

# **Establishing an Online Marketing Priority List**

By Aaron Kahlow , December 10, 2009

As a marketer and even more so as an entrepreneur, I find all of our options and opportunities to shine in online marketing daunting. Not daunting in the sense that “this new stuff scares me,” as that would be quite a thing to say based on what I do for a living (i.e., educate on best practices of online marketing). But enormously daunting in the sheer number of opportunities to do great things during this huge transformational time. Opportunities are boundless and the ideas are gushing over at a pace and volume that feels like the Amazonian waterfalls I’ve seen on the Discovery Channel.

The breadth, amount, and rapidity of such, simply blow me away on Sunday mornings like this. So, I find myself becoming introspective and thinking, “Hey dude, why don’t you just go after one idea and see it all the way through to the very last detail?” Asking myself, “Are you ADD?” or “Do you lack the discipline or interest?” The answer is yes and no.

Most marketers and entrepreneurs are more driven by the idea than the step-by-step execution. We are idea and creative oriented versus engineering and detail oriented. We like to set forth on huge ideas that will transform our respective industries. We don’t like looking at our Web analytic reports on hours to find the one little detail that will shed light on our user experience. Now, this is not all of us for sure, but most is my guess.

This brings me to my ultimate point. With so much opportunity and the desire for the big bang marketing idea in this awesome time for online, what is worth your painstaking effort to do it and do it right? Here at the end of the year, that question seems even more prominent as we set goals and budgets for 2010. Should you fix your Web site finally and build truly for the customer? Should you deeply segment your e-mail campaigns and become ultra-relevant and targeted? Should you tweet the heck out of all things and create buzz around your brand? Should you go on a friends/fans hunt to acquire as many as you can on Facebook so you wield some influence there? Should you build your own social network or invest in a real blog with a real content strategy behind it? Should you take your SEO (define) efforts to the next level and really blow the doors off your traffic and maximize your Web site’s content? Should you customize your analytics reports to align with marketing and business objectives versus slight customization to existing in the box reports?

The answer is “yes.” But of course, time and money are finite resources, so we must choose one idea (maybe two if we’re lucky) to invest in. So how do we do that? Prioritization now becomes king. As has been said many times in many different ways, “It’s never that you don’t have time to do something. Rather, it’s that something has not been prioritized to be important enough to take your time.” And that is the age-old challenge.

OK, I know. You want me to tell you something you don’t already know. Let’s consider how the best are prioritizing their efforts:

## **Pursue Strategic Thinking Over Reactive Acting**

The best folks are constantly challenging themselves on the strategic side. Caring less about what everyone else is doing and more about the reason that what they are doing is important to their objectives. With so much change and new information, strategic thinking is not an annual undertaking; it’s constant and at a minimum must be done once a month. At the very least, ask: Does what we are spending more of our time on represent what’s important to us as an organization? Those who are nimble and willing to act based on constant reassessment will win. Egos will be the biggest obstacle here.

## **Avoid Information Overload**

Doing less. Reading less. Traveling less. Focusing more. Decide what content is worth your time, what events help you in your execution efforts, and reduce the clutter of information overload. Your time is important, so focus on the good

Provided by:

**AUBURN PRINTERS** 13020 Earhart Ave • Auburn • CA 95602  
**integrated marketing** 888-282-8764 • fax 530-885-6517  
www.AuburnPrinters.com • print@AuburnPrinters.com

content that really educates or helps and not the content that distracts or adds little value.

### **Segment Your Customers Based on Their Interests**

Your customers are like you and just have too much on their plates. And as in the point above, you must help them simplify and become more relevant. The easiest way to do this is to ask them what they want and then give them related content to help in their efforts. Segment customers based on interest, not geography, size, or job title.

### **Tweet Sans Blue Thumb**

Using Twitter is a great way to get your content found. But be sure you tweet because there is value to be gained, not because you want your opinion heard or because you want your brand to be seen. Many are tweeting until their thumbs turn blue (I can see it now, “tweet-thumb” being diagnosed at your next check up). Although volume is part of the game, quality will win -- for Twitter, that’s the tweet that’s retweeted.

### **Remember: Facebook Forever**

Facebook “fans of” and groups pages offer a lot of upside in gaining lists of folks who are raising their hand to be more intimate with your brand. So, use it. Get these folks to give you feedback and test offers with them. Don’t chase pure numbers but go for a sub-list that you can hit more frequently, informally, and, if done correctly, forever.

### **Tap SEO to the “Nth Degree”**

For SEO, like other activities, the law of diminishing returns kicks in. But for 99 percent of us, we are not close to reaching that point if we have the content to back up those SEO initiatives. So, do one of two things: A) If you have the content, invest in making this content more appealing to search engines and becoming more competitive. B) If you don’t have the content to compete, get it. For both options, social media is a gold mine for content, links, and unique opportunities to outpace your competitor. For me, a litmus test is a look at your top three competitors, not online, just brand/product competitors. If comparable competitors outrank you, then keep on working. If you are getting beat by lesser competitors, it’s time to get even more serious. If you are ranking above equally financed competitors, then get a little more nuanced on your approach and don’t get overly concerned about getting too much further on traffic/rankings from a volume perspective. Focus on the quality.

In the end, selecting one or two of these areas to sink your teeth into, will make 2010 a year to celebrate. If you try to do all of them well at the same time, you may be coming back to this same list next year wondering why the needle didn’t move.

My final word is this: do something that would be worth opening a bottle of champagne and toasting to; do it big, do it right, and do it because you passionately believe. Life’s too short and the opportunities in this day and age too great not to. Cheers!

Provided by: