



The Sales and Marketing files: Each month, CEO Europe shares its expertise and presents you an expert synopsis of a specific topic.

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Using Article Writing as an Internet Marketing Strategy

Many companies these days have a focus on Online Marketing, for pretty obvious reasons. The Internet has grabbed a hold of most markets, and is now the main source of information in most industries. In many it has also quickly becoming the actual center of revenue, via e-commerce activities on company websites and online retail sites.

But like most marketing methods, competition quickly clogs up the available channels of reaching customers. This is especially true for the fast moving software and high tech markets. Time to market and to the customer's wallet is at a premium, when every company is attempting to establish themselves as the leader of an embryonic market. As a result, it's getting harder all the time to reach the top of the organic search engine listings, and the cost of an Ad in PPC engines such as Google Adwords and Yahoo Overture continues to climb. Downloadable white papers work in B2B markets, if they are well targeted and written, but there is plenty of competition these days in this area as well. And most of you are aware of the declining economics of direct email, with the issues of SPAM and blocking. So folks are constantly looking for a new channel to break through to their online prospect base.

One of the hot areas of Online Marketing currently is what's being called "Article Marketing". It's a new twist on a very old marketing strategy: Write articles as an expert on your industry. So why should you consider an online article marketing campaign?

1/ BUILD CREDIBILITY

As an expert, there are obvious benefits to building your own, or your company's, credibility in the marketplace. If you are considered an industry expert, there is a definite halo effect for your company's products or services. They will take on a "premium" feel to potential users in the industry. You and your company will become better known, more highly respected, and will be considered first, when potential customers are looking for the type of things that your company offers.

2/ CONTENT FOR YOUR OWN WEBSITE

After credibility, this is the second most important reason to consider writing articles. The search engines love information. Articles discussing solutions to problems, or providing expert information is valued by the engines—and will be indexed quickly and ranked highly as a result. As a matter of fact,



“commercial” sites appear to be losing appeal as the search engines seek out this expert content. As for publishing, the search engines love Blogs, which is just a structure to write and publish articles in. A Blog can be an excellent addition to your site, and will make your site much more attractive to the search engines as an information source. If you do use Blog software to publish your articles, make sure the Blog is hosted on your domain, to ensure that the full benefits of this expert content accrues to your site, driving its position higher in the search engine results.

3/ TRAFFIC BUILDING FOR YOUR WEBSITE

In addition to creating content for your own site, it's also a good idea to publish articles elsewhere on the web. Not everyone is using a search engine to find what they are looking for on the web, and even if they are, your own site will not rise to the top in every search (unfortunately!). So I highly recommend publishing your articles on other sites, with a link back to your own website included in your author bio at the end of the article. There is a whole cottage industry that has popped up of article submission websites, software and services to assist you in this effort. People clicking on these links will build additional traffic to your site.

4/ SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION THROUGH BACKLINKS

My fourth reason for writing and publishing articles also revolves around the links established on other websites where your articles are published. We call these links “Back Links”, because they link back to your site. In addition to providing traffic back to your website directly by people who click on them, they provide another very important function. Search engine optimization for a website is very complex, and is constantly changing. But you can boil it down to two major areas—Content and Back Links. If you have great content on your site and lots of other sites are linking to yours, you will rank high in the search results, and get a ton of traffic as a result. All of the links to your website, that appear on third party websites as part of publishing your article broadly on the Internet, increase this “links score” that is so important to search engine ranking.

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5/ ARTICLE MARKETING TECHNIQUES

As you can see, Internet Article Marketing can be an excellent technique for building traffic to your high tech company's website. There are many ways to proceed.

Here is one step-by step approach:

1. Create articles of interest in your company's industry. Write them like you are submitting them to an industry journal—then review the article to ensure it is keyword rich.
2. Publish the articles on your own website. Blog software, available freely on the Internet, is an easy publishing tool. TypePad and Blogger are two of the more popular, but there are many others. Feature the articles in your company newsletter.
3. Leave newer articles solely on your company's website for a period of time, as exclusive content.
4. Submit older articles broadly on the Internet, using Article Submission software or a service. Ezine Articles, Submit your Article, and iSnare are services that all work pretty well. There are again many choices.
5. Be patient—one article may not do much, unless you are very lucky. As your base of articles builds over time, you should see a definite positive effect on your website traffic.



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