to be extravagant and it doesn't need to cost you a fortune. I once worked closely with a digital agency in England and the owner wouldn't even talk to a client

unless they had a minimum of 100,000 POUNDS to invest in a website. In my mind, that is crazy.

My philosophy is to build a decent website that has the main components to make it successful and then invest money in promoting your business as necessary.

Before we get into what those components actually are I'd like to share with you a rather unique approach to setting up your marketing funnel so that it is as automated and as efficient as possible.

The whole idea of any marketing you do from now on should be the same. You want to find people that may be interested in what you do, educate them about what you sell and build your status as the expert in your field so that they contact you when they're ready to buy.

If you spend any of your time cold-calling for business or attending business networking functions now, you might think that automating your sales prospecting like this is completely impossible.

It isn't... and this is how you're going to do it.

Your Automated Sales Funnel

Too many small business owners waste their valuable time trying to find prospects for their business and/or talking to people that are not qualified to do business with them. This results in frustration and a whole lot of angst.

A better way to find and qualify sales prospects is to let your marketing take care of the tedious and time-consuming aspects

of selling. Specifically, we're talking about finding sales prospects and explaining to them what you do and why they should do business with you rather than your competition.

The end goal of all your marketing is to provide you with a steady stream of sales prospects that know what you do, recognize you as the expert in your field and have a genuine affinity towards you after going through your sales funnel.

And this sales funnel all starts with your website. Rather than looking at your website as either a business card for your company or an encyclopedia of all that you can do, remember why we said you have a site in the first place. To find, educate and qualify sales prospects for your business.

Key Components of a Lead Generation Website

First of all your website must be structured properly if you want to get free search engine traffic from Google. We'll be getting into this a little more in the search engine optimization section of this book but for now just understand that structuring your site is critical. It is also fairly easy and very cheap to fix if your site wasn't built properly in the first place.

Apart from how your site is structured, everything you do with your site is addressing the 'conversion' component of the Success Formula. You'll be surprised how much more profitable your business will become by just making some simple adjustments to your site.

Assuming you want to generate sales leads on your site (which you definitely DO) you'll want to have a lead-capture form or your phone number appearing prominently on every page of

your site. Your lead capture form must be tied into an automated email system. Each prospect that completes the form will then be entered into a database and she will receive a series of email messages sent out in a timed and automated sequence.

Of course, people won't just give you their email address for no reason. You need to provide them with some sort of incentive to do so. We call this an offer.

Your offer is something that you give away for free in exchange for a prospective customer's contact information. I prefer to use videos or free reports for my offers but what you decide on is up to you.

For more information about offers and automating email check out the resources section of our site.

You'll also want to have video on your site. Ideally, that video should be you sharing your expertise or one or more of your clients telling every visitor to your site what a pleasure it is to do business with you.

Of course, you can have both. For videos that you star in you want to explain to visitors what you do and why you're the best bet for their business. A good way to do that is to solve problems. Maybe answer some questions that you get all the time about your business. Your wife or husband may be sick of hearing about your business but anyone trying to make a buying decision will definitely appreciate this information.

An even better solution is to ask your customers for video testimonials. Social proof is key in marketing and visitors that

see other people just like them enjoying whatever it is that you sell will make their buying decision much easier.

Of course, testimonials don't have to be in the form of video. They could be audio or even written. The important thing is that you have something on your site that puts your visitors at ease.

If you have any awards or accreditations, include those. If you've been mentioned in the media or in a book, include that information as well. All of these things build your credibility and will make your job of selling much easier down the road.

Don't worry about the quality of your videos too much. Most of my early videos were shot using a webcam and were embarrassing quite frankly. However, every time I added a video to a page of my site, my conversion improved and I received more sales leads. That is all the proof that I needed to buckle down and get some videos made.

Most small business owners shudder at the thought of starring in their own videos – especially after I show them some of the videos I've done myself 😊

That's ok. Another option – and one that is gaining big-time popularity – is to hire a professional spokesperson to present your messages on your site. It sounds complicated and expensive but the truth is that it needn't be either.

Go to Vancouver Video Promotion's website at VideoPromotion.ca and find the On-Site video section. There you'll be able to choose from over 50 different professional spokespeople for your site. Once you've chosen the model that you like, simply follow the instructions on the screen.

You'll be able to write or own script (or get some help from the team at Vancouver Video Promotion) and choose how and where you would like your video to display. There are a few variables but the process is very simple.

In the end, you'll have a professional spokesperson saying exactly what you want your visitors to hear. It adds a whole new dimension to your site and drastically increases the conversion component of the Success Formula. After all, this spokesperson will be on your site, selling your products or services exactly as you want them to 24/7.

Your spokesperson will speak to hundreds of people at the same time, will never get tired or complain and never ask for time off or a raise. Best of all, you don't have to pay any sales commissions on all the new business he or she will attract for you.

A Few More Things to Consider...

If you're collecting email addresses or phone numbers on your site you'll want to include a privacy policy. This just explains to visitors what you'll be doing with their information and it goes a long way in making them more comfortable in sharing their information with you.

If you want visitors to call you, make sure your phone number is prominent on your site. If you'd rather they join your email list make that the most prominent component of your site.

Whatever you do, make it easy for visitors. It is too easy for visitors to get frustrated and to click that back button on the

browser. Every time this happens it is costing you money and a potential life time customer.

Last thing... at this one is a gem of an idea. Set up the information that you're collecting on your website to forward to your cell phone. If you have a smart phone simply have the email sent directly to it. If you have a regular phone you can have emails sent as text messages to it.

The reason that you'll want to do this is simple. When someone is comparing different services they most likely are not going to just contact you. They are going to contact you and some or all of your competitors. When you set up your site and marketing funnel as outlined here you'll already have a distinct advantage but by being the first to return the call or email, you'll be in an even better position for gaining new business.

Imagine the effect you'll have on a customer that completes a form on your site and 30 seconds later she receives your call asking how you might be able to help her. Provided you're not overly aggressive in your approach, what will likely go through her head is, "If this company is willing and able to provide responsiveness like that before I'm even a paying customer what can I expect once I'm paying for service?"

The effectiveness of this amplifies as your competitors eventually get back to the prospect days later – if they get back to her at all.

This has been a rather basic overview of setting up a website to generate sales leads for your business. Of course, you want to have some content on your site about how you are and what you do but if you're interested in generating leads, don't give

away the whole story on your site. Have visitors give you some contact information in exchange for your informative videos or reports.

Once you have their contact information you can proactively reach them with pertinent information and occasional sale offers rather than having to wait for them to come back to you.

More importantly, you can do all of this automatically so your system educates and qualifies your prospective customers – not you.

You'll find more information on this in our Resources area.

Why this Approach is So Effective

Before we jump into the next section, let's take a look at why we're going to set up our site to build credibility and generate sales leads for us.

It seems counter-intuitive, doesn't it? I mean, you want sales. You don't want to spend good money getting customers to your site only to give away free information.

However, think about how a buying decision is made. I'm going to assume that you're in a business that has customers with a high average Life Time Value. Very rarely does anyone see your Yellow Pages ad, give you a call and say, "I like your ad. Can I swing by your shop and pick up the new Audi R8 from you?"

In reality what happens is the process takes time. People buy from people they know, like and trust and building such relationships takes time. But when you allow your marketing to drip information that educates your prospects and builds your

credibility (and does so on auto-pilot) and you can build multiple relationships with multiple prospective customers at the same time. Most importantly, you can do all of the above without having to spend your valuable time doing so.

In sales, everyone is taught the importance of following up with prospective clients or customers. We're told that most people won't buy from us until the seventh time they've been contacted.

Unfortunately, this led to far too many sales people phoning prospects just to see if they're ready to buy... yet. Seven contacts in this manner does not build relationships. It destroys them.

On the other hand, when your marketing system is providing them with valuable information about how to use your product or service or information that will help them make a decision about your product or service, you're no longer an unwelcomed pest. You'll become a welcomed guest.

The reason you'll stand out is because you are actually acting in the best interest of your customers and they see that. They also see that none of your competitors are taking this approach to sales and you'll quickly become perceived as the expert in your market.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, once you have your marketing funnel set up to do all of this automatically, you can then turn your attention to just filling the funnel. You do that by utilizing different marketing approaches that we'll discuss in the following sections.

Maximizing Life Time Value

Before we finish up this section let's circle back to our Marketing Success Formula and the concept of Life Time Value. Obviously, the more profitable revenue that you can generate from each of your customers the better off you're going to be.

Note that I said "profitable revenue". Not all revenue is profitable. It is very easy to get sucked into thinking that any customer is a good customer and all sales are good sales.

Don't let this happen to you!

We all have customers that grind us down on price and then complain or try to return the product regardless of what we do to try to make them happy. These are not profitable sales.

I'm not going to get into my philosophy of charging more and only dealing with good customers here. Instead, I'm going to share with you the fastest and easiest way to leverage your marketing efforts and the sales funnel you're in the process of creating.

Let's assume that you've set up your website to capture sales leads. You've done that by coming up with a great offer and providing it for free to anyone that gives you their contact information. Their contact information then goes into your automated email system and the sales prospect is followed-up with on a regular and consistent basis.

With me so far? Great.

So now you have a list of people that have some interest in what you do and they're interested in what you have to say.

We know this because if they didn't want to hear from you they would simply remove themselves from your list.

You are going to provide these people valuable information about you and your business. You're going to show them your expertise using email and in doing so, you'll be building your credibility and setting yourself apart from your competitors.

As they become more comfortable with you and as they get closer to making a decision about your product or service you can be sure that you will be at least on the list of people they call.

Apart from that though, here is another very powerful way to leverage your relationships to maximize your LTV. I think that you would agree that there is nothing more profitable than selling something that doesn't cost you anything, correct?

At this point you might be thinking that I've lost it again. Everything has some kind of costs associated to it. It must cost money to make or money to market or at least money to distribute, right?

Not always. You can partner with someone that sells a product or service that your customer base might also be interested in buying and promote it to your list using email. If someone buys through your referral the owner of the product will ship it out to them and send you a referral fee.

On the Internet these are called "affiliate partnerships" and they are a very common way to do business. From your point of view you already have an email list and it doesn't cost anything to send an email. As long as the product you're recommending is high quality and honestly solves problems, you'll be doing

your list a favour by telling them about it. The commissions you earn through these sales will go straight to your bottom line.

The key with such partnerships is to never ever exploit your list. The priority is always to provide valuable information. The primary reason of building a list is to keep in touch with prospects interested in what you do and display to them that you are the best choice when their ready to buy. You don't want to jeopardize their confidence by hitting them repeatedly with sales messages.

I hope that you're beginning to see the importance of setting up your marketing system in this manner and building an email list. Sure, it may require a little bit of work at the beginning but once it is set up it is done. You're going to be in business for a long time and the effort you put into building your marketing system now will continue to pay off for years to come.

PART 2: Online Marketing Methods

There is a reason that everyone is clamouring to marketing online. As a general rule, it is more cost-effective to generate sales leads online than it is through more traditional or mass advertising methods.

That is all well and good but my favourite benefit to online marketing is that almost everything can be automated to a large degree. We've already talked about automating your email follow-up (which is crucial) and now we'll look at partially or fully automating other aspects of your Internet marketing.

Note that at this point (and for almost the entire remainder of this book) we'll be addressing the 'traffic' component of our Success Formula. We're assuming here that you've already set up your website to capture leads, you've written all the emails that your automated system will send out and you've tested your sales funnel to make sure it is relatively leak-proof. Now you can just turn on the traffic and watch the leads roll in.

Pay per Click Marketing

The reason that I'm listing pay per click (PPC) marketing first is quite frankly, I don't believe that there is a local business anywhere that can't make it work for them.

If you're not familiar with PPC it is very simple to explain. Generally speaking, people are on the Internet searching for information. They have an idea what they're looking for so they go to Google or one of the other search engines and type it in.

Google returns a list of sites that Google feels are related to that search term that they typed in.

Because Google and other search engines are smart and they get millions of visitors per day doing various searches, they decided that it would be smart to 'monetize' all of this traffic (the Success Formula even applies to Google ☺). That is where pay per click marketing comes in.

Google returns two sets of results. One set is called the natural or organic results. These are the sites that Google feels are most relevant to the search. To get listed here your site must be structured and promoted properly. Most sites are not listed on the first page of the Google results.

The other set of results are the 'sponsored' listings. Advertisers can pay to have their ad appear when certain search terms are typed in. For example if you have a dog boarding business in Vancouver, you may want to have your ad appear when someone types in that phrase to Google. To do so you bid on that term and when someone clicks on your ad and goes through to your site you pay Google a fee.

The benefits of PPC marketing are pretty cool. You can target exactly what people are searching for so the traffic that you get is pretty qualified. If someone goes to a search engine, types in "buy poodle puppy in Vancouver", sees your ad that says, "We Sell Poodle Puppies" and clicks through to your site you know you have a pretty qualified visitor.

PPC is also great for generating traffic to your website quickly. You can set up an Adwords (the name for Google's PPC

program) account and within ten minutes start having traffic to your site.

A third benefit that is unique to PPC is that you can select specific geographical areas in which to display your ads. If you have a clothing store in Kitsilano and from experience, you know that nobody is going to drive in from Abbotsford to visit your store, you simply choose to display your ads to people that are within a certain radius of your store. Maybe 30km in this case? This way, you're not wasting any money on people that would not likely become customers anyway.

Having said that, if you have any experience using PPC in general and Adwords in particular you know that two things are also true. Adwords can be very expensive and setting up an account properly is somewhat complicated.

It is well beyond the scope of this book to get in to all the intricacies of setting up a PPC campaign but it goes without saying that you should be looking at this as an option for getting exposure for your business. Check out the Resources area for some more help with PPC marketing.

Search Engine Optimization

Ok, I had to take a short break before writing this section because I know it could be a little long-winded if I'm not careful. Basically, search engine optimization (SEO) is the art and science of getting your website and content to rank on the top rankings of Google and the other search engines.

As a side note when I say Google I mean any and all of the search engines. It is just that Google has become so dominant

in the market that it really is becoming the only one that matters.

Here is the thing about getting good search engine rankings. There are ten spots on Google's first page and every business in your market is competing for those ten spots. Since very few searchers will go through to the second page your site must be on the first page or for all intensive purposes, it is lost in cyberspace.

But here is another thing about SEO for local businesses. It really is easy to get into those top ten spots if you know what Google rewards and what they don't like.

Nobody can guarantee a #1 spot on Google and you should quickly turn and run from anyone that does. However, someone that is competent and confident can look at a market and with a fair amount of accuracy can predict whether he or she can get a site in the top ten within a reasonable time frame.

Google has to basic criteria they use when their determining the quality of your site. The first is on-site criteria which includes the content of your site, the structure of your site and the behaviour of visitors on your site.

As far as site content, you don't need an encyclopedia but you do need to have some decent amount of content so that Google recognizes you as a source of information. Remember people are searching for information on the Internet and Google tries desperately to provide them with sites with good information relative to what they're searching for.

So make sure you provide a fair amount of content (ten pages is plenty for most local markets) and any different type of media

such as audio or video also helps. More on the reason for this below.

As far as structuring your site properly you need to understand that Google is a gigantic machine run by robots. These robots are programmed to go out through links, look at sites and report back with what they find.

Here is the thing. Many small business sites are not even indexed by Google. This means that Google doesn't even know they exist. This happens because a site is put up but there are no links for the Google robot to follow to get to it. Or the site owner didn't take the time to notify Google that their site is there. Both of these are easy fixes.

You'll also want to do some basic on-site SEO. This includes having the search terms that you want your site to rank for in your title tags, heading, images and throughout the copy of your site. Google still puts a very high emphasis on words. They're getting closer to being able to decipher video and audio but actual text is still what they base their rankings on.

Don't stuff your site with search terms (or you'll get your site banned) but do make sure to include them where pertinent. The best advice I can offer is to include the search terms in the areas mentioned above and then simply write your content as you would talk to a prospective customers. Google is smart enough to figure out what your site is about.

Last thing about on-site criteria. Google seems to place a large emphasis on the amount of time each visitor spends on your site. Google tracks everything and when someone searches for

something, finds your site and then comes back to Google to click on the next ranking, guess what Google thinks?

You guessed it, “I guess that person didn’t find what he was looking for on that first site he visited. It can’t be that great so maybe we shouldn’t rank it as high.”

In other words, it only makes sense that the longer someone stays on your site the more they’re enjoying it. Providing excellent content is the first priority. Adding video also helps as people are more apt to watch and listen to video than to read text these days.

Having someone staying on your site to watch your two minute video sends a positive message back to Google.

We mentioned that on-site factors were one of the criteria that Google looked at when judging the value of a site. The other (and in my opinion much more important) factor is off-site criteria. Specifically, this means the number of sites that link to your site and the quality of the sites linking to you.

Google looks at every link back to your site as a vote of confidence. This makes sense because as a site owner you wouldn’t send your visitor to a useless site, would you? Of course not.

However, Google doesn’t treat every link the same. Some links have more ‘link juice’ than others. For example, one link from the Yahoo Directory may be worth more than 50 links from dinky little sites that Google may or may not know about.

SEO changes by the minute but Google is and always has been consistent on one thing. That is that links back to a site matter a

lot. Site owners have control over their own sites so they can do little on-site tricks to try to fool Google temporarily. However, site owners have little or no control over which sites link back to them (unless you follow the strategies in this book) so those back-links carry a lot more weight.

Knowing this information is key to a solid link-building strategy. You want to get as much content out on to as many high-quality sites as you possibly can. The techniques mentioned in this book are a great start.

When your content starts appearing on news sites, video sites and article directories, it is almost inevitable that your site will start getting good search engine rankings.

Remember most of your competitors don't have the information you're reading so you have the inside track. Applying even one or two of these methods should produce excellent results in a short period of time.

You'll notice that each of the ideas that I recommend for improving your search engine rankings below share two main components. The first is building your status as the expert in your field.

The second is getting your message (content) out to as many different places on the web as possible. The more content you have out there, the more people will see it and the more links you'll have back to your website. These links will definitely boost your search engine rankings over time.

Video Marketing

Video marketing is the creation of short promotional videos between 30 seconds and 5 minutes in length and distributing them throughout the Web using free video hosting sites.

Every small business can benefit from video marketing yet practically nobody is doing this.

Here is why you'll want to consider doing this. First, video hosting sites like YouTube get millions and millions of visitors per day. In fact, in 2007 it was already estimated that video accounted for 54% of all web traffic.

Second, video allows your visitors or viewers to get a true sense of who you are and whether they want to do business with you or not. Through informational videos you're better able to reveal your expertise and build credibility than through any other type of media.

Third, each video that you distribute will carry your website name and phone number so viewers can contact you immediately with or without even coming to your site.

Fourth, each video will carry a link back to your site. If you want to get good search engine rankings, you need a lot of other sites linking to your site. This is an indicator to Google that your site is worthy of a decent ranking. By creating just one video but distributing it through 30 or more free video hosting sites, you'll get a lot of links and those links will carry a lot of weight because video hosting sites are so popular.

Finally, there is a good chance that your videos themselves will appear in the organic search engine rankings. Because you're submitting your videos to free video hosting sites which have a great deal of power with the search engines, it isn't unusual to see videos showing up on the first few pages of Google results.

Truth be known video marketing is my secret weapon to getting better search engine rankings. I'll often see an opportunity in a market, build a basic lead capture site and just by sending out one video I can get that site on the first page of Google – often in less than a week. I know it sounds impossible but I've been able to do it over and over again.

With these types of benefits one must wonder why every business doesn't make better use of video. The first reason is that very few people know that video marketing exists. Now you know so no more excuses.

There is also a perception that videos are expensive or complicated to make. This used to be the case but with low priced camcorders and editing software, creating and editing video is very cost-effective and relatively easy to do.

Finally, (and this is the biggie) most people are just really uncomfortable speaking on camera. You could have someone else speak on your behalf but the Catch 22 is that YOU are the expert and the greatest benefit of video is the ability to demonstrate your expertise.

In case, I'm being unclear, if you want to receive all the benefits of video marketing get through the discomfort and record your own videos. The benefits will far outweigh the discomfort and

before you know it, you'll actually enjoy speaking in front of a camera.

At least, that was true in my case.

One last thing before we leave the concept of using video to promote your business. You own a business in Vancouver and it may not make a lot of sense to have people in the UK or Australia watching your video on YouTube or Google Video. I mean, you can't sell them anything, right?

That may or may not be true. The real value of video marketing is getting powerful links back to your site and getting your message in front of thousands of people. Some of those people will be interested in what you're doing. They won't call you just to annoy you. If they make the effort to call, they should be qualified in some way. They may even be a reporter researching a story and looking for an expert (you) in your field to interview.

The other point is that you can always sell anyone something. You do this through marketing partnerships and affiliate programs. Remember when we talked about these in an earlier section? When you're growing your list and leveraging partnerships you can always find a way to increase the Life Time Value of your customers and potential customers.

Article Marketing

Article marketing is the creating and distribution of short 500 words or so articles about your area of expertise. Once written these articles are distributed across a network of article

directories that agree to post your article and allow other website owners to post your article on their site.

Now you might be thinking I've gone squirrely. Why would you ever want other site owners to steal your content and put it on their sites. Basically, for two reasons.

First, each article that you write will have a short bio at the end. This will be a short blurb about you or your business and one or two links back to your site. This bio must remain in order for any site owner to post your article anywhere.

So in keeping with the theme that more links back to your site will drive up your site's search rankings, every time you write and distribute an article you can potentially get hundreds of links back to your site.

The second reason for writing articles is to boost your credibility. Only experts write articles about their area of expertise and the more articles out there with your name on them, the more credibility you'll have. One site even lists you as an "expert author" every time you post an article. That is pretty powerful when you're meeting with a potential client for the first time.

Of course, not everyone likes to write. In fact, most small business owners HATE writing. That isn't a problem. You can hire a ghostwriter to write and distribute articles under your name and you get all the benefits with none of the hassle. Of course, you have to pay for such a service and you need to make sure the articles are top quality (they carry your name) but that is pretty easy to do.

The bottom line is that article marketing has been around for a long time and it still works. Articles don't allow you to display your expertise quite as well as video does but this is a great alternative if you just can't get video to work for you.

Issuing Press Releases

This is a very smart way of leveraging media to build your local business and again, it is something that very few small businesses truly take advantage of.

We all know what a press release is, right? However since we're in the online marketing section of this book let's add a little twist.

With traditional press releases a company will write something that they feel is newsworthy and send it to any number of local newspaper editors in hopes that it will be published and/or result in an interview. This is all fine and dandy but there are far too many variables beyond your control. The most obvious being that there is absolutely no guarantee that your release will even be read let alone published.

The more modern way of leveraging mass media is by utilizing online resources. You still write your press release the same way but this time you issue it in an electronic format to a number of online news aggregators. There are literally thousands of sites that can and may pick up and post your release but to submit to all of them one-by-one is a logistical nightmare.

Instead, you'll want to use a press release service to get your news out there. Again, you'll have contact information and links

back to your site and your release may end up on some pretty powerful sites like CNN or MSNBC.

If that happens, for sure your phone will be ringing for a few days but more importantly your release(s) will remain on these powerful sites forever. This means those links will be pointing back to your site forever and very quickly, you should see a jump in your search engine results.

Also referring back to what we were saying about adding credibility indicators to your site to put people at ease, imagine how much credibility you'll gain when you can honestly say on your site that your business was mentioned on CNN.com.

Pretty powerful stuff and very simple to do. Of course, there are no guarantees that the massively powerful sites will pick up your release but that doesn't mean they won't either.

Press release distribution is a perfect example of being able to test small and see what happens. Visit our Resources area for some suggestions.

Social Media

A lot has been made in the news and on TV about social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. However you might be wondering how this affects you as a small business owner in Vancouver.

The fact is that it doesn't. Just kidding 😊

Social media sites can be used to generate a great number of benefits if used properly. If not used properly at best they'll be

a colossal waste of time. At worst, they can set off a chain of bad publicity and hate mail.

The thing with social media or social networking sites is that people are there to network – not to buy anything that we’re selling. First and foremost, if we’re going to try to leverage these sites for business purposes we need to understand and respect that concept.

That said, there are millions of visitors coming together on these sites and all of them can be segmented on criteria such as where they’re geographically located or topics that they’re interested in. This is very valuable information to us as marketers.

The key to succeeding with social media is to actively participate in the community as if you were just another member. You don’t want to go in there guns blazing and trying to sell everybody everything right off the bat. That is a recipe for either getting kicked off the site or starting an avalanche of bad publicity.

Speaking of bad publicity, anything that is written by you or about you on social networking sites is there forever and there is nothing you can do about it. That is good news if you’re getting glowing reports but decidedly bad news if someone or a group of customers is slagging you or your business.

Of course, that won’t happen because you’re going to go onto these sites, play by their rules (which are always posted somewhere), and become a worthwhile member of the community. When that happens, people will begin referring

their friends to you and you'll start to see the dividends of social media.

This is a longer term strategy but one that can be used very effectively. If you're already using a site or two that you really like, it is easy enough to add a link to your site from your profile page if there isn't one there already. You'll find that your friends will be curious about your business and it is easy enough to open a dialogue from there.

Podcasting

This should have gone right up there with video marketing as podcasting is very much along the same vein. A podcast is a short audio clip that can be posted on podcasting directories. Visitors can then download your podcast and listen to it on their smart phones, iPods or mp3 players.

The benefits of distributing podcasts are the same as video and article marketing – more links from powerful sites. However, they have the added benefit of being more transportable than either video or longer articles and the thought of someone listen to you share your expertise about your business while they're running in Stanley Park or driving up to Whistler is pretty cool.

Creating a podcast is easier than easy. We have a number of solutions listed in the resources area of our site but the key is really in the distribution. I'm seeing now that a number of my clients' podcasts are actually getting better search rankings than articles or videos – sometimes even higher than press releases. So it is well worth testing.

It is also nice to be able to say to a prospective client, “Well, why don’t you pick up my latest podcast from iTunes, give it a listen when you have ten minutes and let me know what you think.”

Since common knowledge suggests that getting on iTunes would be a big deal, having your podcast listed there is pretty impressive to some potential customers or clients. Best of all it is free and very easy to do.

Local Online Directories

Another often-overlooked area of opportunity is the area of online directories. Here in Vancouver we’re lucky because we have a very active online community and there are a number of great directories that we can get our sites listed on.

Of course, which site you depend to go with will depend on your budget as well as your type of business. My general rule of thumb is to always be where your target market is. Doing a search on topics or products that your ideal customer may be interested in will often result in one or two advertising opportunities. From there you just need to pick up the phone to work out a deal.

Online Classified Ads

Again, we’re super-lucky to be living in Vancouver where we have two online-marketing options that almost any business can leverage but very few do. Those are Craigslist and Kijiji. Both are very similar in how they work. They are almost the same as placing a classified ad in a local paper but instead,

they're online, they're free and you're not limited as to how long your message can be.

Both sites have their own rules and you need to make sure you understand and obey them. However, both are quite straightforward and they have excellent online resources to help you if it is your first time placing an ad.

A couple of suggestions when you're placing your ads on these or any other online classified ads sites. First, if possible, include a picture. For whatever reason, people love pictures online and your ad is twice as likely to get clicked on if you have some kind of an image.

The second important thing to remember when placing your ad is the importance of having a good title. Your title serves two audiences. The first is your prospective customers. You need to make your title appealing enough that they'll want to learn more. The second is the search engines. Craigslist especially is considered a very important site by Google and it isn't that unusual to see Craigslist ads appearing in the search results. Do a little keyword research to find out what people are looking for and include those popular search terms in the title of your ad.

Very few small business owners know how to do this properly but doing so will increase the odds of your ads being read exponentially.

Summary

We've covered a number of ideas regarding online marketing for local businesses. Every business is different so you'll need to

decide which if any of these ideas are relevant to your particular business.

One thing that I must stress before moving on to the next section is the importance of having some kind of online presence for your business. Your site doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive but it is imperative that you have something that can educate and ideally, follow-up with interested prospects automatically on your behalf. Just by putting 90% of your follow-up on auto-pilot you'll find that you'll have a great deal more time for other more critical aspects of your business.

That said, let's now look at more traditional marketing methods and how they fit in with generating more sales leads for your business.

Part 3: Traditional Marketing Methods

Now that you have your website and sales funnel set up properly, I hope that you're going to be seeing traditional advertising methods in a whole new light.

The problem with most of these methods in the past was that you could reach a large number of people but at a high cost and very few of the prospects were qualified to buy whatever it is that you were selling.

If you're selling anything of significant value (and you likely are) you know that these types of decisions a) take some time and b) are only purchased once in a while. As such, the odds of your mass advertising message reaching someone that wanted what you had to offer and was ready to buy it was very, very slim.

Actually, the same philosophy goes with cold-calling but I'm not even going to get into that here. The point is that with a sales funnel and using automated systems to educate and follow-up with prospective customers, you no longer have to find someone that is ready to buy this instant.

Your marketing really just needs to find people that are interested enough to join your email list in exchange for whatever it is you came up with for your offer. From there, your emails, video and website content will educate them and keep in touch with them until they're ready to buy.

Now, combine your marketing funnel with the power of mass marketing and the ability to test small and you'd really be onto something. Fortunately, that is exactly what we're going to discuss here.

My suggestion to start is to never advertise whatever it is that you're selling right off the bat. Instead, advertise your offer. The sales process is like dating. Nobody wants to get proposed to on the first date. They want to start off slow and get to know the other person.

Your prospect is the same way. She probably hasn't even heard of you or your company at first contact so when you go in trying to sell her immediately, of course she is going to be defensive.

A better approach is to get her to ask for your free offer. Let her get through that report or video so that she sees you as a valuable source of information – not as just another salesman. Let your automated system give her more information so she becomes more and more familiar with you.

Once she is ready to find out more about whatever it is that you do, she'll not only get in touch with you but you'll likely be the only one she gets in touch with.

Ok, so that is the overview of the concept. Let's jump into the different options for applying it, ok?

Local Radio Ads

Still going strong and still popular, local radio advertising is often a very good investment for the average small business owner.

Local stations are competing with more and more media options so they're becoming much more flexible in their terms and their rates.

The key to making radio advertising work is to consider the conditions under which your message will be heard. Most likely, someone will be at work or in their car. Your message must be short and memorable. Repetition is also key.

Most importantly (and this is important for all advertising), include a strong call to action. Something like visit our site at www.YourCoolSite.com to pick up your free...”

This is using direct response techniques so that you can measure the results of your marketing efforts. Very few business owners apply this technique and because of that, very few can really know if their marketing dollars are well spent or not.

Local TV Advertising

I rarely recommend TV advertising for the average small business owner but this is the exception. With local TV advertising you get all the benefits of video (credibility, exposure, etc.) and you get the volume of mass marketing.

I’m going to sound like a broken record here but make sure you make your offer front and centre and make sure you have some sort of tracking mechanism in place.

The local reps are pretty cool when it comes to understanding the needs of small business owners so they’re often able to accommodate varying budgets and other requirements.

Yellow Pages Advertising

Before I was able to make advertising on the Yellow Pages measurable and profitable, I was pretty adamant against it. However, the golden rule of marketing is to be where your customers are. If you service a customer base that uses the Yellow Pages (either the old phone book or the online version) then it is best that your ad be there.

Take a look at any Yellow Pages ad and you'll find that they're all the same. Basically, a picture and the same information you'd find on a business card. There is nothing that would make a prospective sales prospect choose one over the other so it becomes more of a game of chance than anything else.

We don't like gambling with our marketing budgets so we're going to tip the table in our favour. We're going to use some old-fashioned direct marketing sales copy in our ad and a mechanism for measuring the number of leads our ad generates.

Let's face it. An ad in the Yellow Pages is expensive. You want to make sure that you're getting a positive return on that investment. If you don't you don't run that ad next year.

The way to leverage the Yellow Pages to generate leads is to advertise your offer in your ad and direct readers to call a specific number (a unique phone number for the Yellow Pages ad) or visit a specific page on your website ie. www.yourcoolsite.com/yellowdeal. That way you can track all of the traffic your ad is generating and what that traffic is doing once they contact you.

If you just have your regular phone number in the ad and the main page of your site, you'll never know if that ad is working for you or if it is, how well. That is a position you never want to put yourself into again.

Direct Mail

Speaking of old-fashioned direct response copy, let's talk a little about direct mail. Direct mail is expensive, there is an art and a science to it and it can be hugely profitable.

Nowhere is testing small and measuring more important than in the world of direct mail. When it can cost you \$10,000 or more per mailing you want to be as sure as possible that what you're doing has been tested on a smaller scale.

There are a number of great letter shops around town and the local Canada Post reps are extremely helpful as well. To get the lowest rates on your mail requires a good degree of knowledge so I highly recommend you speak with an expert before you start designing anything.

I can't tell you how often I've seen someone come up with a great package only to find out that their postage costs will be double what they anticipated simply because the envelope was too big, too thick, too small, whatever.

Another point I'd like to make here is the value of greeting cards as marketing tools. It is estimated that only 25% of traditional direct mail (sales letter in an envelope) gets opened yet 98% of greeting cards are read.

Because of this, I've transferred nearly all of my direct mail to either greeting cards or postcard mailers. Both have their own advantages and disadvantages but because I utilize stamps and a personalized hand-written font, the response I receive is outstanding.

I also send a thank you card to every prospective customer or business partner that I meet on a daily basis. This is the single most-effective strategy that I employ in my business. It makes others feel good, it makes me feel good and it brings in lots of new business and new referrals. I can't suggest strongly enough that you implement this strategy in your marketing.

Visit CoolFoxCards.com to see how I'm able to automated a great deal of my own direct mail efforts and still maintain a very personalized feel to each card I send out.

Newspaper Ads

Essentially you have two options when it comes to advertising in newspapers. First you can go with a simple classified ad or you can go for space advertising.

Depending on the circulation and demographic the paper is directed towards, newspaper ads can range from very affordable to insanely expensive. However, if you see a return on your investment, even high costs are justified with high returns.

One thing to keep in mind is that many newspapers have online versions as well. Often you can strike a deal where you can get a good deal on the digital listing when you buy advertising in the paper version of the same paper.

Whatever you do, make sure that you have some component that allows you to measure the effectiveness and the response you get from each ad.

Utilize the same tactics as we discussed under TV and Radio advertising. Send readers to unique website urls or to call specific 800 numbers whenever possible to ensure you're getting a good return on your print ad budget.

Outdoor Advertising

The options for outdoor advertising in Vancouver are pretty incredible. They range from billboards to buses, benches to bus stops and each has too many pros and cons to give them all the consideration they deserve here.

However, I will share with you a very solid idea when you're considering any of these channels for getting your message out.

Put your marketing messages where your customers are.

Of course, you have to match your product to your market's needs but just as importantly, you need to reach your market where and when they will pay attention to your message.

Using the Telephone

In my first book, *"Nice People Can Sell"* I really went off on using the telephone to develop new business. Call it cold-calling or "reaching out" or whatever jargon you want to use, I was dead-set against the idea. In fact, my entire book was practically based on alternative methods to finding new customers.

Ironically, my opinion on using the phone to generate new business is beginning to sway.

My problem was that I was approaching telephone sales in entirely the wrong manner. I was going about it in the same manner as we're all traditionally taught. To get to the decision-maker, overcome all their objections and close the deal.

Augh! Just typing these words makes me shudder at the stress of it all.

Taking this approach the result was that I faced a ton of rejection and using the phone to generate sales was painful – both for me and for those prospective customers I was calling.

Talk about a lose/lose situation.

Now, I know that a lot of business owners still use the phone. Some of you may even have a great deal of success doing so. If that is the case, and you enjoy what you do please keep doing it.

However, if you're like most business owners the idea of picking up the phone and calling someone you've never met to solicit business is a rather daunting proposition.

As a result, you visit websites and read books just like this one looking for alternative methods of developing business. Am I right?

Believe me, I can relate. But the fact of the matter is that the phone is free, fast and incredibly effective when used properly.

The key is in changing your mindset. In my case, I was trying to sell what I had to sell rather than trying to first determine if my

prospects had a problem worth solving and if so, if they were even willing to solve it.

I don't have the space to go into great detail here as to the exact approach you can use to gain this mindset and dramatically reduce your chance of rejection on the phone here but I will direct you to our Resources area for the solution that I found.

Incidentally, everything changed once I overcame my own distain for the phone and now, believe it or not, I actually enjoy striking up conversations on the phone with strangers I've never met.

Check it out. You'll be glad you did.

PART 4: Mobile Marketing

This is a perfect example of just how fast things are changing these days and how difficult (if not impossible) for small business owners to stay on top of what is available to them in the world of online marketing.

When I started writing this book in April, 2010 I didn't plan on even mentioning anything about mobile marketing. I knew that some people were having success with it but they were mostly large companies based in Europe and Asia. It didn't seem like a practical alternative for Canadian small business owners.

Fast forward a few months to August that same year and I knew that I had to include something about mobile marketing. It was growing too fast and there were just too many cool options becoming available for companies with even the most modest budgets.

As I am writing this update towards the end of January 2011, I have not only decided to include an entire section on mobile marketing I am seriously considering launching a new business focusing only on providing mobile marketing solutions. THAT is how big mobile has become over the last six months and I am 100% convinced that mobile is the future. Let me explain why...

Why Mobile Marketing is the Future

There is an old axiom that goes something like, "Marketing dollars follow eyeballs." It means that wherever you find people in mass you will find someone trying to get their attention.

The Internet is a fascinating thing and I hope that I don't have to convince you of its potential for marketing your business.

However, until recently someone had to be sitting in front of a computer to access information on the Internet. After all, there are “only” 1.7 billion Internet connected computers on the planet. Compare that to the fact that there are now approximately 5 billion cell phones in use – practically all have the ability to receive text messages and just less than 1 billion smart phones have direct access to the web.

Just as importantly, people are very attached to their phones. They’re on 24/7 and they’re in a person’s possession or within 3 feet at any given moment except perhaps while sleeping. But let’s face it, even in bed we may be listening to music on it or using it as an alarm clock.

The point is that as business owners we want to stick to direct response marketing methods because we can measure the results. Nothing is more direct than mobile marketing and we have the facts to back this claim up. Over 95% of all text messages are read within one hour of being received. Compare that to open rates of approximately 25% on email and 5% on traditional direct mail and you’ll have to agree that that is quite a direct response.

What is Mobile Marketing?

Of course, just like I was in early 2010, you might be wondering “What the heck is mobile marketing anyway? Is it placing signage on cabs? Having students walk around with sandwich boards strapped to them?”

Nope. Mobile marketing is simply getting marketing messages through to customers and prospects using any wireless hand-held device. Devices may include iPads, any smart phone, PDAs or simple cell phones.

Mobile marketing can take many forms but not all of them are relevant to the average small business owner so I'm just going to discuss the ones that will most likely make you step back and go, "Whaaat? Really?" Seriously, this is cool stuff.

Before I do that though I want to point out that this is still in its infancy and as such it is changing on a daily basis. So what I've done is provide you with the evergreen, 30,000 foot view of mobile here and I'll direct you to videos and blog posts on VancouverMarketingServices.com to make sure you get the latest information.

I am also going to write an entire guide to mobile marketing and make that available for free on our site as well. If it is not to be found within the Mobile Marketing section of our site, contact me and I'll get on it. It is all in my head but I just haven't had time to get it on paper yet.

SMS or Text Marketing

This is the simplest and often the most profitable way to get into the mobile marketing game. Like email, your customers can opt-in to receive text messages from you. Again, text messages have a 95% read-rate and usually cost less than 5 cents to send out so you don't need a lot of subscribers to make this work for you.

It works like this. You sign up with a service that specializes in text message marketing. They will assign you a short-code which is usually a 5 or 6 digit number that you share with your customers. Then you come up with an offer (similar to our email offer discussed in the previous section) that will entice people to give you their cell number. There are an infinite number of offers you could go with but discounts, coupons, VIP passes,

advanced product notifications and special privileges for subscribers always work well.

Let's use a hypothetical company called Jon's Pizza as an example. Suppose Jon decided that he wanted to give everyone that subscribed to his SMS notification list a free appetizer – this would be his offer.

Once Jon has his short-code (let's say 88766) and his offer he would need to choose a word to share with his customers for this campaign. It should be something short, relevant and easy to remember. In this case Jon decides on 'jonspizza'.

Jon would then launch his campaign. "Join our VIP List and Get a Free Appetizer with Every Order. Text "jonspizza" to 88766 Now". Jon would put it in his window, on his sign out front, on any flyers he might be distributing, on his website (if he is smart enough to have one), on tables and in with every take out order he serves.

What will happen over time is that his customers will text "jonspizza" to that number and confirm that they agree to receive Jon's text messages. Once they do that they will receive a second text with the coupon for the appetizer. They just need to bring their phone in and show it to the server to redeem their free appetizer.

Why would Jon do this? Well, for many reasons. Any business owner – and especially a restaurant owner – knows that there are busy days and slow days. If Jon is sitting there on a particularly slow Tuesday night he could send out a text to all of his subscribers saying, "Chef just made a wicked new pizza combo. Free slices to the next 20 customers on our VIP list".

Since text messages do get read and they get acted on quickly there is a good chance that Jon can fill his restaurant quite easily.

On an on-going basis, Jon could send weekly specials or invitations to watch sporting events via text. As long as his text messages offer value to his subscribers they will remain on his list AND very often they will forward Jon's messages onto their friends and their friends will join Jon's list.

Some of Jon's customers will be active on Facebook and Twitter and - since over 50% of social media interactions take place on smart phones – they may mention Jon's program creating another channel for Jon to grow his list. Of course, after seeing some results of his program Jon would want to get his own Facebook page and Twitter accounts and make things as easy as possible for his business to get free word of mouth marketing.

This is just one example and probably not the best either to be honest. However, imagine the possibilities. Bars and clubs can give VIP discounts or information on upcoming events. The band can announce the short-code and they can add hundreds of subscribers within minutes. Doctors and dentists can notify patients of upcoming appointments via text rather than phone or costly postcards. Retailers can announce sales or new product arrivals. Realtors can allow prospective buyers to text a word to a short-code so they can view further details of a listing on their phone while right in front of the property.

I can't cover all the possibilities here but I hope that you're beginning to see the enormous advantage being able to reach customers via text gives you over your competitors. It is cheap, very effective and your customers/clients/patients/students will love you for it. Refer to our Mobile Marketing section for more ideas about leveraging this technology.

Beyond the obvious reasons (open rate, cell phone penetration, speed, etc.) that text marketing works so well another reason to integrate SMS marketing into your business is to reward your most valuable customers. Pareto's 80/20 principle states that 80% of your profits will come from 20% of your customers. Anyone that joins your SMS list and stays there over time wants to receive your messages. They like what you're selling and they're most likely to spend more money with you and tell their friends about your business. Text messages are an effective way to keep them coming back and sharing what you're doing with their friends.

A final key point to note when it comes to text marketing is this. You don't even need a website to make this work for you. The system we use gives you space on their servers and they'll even set up a mobile-friendly page for you. It doesn't get any easier than that.

While you're thinking about that also ponder on this. If you're doing any kind of radio, newspaper or TV advertising I hope that you're tracking all of your efforts but if you're not why not add a "Text to #XXXXXX" as your call to action. You'll be creating an SMS opt-in that should prove to be very profitable for you for years to come AND you'll be able to tell just how effective your mass marketing really is.

This way you can immediately convert mass marketing efforts (through which results are often difficult to track) to instant direct response marketing and tracking becomes easy. Not to mention the fact that you'll also be building a very valuable business asset in your SMS list.

Mobile Coupons

Here is another area where mobile is bound to explode. Everybody loves to get a good deal. That is why we have sales of all kinds and we distribute coupons via mail, classifieds, etc. However, redemption rates for coupons distributed through mobile networks are TEN times more likely to be used than their paper counterparts. There are many reasons for this but the main one is that users always have their mobile phones on them (and your coupon is on their mobile phone) so they always have the coupon available when they're at your place of business.

Coupons are a fantastic way to reward your best customers and generate traffic when things are slow. Response is immediate and redemption rates are very impressive. We'll get back to the power of coupons a little bit later.

“Mobilizing” Your Current Site

Have you ever looked at your website on a mobile phone? Most business owners haven't but I can save you the trouble. If you haven't created a mobile version it looks awful. I know this because my sites looked awful, too.

I didn't care until I realized by looking at my Google Analytics reports that nearly 20% of my visitors were trying to view my site from a mobile device. Guess what was happening? Yep, they were getting frustrated and leaving. That means 20% of my marketing efforts were gone. Just like that.

You may or may not have a smart phone but many, many people do. And those people are your prospective customers. They are technologically savvy and affluent. They compare your products

or services with your competition and when they can't see your site, they go with your competition.

Fortunately, the solution is simple. Creating a mobile-friendly version of your site is very cheap and easy to do. You don't need to have a full-blown version of your site available to mobile users but you should give them enough information to make them want to visit or contact you to know more. We can usually set up a mobile version of your site that can do that in less than a week.

What is really cool about this technology is that it is smart enough to detect the device a visitor is using. So if she is visiting your site from her laptop or home computer she'll see your regular site. However, if she is on her smart phone she'll see your mobile version.

With a Mobile-Friendly Site...

Once you do have even a basic version of your site available to users of handheld devices, the world really opens up to you.

Click to Call for Generating Sales Leads

You could add a 'click to call' button on your site so visitors can contact you with one click while they're on their phone. Anyone looking at increasing sales leads (realtors, mortgage brokers, bankers, auto dealerships, roofers, any type of service provider really) should be able to appreciate how powerful this is. Again, if your site is mobile friendly but none of the sites of your competitors can be viewed on a mobile device you become the only player in the game.

M-Commerce (Mobile Commerce)

If you're a retailer and you already have an ecommerce-enabled store, why not make that available on mobile devices. Why do this? Because people compare prices on their cell phones while their shopping. One good reason to make your site mobile-friendly is the thought of selling one of your products to a customer while that customer is in your competitor's store. How good would that feel?

Mobile Traffic Sources

Once your site is "mobilized" you can also leverage mobile traffic. There are ad networks that specialize in mobile-only traffic. And guess what? It is cheap!!

I have clients now that often pay over \$2.00 per click on Google Adwords that are paying \$0.20 per click on mobile networks. Immediately their budgets are going 10X as far as they were before they had a mobile version of their site AND they're building a very valuable SMS database.

Proximity Marketing

Going hand-in-hand with mobile traffic is what is called 'proximity marketing'. Tell me if you think this wouldn't help any retail business.

You've set up your short-code and you've started building your SMS list. You see that it is going very well but you want to grow it faster. With some mobile ad networks you can have your ad show up to prospective customers only when they're in the vicinity of your store. AND equally cool, you only pay for your ad when they click on it and visit your mobile site (most often you would be offering a coupon if they join your VIP list). This

way you're not only building your list but you could be reaching new potential customers when they're most likely to visit your store ie. when they're near your store. Pretty cool, eh?

Create Extra Revenue Streams

On the flip side, you can also sell ad space on your mobile site. Most of us wouldn't be interested in doing that but some of us might. Just like Google offers AdSense to publishers (website owners) the same networks that sell pay per click campaigns on mobile sites also will pay you to show their ads. This could become a nice little source of passive revenue if you're getting enough traffic to justify it.

QR Codes and Google

If you're still not convinced that mobile is the future give this some thought. First, back in February of 2010 Google CEO Eric Schmidt unveiled Google's new mantra, "Mobile First." You can see the article [here](#). Google backed up this mantra but providing local business owners space on their servers for Google 'Places' pages which recently replaced Google Maps.

This is extremely relevant for two reasons. First, if you own a small business you likely just need to claim your Places page and "Presto!" you have a mobile-friendly web presence. Granted you can't do much with it as far as promotion but it can be seen on a mobile.

Second, in the U.S. Google is issuing free stickers to all business owners that do claim their Places pages. These stickers contain what is called a QR code and they are meant to be placed in the window of a business. Anyone walking by with a cell phone equipped with a QR scanner can essentially take a photograph of

the bar code and immediately the Google Places page comes up on their phone. The fact that Google is investing such effort to promote 'offline' activities (remember that they're a search engine) speaks volumes.

Of course, QR codes have other uses as well but that is well beyond the scope of this guide. Contact me if you want to know some other applications for using this technology.

Scanning a QR code may sound like a nuisance and it is... here in Canada. But in other parts of the world – particularly Japan - most phones are coming out with built in QR scanners (we still have to download the scanning software on our phones) and QR codes are EVERYWHERE. It is just a matter of time before this is standard equipment on every phone and we're scanning everything from directions to your business and the schedule of movies at the 5th Avenue cinemas.

The last thing I'll mention about mobile marketing is the creating of applications or apps. This is a massive market but one that isn't overly relevant to the average business owner. Apps are very cheap to create but I really haven't seen great results for business owners. I'm sure this will change but I'm going to leave it at that for now.

Parting Thoughts on Mobile

Mobile is the future and there is no doubt about it. It is estimated that more than half of all web browsing will take place on smart phones within two years. Just the sheer numbers of phones in use should at least have you thinking about the possibilities.

Granted, we Canadians are behind the times when it comes to mobile. I spent 2009 in the UK and even back then everything

was going mobile. I was completely oblivious but recently a light has switched on. I honestly believe that any company that can figure out how search rankings, social media and mobile marketing all work together will completely destroy all of their competition.

Of course, it doesn't have to happen all at once but you need to start moving in that direction. My favourite part about online marketing in general and mobile marketing specifically is that it is so much more cost-effective than most of the old-school marketing methods that many of us are doing now.

I mean I love postcard mailings and even at \$2.00 each they're still very profitable for me. But email is free and to send a text currently only costs \$0.03. The math doesn't compare.

If you have a website, take a look at it on a smart phone. That alone is often enough for someone to get moving on this. For a typical small business website it costs less to create a mobile version of a site than what one sale is worth to your business. Give that some thought.

PART 5: Summary

I trust that we have given you some fuel for thought when it comes to your marketing efforts. As mentioned early on the key is to take action and implement something. You don't have to go all out and do everything at once but you do have to start somewhere.

If you already have a website and it isn't producing the results you'd like you'll need to determine where it is faltering. Is it getting sufficient traffic? If not, perhaps you'll want to consider different approaches to generating visitors to your site. Maybe a pay per click campaign or some advertising on a local directory is in order.

On the other hand, perhaps your site is getting a sufficient number of visitors but not enough of those visitors are becoming sales leads for your business. If that is the case, you may want to look at the various components of your site that are affecting your conversion. Maybe adding a video or some testimonials will help? Is your site easy to navigate and are you making it easy for your visitors to contact you? Have someone that has never visited your site do so and literally watch over their shoulder as they navigate through your site. Perhaps you're too close to your work and this new perspective will help flesh out some challenges.

If you don't have a website for your business just yet, I hope that this book has helped you see the value in having one. The whole idea of your site is simply to educate your potential customers and get them to contact you in one way or another. It doesn't cost a fortune to build a site to do this but it will make

your life so much easier and save you so much time it is well worth the effort over the long-run.

Once your site and sales funnel is in place and tested, choose two or three different methods of marketing your business. You'll find some of the methods we've discussed here will resonate with your personality and the needs of your business. Whichever you choose, take the required action and implement them. Test small, expand on the efforts that work best and scrap those that don't. It really is that simple.

And of course, if you get stuck be sure to visit our resources area and get in touch with a local expert in the marketing method that may be tripping you up. Our experts are always happy to guide you in the right direction.