

## **Top 10 E-Marketing Blunders**

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### **Blunder #1: Using free or cheapo web hosting services.**

Let's get one thing straight, you absolutely can not run a business web site using a free web page such as those offered by Angelfire, Tripod, GeoCities, HyperMart, FreeYellow, etc. No matter what you may think, it just isn't going to work. As they say you get what you pay for. There is no bigger turnoff than visiting a web site that is hosted on an obviously overloaded web server. We won't mention any names, but a few of the free services are just terrible. Your web site is the most important asset you have, and it must give a good first impression.

Besides, nothing is really free anyway. When you get "free" web space you are normally required to show the hosting company's banners and advertisements in prime locations on your web site. This is absolutely insane if you really think about it from a business standpoint. These days you can find a good web hosting company that will provide what you need for as little as \$20 a month. Let's be real, if you aren't willing to spend \$20 a month on a good web host how serious can you be? Many good prospects are immediately turned off by this blunder.

And while we're on the subject of web hosting, be sure to get your own domain name. Again, if you aren't willing to spend \$70 to claim your stake on the web ... what are your potential customers going to think? Take your business seriously, or you will ultimately fail.

### **Blunder #2: Destroying your site with graphics, java, music, etc.**

This has got to be the 2nd most offensive Internet marketing blunder. If you are running a business online, your web site's most important job is to sell your products and services. Anything that detracts from this should be avoided like the plague. And we mean it, literally!

Unless you are a graphic designer, graphics that take forever to load are not going to sell anything. And neither is java that crashes your visitor's browser. Same thing for any but the most popular plug-ins. Sound or music clips on your web site? Heck no! Unless you are selling CDs, sound does not belong on a web site -- not yet anyway. Sure you can argue this, but the bottom line is that it can cause your visitors problems. Fancy graphics, java, plug-ins, sound files, etc. do nothing but make your pages take forever to load.

Don't take it from us, just look at any of the top 100 sites on the web. Heck, look at Yahoo which is undeniably the most popular web site on the Internet. When

was the last time you saw fancy java apps, needed a plug-in, or heard music coming from Yahoo's web site?

**Blunder #3: Not asking for, and acting on, comments and feedback.**

This is another big one, and we can personally attest to the value of asking for and acting on feedback. One thing that many people seem to forget is that it's the prospect that has to like what they see -- and not much else matters. Here's a real-world example.

A while ago we launched a web site, and initially use a frames-based layout. We were aware of the potential problems, and spent lots of time tweaking it to be as browser-friendly as possible. But after asking for feedback we discovered that many visitors hated it. And the scary thing is that unless we asked for feedback we probably never would have realized this. Everything looked and worked well for us, but a significant number of our visitors had problems with it. We redesigned the entire site and immediately our sales increased.

You will be literally amazed at the valuable feedback you will receive if you just ask for it. Remember that your prospects are the ones buying your products and services, and despite what you may think, the way they perceive your site and your business is what counts.

**Blunder #4: Wasting your valuable time on unproductive activities.**

As an Internet marketer your most valuable asset is time. And yes, time is more valuable than money so spend yours wisely. Because your time is a limited resource, you will need to learn to prioritize. There are certain things that are more important than others. For example, consider the amount of time you spend on various promotion and marketing activities. Do you actually know which is most productive for you? If you don't you're wasting precious time. Test all of your advertising and spend your time appropriately.

Search engines are another example. One of the biggest myths that is circulating the web marketing community is that getting a top 10 listing will make you an overnight success. Don't believe the hype, and don't waste your time trying to get there.

One of the most important things you can ever do is to automate as much of your day-to-day activities as possible. This includes order fulfillment as well. To succeed online in a big way, you will need to spend most of your time advertising and marketing your business.

**Blunder #5: Not managing your email communications efficiently.**

Your email communication with prospects and customers will make or break you. Since most of the times you will never get a chance to impress them in person, you really need to learn how to use email to your advantage. Much of it is common sense actually.

Each and every day we receive emails from people asking us to do business with them in one way or another, and many of them look like they were written by a 10 year-old. Spelling errors, grammar problems, poorly formatted and difficult to read ... you name it.

No one is perfect and we all make mistakes, but there is no excuse for this. Get yourself a good email program, learn how to use it, and spell-check all of your correspondence. You know what they say; you only get one chance to make a first impression.

For email we like Qualcomm's Eudora Pro, if you're using your web browser for email now you really need to check it out. Download a free demo. It will make your life easier in more ways than we could ever explain here.

**Blunder #6: Failing to create and build an opt-in "house" mailing list.** Red flag! Alert! Serious blunder! If you do not have a mailing list to keep in touch with your prospects and customers, you are literally throwing money down the drain. If you get nothing else out of this issue, trust us when we say that you need one badly.

People buy things they want from people they know and trust. And there's no better way to get people to trust you than to show them that you are good at what you do. Starting an email newsletter will allow you to keep in touch with your audience and do just that.

With it you can keep them informed of site updates and new products. You'll never have to worry about them forgetting you because your name will always be in front of them. You can even sell advertising. But most importantly, you will build trust and relationships.

Think about it. If you wanted to become a real estate investor, would you purchase a home-study course from a door-to-door salesman or someone who had been sending you a free newsletter for the past year? Starting an opt-in newsletter should be a top priority!

**Blunder #7: Ruining your reputation via inappropriate advertising.** A list of Internet marketing blunders which didn't include spamming just wouldn't be complete. Despite what you may have heard, there is no better way to run your online business into the ground than the act of sending unsolicited email. It is the ultimate blunder.

If you have to learn this the hard way then so be it, but don't say we didn't warn you. For every spammer that is actually making any money, we can show you 10 responsible marketers who are making lots more. There is absolutely no reason to spam.

The same thing goes for posting ads in Usenet newsgroups where they don't belong. Why hassle with the negative effects of these questionable methods when there are so many ways to advertise online? Forget morality issues, it just makes no business sense.

The most important asset you have as an Internet marketer is your reputation. And spamming is about the fastest way possible to ruin it, short of blatantly ripping people off. If you have any intentions of being around to realize long-term profits, please don't spam.

**Blunder #8: Forgetting that marketing is the key to your success.**

Even if you have the greatest product in the world you will never sell anything if you don't tell anyone about it. Without advertising there will be no prospects, and without prospects there will be no sales. It sounds like common sense, but it's also a common blunder.

You only have to do two things to be successful in business, and you only need to do one of them on a regular basis. Can you guess what it is? If online endeavors are not as successful as you'd like them to be, do yourself a big favor and return to the basics.

First of all, you need to develop a profitable business model. Until it has been proven that you have a viable product or service and a method of selling it that turns a profit, anything else is premature. Do not waste time and money promoting a dud, testing is critical.

Once you have determined that your business model is sound you should concentrate most of your efforts on promoting it. If you make \$10 per sale, you simply need to find 100,000 customers to make a million dollars. Marketing is the lifeblood of your business.

**Blunder #9: Thinking you're going to get rich without working hard.**

Here's another blunder that isn't exactly limited to the Internet, but it is just as dangerous as the others. If we had to pick just one, this would probably be the number one cause of failure -- both online and in the real world. Making money is easy, but you must work for it.

A successful online business isn't built overnight; it is the result of many late nights. If anyone says that they can teach you to make a substantial amount of money without hard work, run as far away as you possibly can. And be sure to bring your checkbook with you.

The get-rich-quick mentality seems to be quite popular online. But the truth is, there really isn't a way for the average person to do so. And getting caught up in the hype is only going to delay true success. Save yourself lots of grief by accepting the fact that there is no free lunch.

We're still not sure why the get-rich-quick mentality is so prevalent on the Internet, but we do know one thing. There are no secrets, and there is nothing mystical about making money online. With some hard work and a little perseverance, absolutely anyone can do it.

**Blunder #10: Not understanding the real power of the Internet.**

The Internet is a communications tool. It was created for this purpose, and you'll get the most out of it if you use it as such. There has never been an easier or more cost-effective way for a business to reach its target audience, and there never will be. So take full advantage of it.

Use the power of the Internet to reach millions of customers all over the world. And then use it to provide them with the sort of customer service that was impossible without it. Use the Internet to gather information, research the competition, and network with others.

There is a goldmine of information and resources floating around in cyberspace, but you have to know where to find it all. Learn how to use the search engines to easily find almost anything you need and your productivity will skyrocket. This tip alone is invaluable.

In a nutshell, use the Internet to communicate more effectively. Don't forget that business is about people, and that the Internet is nothing more than a great way to interact with them. Don't hide behind it, get involved and witness the way it changes the world firsthand.

In Conclusion...

There you have it, our Top 10 Internet Marketing blunders. Sure there are lots more, but these costly mistakes are common and they provide a good starting point. If you steer clear of these Top 10 blunders, you are absolutely guaranteed to be more successful on the Internet.

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ARTICLE CREDITS

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