

# The Internet Marketing List: 59 Things You Should Be Doing But Probably Aren't

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March 21, 2008 by ian

Internet marketing is about lots of little things, not one big one. This list is half-list, half-procedure. If you go down these items in order it might give you a decent internet marketing plan for the next few months. If you have others, post 'em as comments:

1. If you have a Flash introduction on your web site, delete it. If you don't agree, try this: Shove your head into a bucket of water. Stay in there, not breathing, for 10 seconds longer than is comfortable. That's what you're doing to your customers. Delete it, please.
2. Check the load speed of every page on your site. If any load in more than 10 seconds, fix it (2-6 seconds is far better). If your developer says they can't, and it's not your own network causing the problem, fire them. Here's a good page load tester.
3. Check your site for broken links. You can use a tool like Xenu. Fix those links. Do not pass this step until you're done. If it takes your developer more than a week to do this step, again with the firing thing.
4. Make sure you have a user-friendly 404 error page, not the generically nasty PAGE NOT FOUND message.
5. Make sure you have a user-friendly 500 error page, too. A 500 error happens when some bit of database code you wrote late at night decides it's had enough with this world, and takes your web site with it. That usually leads to something terribly informative like "500 Error Connection Timed Out". Maybe you can do something better?
6. Remove all inline javascript to a separate .js include file. That will speed up page load times and may help you with search rankings, too. Plus it appeals to code geeks like me, and we're all that matter, right?
7. Set up Google Webmaster Tools, Yahoo! Site Explorer and Live.com Webmaster Tools. You'll see your site from the search engine's viewpoint, what folks use to find you, and whether there are any problems that might be hurting you in the search engines.
8. Set up an XML sitemap, too. Check out Sitemaps.org for an overview.
9. If you're running an e-commerce site, hire a really good writer to rewrite all your product descriptions. Those descriptions matter more than you think.
10. Get analytics set up on your site. You can't do internet marketing without it. Actually, you can, but you'll suck at it. I recommend Google Analytics. If your developer says they can't install anything, well, you know...
11. In that analytics tool, make sure you can consistently track conversions: Sales, or leads, or whatever else you want folks to do when they see your site.
12. Get a HackerSafe or ScanAlert logo on your site. While I question their value, the search engines don't. Nor do customers. That sticker can get you more search engine 'trust' and improve conversion rates.
13. Put your full address and phone number on each page of your site, for the same reasons.
14. Use Wordtracker, Trellian Keyword Discovery or something similar to find the top keywords that folks use to find your products or services.
15. Now find the top ranking sites for those phrases.
16. Who links to them? Do a "link:" search on Google, or use linkdiagnosis.com or Yahoo! Site Explorer to build a list. Now go out and get those links!

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17. If two years ago some SEO hack advised you to put 100 links at the bottom of your home page, delete them. They're not helping you, and they may be hurting you.
18. If two years ago that same SEO hack advised you to write title tags that read like this - "Wedding stuff and wedding things and weddings stuffs and weddings things with more wedding items and this is your place for weddings" - delete those too and write something that doesn't sound like Elmer Fudd suffering a mental breakdown.
19. If you have the same keywords in your keywords tag on every page of your site, search your feelings... Do you really think the search engines are that stupid? Change 'em, or delete the tag altogether. The tag doesn't really help, and duplicating keywords across all pages can flag you as an SEO spammer.
20. Write a high-quality meta description tag for each page of your site. That may not affect ranking but it'll get more folks to click on your search listing.
21. Make sure your site uses correct semantic markup. Your developer had better understand what that means. Don't make me come over there...
22. Get your site totally standards compliant according to the W3C code validator.
23. At the same time, make sure your site isn't hideously ugly.
24. With those two items handled, you can now go to all the major XHTML and CSS site directories out there, which list lots of standards-compliant sites, and submit your own web site. If you get in, you get great links from great sites. Do not submit your site to any CSS or XHTML directories until you see a happy green report on the W3C validator. Doing so wastes your time, and the directory owners'. They're liable to digitally tar and feather you.
25. Comment on other folks' blogs. That gets you attention from those bloggers. They may come look at your site, or just drop you a line, or they may do nothing for a while. But you're building relationships you can use later.
26. Do a press release a month. Chances are something cool happened. Did you hire someone new? Create a new product? Complete a new project? Win a prize? Brag!
27. Get someone who can write to create that press release. Bragging doesn't help if you sound like an idiot.
28. Learn to use Google Reader. Subscribe to the top internet marketing blogs. Read them a lot. For a hint you can look at the AdAge 150 list.
29. Go to Google blog search. Search for your own brand name. Then subscribe to that search result in Google Reader (you'll find a little RSS link on the search results page). That gives you a quick look at what folks are saying about your company.
30. Do the same thing for your own name.
31. Then subscribe to who's linking to you on Technorati, for the same reason.
32. Go to local directories like Yelp! and make sure you're listed. Hey, it's a link, right? Plus it'll give you one more place to manage your reputation.
33. Be sure your company information is up to date in Google, Yahoo! and Live's local search tools.
34. If you're a local business, ask your customers to review you on one of the local sites: Either on the search engines or on the other sites. This will boost your ranking in local search results. Beg, plead, bribe. It does require work on their part. And don't worry if you get a few negative reviews, either.
35. Start working on Yahoo! Answers. This is an opportunity to make yourself an expert, and get some links at the same time. Spend no more than an hour a week. Read Matt McGee's excellent article on the subject to learn more.
36. Invite people to subscribe to your house e-mail list. If you don't have one, start one. This continues to be one of the most neglected facets of internet marketing.
37. Make sure there's an easy way for folks to sign up for that list.

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38. Remove any extra fields from your subscription form. All you need is their e-mail address.
39. If you require registration during checkout, get rid of it.
40. If you're automatically opting folks in to your e-mail list, stop.
41. When you receive customer requests via e-mail, answer them. Fast.
42. Remember that house e-mail list I got you to start building? Starting sending out a quality offer to that list, once a month. See how it works. Keep testing different types of subject lines, creative, offers and such. Always strive to beat your last best performance.
43. Now you're ready for some real online marketing (yes, all this was a warm up). Create a landing page for the best offer you've got. Follow best practices. Read Marketing Sherpa's Landing Page Handbook for the best information you'll find.
44. Create 2-3 headlines for that page.
45. Write a few different versions of body text for the landing page.
46. And finally use a couple of different images.
47. Then use a multivariate testing tool like Google Website Optimizer (if the budget's tight) or Widemile (if you want the best possible result) to test all those headlines, copy versions and images and find the best 'recipe'.
48. Create 2-3 pay-per-click ads on Google Adwords and/or Yahoo!. Point those ads at the landing page. Be sure to use whatever tagging mechanism your analytics software requires, so you'll know which ad generates which clicks.
49. Now start that test!
50. Pick the 3 things you learned from that test, and apply them to the rest of your site. Did one call to action work best? Create a button to put everywhere on the site. One type of photography? Use that, too. You get the idea.
51. Did conversion rates go up? Cool! Now make sure you're earning a good return on those PPC ads. Increase your spend and broaden your campaign, always watching out for ROI.
52. Now you can create landing pages for all those house e-mails you're sending out. Since you already know which subjects work best, and which kinds of offers, you can start with a good foundation and find the best possible landing page.
53. Borrow your neighbor's DVCam. Put it on a tripod. Film yourself talking about one of your products, or explaining how to use one of them. Post it on YouTube and then embed it on your site. No, you're not Scorsese. But it's more exposure for you, in another venue.
54. Are you still using Yahoo! Answers? I hope so. Don't make me come over there AGAIN.
55. Create a MySpace page for fans/hobbyists/enthusiasts/students of your product or service. Don't brand the page that heavily. Focus on the type of product or service. Attract folks who want to know more. Then wow 'em with your knowledge, and build a circle of friends. Now you can announce offers and such to them, too.
56. Do the same thing on Facebook.
57. Find any industry-specific social networks that are relevant to you. It's easy: Go to Google and search for "'your product' social network". Bet you find some. If you do, join up.
58. Take all the cool stuff you've learned by testing offers, and newsletters, and keywords, and ads, and landing pages, and revamp your site. Then announce your new, improved site to all your customers, and subscribers, and MySpace friends, etc..
59. Whew! You're done. Congrats! Now, go back to step 1, and repeat the process. Because you're never 'done'.

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