



Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

OVERVIEW OF INTERNET MARKETING

Introduction to the various ways in which you can market your business online

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Introduction

This guide provides you with an overview of all the different areas of Internet Marketing. It would be very difficult to adopt everything in this guide but ideally you need to pick out what is most relevant to your business.

Skill Level

Basic

The topics in this guide are suitable for anyone who has basic PC knowledge.

Terminology

You will come across the following terminology in this guide which you need to be familiar with:

Term	Explanation
Opt-In	Opt-In is a term used to describe a way of getting details from a potential customer to subscribe to a particular service. They decide they want to get details you offer so they opt-in. For example, sign up to a newsletter.
Inbound Marketing	You attract customers to you rather than broadcasting your message.
Outbound Marketing	You promote your products and services directly to potential customers. For example, advertising is outbound marketing.
Call to action	On your website a call to action is something that requests a visitor to do something. For example – 'Subscribe Now' is a call to action.

What is Internet Marketing?

Internet Marketing is any means you use to market your business online. How to market to people has radically changed over the last few years and it can be very confusing to businesses.

Social media in particular is an area that has radically changed how you market your business. Consumers are much smarter and are not as interested in messages being broadcast to them and are therefore engaging more with social networks. Through these they are finding out what products to buy, services to use, and so on, based on trusted recommendations from their friends and family. It is estimated that 78% of the time if you read a recommendation from friends online you trust that recommendation but what's more interesting is that if you read that recommendation from someone you don't know you still trust it 60% of the time.

Inbound versus Outbound Marketing

Outbound marketing was typically the traditional approach to market your business and this was known as interruption based marketing. This is where you broadcast your message through advertising and other mediums and try to grab the attention of the user. When consumers are bombarded with on average 3,000 messages a day you can understand why this form of marketing is becoming increasingly difficult. It certainly still works in some cases (for example, it can be very effective with Google advertising) but there are now other ways that can be more effective.

Inbound marketing is where you provide something of value that attracts your customer to come to you. When you attract that customer you try to build a relationship. After you build the relationship you develop trust and this then allows you to sell your product or service to them. This form of marketing although difficult to grasp is becoming increasingly effective.

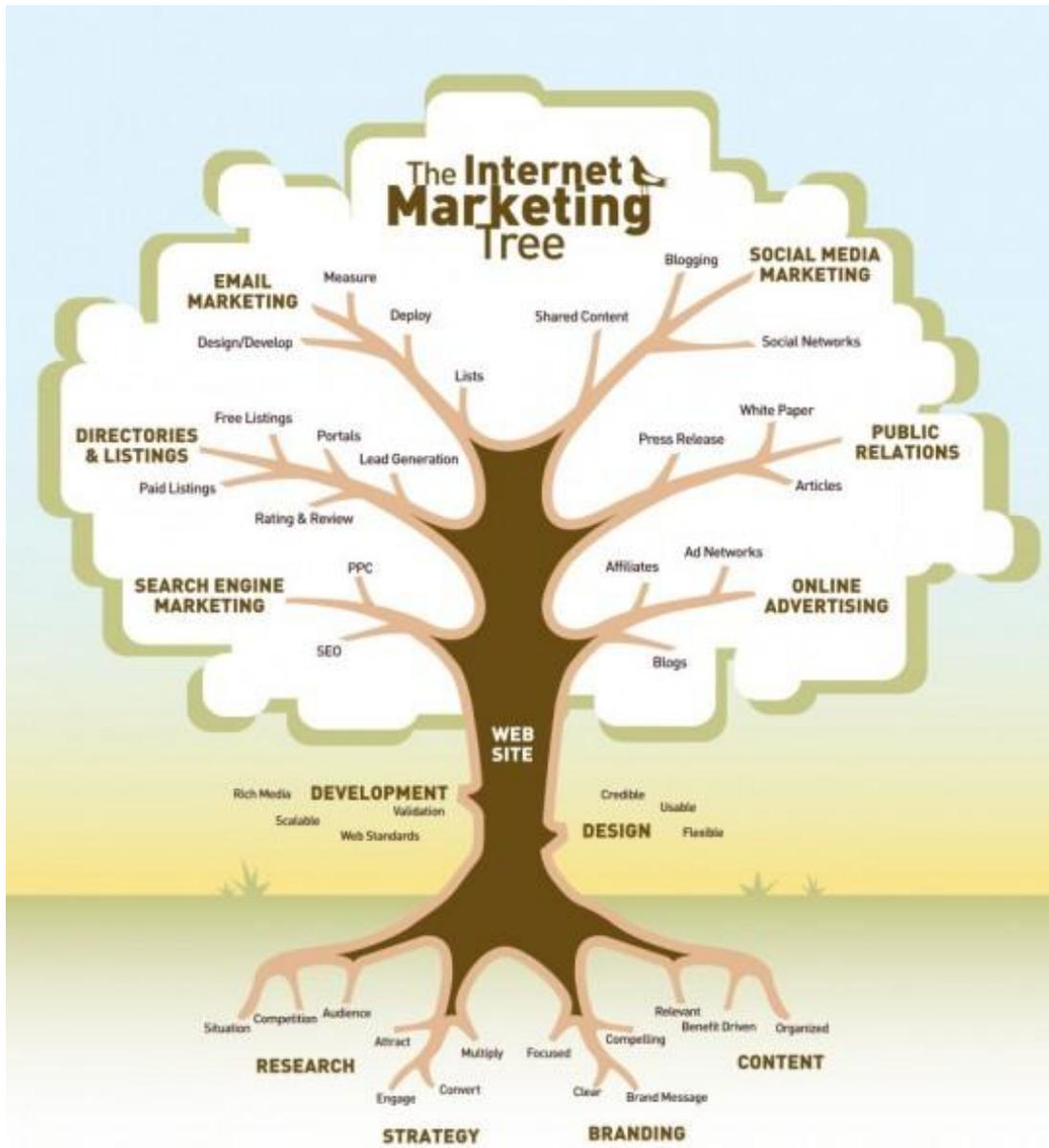
A permission based approach such as this can also produce much better results because:

- a.** When you build a relationship within any client online or offline your chances of a sale increase significantly. When you go into a sales meeting and fail to build rapport with the potential customer it is difficult to get the sale. Online is now becoming very similar.
- b.** It's generally more cost effective. It does involve more of your time but there is less expense.
- c.** Performance/return is relatively easy to track so you can adjust to get better results

Different Ways to Market your Business Online

This guide gives an overview of the different means to market your business online. It's not a case of using everything in this guide for your business as you don't have an endless amount of time and budget but this guide will help you to identify the areas that can be effective for your business.

The following diagram gives an overview of the type of areas we are talking about.



Before deciding which methods of online marketing tools you are going to use you need to allocate time for the following:

- **Research** – The initial research is to figure out what other people are doing and what is working or not working. You will not necessarily copy other people but you may take some guidance when coming up with your unique plan.
- **Strategy** – You need to define a clear effective strategy. It’s very easy to waste time and money on internet marketing, a clear strategy will help with this. How are you going to attract potential customers, how are you going to engage them, how are you going to keep in touch with them and how are you going to convert them.
- **Branding** – Branding is becoming increasingly important in the online world. What message are you giving out online? Are you an approachable company? Is your information clear and compelling? What’s unique about your offering? Branding consistency is extremely important in how you communicate, what you communicate and how it looks. For example, always ensure the tools you use online to communicate with your customers have the same look and feel as your website wherever possible.
- **Content** – You need to have a clear content strategy. What content are you going to provide that will add value, what will be of interest to potential customers.

The following gives a breakdown of the key forms of Internet Marketing as outlined above.

Type	Explanation
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)	This is a process used to optimise your website so that it appears more in Google searches. For more information, see “Search Engine Optimisation” on page 10.
Social media	Social media marketing is marketing yourself through conversation and engagement with your potential customers. For example, using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and so on. For more information, see “Social Media” on page 11.
E-mail marketing	e-mail marketing is marketing yourself through delivery of e-mails to current and potential clients. This could be in the form of signatures on e-mails (showing your Facebook address etc), newsletters, mailing lists and much more. For more information, see “E-mail marketing” on page 13.
Online Advertising	There are many forms of online advertising. Although advertising through the likes of newspapers is not that effective, targeted advertising online can be very effective. For example, if you are searching to buy a Canon camera and the ad is directly relevant to this then you don’t view this as a bad thing. The advertisement is directly related to what you are looking for. For more information, see “Online Advertising” on page 15.

Type	Explanation
Affiliate marketing	Affiliate marketing is where you get third party companies to promote your company with a commission paid for a lead or sale. For more information, see "Affiliate Marketing" on page 17.
Website	Your website is a key internet marketing tool used to promote your business online. For more information, see "Website" on page 18.
Online PR	PR can be a very effective tool for promoting your business and there are many ways of doing this online. For more information, see "Online PR" on page 19.

Your Internet Marketing Questions Answered

What's the difference between Internet Marketing and Digital Marketing?

There is no difference!

Why should I consider marketing on the Internet?

As more and more people spend time on line they are spending less time with traditional media such as newspapers, TV, and so on. So it's becoming increasingly difficult to target your audience using traditional channels. Internet Marketing is typically cheaper and a more effective method of targeting your potential customers. Advertising online as opposed to offline is also easier to track to see its effectiveness.

What is viral marketing?

Viral marketing is where you communicate a message to someone and they share out this message to their personal and business networks, who in turn share it out to their networks, and so on. The more people that share and pass on your message the more chance your message has of becoming viral. There are various techniques that can be used to get this message shared out.

What is social media all about?

People are joining social networks such as Facebook. They are now starting to use these social networks more and more to find out recommendations about products and services from their friends, sharing out information about their trips and experiences, and promote companies they really like. Tapping into this can be very powerful.

What is a smart phone?

A smart phone is a phone that contains more than just call receiving and answering functionality. It would typically have an internet browser which allows you to get access to websites. Increasingly people have smart phones such as an iPhone and this means you will need to make sure that your website works on these types of devices.

Where is it all going?

This is very difficult to know because online is moving at such a fast pace, however, one thing for sure is that the traditional methods of broadcasting your advertising message to a consumer is going to continue to have difficulty. That's why newspapers and TV will have to change their revenue models because their advertising revenue will continue to decline. A lot of social media is about networking online and this will certainly increase. The tools will change but people networking online will continue to grow.

Do I have to spend lots of time online sending messages through Twitter, updating my Facebook page, writing blogs, etc?

It is true that although a lot of the tools you use online are free you still have to invest time in engaging and communicating with your customers and potential customers.

Search Engine Optimisation

Search engines such as Google and Bing (Microsoft's competing search engine to Google) index content and try to display the most relevant information to users when they perform a search. The search engine optimisation process is about ensuring that the search engines give priority to your web pages over other competing pages and there are many techniques for doing this.

For more in-depth information on Search Engine Optimisation and how to apply it to your website, see the "Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)" training guide which is part of this series of guides.

On Page Optimisation

On page optimisation is the process of optimising the content within the web page to ensure that Google indexes it according to how you want to be indexed. Google goes through your page to see what you have outlined what this page is about and then it goes through all the content to figure out if it agrees with this. It's important for Google to index content in a way that makes the most sense.

For example, if you had a restaurant in Dublin and you wanted it to appear high on rankings within Google when someone typed in 'restaurant dublin' then you would optimise at least one page on these keywords. This means the name of the optimised page would contain the words 'restaurant dublin', the title of the post could include this and any details displayed could display information related to restaurants around Dublin.

Off page optimisation

When somebody links to your website, that is like someone giving you a vote for an election. The more relevant votes you get the better. So Google checks to see who is linking to you and what words they are using to link to you. You need to get important web pages to link to you using the keywords you want to get indexed on. It is much better to get 10 links from 10 important and relevant websites (e.g. getting a link from Fáilte Ireland would be an important and relevant link) rather than links from 1,000 poor quality sites.

Social Media

Social media is very simple. It's really about people networking online and how you communicate with people online. People are networking online with a range of different tools such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. As people spend more time on social networks they are starting to recommend products and services, share out information on their holidays, trips, products purchased and much more. There are many ways of taking advantage of this and generating sales.

For more detailed information on Social Media and the many tools you can use, see the range of social media training guides that are part of this series of guides. A full list can be found in the section "Related Guides in the Series" at the end of this guide.

Twitter

Twitter is the answer to the question 'what are you doing now'. It allows you to create a text like message of up to 140 characters through a PC or on your phone and send it to your followers. It's a mix of business and social. You could be at home communicating what you are doing or in work.

It can be a very useful tool to market your message to a lot of people at the same time very quickly. It can also be used to find out if people are actively looking for your services. For example, recently I searched for 'recommend restaurant dublin' and within 1 hour of me submitting this somebody was looking for a restaurant in Dublin. So it can be very useful, however, until you master the tool it can be very time consuming to use.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business networking tool with over 150 million users worldwide and over 66% of them are considered influencers or decision makers. You create your personal profile (similar to a CV) on the site and then network with other people. One big advantage with LinkedIn is that when you connect with someone through the site they become part of your network and you are made aware of who is in their network. This can be a very powerful way of getting warm leads.

Facebook

Facebook is a social network with over 800 million users and is ideal for companies in the tourism industry to promote their business. You can create a personal profile to connect with your friends and a business page to connect with your customers. By marketing through your business page you can communicate directly to your fans of that page.

Google+

Google+ is a business social network developed by Google. It's relatively new but it's growing quite fast. You can have a personal and a business profile similar to Facebook but at the moment it's more suitable for business networking.

Blogging

A blog is basically a set of online articles normally displayed through your website. When you write an article you want people to read this content and share it out. If this doesn't happen it can still be very advantageous to keep a blog because it gives Google extra pages to index. Every time you create a new post that's fresh content for Google to index so it really likes blogs.

Social Bookmarking

A bookmark is a way of keeping track of sites you went to before that you might want to go back to. Social bookmarking allows you to share out the information on the sites you have bookmarked to your friends and of course they can do the same.

Podcasting

A podcast is a series of files, in either an audio and/or video format that can be downloaded and listened to or viewed at a later stage. For example, a radio station could produce a podcast of a show they run so that people that missed the show can come to their website and download it to listen to it at their leisure.

Video

There are many online video sites that can be used to market your business. Video can be a very effective tool and as Google really likes video it is more likely to appear in search results. YouTube is the biggest video sharing site and is also one of the biggest search engines as so many people search for content through YouTube.

Alerting Applications

There are applications available on the web that allow you to monitor what people are saying on the internet about your product, service or even your competitors. It's important to 'Listen' to these conversations and join in if it's useful. For example, Google have a free alerting application called Google Alerts (www.google.ie/alerts). With this application you can enter in what you want to be alerted about and each day Google will e-mail you with details of where on the Internet somebody mentioned these phrases. For example, if you want to be alerted if your hotel name was mentioned on the Internet you could create an alert for the hotel name. When your name is mentioned Google will send you an e-mail with a link to a web page to where your hotel name was mentioned.

E-mail marketing

Although there is a lot of talk about social media, e-mail is still the primary form of online communication for a lot of people. This may change in years to come as social media becomes more important but at the moment e-mail marketing is still quite effective at keeping in touch.

For items such as newsletters there are many cost effective tools available that will help manage this process and most of these tools will allow you to customise the look of the newsletter so that it is consistent with your brand. For example, MailChimp allows you to fully customise the look and feel of the newsletter. It also lets you monitor statistics such as who is opening your newsletter, who deleted it, who clicked on a link and went to your website.

This is extremely important information to monitor as you want to continuously tweak your newsletter to make it more effective. If you find that people are more engaged with any particular type of information you provide then provide a lot more of it.

Your newsletters should have the following characteristics

- **Branding consistency** – Make sure it follows your branding guidelines.
- **Clear call to action** – When you send out a newsletter you want people to take action. For example, if you have any special deal make sure you have a clearly visible way of a potential customer availing of this offer (e.g. Book Now!)
- **Clean design** – They say that people make a judgment on design in less than 1/20th of a second. If your newsletter doesn't look professional you are facing a real up hill battle.
- **Relevant, short, interesting** – Be considerate of the time pressures that people are under. Keep the information relevant and short with very interesting catchy titles. If they want to read more information, give them the option but don't provide too much content up front. They don't have time to read everything so they will skim through the content and pick out what is relevant to them. How many people read your entire newsletter? Very, very few.
- **Regular** – People like consistency to what you do, so if you decide that you are going to send a newsletter every month make sure you deliver it every month like clockwork.

Do not automatically subscribe anybody to a newsletter. This should be an 'Opt-In' process where people decide they want to see your content and opt-in to receive it. It is just annoying for a person to be put on a newsletter they didn't subscribe to and if they consider this as spam (unwanted online communication) they can report you.

There are other forms of e-mail communication such as people just signing up to a mailing list, however, the guidelines for a newsletter still apply.

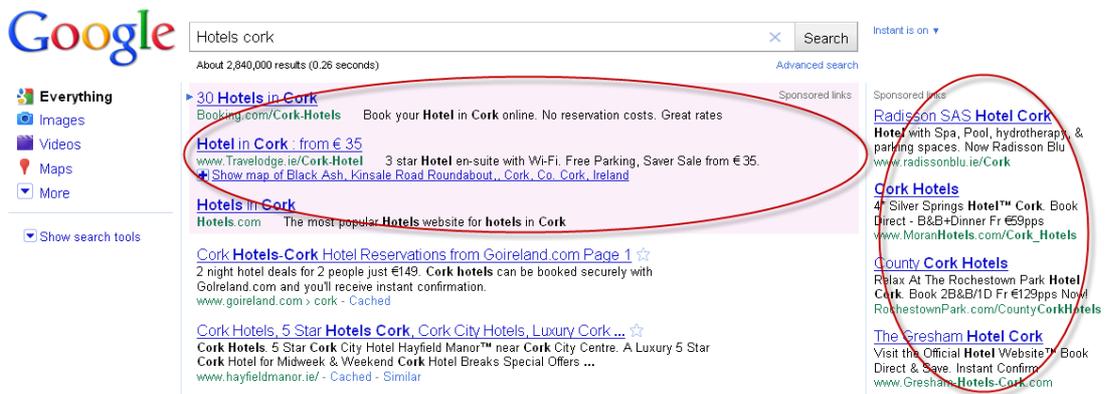
For more in-depth information on Email Marketing and the many tools and techniques you can use in an effective email marketing campaign, see the "Email Marketing " training guide which is part of this series of guides.

Online Advertising

Although permission based marketing (e.g. social media) is growing and advertisements are not as appealing as they were, targeted online advertising can still be very effective. The following gives an outline of some of the most popular ways of advertising your products online.

Google Adwords

When you do a search on Google you generally see advertisements to the right hand side of the search and sponsored advertisements across the top.



Companies are paying for these advertisements based on a cost per click or cost per impression basis.

- Cost per click — this means that you pay when somebody clicks on the advertisement but you don't pay for it to be displayed.
- Cost per impression — this means you pay an amount every time the advertisement is displayed 1,000 times irrespective of whether someone clicks on the advertisement or not.

When you create an advertisement you decide when the advertisement will appear and this is based on matching up with keywords that people use for searching. So if you sell boating tours on the Shannon you might want your advertisement to appear when somebody searches 'boating tour shannon'. The price of this advertisement is based on an auction so it is more expensive if there are a lot of companies that are also interested in these keywords and want advertisements based on this.

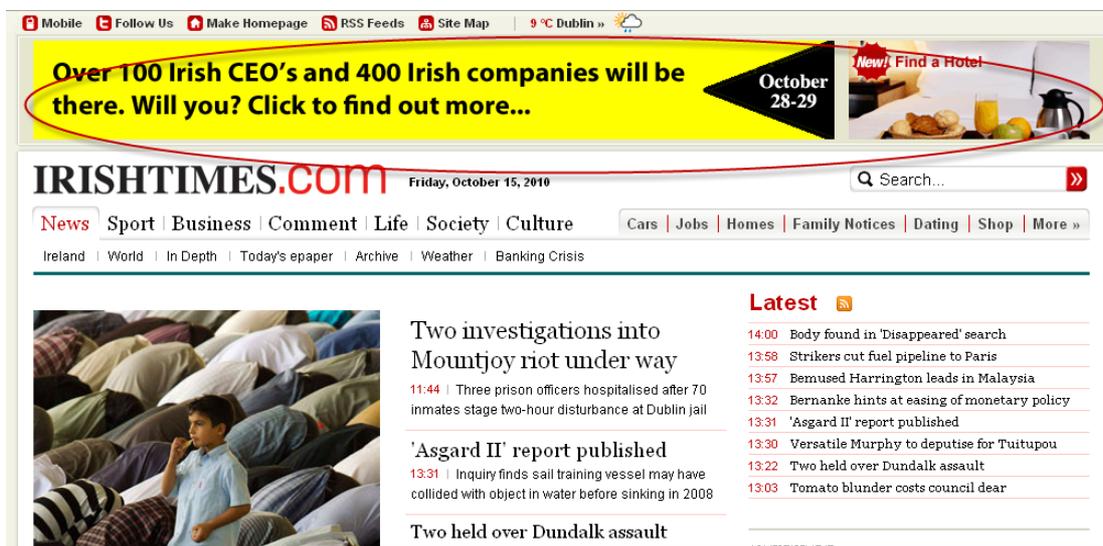
There are many other factors that Google also take into account when pricing the advertisement. For example, it assigns a quality score to your advertisement. If your quality score is high then your advertisement cost could be lower compared to another competitors with a similar ad with a lower quality score. The quality score is calculated using a variety of factors and probably the most important is the click through rate. If your ad is displayed and nobody clicks on it then your click through rate is 0%. Google now thinks you ad is not relevant so penalises you for this.

Your advertisement can be displayed on Google searches but it can also be displayed on partner websites that work with Google. This is known as the content network.

For more in-depth information on using Google Adwords, see the "Using Google Adwords" training guide which is part of this series of guides.

Banner Advertisements

A banner advertisement is an advertisement that appears on the website that is clickable. When you click on the advertisement you are brought to the website for the company that is paying for the advertisement. Here is an example of a banner advertisement on the RTE website.



Typically the banner advertisement would be graphical and you pay on a pay per click or pay per impression basis.

Facebook Advertising

In Facebook you can run targeted advertising based on a cost per click or cost per impression basis. The big advantage with Facebook is that you can target in on exactly who you want to see the advertisements. For example, if you ran an adventure centre and the typical profile of a customer is a male between 30 and 45 that live in Dublin you could just advertise to them. When they login to Facebook they see these advertisements on the right hand part of the screen.

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is where you use other websites to help drive traffic to your website. The source of the traffic is called the affiliate. The affiliate then gets payment for driving this traffic depending on the result. For example, the affiliate may only get paid if they drive traffic to your website and this ends up in a sale.

There are many forms of affiliate marketing and sometimes these cross over with other forms of advertising. Here are some examples:

- You write a blog post about a hotel you stayed in and the link to the hotel is an affiliate link. So if you go to the hotel and book a room then the source of this traffic will get paid an amount.
- You send an e-mail newsletter and include an affiliate link in this content.

Website

Your website is a key internet marketing tool where you can promote your business and sell your products and services. When you do all your work with other forms of online promotion and drive traffic back to your website you want to convert this traffic. If this is not a sale then at a minimum you need to capture their details so that you can continue to market to them.

So the design of your website is very important. You want it to look professional to follow all the appropriate usability guidelines and you want it to produce business. A key term on a website is a “call to action” and this is what you want the visitor to do. For example ‘Book Now’ is a call to action to make a booking. If they are not ready to book now maybe you’ll provide another call to action to sign up to a newsletter or become a fan on Facebook. At least then you’ll have another opportunity to market to them.

There are many websites out there that are just brochure websites. They tell us how good the company is and all the great services they provide but that is not enough any more. You need to provide some value to people arriving at your site. Think about what information you can provide that will help them make a decision about booking a room at your hotel, a table at your restaurant, or an activity at your adventure centre. Don’t think about how you can promote your business. If they are booking a hotel let them know what other people have said about the hotel, let them know all the facilities nearby and provide them with a video where they really get a feel for what the place is like. Recommendations from other people are extremely important online.

For more information on how to get the most out of your website through the use of an effective layout and design, calls to action, and many more, see the training guide “Getting the Most from Your Website” which is part of this series of guides.

Online PR

PR is a very effective tool for promoting your business and there are many ways of achieving this. The following gives some examples:

- Irishpressreleases.com – This is a site that the press monitor for any Irish press releases so if you've got something interesting to say, say it here!
- Guest Blog Post – Instead of you writing a blog post (article online) on your own website, why not find another popular blog that is related to your business and write a post for them. That is good PR for you and you can also provide a link back to your website that helps with your rankings on the search engines.
- Article writing – There are many sites online that allow you to write articles and these articles are read and distributed by many people.

Other Forms of Internet Marketing

Internet Marketing contains a lot of different areas and it is continuously changing. The following are some newer forms of internet marketing you may come across.

Location Based Check-ins

There are many sites (e.g. Foursquare, Facebook places) that are providing the ability for people to check in to any location they are. When they check in they see who else is checked in, what there is to do in an area, and much more.

Mobile Marketing

The mobile device has become increasingly popular over the last few years and with a mobile being with you 24 hours a day 7 days a week it's not something to ignore. There are lots of new and innovative ways of using the mobile to promote your products and services. For example:

- Mobile Applications – You can then develop mobile specific applications (e.g. iPhone Applications) that can run on the mobile and can be used to promote your service. For example if you run a hotel in Kerry maybe you'll have an application for tourists which shows you where to go and what do to.
- Mobile website – Your website can be a very effective marketing tool but does it work on the mobile device? Make sure it does!
- Mobile location based services – Increasingly people will use their mobile device to see what's going on in the area, what activities are running to-day etc. It will be important to be part of this conversation.

The Future of Internet Marketing

Where this is all going is hard to predict because it is moving so quickly but we can see that broadband access is increasing, mobile device usage is increasing and social networking is increasing. So that just means more people spending more time online and everybody having access to the internet.

Lots of businesses that don't use the Internet as a marketing channel will fall behind and this is not going to be good for business.



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