

What your boss needs to know about eMarketing

 By [Tim Shier](#)

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Online marketing is one of those activities which, let's be honest, not everybody understands. The idea of people spending extended periods of their life using the Internet can be a little foreign to many bosses and its applicability is often misunderstood. Here are three critical strategic objectives which lend themselves to eMarketing and the ways they can be implemented to create holistic and successful online and offline marketing campaigns.



With the online population growing in leaps and bounds, eMarketing presents an avenue companies can no longer afford to overlook. It opens doors to building an online presence, brand awareness, driving leads and a medium to truly engage with existing and potential consumers - all of which promote increased profits both on the short-, medium- and long-term.

Generating presence

You can only market what is perceived - generating presence.

The first step to eMarketing success is establishing an online presence. Building presence and awareness is fundamental as consumers can only purchase from that which exists.

Website development is the critical first step as it provides the central hub upon which all future activities are built. Think of it as your brand's home from which all other tactics can launch. Once in place, other services are available as support in the quest for presence. These include social media, web PR, online advertising and viral marketing- all with their particular tactical advantages.

With a firm presence comes more potential customers/clients and with that, an additional revenue channel. Ultimately, if people don't know you exist or can't find you online, then you can be sure your competitors are enjoying the leads which are passing you by and making them rich (particularly considering their near zero cost of sale!).

Simply put, your online presence needs to be built around your marketing objectives. eMarketing fits within the overall marketing framework and **not** as a separate entity. By building an online presence, you will be able to implement your eMarketing strategy in various ways and therefore drive increased leads and long-term value from engagement and relationships.

Subtle interplay

There are various marketing tactics that appeal to different disciplines and it's critical that you (and your eMarketing agency) are aware of the subtle interplay between these tactics and how they apply to your brand and business objectives. In order to understand the success of your drive for presence, strategic brand reviews can be conducted providing the knowledge to understand your success and their distinct business implications.

Using the many avenues for driving online presence presents unique advantages over traditional (read: offline) presence drivers. For example, the upfront (and indeed maintenance) costs are considerably lower and, with reduced cost and time lag, it's possible to rapidly mould your presence to opportunities and risks in a near real-time fashion as they arise. Furthermore, the [economies of scale](#) apply, allowing the same sunk cost to open a market of 100 000 potential consumers as it would 100 million.

Look to leads

Once your brand has acquired an acceptable presence, it can then start performing as a marketing machine and should be focused on developing and growing leads. Some of the many tactics in the space of generating leads online include search engine optimisation (SEO), which will ensure you are better represented on the [SERPs \(search engine results pages\)](#) - increasing your exposure to potential leads and driving traffic to your website.

Another critical tactic is pay per click (PPC) advertising which drives targeted traffic on a pay per click model so a cent is never wasted. As a different model, affiliate marketing provides an opportunity to work alongside other established brands in a symbiotic relationship that incentivise others to sell on your behalf through a strong revenue share.

Finally, conversion optimisation looks to make the most of each unique visitor coming to your website - subtly directing them to meet your marketing objectives. In short, the more visitors who come to your site, the higher the number of potential leads. Furthermore, by implementing conversion optimisation, this number can further be increased as more traffic is turned into viable business leads. This in turn improves the profitability of your web presence and your overall business (something which will no doubt appeal to your boss).

Take for example, the unlikely case where your website receives only 200 visitors a day - you then implement SEO and increase your traffic by 50%. You can also implement conversion optimisation and improve your conversion rate (turning visitors into leads) from 1% to 2% (not uncommon at all). If your lead-to-sale conversion rate is 30% and has an average profit of just R5000, then the implementation of SEO and conversion optimisation will increase your profit by a whopping 300% (R3000 - R9000).

If you consider the potential for a website with higher volumes (100 000+ daily visitors) then, tweaks to conversion rates, for example, can start to look very rosy.

3. Engagement is better than cure

There are various channels to drive engagement and build relationships with your consumers. By exploiting one of the two key advantages of online marketing - one-to-one engagement and economies of scale - it becomes possible to meet consumers' particular needs in a near real-time environment. Email marketing has long been considered the key tactic for keeping in touch with potential consumers and clients and is still one of the most effective eMarketing tactics through the sheer proliferation of email.

Social media and mobile marketing provide equally useful channels to spread your marketing love and online success. By creating a platform for engagement, you are opening the door to further engagement and this allows for a relationship to be developed. Here, the old maxim, people buy from people they trust, holds 100% true.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that all engagements should look to empower and enrich the relationship rather than directly sell products. A simple measure to establish whether you are on track is to make sure that no more than 10% of the content is focused on sales.

This encourages the development of a relationship built on transparent and honest communication. Provided engagements have clear payoffs to the users' time investment (be it financial, social or emotional), users will continue to engage. It's important to remember that your consumers are as time-starved as you and need to be provided with an exchange for their time - as is described in the [attention economy](#).

To demonstrate the value of engagement consider this: the Edelman Trust Barometer tells us that corporate messaging (advertising and CEO-centric PR) are only trusted [17% of the time](#). In contrast, consumers are trusted [56% of the time](#) (making them the most trusted source of information).

This information should **fundamentally change the way we communicate with our consumers**. Your new focus should be on empowering them to communicate on your behalf, therefore increasing the impact of their trust - the perfect opportunity for social media marketing.

eMarketing doesn't stop at the creation of a presence, driving of leads or the creation of a platform for engagement. One should also consider the possibility of internal business process improvement through integration of certain processes with your web presence.

CRM (customer relationship management), for example, can be perfectly integrated to allow for automated engagement through the use of email or mobile marketing, therefore streamlining your processes and improving consumer satisfaction through targeted and timely engagements. This reduces the fixed cost overhead of staff and replaces it with the low variable cost of a "per engagement" model which can grow and be shaped as your needs develop.

From these engagements deeper customer insight can be gained which can be used to improve the effectiveness of your current and future marketing strategies.

As the online population continues to skyrocket, eMarketing could provide the competitive edge necessary to excel in today's highly competitive environment. A simple review of the top international companies' (and indeed your competitors') activities should be enough to demonstrate the power of online.

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