



Choosing a partner for your Internet Marketing can be one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your organization. Be sure your Internet Marketing partner can guide you in the right direction. When considering which Internet Marketing company to team with, ask them the following questions.

Can you provide us with a full service Internet Marketing Plan?

There are several aspects to Internet Marketing including: Search Engine Optimization (SEO); Paid Search; Email; Social Media and Mobile. Not every aspect will be appropriate for every organization, but some combination is usually the best approach.

What to look for: Many web developers are jumping on the SEO bandwagon out of necessity. Make sure your Internet Marketing partner truly understands marketing and can even provide you with a full service Internet Marketing plan.

What is your approach to SEO?

There are several approaches that can be used to help your site show up higher in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERP). Unfortunately, many of the approaches are less than honest and will eventually cause more problems than you can imagine. There is only one legitimate approach to SEO – it can be a lengthy process, but it has the potential to provide a significant ROI.

What to look for: Ask your prospective Internet Marketing teammate if they have ever had a client blacklisted or penalized by a Search Engine. Make sure they are going to do all SEO work on your site, not on an external or third party site. Ask them how many keywords they will focus on within any landing page. If the answer is more than one or two, or if they ask you what a landing page is, it is time to move on.

How long does it take to get us listed at the top of the search engines?

There are two different ways to get listed at the top of the SERP's in the major search engines. The left hand column is known as 'organic' or 'natural' search results, and the column on the right is made up of Sponsored Links, aka Paid Search or Pay-Per-Click (PPC). Positioning on the organic results (left) side of the SERP's cannot be bought directly. Positioning on the Paid Search (right) side of the SERP's is done with a bidding system. There is no way of determining how long it can take to get listed higher in the organic listings, it is dependent on too many factors. You can get listed near the top of the Paid Search side of a page in a matter of hours.

What to look for: If someone promises to get you listed at the top of the search engines they are going to use Paid Search. The only way to make that promise is by bidding higher than all other bidders for keyword phrases. Getting listed high in the organic search results is clearly preferable since you are not paying every time someone clicks on your ad, plus the Click-Thru-Rate (CTR) is much better for organic results.

How will you help us to achieve the best ROI?

Unless you already rank very high in the major search engines on the search phrases that are optimal for your organization, you should be using a two part approach to your Internet Marketing. For maximum near term results the best approach is to use Paid Search. With Paid Search it is better to use a wide variety of keywords and continuously test positioning and copy to achieve maximum results. When using organic search it is better to focus on just a few keywords and work to optimize the site for those keywords.

What to look for: Make sure the Internet Marketing firm you are working with provides you with a full service approach to your Internet Marketing needs. Check for credentials such as Google AdWords certification, Yahoo Search certification and Search Engine Marketing Professionals Organization membership.

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How do you perform keyword research, and how do I know these are the best keywords for my organization?

The foundation of your Internet Marketing system begins with keyword research. The list of keywords should be selected in consultation with you – no matter how much research is done, you still know your business better than anyone. One, or at most two, keywords are chosen per web page and the page is then optimized for that keyword(s).

What to look for: There are free SEO tools available and these are used by some SEO companies and web developers. Make sure the Internet Marketing firm you are working with uses a business class research service such as Wordtracker®.

How do I know if I am getting the results I want?

One of the beauties of Internet Marketing is knowing just how good your marketing efforts are performing. Nearly every aspect of an Internet Marketing campaign is measurable. With Internet Marketing, you can get statistics on just about anything you want to count.

What to look for: Ask your provider what type of analytics they will be providing to you during your Internet Marketing campaign, how often they will be providing them, and how they use the analytics to adjust your marketing effort.

How do you get my site listed in the Search Engines?

The best way to get your site listed is to let the Search Engines find it on their own. Don't pay anyone a fee just to get your site listed because you will be wasting your money. Most likely the Search Engine will follow a link from somewhere else to find your site. And remember, even with the dozens of Search Engines on the Internet, there are only 3 you really need to be concerned with.

What to look for: Avoid any service that wants you to pay them for submitting your site to any Search Engines. The best approach for achieving good Search Engine listings is tried and true SEO.

Are there other ways to help improve my Search Engine results?

Link building. Quality incoming links are extremely important to your standings and there are legitimate methods for increasing the number of links connecting to your site. Every SEO effort should include link building.

What to look for: This is one way to separate the real Internet Marketing providers from the wannabes. Ask them if they provide link building as part of their service package. Don't let them buy or rent links from a link farm.

How can I stay in touch with clients when they are not searching for me?

E-mail marketing is probably the most underutilized aspect of Internet Marketing. It can be used for newsletters, product announcements, special offers, and a host of other purposes. When used properly, your clients will not throw you in the spam bucket, in fact they will be looking forward to your next mailing.

What to look for: Even if you decide to do it yourself, always, always, always use a respected E-Mail Service Provider. E-mail address lists can be bought or rented, but the best method is to build up your own permission based list.

How can social media marketing affect my business?

Social media means different things to different people so this is multi-part, many faceted, ambiguous question without a clear answer. We do know that choosing to ignore social media can be devastating to your business. Participating in, or at least monitoring, blog posts and social media sites is highly recommended. On the up side, satisfied customers are your best sales people.

What to look for: Take the time to listen to your Internet Marketing partner and make sure they provide you with a good explanation of their capabilities and experience with blogging, article marketing and viral marketing.