

An Open Letter from Website Marketing Charlotte: What Local Businesses Should Know About Internet Marketing

Internet Marketing Leads Traditional Media in Local Advertising

If your business is currently using traditional marketing methods that are proving effective, we don't recommend that you abandon them completely. However, there is a significant transition occurring that is affecting the success of your marketing efforts.

Online marketing has predictably shown a steady year-to-year growth as businesses shift their marketing strategies to the Internet. But what is notable is that the trend has significantly increased during the past 24 months. Digital/online media now leads traditional media in local advertising (Figure 1), and the Internet is expected to surpass newspapers with the most U.S. advertising spending shares in 2011 (Figure 2).

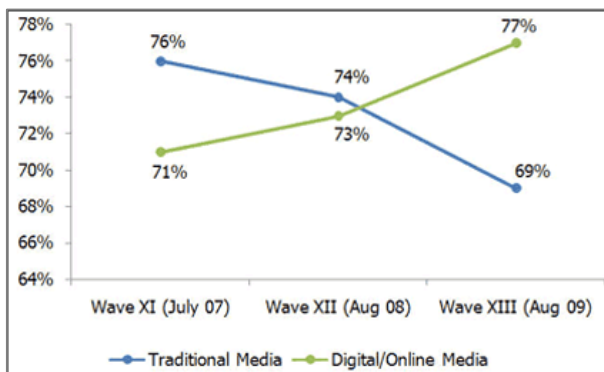


Figure 1: Local Search Changing with the Seasons, Gregg Stewart | Sep 18, 2009
The Kelsey Group and ConStat : Local Commerce Monitor Wave XIII

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Newspapers	18.7%	16.3%	14.6%	14.0%	13.0%	12.1%
Internet*	9.0%	10.6%	12.2%	12.9%	13.4%	13.6%
Local and national spot TV	10.7%	10.9%	10.1%	10.5%	9.7%	10.3%
Custom publishing	8.6%	9.2%	9.4%	8.1%	8.0%	7.7%
Cable network TV	7.3%	7.8%	8.7%	9.1%	9.6%	10.0%
Broadcast network TV	7.8%	7.9%	8.3%	7.8%	7.5%	7.0%
Terrestrial radio	8.5%	8.0%	7.5%	7.7%	8.0%	8.2%
Consumer magazines	8.8%	7.9%	7.5%	7.6%	8.0%	8.0%
Yellow pages (print)	6.2%	6.0%	5.5%	5.2%	4.6%	4.0%
Branded entertainment/product placement	3.0%	3.7%	4.4%	4.8%	5.4%	5.9%
B2B magazines	3.8%	3.8%	3.7%	3.5%	3.7%	3.6%
Out-of-home/place-based**	2.9%	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%
Local and regional cable TV	2.7%	2.3%	2.0%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%
Broadcast syndication TV	1.3%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%
Video game advertising	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
Cinema advertising	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Mobile advertising	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%
Satellite radio	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *includes display, search, online video, social networks, widgets and other; **excludes cinema
Source: Jack Myers Media Business Report, "Advertising & Marketing Investment Forecast 1998-2012," provided to eMarketer, September 14, 2009

106857 www.eMarketer.com

Figure 2

Myers Publishing Media Business Report, September 2009

The Internet, together with explosive technological innovations, has transformed consumers' lives, giving them access to entertainment and information however, whenever, and wherever they want it. Local businesses must be willing to adjust their marketing strategies to remain competitive.

If your local business is not using the Internet to build a customer base and generate sales, then you are falling behind the marketing curve. If your competitors are online, there is the probability that you will fall behind them. If they are not, then you have a limited opportunity to lead your competition by establishing a superior Internet presence in an unclaimed market.



The Advantages of Internet Marketing

There has never been a better time for local businesses to take advantage of Internet marketing. Major search engines are competing for the local market, resulting in more local features and a substantial reduction of online competition. You may have noticed a change in the organic (natural) listings of major search engine results. If you search Google today for "chiropractor" without specifying a local modifier (such as town, state, etc.), you will receive local results.

Why are search engines competing for the local market? Because of consumer usage. 74% of Internet users perform local searches and 35% of all searches are local.

What that means for local businesses is that your customers are shopping online. In a recent study, The Kelsey Group found that 83% of United States households now use the Internet as an information source when shopping locally for products and services. The Internet, they concluded, will soon surpass newspapers as a local shopping information resource.

So now the question is, "Will consumers find you when they search for your products or services?"

Consumers who search locally are further along in the buying cycle, are generally more qualified and result in higher conversions and purchases. The advantage of Internet marketing is it targets customers who are already interested and ready to buy.

· 82% of the people using local search follow up their research with offline action, including in-store visits, phone calls, e-mails, or purchases. *Source: comScore Networks*

· 61% of those using local search make purchases. *Source: Stuart McKelvey, TMP Directional Marketing CEO*

· 24% of all off-line purchases are influenced by the Internet. *Source: Forrester Research*

· 81% of internet users find the web sites they're looking for through search engines. *Source: Consumer Survey Data, Jupiter Communications*

· Over 80% of search engine users find what they are looking for within the first three pages. Sales leads made from keyword and phrase searches are the most qualified and have the highest purchase probability. *Source: Forrester Reports*

Traditional marketing methods don't match that return on your investment. Plus, Internet marketing promotes your business 24 hours a day, enables motivating sales tools, and allows you to track customer response.

If you haven't considered Internet marketing, now is the time. The channels consumers are using to shop locally are changing. Is your marketing strategy adapting?

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