



Investing Wisely: Article Marketing vs. Direct Mail Marketing

Let's get something straight right now—direct mail marketing works. Please tell me you're not one of those myopic marketing guys that thinks just because everyone is on the Internet the old avenues of advertising are futile! The truth is many companies have found success by using flyers, brochures (actual brochures, not virtual e-cards!) and even direct mail marketing.

The key to making sales is to make your business a part of your lifestyle. You go where the people are. If people are picking flyers off of their door knob then you may be able to pique their interest with a well produced flyer advertising your company name, new promotion and website address. If people are checking their mail everyday then a direct mail marketing campaign will definitely catch their attention.

Direct mail marketing works because people do need to take a break from surfing the Internet all day. As soon as they start opening their mail, they will see your print ad and immediately evaluate the service based on your words and images. If your pitch taps into a need the customer immediately has, rest assured he will hold on to that coupon.

The Universal McCann Insider's Report (<http://www.nmoa.org/articles/dmnews/AdvertisingInsidersReport1205.pdf> Page 3) recently published figures showing that direct marketing budgets were soaring—in fact, commercial industries spent over \$50 billion using nothing but direct mail advertisements in 2005. So yes, you can't really argue with someone who suggests that direct mail marketing can be successful.

The point is, when you actually compare the strategy of direct marketing with article marketing then you start to notice some subtle differences—differences that are ultimately important. Consider for example the natural limitations of direct mail marketing.

The Disadvantages of Direct Mail Marketing

Cost: With direct mail marketing you are paying for paper and ink—each and every piece of it. Though you do often hear about how cheap direct mail marketing is (since you're paying literally pennies for a single sheet) it still remains the most expensive form of mass promotion you can use.

Waste: You are paying for sheets of paper that will be discarded. Not only is this a waste of money, but you're also inadvertently contributing to the pollution of the earth, and probably upsetting your green-friendly customer base (even if it's recycled paper).

Reputation: In fact, direct mail seems to have an ugly reputation of being “junk mail” and for this reason, many homeowners won't even bother looking at the ad to begin with. Why? Probably because most of your direct

mail competitors create really dumb ads and give direct marketing a bad name in general. Sad, but true...no matter how brilliant your ad is, many of your targeted readers will tune your ad out completely.

One-Shot Opportunity: It's hard to sell any business idea if you have only one opportunity to make your pitch. Just ask a real estate agent how often he can sell a house on the first meeting! Business nowadays is tied up with trust, establishing a relationship and intensifying efforts on your buyer's needs over time.

Prohibition: Buyers tired of unsolicited mail can get prohibitory orders against companies they do not like, or can opt out of a specific mail order campaign.

Intense Competition: When a person is going through his or her mail, he is usually looking at several ads at once and not really concentrating on the message. In order to compete with the other solicitors you have to create vivid imagery, photos and text that will be remembered. You'll probably be competing against everything from glimpses of dessert to beautiful young ladies to bombastic ads for "free cash prizes!" It's just hard to sink down to that mentality—and even harder to do it successfully.

Inaccurate Mailing Lists: Many of the mailing lists you will pay top dollar for will be dated or inaccurate information. Often times, you will end up mailing a letter to an unknown resident. Very seldom does a homeowner perk up after reading "To: Resident."

Electronic direct marketing does manage to dispense with one problem: the waste of paper. However, if there's anything more reviled in this world than junk postal mail it is SPAM email. Cutting down on the cost still doesn't fix the problem of annoying solicitors and badly managed marketing plans. Do you really want to compete against the ad wizards who came up with "You can make \$5,000 a day writing Google ads"?

The Advantages of Article Marketing

Now, let's consider the natural advantages of natural Search Engine Optimization, or as we often call it, article marketing.

Targeting: When you invest in article marketing, you are utilizing the full power of the Internet, and focusing your efforts in a concentrated and targeted "attack." Instead of blindly reaching out to residents and broad demographics (as with direct mail marketing) with SEO you are targeting customers according to their needs and thoughts—exactly as they type them in a search engine.

Low Cost: Article marketing doesn't charge you by the ad or even by the click. You only pay for the content itself and you buy all rights to it. Article marketing is largely seen as the cheaper alternative to Pay-Per-Click or banner advertising, since your ads essentially run forever at a much lower cost. The majority of traffic you get from an article marketing campaign is going to be coming from web viewers who are searching for specific keywords that relate to your business. With direct mail, you're basically playing a guessing game. Therefore, while article marketing does cost you an initial investment, it comes at a lesser cost than direct mail and without all the guesswork.

Testing Niches: While your investment is smaller compared to direct marketing and even PPC ads, you are actually able to target more of your paying audience through more effective niche marketing. In order to do this successfully, you must consistently feed the search engines with new content. However, for the money you spend, article marketing offers a better return-on-investment rate, and again, a lower price overall.

Time-Saving: In article marketing, all you are waiting on is the completion of the articles and the article direc-

tory process, which SEO firms and ghostwriting services usually handle for you. The articles you buy will be submitted by the SEO firm over a period of time. Why? Because this helps to maintain a constant flow of submission, which helps regularly feed the search engines, thus ranking your site higher. Consistency is the key to higher rankings, which in turn is the key to greater traffic.

Article Marketing Trumps Direct Mail Marketing

Best of all, when you use article marketing, you are basically leveling the playing field. Instead of competing against filthy rich conglomerates like Yahoo! or Wal-Mart, you are battling it out customer for customer against your competition. You have your customer base's undivided attention and an entire webpage to make your pitch. If you know what you're doing market-wise, this is your best bet.

AccuraCast.com in the U.K. (<http://www accuracast.com/seo-weekly/se-statistics.php>) reported that in December of 2006 81% of Internet users worldwide, or 256 million people, visited a search engine looking for a keyword interest. SEO also showed much potential for growth, increasing 10% over the previous year, even while Google's mainstream audience grew 250% in a short amount of time. The study even revealed something interesting about user behavior: the average searcher spent 27 minutes searching for the perfect website to answer his/her questions, and looked at over 93 individual pages.

You know what that means? You have at least 27 minutes to make your pitch on a recurring daily basis. To be fair, article marketing is not always easy. There are some web marketers who do tend to give us all a bad name by writing inferior content. Article marketing is also slower than PPC ads and sometimes the technical aspects of this technology can go over people's heads. However, if you work with an experienced SEO firm then you can sidestep these common problems and just watch as your sales and prospects gradually increase.

This isn't a piece of junk mail! This is a call to all the Internet marketers out there who are just now seeing the potential of article marketing. Are you getting your piece of the "Internet pie?" If you aren't investing in article marketing, then you are missing a major part of your customer base. As we stated earlier, most online prospects are using search engines and are clicking on natural keyword results. Most serious prospects are looking for organic search results as opposed to quick ads or banners. One thing is for sure: there are far more people utilizing the Internet than there are people opening their postal mail and falling for the latest hype machine. It's time for you to tap the established and proven market of article marketing and start increasing your sales!