

Marketing Wisdom for 2007

110 Marketers & Agencies
Share Real-Life Tips

by the Readers of MarketingSherpa

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the fifth annual edition of our “Wisdom” report, featuring 110 stories and lessons learned from MarketingSherpa’s readers, all in their own words.

We received more than 320 submissions and spent many hours culling those down to the ones featured in this report. Once again, we were amazed by the time and effort that marketers put into their submissions. And, boy, did our readers cover the gamut of marketing: segmentation, blocked images, traditional DM and pay per click. Even podcasting, mobile, word of mouth, video and social networking made it into the mix this year.

To inspire you, this year’s report features dozens of real-life test campaign lessons and tips. As usual, testing was the No. 1 rule of thumb. And for good reason, as pointed out by Leslie B. Lyons of Best Selling Website and Birthday Party Games Lady:

Completely coincidentally, I ran a test during my slowest sales period of the year that only entailed a change to the P.S. section of my home page. All the way down at the bottom where I don’t even want my site viewers to go as my page’s purpose is to get a click to an internal sales page. It was a clever little snippet of text ... and it boosted my conversion rate by well over 50% on statistically significant sample sizes. Had I not been conducting an actual split test with definable and measurable results, I’d never have seen the impact of this one change.

Test. Test. Test. That mantra will never become passé.

As I was looking through the entries, similar themes kept reappearing. Here are three I noticed:

Trend #1. Simple ideas bring big returns

Inspiration doesn’t have to be complicated. One marketer found that resending the exact same email two weeks later to unopens increased his company’s sales per email by 50%. Another writes that including holiday shipping information on their shopping cart pages boosted response and eliminated customer service inquiries, especially when her team updated the dates on a daily basis in the days before Christmas. Yet another marketer added an “Access Your Account” link to their weekly marketing emails so customers could go right to the sign-on page. Now, it’s how 60% of their clickthroughs enter, and the revenue per visit is more than twice the average from clickthroughs on email product links or graphics.

Trend #2. Emergence of social networks

It's astounding what has happened with social networking. Could you have imagined hundreds of thousands of people sitting at their computers and clicking to watch a car commercial on YouTube? Or a pasta company that gets word-of-mouth buzz from a coupon and sampling kit? Still, not all is as easy as it seems. A marketer tells us that results may be slow at first, but they'll come eventually. Turn to our Social Networks section and see what marketers are doing to overcome their challenges.

Trend #3. Don't lose the personal touch

In this day of automated emails, recorded messages and virtual workers, it's easy to forget how much a handwritten note can mean to a potential customer. One B-to-B marketer uses video calling cards to open the door to new clients because of the familiarity they bring. A face, a name and a voice — you feel as if you've already met the person. Another marketer spent a fair amount of time reading blogs before contacting bloggers. Since she knew what they were writing about, she could be confident her content would appeal to their audience.

One final note: as you read through your peers' stories, think about your own campaigns and test results. Do you have a story other marketers could learn from? If so, let me know. We're always looking for marketers to interview and test campaigns to cover.

We thank all of this year's contributors. Your stories will serve as inspiration to tens of thousands of other marketers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tad Clarke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Tad" and "Clarke" being significantly larger and more prominent.

Tad Clarke
Editorial Director, MarketingSherpa

Part #1: Email Marketing

1 My big lesson in 2006 is ‘Listen to ideas from your Customer Service Department!’ We had a Customer Service Associate suggest including an ‘Access Your Account’ link in all our weekly marketing emails so customers could easily jump to our sign-on page and access their previously ordered or saved designs and use the email discount (if applicable) to purchase the items. My thinking was that this would: a) destroy my creative and b) people would typically order new featured ‘on sale’ products and would not even ‘remember’ what designs or previous orders they might have sitting in their account. Turns out that more than 60% of our clickthroughs now enter through the ‘Access Your Account’ link. And the revenue per visit is more than double the average from clickthroughs on email product links or graphics.

Jody Sterba, [iPrint.com](#), [www.iPrint.com](#)

2 As the year began, we were mailing our email newsletter full of helpful information and special offers to the allergy, asthma and sinus sufferer subscribers on our list once a month. It was our erroneous belief that many of our subscribers would unsubscribe if they heard from us weekly, but we held our breath and tried mailing more frequently anyway. Wow, were we wrong, and our weekly campaign, which now includes the traditional enewsletter, an ‘Insider Alert’ and product updates has been a huge success in every way we measure it. Unsubscribes have not been a problem, and email-related revenues have increased significantly.

John Fry, National Allergy Supply, [www.natlallergy.com](#)

3 Three lessons stand out from 2006 as having the most impact on the success of my email newsletters. The first was to test subject lines with a small group of users a few days before sending the enewsletter to all customers, then to use the most effective subject line (measured by opens and clickthroughs on key content) for the full send. While conducting these tests, I also learned that mentioning in the subject line the most important link in the enewsletter — the action item you most want your customers to click on — generates far more clickthroughs on that item than a subject line that highlights other content in the email. The third lesson was to send the same email a week later to those customers who did not open it the first time, but to change the subject line so that the two sends don’t appear identical in the customer’s inbox. This tactic achieved an incremental but significant increase in transactions and clickthroughs.

John Blaser

4 BlackBerrys! What I learned is that my carefully crafted HTML emails are gobbledygook on BlackBerrys. Our industry (government services contractors) relies heavily on BlackBerrys; I never would have known to

insert a short text message up front if I were not a MarketingSherpa subscriber. My program's click rate is up and that may be a factor.

Susan Kuhn, Contract Services Association, [www.csa-dc.org](#)

5 In 2006, R.O.Why! Marketing managed a series of email campaigns for a client in the medical staffing industry. The emails were designed to attract qualified medical professionals to visit the Web site, review available opportunities, register as a member on the site and complete an application for consideration. Registration on the Web site enables the visitor to access members-only content. Our tests focused on the construction and placement of hyperlinks within the email. We tested both descriptive links that utilized popular keywords and simple links such as 'click **HERE** for more information.' We also tested the placement of these links — in the body of the introductory message, in sidebars and special callouts, and in graphics. Our tests have proven much of what we expected — that many people quickly scan the body of an email and look for highlighted areas, sidebars or bulleted text. Email recipients overwhelmingly clicked on links placed in sidebars and specially colored callouts that captured attention. The links within the body copy were rarely clicked. In some cases, the links in the callouts produced more than 80% of the clicks from the campaign. Lesson learned? The client now appreciates the value of testing multiple links within the same email. What may seem to be a logical place for a link may not be the most popular for the recipients.

Brian LeCount, R.O.Why! Marketing, [www.ROWhyMarketing.com](#)

6 Resending the exact same email two weeks later to unopens increased our sales per email by 50%.

Chris Middings, Lake Champlain Chocolates, [www.lakechamplainchocolates.com](#)

7 We have been delivering a monthly newsletter to our subscribers for the past five years. The basic template for the HTML newsletter hasn't changed much over this time, but I realized some alterations were in order. The most dramatic change was the addition of a list of text links added to the top of the newsletter that provided summary access to all of the article links mentioned in the body of newsletter. We immediately saw that more than 50% of the clicks on any given content item were through the summary links at the top of the page. There was also better clickthrough for items that were lower on the page which used to get lost. Next up, a total newsletter overhaul!

Andrew Seltz, American Bible Society, [www.BibleResourceCenter.org](#)

8 A nonprofit client learned the value of re-sending email appeals this year. Three to five days after the initial send, I had them begin sending the same email to everyone who did not open the first email. The response to the

re-send was half of the initial response, increasing their overall response by 50%. The organization was pleasantly surprised. 'We didn't do re-sends because we thought it would irritate our donors,' they originally argued. When I pointed out that the re-send recipients had never even opened the initial email, they agreed to try it. Now, with their email donations up a full 50% with very little effort, they are happy they learned the value of the re-send.

Randy Robison, consultant, [RandyRobison.com](#)

9 We tried to get as much market data as we could, and that included speaking with high school and college students in the US. I'll keep it short but share some interesting findings: College students often had two email addresses. One they used with friends, and one they gave out to 'others.' Even though they had email, they did not check it often, and instead used IM. Very few used email clients, and a majority had no idea what Outlook or Outlook Express was. A majority did NOT know what RSS was by name, but many more could describe it. Of course, even fewer knew what an RSS reader was by name as well. A majority did NOT know what tagging was by name, but they expected to be able to find things by searching tags.

Duane Kuroda, [abazab.com](#), [www.abazab.com](#)

10 As a magazine company, our circulation department often uses our email list to deliver subscription offers to our enews readers. This holiday season they decided to submit an email offer featuring multiple magazines, then a follow-up offer with the same header and a similar subject line. Both of these emails were void of content, having only the offer to buy magazine subscriptions. Well, you can guess what happened next. We allowed them to execute a poor plan for 'testing purposes' when we should have stood up for our readers. Our number of enews opens dropped more than 25% compared to the prior month and nearly 30% when compared to the same month last year. After only two emails our list is burnt toast. Moral of the story: If you are crafting an email campaign you're not 100% sure will be well received, don't do it. You will never get those customers back.

Anonymous

11 A lesson the OTC Digest has learned: After comparing statistics over the past 12 months from weekly mailings to our entire database of more than 100,000 members, we now have empirical evidence showing that every time we email 'positive news,' the unsubscribe rate is in the single digits and we experience positive feedback. When we send 'negative news' we experience record single-day unsubscribes and little or no feedback. We have learned it is possible to accurately report negative news in a positive light, resulting in member retention while curbing attrition rates.

Gerald Young, Equity Media Inc., [www.otcdigest.com](#)

12 Always budget some promotion dollars to try something new and learn. We managed the marketing for a golf course client in South Florida where an overabundance of courses can make filling up a course in the hot summer a real challenge. In 2006, we decided to try something unique vs. the coupons and discounts everyone does in the newspaper or sends by email. We had a company create an online golf game and invited people to try playing our course online. We called the promotion ‘Beat the Pro.’ If you score better than the pro’s score, you receive a discounted round; if you don’t, you still get a small incentive discount to come out and play. The overall winner each month gets a free month of golf, so participants keep coming back each month to try again. The game is quick and fun, and what golfer sitting in their office dreaming about golf is not going to want to play a quick round online! We started the campaign by emailing our customer list of about 2,400 names and posting a link to the game on our home page. The results have been nothing but spectacular. We had a 12% open rate on the initial campaign, which also solicited an additional 57 forwards to a friend. 222 people actually participated in the game the first month, and then the viral effect took hold. We have not sent out another email, yet through the year we’ve averaged around 300 players per month and seen lots of new faces and redemptions.

Jim F., Marketing Consultant, [www.vromangraves.com](#)

13 I received an email from a brokerage company with an animated chart showing interest rates on the rise. In the past, I have found charts to be compelling and have used them in print advertising. What a great email test for our financial services client, right? It didn’t perform like I thought. We selected a product that would benefit from a chart illustrating interest rates on the rise. We created the chart (with animation) and then developed the other copy-focused email. The chart execution was the test and copy was control. Results: We saw no incremental lift in response rates between the test and the control. The only metric slightly higher was unsubscribe for the test. We suspect that the animated chart drew too much attention and the customer decided to unsubscribe. While my client and I still can’t believe the results (was it the segment we tested, was it the animation) we will test again. Could it be that an illustrated chart doesn’t improve the communication?

Gene Rees

14 What once was a novelty — ISPs delivering email to their users with images initially hidden or turned off — became a ubiquitous feature of the landscape last year. With influential trade associations such as the Messaging Anti-Abuse and Anti-Phishing Working Groups ratifying image suppression as an ISP best practice, and Microsoft incorporating it into the beta preview of its next-generation free Web mail service, WindowsLive Mail, we wanted to understand how many consumers are affected by image

suppression, and how their adjustment to it may impact marketers. Epsilon conducted a survey with GfK NOP in July and found that 65% of American adult email users received at least some email with suppressed images. But 94% said they at least occasionally activate images in mail from friends and family and roughly 80% do so at least occasionally in promotional messages. Their propensity to activate images was directly tied to the depth of their relationships with the sender. So while default image suppression may be an emerging technical challenge that marketers need to adapt to, it certainly is not an insurmountable one. The fine art of creative design and rendering optimization has never been more important. But sending relevant, timely email that is welcomed and valued by consumers remains the key to optimizing email marketing performance.

Jordan Cohen, Epsilon, [www.epsilon.com](#)

15 Never underestimate the complexities of email and share this understanding with your clients. In 2006, we sent international emails to Japan, Russia, Poland, China and Korea for our global clients based in the US. We had to leverage experienced translators fluent in each language to ensure every line break was in the right place and QA, work directly with email service providers to encode each subject line correctly for foreign characters and ensure our clients had someone on staff who would be able to translate, proof and approve the final emails for sending. The process was far more complex than collecting a database, translating and pressing send. Without detailing this to our clients upfront and keeping a unified understanding of the process, we would've been unable to manage their expectations and successfully execute the campaigns.

Tara Lamberson, MindComet, [www.mindcomet.com](#)

16 Here are three lessons I learned in 2006:
1: The layout affects clickthrough rates. The restyling of a monthly newsletter layout gave a 50% increase of clickthrough rates for our customers.
2: The graphic affects newsletter subscriptions. By changing the layout of a subscription box we doubled the subscriber base in one week. We get this result simply changing the position of the box on the Web site and providing more information about the newsletter (what we send, when we send, privacy policies).
3: The autoresponder works. A simple autoresponder system on a Web site gives us a 20% conversions increase. We get this result sending three targeted messages on the two weeks after the request on the site.

Alessandro Binello, Time2marketing, [www.time2marketing.com](#)

17 During Q3 2006, beauty etailer philosophy, a Responsys client, implemented a reactivation program in hopes to encourage customers or prospects who have not made a purchase in the past three months to place an order online. The two teams collaboratively designed a

‘crawl, walk, run’ approach as a three-phased reactivation program. The first phase would be the simplest ‘crawl’ approach, and the more advanced ‘walk’ and ‘run’ approach would be implemented once ‘crawl’ was proven to be a successful strategy. Indeed, it did! The etailer launched their ‘crawl’ phase in July, which consisted of an email stating that the etailer noticed the subscriber has been inactive and included an offer to encourage them to purchase. A second email with a stronger offer is sent after a few weeks to recipients who did not respond to the first email. The reactivation program in Q3 2006 surpassed expectations and experienced an average unique open rate of 67% and an average unique clickthrough rate of 54%. This program recovered implementation costs within two months and generated an impressive \$3.34 of sales per email delivered.

Helen Chan, Responsys, www.responsys.com

18 Want to know how to use email marketing to increase your telemarketing response rates by 150%? We offer hands-on workshops using a combination of SEO, email marketing and telemarketing to secure registrations. Our typical response rate when making calls is for every 100 numbers dialed, 20 people will answer. We managed to increase that to 50 out of 100. How? We leveraged our email marketing efforts. All of our email marketing is done in-house. We do the typical tracking of opens, clickthroughs, unsubscribes, etc. We tweaked our email software to run a stored procedure that would monitor the clickthroughs of a specific email campaign. Depending on the specific clickthrough, we would instantly send an automated email to our telemarketing team that would clearly define what the email recipient was interested in along with all of the contact’s contact information (pulled from our opt-in database). For example, if the email recipient clicked on ‘more information about the Denver workshop,’ we would send a note to the telemarketers indicating this. If the email recipient clicked on ‘Privacy Policy,’ we would not forward an email. The telemarketing team would wait three minutes and then call the contact. Because this was done in real time, we were able to get people sitting at their desks and increase the rate of actually talking to someone by 150%. I know what you’re thinking — was the contact not a little freaked out by this? The answer is no. In fact, many people respond by saying, ‘I am glad you called. I was just looking at your email.’

Brian Neufeld, Matrikon, www.matrikon.com

19 One study we conducted in 2006 caused us to actually make some changes to our own email marketing program. Silverpop’s ‘Email Creative That Works’ study revealed a somewhat counter-intuitive finding. While most B-to-B marketers preferred a one- or two-column format for their messages, postcard-style emails evaluated in the study actually received 75% higher click rates, on average. B-to-B emails in one- or two-column formats generated click rates of 3.4% and 4%, respectively, compared to an impressive 7.9% for postcard-style messages. Consequently, when we

announced the findings from the study, we made a point to send our subscribers a postcard-style email. Perhaps postcard-style emails received higher click rates on average because of their novelty among B-to-B recipients. Whatever the reason, at the end of the day, successful marketers know it takes the right product and the right price targeted to the right audience at the right time. Relevancy is still the key, but beyond that, certain creative elements can help improve the level of awareness necessary to attract customer interaction.

Elaine O’Gorman, Silverpop, [www.silverpop.com](#)

20 I joined the advertising department at my ecommerce company exactly one year ago. Over the summer, our email marketer left to go back to school and I was offered the position. As I was getting up to speed on the daily responsibilities, best practices and lessons learned, I began to realize that email marketing could be so much more than simply an additional revenue channel. The email campaign initially started two years ago. The style, content, promotions and frequency were all established by using current industry best practices. Then these best practices were rigorously tested every week against our quickly growing list until the company was confident in the campaign. And that’s when the testing stopped. Confidence grew in the revenue generation as the cost as a percent of revenue decreased. Back to summer 2006, I took over the campaign. I began re-running all the original tests for starters, to see if we’re still on track with best practices but also with our subscribers. By year’s end, I still hadn’t stopped the tests. Every new email gives me a chance not only to entice new business and re-engage repeat customers but to learn more about the entirety of the online marketplace through my more than adequate sampling. What if I work in a regionally targeted promotion? Do you suppose age factors into the timeliness of conversions? Should I let the design department mock up a really beautiful image or just do it myself? My questions have even become less about the actual email campaign and more about our entire business. I’ve never been the only one asking questions about our customers, but through continuous and varied testing of emails, I have become the person with the answers.

Jay Basnight, CSN Stores, [www.csnstores.com](#)

21 Thinking light was the lesson learned this year. We were finding that our conversion rates for our bi-monthly emails were steadily falling. The email we were broadcasting was highly designed and image heavy but wasn’t effective. The solution was to steadily strip the ‘bells and whistles’ from the creative and make the email as simple as possible. The final and most successful design included simple prize images, quick text descriptions and call to action was a text link — no graphical button. The prize title, prize image and description were made clickable, too. Our conversion was increased by 40%.

Paul Clifton, IPT

Part #2: Blogs and Podcasts

22 2006 was the year of the corporate blog for Quirk eMarketing. We decided to take it from an afterthought to a mainstream marketing initiative for our agency. After a few months of consistent effort, our traffic numbers starting going up and, in fact, the community that grew around the blog became an important source of leads for us. However, we noticed that our traffic would consistently dip on the weekends. This is a common state of affairs for most B-to-B Web sites, but we figured there must be some opportunity there. To try and find the promise in this opportunity, we racked our brains for a content strategy that would fit our brand, meet the needs of our community and engage with people when they were not in hardcore work mode. After testing a few ideas, we began the Quirk viral video weekend, in which we showcase top-notch (and often hilariously edgy) viral clips and briefly summarized why they were successful from a brand or response marketing perspective. The result is that our weekend traffic has increased substantially and this has led to a larger and more engaged community.

Rob Stokes, Quirk eMarketing, www.quirk.biz

23 At Small Business Trends Radio, we do a weekly one-hour podcast interview of a small business expert. We tested some podcasts with free, full written transcripts accompanying them. We expected the number of listens to the MP3 audio file to go down when the written transcript was available. To our surprise, the opposite happened. We saw a 35% increase in the number of streaming listens and downloads of a podcast when the full written transcript was made available. We saw similar (although less dramatic) results when we made lengthy, detailed show notes available containing extensive quotes from the podcast. Instead of causing visitors to skip the audio, it actually increased the number of listens compared to podcasts that had only a shorter description of the show and less detailed notes. Our supposition is that the more engaged and interested you get the visitor, the more likely he or she is to listen to the podcast.

Anita Campbell, Small Business Trends Radio, www.smbtrendwire.com

24 I spent most of 2005 writing a book on database marketing. In May 2006, the book was available for purchase, and I eagerly awaited my sales totals. Each day, I would visit Amazon, and if I was lucky, I sold one book a week. As each day passed, I became more and more disappointed with the sales of my book. I wrote articles in trade journals, trying to stimulate book sales. Still, sales failed to meet my expectations. In August, I decided to start a blog, covering topics loosely aligned with the content in my book. If I could do it all over again, I would have started the blog one or two years prior to the release of the book, as the blog did a nice job of increasing book sales. It took between 60 and 90 days to build an audience. By the end of 2006, I

averaged 175 daily visitors. About 75 visitors consume information on a daily basis via RSS feeds and email subscriptions. Among the remaining 100 daily visitors, folks come from four different sources. About 40 visitors arrive from other blogs that mention my blog. About 40 visitors arrive after searching for information, primarily on Google. About 10 visitors bookmark my URL and visit via the bookmark. Another 10 visitors are unaccounted for. 70% of my audience is from the United States.

There is an art to obtaining visitors via search. For instance, if I write a post about 'Lifetime Value,' I will be lucky to get any visitors from Google, because few people search for this term. If I write the exact same article, but put the words 'Return On Investment' in the title, I get traffic from Google, because many people search for this term. This may seem obvious to many, but it is an art that you learn over time. Search engines like it when I include company names in the title. I could write about 'Customer Loyalty,' and Google will not rank my content high enough to drive traffic. If I write 'Customer Loyalty At Best Buy,' Google will send maybe five to 10 visits a day for two to three weeks, because people are interested in both topics. Now that I have an established audience, I find that I sell more books. On Amazon, I sell about one book for every 500 visitors who come to my site. It becomes clear that at some point in 2007-08, when I have 1,000 daily visitors, I will hopefully be able to sell two books a day. And that is pretty good for a highly targeted niche such as database marketing.

Kevin Hillstrom, The MineThatData Blog, minethatdata.blogspot.com

25 From time to time, we get questions from clients about the point of blogging. We've maintained a communal CHEN PR blog since 2004. During that time, we've gotten comments and questions from students, prospects and clients. One of our blog posts on a publicly held client generated a Google Alert, which the chairman of the company commented on with unabashed enthusiasm. Another light-hearted blog post on 'Holiday Gifts for Geeks' generated a request from a buzz marketing firm to review Sears' holiday Web site. That latter request, in particular, was an eye opener and a milestone for us. A buzz marketing firm in Los Angeles, working for a \$55 billion retail firm, asked CHEN PR, based in Waltham, MA, to review a Web site. That says so much about the reach of a blog, the perception of blogs as legitimate outlets and the power of buzz marketing.

Barbara Heffner, CHEN PR, www.chenpr.com

26 Choosing a social media blog engine to launch our company, brand and drive traffic from women consumers to our female-friendly network of new car dealerships is the centerpiece of our success in 2006. We chose the Six Apart TypePad community as our blog platform and began generating articles and posts of interest to women consumers on automotive-related topics and featured expert automotive women to answer questions. In

July 2006, Six Apart featured the Ask Patty blog and thus began the tremendous boost in our traffic and the tremendous amount of publicity in the bloggersphere and in mainstream publications. We syndicated our content via RSS feeds and joined the bloggersphere with complete abandon, icing our hands at night, sore and tired from all of the blog posting and comments left on blog posts of interest. We attended BlogHer's annual event in San Jose in July 2006 to meet the women bloggers. The San Jose Mercury News published a featured article on the event and included Ask Patty along with other BlogHer.org members that weekend. The leadership of BlogHer.org, a network of more than 5,000 women bloggers, Jory Des Jardins, Elisha Camahort and Linda Stone, embraced and helped promote Ask Patty to the members by inviting me to speak on business blogging at this event. This large social media network of women bloggers wrote many articles endorsing Ask Patty in the aftermath of this event, bringing additional traffic and much appreciated support to Ask Patty. The lesson here? Business owners, get your blog on in 2007 and enjoy the benefits for building your brand and generating traffic to your business, products and services.

Jody DeVere, President, AskPatty.com Inc., www.askpatty.com

27 The most valuable lesson I learned in 2006 was the value of networking to advance your SEO and other marketing goals. Here are a couple of ways it helped. By blogrolling, commenting, emailing and chatting with other bloggers in my niche, I gained links, traffic and influence. Starting out from simple blogroll link exchange emails, I began chatting with fellow bloggers on a semi-regular basis. I would drop by their blogs and either comment or send an email to share my feedback, including technical matters such as broken links. In turn, they were much more receptive when I had a good post to suggest they link to. When I got an interview with a big star in the milieu (she has been on TV repeatedly and is a nationally known personality), I turned it into a contest. Asking fellow bloggers to tell their readers about it, I got one-way inbound links from my friends and their readers. In addition, it increased the volume of comments on my blog (the contest was to submit and vote on questions for the interview) and grew my network. And the interview gets my blog deep-linked. Getting the interview itself was a benefit of my networking. I emailed the person's organization to point out some white-on-white text on their site. That 'in' and offering to help out with translation eventually allowed me to obtain the interview. One last way it helped was through referrals. Simply talking to friends, family and acquaintances to let them know that I do SEO work has garnered me work and will likely get me more clients in the future.

Gabriel Goldenberg, Montreal SEO Consulting, Montrealseo.ca

28 Recently there was a 'blog tag' meme that started, and when it hit the search marketing blogs, the idea came to me to track the tags in a Family Tree sort of way. What I didn't know was that a link to my 'Blog Tag

'Tree' would be included in a good majority of blog tags from that point on from bloggers all over the Web. It became a great way to get some traffic (and links) for our new search marketing project management service. We've had thousands of visitors since!

Michael Jensen, SoloSEO.com, [www.soloseo.com](#)

29 This year I was reminded — again — that it's never too late to embrace communications mediums. I never had a blog, since I already had a place to speak directly to my readers. But then one reader complained that he had no place to find historical items that I had written about in my email newsletter since 1994, and I instantly realized that blogging software would be the perfect medium for hundreds of pages of already written commentary, which is engaging readers in a new way, bringing in new readers and putting plenty of interesting items 'on the record' in a searchable place. And it's generating ad revenue, too — icing on the cake. For 2007, I'm adding a podcast, as well as video. Each will help bring my work to a new and different demographic, expanding my site's outreach ever wider.

Randy Cassingham, This Is True, [www.thisistrue.com/blog.html](#)

30 The most important lesson I learned on both the marketing and PR front is not to leave bloggers out of the mix. There are an extraordinary group of dedicated editors of blogs, and if you send them something for consideration that fits their topic of coverage and you do not engage in the old-style blast PR effort (don't blogblast), but rather a simple, short email about the book or product you're representing, oftentimes you can see astounding results. A business management book author that I'm continuing to do PR for took the leap with me to really reach out to bloggers for his book, and we've had unbelievable success, response and alliances through this effort of being respectful of bloggers and reaching out to them on their terms! We personally contacted each blogger and made sure we had read the blog and it resonated with the book in some form. We never sent 'PR speak' form queries, we really researched and found the ones who would be most happy to hear from us. Since our ongoing three-month effort the book went from 42,000 on Amazon to twice being #1 in Business and Investing Management books. And bloggers are still covering us and sending news about the book to other bloggers!

Nettie Hartsock, Hartsock Communications, [www.nettiehartsock.com](#)

Part #3: General Marketing & Advertising

31 Harry S. Truman said, 'It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.' As simple as this concept sounds, it can be a hard one to follow in corporate culture today. In many companies, there is a sort of sibling rivalry between the catalog, the store, the Internet, the call center and so on to see which one can make the strongest contribution to the bottom line. This past holiday season, one of my clients put that kind of thinking aside and all worked together in a truly integrated manner. Needless to say, the results reinforced the value of true integrated marketing. They used their store window merchandise and design as the foundation for their efforts. The day they completed their beautiful window displays on New York's Fifth Avenue, they launched a coordinating insert in The New York Times, sent a corresponding email to their house file and launched a PPC campaign to support all of the new merchandise. This united effort made an immediate impact across the board: they saw increased store traffic as soon as they opened the doors and even had their first substantial sale from their efforts before 9 a.m. And this was only the beginning; the days that followed saw big traffic increases on the Web site generated from the email, the inserts and the search terms. As a result, they saw a 40% lift in sales from that effort alone.

Jennifer Myers Robb, ebove & beyond inc., [www.eboveandbeyond.com](#)

32 As a software company, Logos Bible Software has enjoyed the low costs of online marketing for many years. Direct mail, broadcast, print ads and other expensive 'real world' advertising methods did not look so appealing compared to the low costs of emailing our customer list and optimizing our Web page. Imagine our disappointment when we realized that a portion of our customers were deleting our email offers without reading them. We knew we had to at least give direct mail another try, but just as we learned from our email efforts, the problem was standing out from the crowd and cutting through the clutter. We figured that it would be easy for anyone to throw away a direct mail envelope without giving it a second look, but how many people would throw away a 'package' without opening it, especially at Christmas? So we decided to go out on a limb and mail a Christmas present to our customers with the offer inside it. We got a cool water bottle with our company logo printed on it, had a coupon inserted inside the bottle, placed it in a cardboard box and stuck thousands of them in the mail a few weeks before Christmas. So far, we have had about a 15% purchase response and have generated 400% of our costs in sales.

Dan Pritchett, Logos Bible Software, [www.logos.com](#)

33 As experts in detecting piracy and online fraud, we often uncover material that makes for good PR. But I was really excited when Envisional spotted the first pirated copies of the new James Bond movie,

‘Casino Royale.’ Versions were available for illegal copying from file sharing Web sites just one day after the film opened, and our piracy unit could quickly see evidence of large-scale downloading. So I put out a press release ... and it bombed completely. Take-up was nil. This was a great news story with specific technical, legal and entertainment industry angles and topical, worldwide appeal. Yet nothing happened.

Two days later, we decided to try again. I asked the piracy intelligence team to figure out how many downloads had already occurred, and they came up with an estimate of 200,000 in the first 72 hours. I wrote a second release, identical to the first but using this new figure, making the headline ‘200,000 pirates swoop on James Bond.’ The difference was spectacular. Dow Jones, AP, UPI, Agence France Presse and the BBC grabbed the story with both hands. First, the British media and then the world’s began to talk about film piracy and quote Envisional’s experts. In all, the story was featured in 1,100 media outlets, from TV and radio to national press, magazines, Web sites and blogs. It made headlines in Croatia and Kazakhstan. It even got us a sales inquiry from a world-renowned band of rock dinosaurs. The sole difference between the two newsletters was the inclusion of one quotable figure. By the time most of the media ran their stories, that 200,000 should probably have been updated to 400,000 or half a million. But that didn’t matter. The old lesson relearned — and it’s a massive one for product and corporate PR work — is that journalists need numbers. Give them what they need and PR can be one of the most powerful and cost-effective elements in the marketing mix.

Ian Shircore, Envisional, www.envisional.com

34 In 2006, I learned that customer complaints are often the best marketing opportunity of them all. By addressing complaints quickly, acknowledging fault if it was your own and compensating the customer (even if the fault was theirs!) you can impress that customer so much that they become a legacy client. One stand-out example of this in action was when a customer had trouble signing up for one of our courses and sent us an email complaint. After quickly fixing the problem and reimbursing the customer the full amount of the course (while still giving them access), we received extremely positive feedback from the customer who was not expecting such extreme customer service. Now the customer sings our praises to all who will listen. That same customer ended up buying three more courses from us so our refund investment was well worth it. If you don’t already give your customers a forum to voice complaints or feedback, I highly recommend you make this your main New Year’s resolution for 2007.

Kalena Jordan, Search Engine College, www.searchenginecollege.com

35 I learned in 2006 that partnering with a well-known nonprofit organization for a good cause can attract attention from major publications and positively impact revenue. I also found pitching Web sites

and blogs to be rewarding, as they can generate more media coverage. Our PR objective was to attract media attention for Buffalo Exchange's first store in New York City that opened on Dec. 15, 2005, in Brooklyn, to hopefully trace a positive impact of 25% on store revenue.

We used the Internet to research local and national media in New York City. In addition to searching online mastheads and contact information at media Web sites, bloggers' links were followed to discover other influential blogs and Web sites for New York City and fashion communities. We sent out a press release to our media list and posted details and hyperlinks on Newswire Today, Craigslist, Daily Fashion Report online and billburg.com. Response from the press was modest. Then a PR opportunity presented itself. Acting on a customer suggestion, our president Kerstin Block asked me to launch a used fur drive in all our stores to benefit orphaned and injured wildlife, a program through the Humane Society of the United States called Coats for Cubs.

Through fliers and an online bulletin on buffaloexchange.com, customers were asked to bring used fur apparel to Buffalo Exchange stores across the country until Earth Day. We planned to donate the furs to wildlife rehabilitators as bedding for animals in their care. Now we had a heartwarming story: baby animals in need, company generosity to a well-known charity and a public call to action for a worthy cause! We contacted New York and national press again with a media advisory announcing our Coats for Cubs participation, which started Jan. 1, 2006. The emailed advisory had hyperlinks to complete program details on buffaloexchange.com, with links to relevant HSUS.org pages. Gothamist.com wrote up an item, and our Brooklyn store revenue increased 40% compared to the previous week. The Times, Village Voice and other major publications picked up our New York store opening story by tying it into Coats for Cubs. Store revenue shot up 52% from the previous week. Following this publicity, we were recommended by New York Magazine for Rock-Bottom Deals on Men's Designer Jeans in the Ultimate Price-Warrior's Guide to Sales & Bargains Deal Finder and profiled on New York City's ABC-TV7 Eyewitness News. Our store revenue increased another 20% from the previous week, a 115% revenue increase from the week of Dec. 26, 2005.

We chose The HSUS as the charity for our annual Earth Day 'Dollar Sale' benefit, so that Coats for Cubs would lead up to the Dollar Sale on April 22, 2006. All sale items offered for \$1 each at Buffalo Exchange were to go to the Urban Wildlife Program of The HSUS. We sent another media advisory in mid-March 2006, adding Earth Day to our Coats for Cubs final push. These HSUS events were published in 66 newspapers, blogs and TV/radio stations nationwide. The HSUS promoted Buffalo Exchange in their e-newsletter Humanelines, and in a hyperlinked e-blast HSUS President Wayne Pacelle wrote: 'This Earth Day, celebrate with some guilt-free shopping at the Buffalo Exchange resale store near you — shop for 'recycled' fashions while supporting our animal protection programs.' Buffaloexchange.com visitor sessions increased 196% on April 19 from the previous day. Buffalo Exchange raised

nearly \$42,000 for The HSUS at our Earth Day Sale, the largest donation since we began Earth Day benefits in 1997 and a 142% increase from last year's benefit for Surfrider Foundation. Our Coats for Cubs program collected 873 used furs, over half the total donated by the public to The HSUS in 2005. The Brooklyn store's revenue increased 16% from the previous week. We received \$5,737 worth of television media value and 3,417 words and 32 photos in print and online media coverage for our New York City store from the week of Dec. 26, 2005, to June 21, 2006.

Michelle L. Livingston, Buffalo Exchange, www.buffaloexchange.com

36 I was working with a client in the real estate industry, trying to improve upon a direct mail piece that was delivered to a very targeted and qualified list. His previous letter was ... in a word ... 'typical.' As in, here's who we are, here's what we have to offer, here are some details about the product, give us a call. Instead of making his letter look like a sales piece, we educated his consumer about a specific product that most homeowners are 100% unaware of. We outlined the benefits, provided a real-life case study and painted an honest picture of what to expect. While his competition was busy selling, we chose to inform. The response of the letter increased fourfold, and, perhaps more importantly, the people who called were actually grateful and eager to talk to my client. This was a very pleasant deviation from the skepticism he was used to dealing with. As a result, his costs for closing these clients decreased greatly, he closed more of them, and it was a win-win for everyone involved.

Alan Saltz, Guaranteed Marketing Inc., www.YellowPagesProfit.com

37 The best experiences tend to be one's failures. I know, you may say to yourself, 'Why would anyone want to fail?' After 20 years of working in the advertising industry, I've discovered that some of my best work has come immediately following a promotional bomb. For instance, my ad agency handles a local automobile dealership. In the latter half of 2006, the market shifted south. Very few dealerships throughout the country were hitting home runs, or for that matter, trumping numbers from the previous year. So in our zealous effort to move the market, we conjured up a promotional idea that was way out in left field. For one particular weekend, we would have the dealership host a concert event. But not just any old concert event. We would tie in local radio stations, nearby retail stores, fast food chains, sporting good outlets, etc. It was like a battle of the bands SUPER-SIZED. We developed print ads, radio spots, TV spots and a microsite linked to the dealership's URL. We cross-promoted like gang busters. This was an enormous undertaking. The event actually turned out great, that is, for everyone except the dealer. In all our righteous efforts to succeed, we took our eye off the main prize. I will say that our agency's effort was outstanding. However, effort fails the bottom line, especially for retail clients. What lesson did we learn? That we should always review our initial

goal periodically throughout the development of the campaign. Our goal was to create additional customer traffic of 50% with an increase of sales at 25%-30%. As the project progressed, our focus shifted from what the event could produce for the client to the pure hype of it all. After further review, our promotional team agreed that we should always question our methods in every media. For example, 'Does the print ad bring attention to our ultimate goal.' Or, 'Does this URL microsite motivate the dealer's potential customer to buy a vehicle during this event?' A final thought I would share is that when you're faced with a challenge of a client looking for a quick fix, provide solutions that are simplified. Complicated messages tend to get lost and their meaning gets drowned out by the enormity of it all.

Brian Connors, Ad Group, [www.adgrouponline.com](#)

38 Assume your product (or service) is terrible. The #1 lesson we learned this year is that it pays to convince your clients (or prospective clients) to assume that their product is terrible. The #1 reason that new or existing marketing initiatives fail is that management falls in love with their product. They believe they have an excellent product and often act in excessive reliance on the assumed fact the product is great. This often causes them to disregard, dispute, dislike, disown or disrupt the crucial sales and marketing processes. Assuming the product is terrible releases the client or prospect from their biases and establishes a better vantage point from which they can constructively consider strategy.

Tatsuya Nakagawa and Peter P. Roosen, Atomica Creative, [www.atomicacreative.com](#)

39 We had hired an appointment-setting company that specialized in 'acquiring and retaining new customers.' We ran a test campaign of 100 contacts from our in-house list. I placed the contact information of a close business executive friend in the list to evaluate the calls that the company made. When we ran the test we had no appointment sets, but the appointment-setting company presented us with a detailed analysis that recommended a larger contact list would deliver 10% to 15% response rates. I then called my friend and asked him how the call went. He told me that not only did the caller sound like a robot reading from a script but the caller had no answers to most questions that he had about our company. Lesson learned: always test campaigns and always have a way to evaluate the performance of an outside vendor to make sure that what they are presenting reflects your business standards and practices.

Douglas Chiles Jr., Integrated Global Business Solutions Inc., [www.igbsinc.com](#)

40 We learned that the 80/20 rule, when applied to spending on lead-gen tactics, is really the 90/10 rule. ... Like most companies, we have always spent a fair bit of time before making a spending decision

assessing the expected value, but a lot less time (if any) looking at the realized benefits after the fact. In 2006, we spent the time on a quantitative assessment of the results of our marketing efforts. The four tactics we assessed were spending on paid search, PR/media, SEO/organic search, trade shows and 'other.' We tried to normalize the results against lead volume by making allowances for peripheral benefits (e.g., what is 'background awareness' worth to us). Without divulging which tactic is which, the range of '\$ / lead' looked like this: Tactic A - \$X; Tactic B - \$2X; Tactic C - \$3X; Tactic D - \$15X. This will certainly factor in to how we spend going forward. Having clarified our definitions for 'lead' and 'opportunity,' we're going to extend this deep into the sell cycle and, hopefully, maximize our marketing bang for the buck in 2007.

Gordon Janzen, Elastic Path Software, www.elasticpath.com

41 In 2006, I was reminded again that consumer behavior is not rational and is full of contradictions. The ability to motivate consumer behavior correlates with our ability to understand and manage the dynamic tension of human contradiction. Teen consumers provide an excellent example of this dynamic. Two behaviors most associated with teen-agers are self absorption and focus on creating a sense of individual identity. However, teens have two seemingly opposing and deep-seated values that contradict these behaviors: altruism and a craving to belong to a larger group. While many campaigns targeting teens focus on their drive for individuality, for my client, the Ohio Tobacco Prevention Foundation, we aimed at the contradictions. Our campaign created altruism that satisfied a personal need and group identification that allowed for individuality. The results were astounding. Smoking rates among teens in Ohio continue to decline, down 40% since our campaign started, more than 2 million acts of activism by teens who want to debunk smoking myths. The lesson is that as human, we are incredible complex. Your brand, its messaging and media has to be multidimensional if it is going to become a higher part of your target's consciousness.

Brian Newberry, Northlich, www.northlich.com

42 My client, a real estate developer, was frustrated with the unreliability of market research interviews of potential buyers for his office condominium projects. In a previous telephone survey we conducted, many people had expressed interest in a planned project, but when he attempted to engage them, he had little success. So the next time around, he decided to do 'real' marketing to try to move potential buyers to sign contracts. He optioned a tract of land for 45 days. We worked together to produce a multimedia campaign, including PR, newspaper advertising, direct mail, a sales brochure, meetings with local Chamber of Commerce leaders, on-site signage, a special Web site, Google ads and realistic 3-D renderings of the planned buildings. We marketed the buildings 'as if' the project were

live, when in fact the client only had the property under option and could walk away from it if he wanted to. This time the results were markedly different. The PR campaign was particularly effective, as news media love a story about a new \$20 million development. We drove initial traffic to the Web site, which included lots of details and an 800 number to call if interested. Many people did call, and at the end of the test period, the developer had enough actual contracts with real buyers to buy the land, start two multitenant buildings and plan a third immediately thereafter. It was a very short time to launch and execute a real marketing campaign, but it worked extremely well. The client had contracted buyers this time, and not just a marketing study saying some people were interested.

Buck Lawrimore, Lawrimore Inc., [www.lciweb.com](#)

43 Offline marketing is still alive and well in this techno-marketing world. Looking back over client campaigns as well as our own company's marketing initiatives, it is the power of the pen (over that of the inkjet printer) that presents the major lesson for 2006. The bottom line in any marketing effort is to build or extend perceived value of the brand and, ultimately, lead to the next sales transaction. We market business and consumer service companies, and nothing has had such an impact on our campaigns this past year as has the handwritten personal note and signature on a sales letter and envelope. The old truths still prevail — and blue ink still cuts through the clutter!

Bob Martel, JMB Marketing Group, [www.jmbmarketing.com](#)

Part #4: Search Marketing

44 I worked with a division of a well-known consumer durable goods manufacturer to help launch a PPC campaign. As part of the initial keyword selects, we choose well-known brand terms associated with this company's products. These included the company name and various product brand names. Drawing upon our search engine reports, as well as our internal Web log files, we quickly learned that we were wasting money on these branded terms. By and large, searchers who used these terms would arrive at our site as a result of our natural search efforts. We were needlessly spending money to acquire visitors who would otherwise arrive at our site for free. We quickly abandoned our PPC efforts around these branded terms and shifted those funds into other, more targeted terms. Then we pumped up our site optimization efforts to maximize our exposure to these branded terms. Why pay for visitors who would otherwise land on your site for free? My lesson for 2006 is to focus your PPC budgets on category terms (e.g., snowthrowers) or benefit-oriented search terms (e.g. easy-to-use snowthrowers) and leave the branded terms up to your site optimization efforts.

Jay Lipe, Emerge Marketing LLC, www.emergemarketing.com

45 In 2006, we started our first PPC campaign for an online shopping site. In just 10 days, we learned that switching the landing pages for the PPC ads to the product pages (where you have to read about the product before you can buy) as opposed to the catalog pages (where you can buy immediately) nearly tripled our conversion rate and lowered our cost per conversion by almost two thirds. We also tested two versions of ad copy, one of which included the price of the product. We found that the ad with the product price was the one that gave us all our conversions.

Anonymous

46 Western River Expeditions offers rafting vacations on the famous Grand Canyon. As the summer season came to a close, Western River began preparations for pre-booking trips for the 2007 season. Previous online PPC advertising produced normal results — around 2% CTR for most keywords in the top three positions. In preparation for the 2007 season push, Western River wanted to make each marketing dollar 'filtered' leads as much as possible. We wanted to find a way to almost turn people away who would not be interested right off the bat, so what better way than showing the prices and limited booking up-front? We put our price ranges for the trips, along with a line stating we are only taking 2007 reservations. The prices were not sales or promotional deals. They were exactly what we sell them for: \$1,000-\$2,000 per person. The result of such straightforward advertisements? Western Rivers' CTR for the new ads skyrocketed! Western Rivers' ads began averaging 10% CTR on the same keywords and campaigns. The expectation was for

clicks to decrease, expecting a large number of people to not click because of the pricing and limited availability. The awesome numbers have continued to show the same impressive results and give no sign of letting up. I learned a few things from this experience. The most important lesson was the fact that people obviously prefer to see exact details up-front. Thinking about the advertisements, I personally like this type of presentation as a consumer. If you can determine the most important decision-making factors for your product or service and present those at the start, you get multiple benefits. Not only do you pre-qualify and filter incoming leads, but you also make the customer happy. As consumers, we all like to get to the bottom line: how much is it and how fast can I get it? No sales or gimmicks, just the honest facts. Presenting these two items in our ads did far more wonders than the most elaborate and convincing promotional creative could have ever done.

Ryan Hutchings, Western River Expeditions, www.westernriver.com

47 We worked with a skincare company to do a soft launch online of their new category of product called a shielding lotion. We learned that Web content syndication really affects search ranking and brand awareness. We added one search-optimized article to the Web site each week and syndicated it in an RSS feed. We saw these articles get into Google News and other news aggregators. The articles were picked up and published on relevant sites — and they all had a link back to the Web site, so this was building valuable inbound links. When we started in October 2005, the site was brand new and was not visible in the first 1,000 results on Google for any of their keywords. Within three months, they were showing up on all keywords and a year later they are on page one for most of their keywords. While there were initially no searches on the term shielding lotion this is now searched for. The hard launch into the stores October 2006 went easily because the public and the trade are now aware of the category and the term.

Sally Falkow, PRESSfeed, www.press-feed.com

48 Never underestimate the value of a high search engine ranking. There are a number of hospitals in my region (including ours) that offer a sleep disorders center. To position ours better, I put some extra time into its search engine ranking. Months later, I heard from a television news producer halfway across the country who was working on a sleep deprivation story and had searched Google for a sleep quiz. Finding ours ‘user-friendly,’ she asked if the quiz and its results were unique to our hospital. And when I told her they weren’t, I assumed that was the end of her interest — that she would find a similar quiz and clinic closer to her location. Unbeknownst to me, she did use our online quiz and provided a link to it on her station’s Web site. Soon after, the story was picked up by a number of related Web sites, including MSNBC, and similar stories were run on other television stations, including two that mentioned our hospital by name. Three weeks later, just when we thought it had subsided, eight more stations in different markets picked up the story, giving us more visits and activity. All told, we received

more than 10,000 additional unique visits to our sleep quiz page and sleep center home page because of her initial finding of our online quiz, and we had the top two rankings on Google for the specific quiz name.

Michael Kinstlinger, Union Memorial Hospital, www.unionmemorial.org

49 I inherited a good number of Google Adwords campaigns in which the client had completely neglected to use the ‘negative match’ feature. This feature tells Google NOT to show your ad if the user’s search contains a given word. This one tactic alone typically resulted in at least a 30% increase in clickthrough rate.

Todd Miechiels, Internet marketing consultant, www.miechiels.com

50 Our team discovered that buying keywords in the form of domain names can be hugely effective. I know we’re not the only ones doing so, but it still seems to be a fairly well kept secret. Many more searchers than you would think enter domain names as searches on the major engines, and there is usually much less competition for these terms. Domain name keywords can include those coveted, generic URLs you wish you owned (e.g., ‘marketing.com’), product names (e.g., ‘blackberry.com’) or, for those so inclined, even your competition (e.g., ‘myspace.com’).

Jay Ashton, Five Star Alliance, www.FiveStarAlliance.com

51 I learned that when the consumer is searching online for home improvement contractors, they couldn’t care less who you are until they decide they want what you’ve got! In 2006, I acquired a new client that provides basement waterproofing and foundation restoration services. When setting up a paid search campaign, the first thing I do is search that vertical myself to see what the competition is doing and get some ideas of how to word the ads. I found that the other advertisers all had their company name as the headline of the ad and then went into what they offered in lines 1 and 2. I followed suit, even though I noticed redundancy between the headline and the display URL of the ad (their Web address also was the company name). Figuring they knew what they were doing, I wrote the ads the same way, with the idea that the headline was drawing off the branding of the company name, and launched the campaign. The client was actually very happy with the results, for it returned a nice profit for them, when their print yellow page ads couldn’t even pay for themselves anymore. Ignoring the ‘If it ain’t broke don’t fix it’ cliché, I wanted to see if I could do better. When I wrote the ads for the next campaign, I simply put the #1 searched keyword from the first campaign in as the headline, with no mention of the company name in the ad copy itself. To my amazement, this increased the clickthrough rate to more than twice the industry average for this vertical, while the click-to-call ratio still remained steady. The bottom line for the client: a 1,000% ROI in the 62 days it took for the budget to spend.

Robert M., freelance paid search marketer, www.lmcadvertising.net

52 Our experience demonstrated that Google AdWords conversions were insufficient to justify their widespread use for the promotion of our site, but we kept them running in a limited fashion anyway. Why? Because they helped illustrate a fairly wide gulf in performance of different (though sometimes not widely different) key marketing messages. For example, in one test campaign we ran, the clickthrough rate for keywords 'funny baby gifts' outperformed what we thought were our most important keywords (simply 'baby gifts') by close to 370%! Using that information, we were better able to hone the messages/content both on our site and in our email campaigns.

Robert Kelen, Savvy Tot, [savvytot.com](#)

53 The challenge for [efollett.com](#) was visibility online for the 750 college bookstore Web site URLs we manage. We initiated our first search engine optimization campaign designed to optimize the content on our sites and drive traffic using targeted keyword campaigns. The results were dramatic and measurable. We increased the number of pages indexed on Google from 200 to 220,000 in one year and we are planning on reaching \$200 million in online sales by the end of 2007.

Mark G. Hammerschick, Follett Higher Education Group, [www.efollett.com](#)

54 In March, we made a switch from the SEO practices of landing pages, gateway sites, tons of inbound links, etc., to a much more white-hat approach, and it paid off. I canceled our contract with a real questionable-practices SEO company, discontinued pursuing sites that offer free or reciprocal links and eliminated all of my peripheral sites (that were all cross linked), bringing all the relevant content under one main domain. The result has been that we rose to and have pretty consistently remained #1 for our main keyword phrase (basement waterproofing) on Google, plus we began ranking very well (Google SERP 1) for many other good keyword phrases (sump pump, crawl space) that had previously failed to crack the top 30. The lesson I learned is that integrity now pays off. The search engines finally figured out how to reward good sites (or at least got better at thwarting illegitimate SEO techniques). I feel much better now simply making the best site in our industry, as opposed to worrying whether hiring a link-farm company would get me blacklisted from certain search engines. Integrity is what we practice as a business and it's what we will pursue on the Web going forward.

Richard Fencil, Basement Systems Inc., [www.basementsystems.com](#)

55 Even though I have actively practiced search engine optimization for a long time, in 2006 I specifically learned:

1. Only Google will automatically find you and top rate you under your own domain name. For others, submission is still very important.

2. Long, descriptive Web page names that match possible search terms are a great way to get hits and improve performance (even though they are often a lot more typing for the Web designer!), e.g. name_search_services.html is much better than NSServe.html. It appears the page name has become as important as the title statement.

Athol Foden, Brighter Naming, www.BrighterNaming.com

56 2006 was our year to SEO our Web site! It was built three years ago and didn't meet our needs anymore and was outdated in terms of technology used. We decided to start PPC and SEO campaigns at the same time. For that, we interviewed three consultants and a larger SEM firm to review our site and provide recommendations. We chose the bigger company and started working together on those campaigns. Initially, all was well ... keywords were finalized, links, contact us forms, changing home page, PPC budget was set, etc. ... a real 'white hat' campaign. But nothing changed. For two months. Almost no visitors and low clickthrough rate. Is it the text on the site that wasn't reviewed? Not enough 'call for action'? We decided to stop our work with the big firm and rethink our steps. I believe our lesson was that we needed to rebuild the site in a more updated technology that will make our site more 'friendly' and easy to locate for search engines. Meaning — rebuild the foundations before putting another layer of paint in the second floor.

Sharon Magor, Essential Data Services, www.essentialdata.ca

57 Nearing the end of 2005, Scandic Media was faced with one of the biggest obstacles any advertising company can face, declining leads for one of its clients. We needed to come up with a new strategy for 2006. We immediately thought to pass a percentage of the client's advertising budget to our Internet marketing division, Inet-Optimizer. Our main problem was dealing with a client who was used to primarily using print advertising. Going into a full Internet marketing campaign would be a big nut to swallow. In late December, we re-assessed the client's budget and how the money was allocated. With a budget of a few hundred thousand dollars and a client who was not comfortable with going head-on into an Internet marketing campaign, we decided to introduce a geotargeted PPC campaign for them. This would allow us to monitor their daily spending and keep the spending at a controlled level. We made the decision to allocate 20% of their current budget to PPC. This plan was a more palatable strategy for our client, and they agreed to give it a try.

Familiar with the competitiveness of PPC, we went to work on a competitor analysis. We concluded that 80% of their main competition was already doing a geotargeted PPC campaign in the same areas that we needed to target. This would make the bidding a difficult task. We analyzed the keywords and text ads they were running, and it revealed the competition was bidding on the same terms within the same area. In order to stay ahead of the competition, we

developed more specific terms tailored to their services and decided to use the Exact Match featured only, and not the Broad Match or Phase Match options. This allowed us to generate the most qualified leads and kept us out of the bidding war. Our analysis determined that their competition was simply directing customers to the home page of their sites and did not focus on the true search of the customer. We capitalized on this weakness, and our writers and designers went to work on landing pages specific to the keywords that were chosen. This allowed customers to be directed to the content and services they were searching for, which would bring in more leads.

We were also aware that our competition was not making use of negative keywords. We employed negative keywords to gain an edge over the competition. By adding negative keywords, it allowed us to attract a more qualified customer and maximize their PPC spend. Within the first quarter, after only spending 15% of the allocated PPC budget, the campaign had generated a remarkable 65 qualified leads. This was 120% more than the previous year with just using print advertising. The second, third and fourth quarters proved to be just as profitable. With an astounding 287 leads, the 2006 year ended very strong. Due to this year's success, our client has agreed to allocate 40% of their budget to Internet marketing for 2007.

Michael Sass, Inet-Optimizer, www.inetoptimizer.com

58 A long-term client wanting SEO work delivered 90 keywords with which we began work on the medium-sized site. The site was large enough to work with so the list was not an issue. To date, 83% of all keywords rank in the top 10 SERP. Pointing to one keyword, the question was asked, 'We want to be #1 not #4.' Ranking #4 of 1.1 million results was a great achievement in our opinion, but the client did not understand this position. WordTracker reports the keyword/s with a KEI (keyword effectiveness index) of 0.000 and 1.1 million competing. The business owner's expectations were likened to a PPC campaign, in that we tweak the page a little bit and BAM, instant #1 ranking. The idea of a process with sustaining results that are achieved by building the results, links, assessing the competition, etc. was not fully understood. Today, we have not 'tweaked' the page now that the client understands what an ideal position they do in fact have. It's a long drop or a VERY short gain, we opt for the positioning we have currently and would let others 'stumble' over their efforts to reach #1. Being a secure #2 or #3 suits us fine. Firm footing makes great sense in this case. Lastly, we have learned that from this point forward, we need to address the client's expectations first, then work to achieve results. It makes their understanding of the process and results more in tune with achievements made. It also makes our job easier. Reporting we went from zero to 39 (SERP) is a great step; 39 to 12 is great; 12 to 4 is celebration time. I think our clients will now be better equipped to see ranking not as an instant result, but a long-term effective marketing tool they have added to their businesses arsenal.

David Hallmark, CrystalVision Internet Services, www.cvwip.com

59 If I was charged with creating a bumper sticker that would highlight a mantra for 2007, it would be: ‘MONOLITHIC SEARCH THINKING MUST DIE!’ Monolithic is defined as ‘characterized by massiveness and rigidity and total uniformity.’ Most North American search marketing and optimization efforts qualify under this definition — there is almost total uniformity in the rigid use of English-only thinking. Over the past six years, English language Internet usage has grown 135% while Spanish usage is experiencing a growth rate of 231%. With an estimated 81 million Spanish-speaking Internet users worldwide, it seems to make sense to develop content and marketing material. Frequently the only Spanish content on many Web sites is the declaration ‘habla espanol.’ Since the late ’90s, English language search optimization has reached levels of competition that make winning the lottery seem like a sure bet.

During the same six years, pay-per-click search marketing for English language keywords has steadily increased from 5 cents-10 cents per click into the multidollar range. If top-page English language search optimization positions and pay-per-click marketing ROI are becoming harder to achieve, why don’t more marketers employ multilingual content and bidding strategies? Why don’t more marketers realize that the Internet provides affordable access to a global market that is only a translation away from revenue? Why don’t businesses focus on speaking to their prospects and customers in the customer’s primary language, especially when non-English PPC bid prices are often lower? Why don’t search optimizers realize that competition is frequently lower for non-English content? I don’t have an easy answer to these questions. My best guess is that most businesses in North America have not been forced to offer multi-lingual as an Internet option, but with rising costs and increased international competition, small businesses in India, China, Spain, Russia and elsewhere can effectively compete for your customers’ dollars 24/7 by providing multilingual content.

John Lawlor, Internet marketing strategist, [johnlawlor.com](#)

60 Having spent your precious marketing budget on any paid search activity, check the links, landing pages and shopping cart software REGULARLY ... AND DO IT YOURSELF!

Jonathan Walker, Stride Limited, [www.stride.co.uk](#)

Part #5: Social Networks

61 In 2006, we learned the incredible power of social networks. We recently launched a new Web site and within 24 hours it was Alexa.com's third-from-top 'Mover & Shaker' of the week. More importantly, we received more than 1,000 inbound links within one week. All for zero cost and very little work. Here's how we did it:

1. We wrote an article that was truly useful to our customers.
2. We spent ages perfecting the headline (we gave it borrowed authority and made it timely by mentioning Google Optimizer).
3. We made it lighthearted and 'likeable.'
4. We 'seeded' it on the social networks (that is, we Dugg it and

Del.icio.us'ed it ourselves), then contacted bloggers to let them know. But here's our best tip for getting attention from social sites: You know you're giving away valuable information when it slightly hurts you to send it out. If the information is truly valuable, then you will probably find yourself saying, 'Maybe I should keep this to myself. I could profit from it.' When you hear yourself saying that — you need to go ahead and publish!

Karl Blanks and Ben Jesson, Conversion Rate Experts, www.conversion-rate-experts.com

62 2006 taught me that the press release is not dead. Instead, it is transforming itself to adapt to new forms of communication and the ways in which we obtain news — via social media. In addition to optimization, press releases that include the ability to easily distribute, post and link to relevant social media outlets are one of the best ways to quickly gain visibility across these networks. I recently did this for a client and within days found my release ranking well on the major engines and within several major news aggregators, including Technorati.

Rachel Andersen, Anvil Media Inc., www.anvilmediainc.com

63 The power of YouTube: views versus leads. As a simple test, we let our latest commercial into the wild on YouTube. The number of views (more than 200,000 so far) was substantial, but it is important to understand that generic brand awareness exercises are not the same as lead generation efforts. Call to action is the doorway to a successful campaign.

Scott Gray, BMW South Africa, www.bmw.co.za

64 Word-of-mouth programs really work as proven by our recent success for Dreamfields Pasta, a brand of healthy pasta that appeals to low-carb dieters and people with diabetes. We created the Taste & Tell program to offer our email subscribers the chance to receive a kit containing samples, coupons to distribute and suggested talking points about the delicious and healthy pasta. After just a few weeks, members reported extremely positive feedback, with 75% saying they actually cooked and

served the pasta to friends, family and co-workers. 94% reported that they received very positive or good level of interest from people they spoke to about the brand. The key to these positive results are being genuine about asking for help. No payments, bribes or other incentives are offered, just sincere appreciation and real listening. The pilot campaign is being expanded to full-blown program in 2007.

Dan Heimbrock, HyperDrive Interactive, [www.hyperdrivei.com](#)

65 A few years ago, I began developing what would become the first online social network dedicated to real estate investors. We had already launched a traditional site for real estate investors that focused on the main tools — a property search, a real estate professional search and the mechanism for our investor members to list their own properties for sale. Adding a potentially viral social network that would offer real estate investors a platform to evaluate investment opportunities, to seek out advice from other investors in the local market and even solicit help from local real estate professionals became a very big project. We launched the social community early in 2006 and have seen slow but steady growth. Where's the viral explosion? Our task has become more difficult than we originally thought. But we have made great progress. We learned early on that it's not about how many members we have, but more importantly how many 'connectors' we have. A small number of members account for the majority of the referrals into the community. Those members tend to be the ones who jump in from day one, get their hands dirty and selflessly devote their efforts to sharing our vision with everyone they know. As a result, we decided that we would target the perfect member and not feel slighted if we didn't fit the expectations of every visitor. We can't be everything to everyone. But we can be the preferred networking vehicle for the serious real estate investor.

Tim Miner, Investment Riches, [www.InvestmentRiches.com](#)

66 Social media was the buzzword in 2006, but a lot of marketers did not know what to make out of it or were too afraid to participate in it. I can tell from my personal experience that social media is nothing to be afraid of. On the contrary, being part of an online community, be it personal or professional, and contributing to it does reward you personally and professionally. You will probably not see any results at the beginning. This is something that requires the establishment of trust and acceptance. Those are things that are not earned over night. But once you have earned them, rewards will probably be beyond your expectations. They were beyond mine. One piece of advice though: Be honest and be real. Don't fake it. Simply be human and you will do just fine.

Carsten Cumbrowski, [Cumbrowski.com](#), [www.cumbrowski.com](#)

Part #6: Web Sites

67 The best Internet marketing story we learned was that some amount of ‘fluff’ must be on a Web site’s home page to convert visitors to buyers. We offer custom software development services for global clients and we have only our Web sites as our business acquisition channel. Our home page had some amount of ‘fluff’ content before beginning our sales-oriented copy on the page. We decided to test extreme hard-sell copy on every area of our home page thinking people just want to know what we offer and what’s in it for them. We structured our copy around this idea. We changed only the copy and nothing else. But since the day we put up the page with extreme hard-sell copy, our business inquiries slipped drastically by almost 50%. This went on for about three weeks. After three weeks of low numbers of inquiries, we reverted to the original copy. To our surprise, the number of inquiries returned to the original level. That’s when we realized even though visitors want direct-to-point copy, their minds are tuned to some ‘fluff’ copy that feature in the millions of Web sites they have visited over time. They just can’t seem to adjust to a direct-to-point copy on home page.

Vishal Nayak, Stylus Systems Pvt. Ltd., www.stylusinc.com

68 I manage the search marketing activities for a direct-to-consumer retailer. Over the past year, the site visitor conversion rate has increased from 10% to 15%. One of my latest tests resulted in a 5% increase in sales. The checkout registration confirmation/submit order page was converting at 92%. I thought this was acceptable, as some shoppers got last-minute cold feet and ran. However, upon further investigation, I found out that 98% of the shoppers who dropped at this page left the site completely. This had me scratching my head, so I went to that page to check it out. The page looked fine. The only action required on the page is to click the ‘Submit Order’ button, which I noticed was below the fold. I suspect that many of those visitors who left the site at this page likely thought they had completed the order process and were looking at their online receipt and did not scroll down to the bottom of the page to click submit. The solution: place a ‘Submit Order’ button in big, bold colors on the top right of the page in addition to the bottom. The result: Step conversion at this page went from 92% to 98% and added approximately 5% to the top line. Just goes to show you — if you keep looking, even the smallest, seemingly most insignificant changes can have significant impact.

David Pearce, Responsible Marketing Consulting Services, www.resmarkconsulting.com

69 I am not sure there is such a thing as a safe assumption when it comes to predicting behavior. Nearly every client I speak with has read somewhere that scrolling on Web pages is a horrible thing that will repel people. However, the data we gathered does not always concur. For example, in the past 12 months we found our conversions increased by 12% to 14% in

a shopping cart registration process when we allowed users to scroll through two pages of information instead of clicking through four.

Scott Levy, W3 Management Group, [www.w3management.com](#)

70 MarketingSherpa presented a story on increasing the conversion rate of Web site browsers to paying customers. I made several simple changes to the Temperature@lert site, including:

1. Placing the pricing 'above the fold' on the home page.
2. Including key features on the home page.
3. Placing an honest customer testimonial alongside the product.
4. Including a click-to-chat link with live customer support.
5. Posting quick comments on other sites such as Digg or Slashdot comment areas with links back to Temperature@lert to increase search engine visibility.

I immediately saw a triple increase in daily order volume. Not yet convinced, I delved into the log files to confirm that some other force had not obscured my experiments. It was very clear that these changes had a profound impact on my daily numbers.

Harry Schechter, Temperature@lert, [www.temperaturealert.com](#)

71 Alas! What to do when your small B-to-B white paper banner ad is buried among a bastion of competitors' ads on a highly targeted site? Accept getting lost in the fray? Make your ad so annoying that people click on it just to get it off their screen? Neither. Through a series of tests, we developed a flash-based banner ad that stood out from the rest and resulted in a 220% increase in clickthroughs. Here's how we did it: After studying the other ads that were on the site, we noticed that most of them were what we call 'movie trailer' type ads. To get the intended impact of the ad, you literally have to stare at it beginning to end (anywhere from three to seven seconds). Problem is, people scroll all over on these pages and you never know at what point they'll notice your ad in the trailer. We suspected that a message that depends upon sequential viewing to get the point across would have a harder time earning clicks — especially on a page this 'noisy.' Our theory was that if we could create an ad that captured attention no matter what point you happened to see it (two, four or seven seconds into it), we could get a higher clickthrough. So we created a series of three ads to test. Two had a repeating flash element (a vector outline of a lifelike human doing a repetitive task, such as running in circles). The other one had the exact same messaging, but did not have a repeating element. In all ads, the call to action and offer were exactly the same: 'Click for the white paper.' The results were as follows: Ads with repeating flash element, viewable at all times: 0.11% clickthrough. Ad without repeating flash element: 0.05% clickthrough. Length of test, 48 days. Difference of clickthroughs: 220% Wee-hoo! Our results showed that even on a 'noisy' site with lots of competing banner ads, you can achieve high clickthroughs if you use a consistent, repeating element

throughout the entire marketing message. And one last cherry on top: Following the best practice of matching your landing page to your ad exactly, we created individualized landing pages for each of the ads. Our conversion rate from visitor to lead was a whopping 62.96%. I know, I had to re-run those numbers three times to make sure I wasn't fibbing, but it's true.

Jeremiah Desmarais, ProspectZone, [www.prospectzone.com](#)

72 Don't just say it, show it as well! We added a simple diagram as close to the top of a number of key pages on our Web site. It immediately lets visitors understand what Kayote does for them and what parts of their business we don't touch. The emphasis here is on 'very simple' — which we had been overlooking since our product is very intricate — and 'diagram' (not a screen capture). We made sure to explain it as well, highlighting each element and not leaving anything to chance. The result was an immediate drop in bounce rates, especially on landing pages. Our A/B testing proved that even pages with a simple and intuitive screen capture couldn't compete. I did the diagram myself (no graphic artist=cheap) after a few hours of discussions that also helped put all the top managers on the same page for internal discussions.

Gabi Cohen, Kayote Networks, [www.kayote.com](#)

73 We decided to test an offer on our site, PropertyShark.com, to encourage subscriptions with a strategically timed pop-up offering 20% off. I am fairly anti-pop-up ads in general, but I thought it was worth trying. There was concern on the part of the management team that we might be cannibalizing sales (by 20%) that would have happened anyway, so we set up an A/B test to see if those who saw the pop-up subscribed with greater or less frequency than those who did not see it. Two very interesting results were discovered:

1. We found that indeed the sample that saw the popup was 81% more likely to subscribe to PropertyShark.com than those that did not.
2. Even more interesting, the average sales size was 37.5% higher for those who subscribed through the popup (even after the 20% discount) than those who subscribed without seeing the popup.

It seems that our concerns about the pop-up were unwarranted, as the pop-up both increased the likelihood someone would subscribe AND increased the average sales size even after accounting for the 20% discount!

Brian Scully, PropertyShark, [www.PropertyShark.com](#)

74 Testing has boosted my micro business's Web conversion by more than 200% over the last two years. Here's a perfect example of what you're missing if you're not testing. Completely coincidentally, I ran a test during my slowest sales period of the year that only entailed a change to the

P.S. section of my home page way down at the bottom. It was a clever little snippet of text, directly related to my product offering, which involves creativity, and it boosted my conversion rate by well over 50% on statistically significant sample sizes. I never dreamed such a small change could have such a huge impact. Had I not been conducting an actual split test with definable and measurable results, I'd never have seen the impact of this one change. It would have been buried by the overall drop in conversions during this very slow sales period. Had I included this change with others on my home page, I'd never have isolated the dramatic effect of this one tiny tweak because I wasn't expecting it. I now know that my market responds to a pinch of fun on the page. That's market research information I would never have gotten without testing.

Leslie B. Lyons, Best Selling Website, Birthday Party Games Lady,
www.bestsellingwebsite.com, www.birthdaypartygameslady.com

75 After 16 years in the interactive advertising business, we thought we had seen and heard most everything. But we were wrong. Last August, an e-commerce software company hired us to develop an online media campaign for the launch of a new software product targeted to the mobile consumer market. The sales process would use a combination of their internal corporate Web site and an external ecommerce engine. We were told this established process measured sales from advertising down to sales at the SKU level. Our job was simply to test a variety of messages and achieve an overall CPC cost of less than \$2. They insisted we use a third-party ad server in order to reconcile discrepancies between delivered impressions and actual clicks, as previous campaigns had taught them not to just rely on site result reports. We met with their marketing, Web development and ecommerce folks, and it appeared they could indeed measure sales by SKU, ad, ad size and site. So we launched the campaign in September, using a standard third-party ad server as requested. And we achieved the required ad objectives. The campaign's overall CPC was \$1.73 and we were able to tell them which message and ad unit were the most effective combination. However, their sales were dramatically lower than expected.

Their first thought was the media plan contained a number of 'turkey' sites. What they didn't realize, since they had never deployed any type of post-click ad tagging, was the ability of tagging to pinpoint exactly where in the online sales process prospects were dropping off. By developing both counter and sales tags, which were provided to the Web masters for placement on appropriate internal and external site pages, we were able to locate the culprit: 98% of all people who clicked explored other pages on their internal Web site. This meant that even though the client believed the benefits were obvious, the product was not understood enough by prospects to go directly to sale. More education was required to make a purchase decision. This need for more information was further supported by the fact that 65% of all people who clicked on or viewed the ad went to the client's promotional informa-

tion page rather than to the campaign landing page. 89% of those people who made the decision to buy placed items in their ecommerce shopping cart, yet just 2% of those trying to buy the product actually completed the purchase process. In other words, the client had a 98% shopping cart abandonment rate. What the client learned was: The product and its benefits were not as apparent to the prospect as had been originally assumed. Their ecommerce engine and its process were too frustrating and complex for the consumer to complete a purchase. What we learned was: To insist on sufficient lead time to develop, implement and test ad tags for maximum effectiveness for each campaign. To educate clients on the incredible power of ad tagging to follow a prospect's progress toward the desired result (registration, download, participation in a contest or sale). The end result is knowing, rather than guessing, what is and what is not working in a given campaign.

Susan Simmons, Cooper+Simmons Media Architects, www.coopersimmons.com

76 We learned the importance of a holistic view toward a campaign. We defined the message, tested it with focus groups and began a direct mail campaign. At the last minute, the client decided they had to upgrade their Web site to allow for ecommerce for the responses. We resisted, as this had not been considered in our plans and we felt there wasn't adequate time or need to make the change. Still, they insisted and we complied. Our direct mail campaign tripled their responses. However, as the prospects came to the hurried site, they saw the old message and failed to convert in droves. Lesson learned — examine all touchpoints of a campaign to be sure all messages are consistent.

Steve Dangle, Color Digital Marketing, www.cdmarketing.com

77 It sounds obvious, but Web visitors do respond quite differently by segment, and targeting each segment and testing assumptions can increase response rates greatly. We've seen a rise in response rates after following these three steps:

1. Segment site traffic — returning customer, potential customer, search engine visitor, keyword searched, etc.
2. Use third-party technology, A/B test messaging and offers by segment to validate segment assumptions.
3. Serve the winning messaging and offers by segment.

Carrie Bolton, GMAC Mortgage, www.gmacmortgage.com

78 This past year our Web page optimization system proved that some traditionally held assumptions about Web page conversion behavior were completely incorrect. Most emarketers (and us, too) reasonably assume that all Web pages designed to convert visitors to customers would get an equal boost during high demand, or that conversion rates would start merging due to blind demand in more extreme cases. These both proved to be

inaccurate models. In reality, we have seen that during high demand all pages experience a lift, but the best pages tend to convert at disproportionately higher rates than the worst pages. Let me tell you how we found this out. One of our customers provides a Web-based service that warns subscribers when severe weather conditions approach their homes. We were completing a sales-path optimization project when the data stabilization graph suddenly showed that conversions of certain pages had shot up an incredible amount over the past couple of hours, while others remained relatively flat. A phone call to the customer confirmed that this conversion jump occurred simultaneously with a series of tornadoes that had just killed several people in the Midwest. Our test had captured in real time the exact type of event that our customer's online service was designed to warn about. Over the following days we tracked the site's visitors' purchase response behaviors to this event. This revealed the flaw in traditional expectations. Our client had assumed that highly motivated visitors would respond equally to good and poor page designs. In fact, pages that performed poorly before the storm leveled out quickly while the best pages performed three times better. Interestingly, the rank order of the pages remained exactly the same but the difference between the best and worst performers was exaggerated and was now separated by almost 80% vs. under 50% before the storm. Our conclusion is that the response behavior of highly motivated Web site visitors is amplified on both ends — the best designs perform significantly better while poor designs perform only marginally better. We now call this the 'tornado effect' and believe that companies can improve their conversion results by understanding it. It pays a high dividend to find these optimal pages.

Frans Keylard, Widemile Inc., [www.widemile.com](#)

79 At Folica.com [an online beauty store] we always add our holiday delivery date schedules to our home page, customer service pages and various other high-traffic, prominent pages on our site. We found that by adding this delivery language to the shopping cart pages proved very helpful for our customers and eliminated many customer service inquiries about delivery dates and extra shipping charges they might incur. Changing the dates daily as the deadlines approached not only increased the urgency of the message but increased purchases on those 'deadline' days. Clearly communicating with our customers with language such as: 'Last Day for Guaranteed UPS Delivery,' or 'Order by 4PM today to guarantee delivery by 12/23' increased response, while decreasing customer service calls. Having this copy on the shopping cart page increased the urgency and sales overall.

Michelle, Folica.com, [www.folica.com](#)

80 In an effort to boost leads from our existing traffic, we added a form for email submission on our home page. We tested this against other landing pages that did not have that and measured the number of inquiries received on a weekly basis. After a few months, we came to the conclusion

that although we received many new contacts in this manner, they were less qualified sales leads than those obtained by other means. For example, although our lengthier request for information form. While the idea was sensational, it proves the point that every new effort deserves a chance and should be tested thoroughly. It is not always a straightforward conclusion, but giving new ideas a chance is the only way to find out their potential value!

David Yussen, Global Volunteers, www.globalvolunteers.org

81 The Kabalarian Philosophy offers five successive home study courses teaching the mathematical principles of mind. Our students are spread from Europe to Australia, with the majority in North America. Because each course is a prerequisite for the subsequent course, helping the enrollees successfully complete their course material is a priority for future enrollments. In August 2006, we offered a test trial of free teleconferencing support with the introductory course by an email invitation to a test group of active students. We hosted a one-hour teleconference call weekly for eight weeks with a North American-wide toll-free number. Each week covered one module of the course. Here are a few lessons learned:

1. Time zones are a conundrum with live sessions. Our international students could not join the conference due to the time differences. No matter how interesting the content, no one is going to listen in at 4 a.m. We are now moving to on-demand audio podcasting for supplemental training content.
2. If you build it, they don't always come! Even with more than 35% of the contacted students signing up for the free teleconference sessions, email reminders are crucial. We had only 9% of the students enrolled for the conferences show up. When we had an email alert mix-up one week, that attendance rate dropped to 4%. We expect a nominal fee would have given the participants a financial incentive to participate consistently. After all, if it is free, it is easier to skip.
3. People need personal contact. Previously, we provided weekly Internet broadcasts, but with much less interactivity, without the same completion results. All those who joined in on the eight teleconferences completed the course. 14% progressed to the next course immediately, and we expect more will follow through in the months ahead.
4. Track your costs. Teleconferencing is reasonably priced, but it is on a per-person basis. It can add up quite quickly with a good turn out. We now plan to factor these support costs into the course fee so that we can ensure the maximum success of the student.

Daken Ariel, Kabalarian Philosophy, www.kabalarians.com

82 Here's a little nugget I realized this year after some trial and error: Keep your URLs short! I worked on two different campaigns this year that were both similar in strategy and quality of data; both had PURLs

(Personalized URLs); both had relatively equal number of records. One had a much higher PURL response than the other. I kept going back to the results but couldn't begin to think why one did so much better. Then I had my 'Aha! moment': one campaign had a much shorter URL than the other! If you get a direct mail piece with a long URL attached, the chances of a mis-type on the receiver's part are far greater. Furthermore, how many people put down their mail piece and go straight to their computers? I know I don't. I'll tuck it away in my purse for a later time or, if the URL is short enough; I commit it to memory. I have no data or proof to back this up ... yet! I plan to test this notion as soon as the moment presents itself, but I'd be interested to know if anyone else has tried it.

Nancy Masse, DME, www.dmecorporate.com

Part #7: B-to-B Marketing

83 When I joined Duck Creek Technologies as Marketing Director in mid-2006, a marketing consultant had already put in place a campaign called ‘Are you a Duck Match?’ that he thought would yield many highly qualified leads for our enterprise software. However, the online ad campaign required too much work — answering three screens worth of questions — and garnered far fewer responses than anticipated. In addition, we spent money to have an ad agency design a microsite, IT staff time to link it to our CRM engine and had to deliver on our promise of giving one person a ‘proof of concept’ worth about \$10,000. In contrast, my team created a second campaign of online ads that let people click through to visit a ‘Two Minute Explainer’ Flash demo that already was on our Web site. It took one click to watch the demo and another to register your contact info. This campaign cost far less and generated solid results for our sales organization each time an ad ran. It also let us experiment with different ad formats (tower, banner, text and peel-back) in different online trade publications to see which ads in which publications worked best. The lesson learned is that big and fancy and complicated isn’t necessarily the best way to go — especially when small, simple and straightforward is available as an alternative

Kevin Rudden, Duck Creek Technologies, www.duckcreektech.com

84 In the B-to-B lead gen game, speed is of the essence. When a prospect registers for a white paper, hits submit for more information, attends your webinar or calls you and leaves a message, it’s critical to get back in touch with the prospect that same day (or early the next if after hours). We found that with our own lead generation efforts as well as those we produce for our B-to-B clients, responding quickly when you are still fresh in the prospect’s mind, as opposed to waiting a few days, increases your chances of getting the prospect into the sales funnel by 5x to 10x. We like to keep the registration form deadly simple, then have mechanisms in place to follow up by phone within hours of the prospect hitting submit. A simple registration form keeps prospects from abandoning at higher rates, and the serious prospects seem to appreciate the fast follow-up and are willing to talk about their company and challenges. Fast follow-up is the key.

Tom Link, Mercury Leads Inc., www.mercuryleads.com

85 One of the key ways that Pilot reaches its customers and prospects is through the use of online seminars. These seminars typically are around one hour, have a mixture of educational and product related materials and are always free. Often, we will return to a popular topic or issue updating the previous presentation, as we find that people prefer a live event. For one session, we decided to change the title, keeping the material the same, to see if it resulted in a different crowd. In hindsight, the changed title sounded much

more like just a product demo than an educational seminar and the result showed in our numbers. Not only was enrollment down more than 75% from our usual numbers, our enrollment-attendance ratio suffered as well, declining more than 50%. The lesson that we've learned is that while most people who attend our webinars want to get product information, it's the trusted adviser aspect of our webinars that drives enrollment and attendance.

Ranga Bodla, Pilot Software, www.pilotsoftware.com

86 As a publication that reaches more than 280,000 technology professionals, we track response rates for various types of advertising placements. In 2006, conversion rates for lead generation campaigns using whitepaper offers actually rose by nearly 2% this year (an average of 2% more of the total audience addressed converted). This tells us that 'how to' information is more powerful than ever before.

Dave Garrett, gantthead.com, www.gantthead.com

87 The challenge: design a direct marketing program to get the attention of C-level executives and VPs at medium and large software companies for a strategic, high-value service — specifically, outsourced supply chain management from Zomax. The plan: a direct mail campaign using a CD inside a DVD case with an insert showing a superhero illustration to give the package a video game feel. The flying superhero wore a high-tech tool pack on his chest (there was also a female version — the illustration matched the recipient's gender) with tools creatively labeled to reflect the company's supply chain services offering, such as 'Inventory Normalizer' and 'Supply Chain Analyzer.' The result: an award-winning campaign that was also a big business success. More than 30% of recipients viewed the CD, 6% entered into active sales cycles and a third of those became clients, producing more than \$500,000 in revenue. The campaign was named a finalist or winner for four different awards, including the CMO Council/Yahoo! Big Idea Chair award. Lessons learned:

1. Make a list and check it twice (at least): Because each package was personalized with the recipient's first name and company name, production costs were high and returned packages had no re-use value. So the list had to be solid, both in terms of company size and targeting the responsible individual. First, hours were spent building a list from in-house, purchased, and publicly available sources, and then each company was called to verify the appropriate name, title and address.
2. Make it personal: Personalizing the package increased curiosity and the 'cool factor' — it looked like a video game designed just for that individual and company.
3. Special delivery: The superhero packages were delivered via FedEx. While this added significantly to the campaign cost, people are more likely to actually receive and open FedEx packages than regular mail, and we were able to track delivery times for phone follow-up.

4. Track it: The CDs were imbedded with Zomax's own tracking technology, iTrax, which allowed us to track — at an aggregate level, similar to Web analytics for a Web site — the total number of CDs viewed, the total number of times they were viewed, and how many different PCs they were viewed on, to measure campaign response.
5. Coordinate follow-up: Deliveries were tracked in Salesforce.com, and marketing worked closely with sales to ensure that all recipients were followed up with by phone within 48 hours of receiving the package. Many of the recipients who weren't immediate prospects said they would keep it on their shelf, providing Zomax with a number of long-term leads as well as the short-term sales opportunities.

Tom Pick, KC Associates, [www.kc-associates.com](#)

88 When marketing starts screaming about low conversion rates, I've learned to remind them that the #1 way to increase conversions is to offer the prospect something he/she wants. That is, make it worthwhile — offer value — for the prospect to jump through our registration loops. Like it or not, what the marketer thinks is valuable and what the prospect thinks is valuable are often two very different things. Best advice to anyone selling anything: put yourself in your customer's place.

Dale Stewart, Océ North America, [www.oceusa.com](#)

89 Here's why the tchochkie — the premium item or personal giveaway — always beats the professional or informational offer in direct marketing campaigns. The secret lies deep in human nature; we are wired to hunt or gather stuff. And we can't pass up something for nothing. If you politely survey us we'll tell you that we would never go out of our way to get or even be remotely influenced by a cap, T-shirt, polo, thumb drive, stress ball, Frisbee or cool pen. But given the choice between a warmed-over white paper, a PowerPoint deck, a webinar or a case study, the swag is a no-brainer. If you doubt me, go to any trade show and watch high-paid executives in expensive suits kill each other to collect \$3 T-shirts or another baseball cap. Better yet, look around your doctor's office. In most cases people are motivated to get and possess the object; its value or utility is hardly considered. Something about the offer of a freebie fires synapses in our limbic brains and we leap into a life-or-death struggle to acquire the shiny object. In a recent B-to-B campaign, we made the unvarnished subject line offer 'Take a Survey. Get a Gift.' In every test cell, email opens and survey completions were twice that of the more subtle and professional appeal, 'Your opinion is needed.' The offer of a gift seems to be even more motivating if the recipient can choose his or her prize. In a recent campaign, Loyaltyworks used its world-class premium catalog as a reward for survey takers. Each survey responder got enough points to choose from among 11,000 items. With a lure like this, it wasn't too surprising that purchased lists performed like house lists. Frankly, the tchochkie also works better because it creates an unspoken but clear

obligation between the marketer and the recipient — again, a throwback to ancient inter-personal practice. The message transmitted telepathically is: ‘I gave you something cool for nothing, now you owe me a conversation.’

Danny Flamberg, The Delve Group, [www.delvegroup.com](#)

90 We started this company in 2006 with the intention to provide information and resources to small & medium enterprises (SMEs) of India. After having built a reasonable Web site with content, we sourced a business database and shot a campaign offering services to SMEs, which included free advisory services for a limited time. We thought that this free service would be of interest to most of the SMEs. The response was lukewarm. We did a small research to the audience of 300 SMEs to find out why although the open rate was high, they did not use the advisory services. They came back that anything offered free is considered that they would not get the response in details and at a superficial level they are already aware of the problem. With that feedback, we created some white papers that had relevant information and sent that across to the business, which had a good response rate. I feel now the concept of ‘FREE’ is also not working with SMEs and if you need to engage them you need to give them services of value.

Maggi, SmallBizUnlimited, [www.smallbizunlimited.com](#)

91 As a marketing account executive, I am always looking for cost-efficient mediums to capture target audiences pertinent to my clients. For one particular client, an IT solutions provider, we were searching to obtain sound metrics to prove the value of setting up booths at costly trade shows. This past year we developed a coordinated paid search campaign across Yahoo! and Google on keywords pertaining to the trade show. We had coverage online for several weeks before, during, and after the trade show with adjusted copy. For example, before the trade show we mentioned in the copy what booth to visit our client. During the show we reinforced the booth number and core services of our client. Then, after the show, we included a thank-you message and encouraged individuals to ‘learn more’ and clickthrough to the client’s Web site. All in all, our effort’s cost was under \$2 in media spend and drove 10 qualified leads to our client’s Web site. We were extremely excited by using an efficient and targeted medium (paid search) in tandem with trade show efforts to support our investment!

Jennifer Marshall, Fishbone Marketing, [www.fishbone-marketing.com](#)

92 We are a high-tech company in a very low-tech industry. Selling handheld applications and inventory and accounting software to all size businesses within the nursery industry can be challenging. Being a very networked industry lends itself well to the marketing activities we perform. Our success has always come from marketing and repeated utilization of the

channels that are available to us. Take a trade show. Here's the SBI way, starting six weeks out:

1. Email broadcasting: a) Speculation list we have. b) Email to our internal database. c) Email to highly targeted purchased list that we collected emails based on an application that looked at the company Web site address and scraped the contacts. d) Don't forget to include your competitors' sales teams; this strikes fear and envy among them.
2. Direct mail postcards (two times — once promoting the seminar with a blurb on us, once promoting us with a blurb on the seminar): a) All leads one year old. b) Top in vertical niches. c) Trade association lists we have compiled through sponsorships and trade show attendance.
3. Seminar scheduled to be held on tradeshow grounds. a) Panel format — information first, SBI second. b) Mentioned in all marketing materials. c) Moderators are industry experts that exchange publicity for cross promotion.
4. Fax blasting: a) Fax machines are still in heavy use in our industry. b) There is obvious negative connotations with this channel, but, by golly, it does work (we allow unsubscribes).

On off months, we fax/email/direct mail/industry trade rag advertising. I will admit that in order to market this way, there has to be a 'No Fear, No Prisoners' mentality. So what's next for SBI? It's important for us to track where our leads come from (marketing channel), but we feel as an organization that the combined parts are more important to the whole campaign and support each other well. I have always been shocked at companies that don't market and take advantage of the tools. Even if it's not as pretty as some of the marketing we are capable of, I would rather have the message go out than to have been intimidated by trying to create a super polished piece, unless you are an ad agency of course.

Dave Coursen, SBI Nursery Software, www.sbinursery.com

93 I was managing follow-up communications to attendees of an event we had produced. When I pulled the final list I noticed that some attendees had opted out of marketing communications, I assumed before the event. After some discussion we decided to put a note at the top on the email to the folks who had opted out, explaining the situation and making it easy for them to update their communication preferences. I pulled them out as a segment to track their responses. As a group, their click and response rates were considerably better than the opt-in segment. We also heard that people were overjoyed with our professionalism. Personalized and authentic messages resonate. Duh.

Marko Muellner, WebTrends, www.webtrends.com

94 Video calling cards open the door to new B-to-B clients. This has been a highly successful means of generating new business by combining email to a partner's list, video calling cards and good old-fashioned

sales follow up.

1. Objective: Trends Publishing has produced Kitchen Trends magazine for 10 years and is now producing regional editions in cities such as Atlanta and San Francisco. Our sales team wanted to target kitchen designers, cabinetmakers, etc. in San Francisco.
2. Plan: An Industry Association that we have a 25-year relationship with provided us with 331 of their members in San Francisco. Trends TV, our TV production company, produced a Video Calling Card for our account manager — a 60-second introduction for the company, the account manager and the business proposition. We then sent an HTML email that outlined the video and our desire to talk to this niche.
3. Results: From the 331 messages sent, 145 people (44%) opened the email and 45 (14%) clicked — mostly on the video link. Within the hour, we had six replies asking for appointments. Following up with phone calls yielded a total of 34 appointments, or over 10% of the database. We currently have four signed contracts with another seven probable contracts to follow.
4. Follow-up: We sent a second message to the 191 who had not opened the first message after seven days. Of these, a surprising 63 (33%) opened the repeated message and 23 (12%) clicked. The total from the database of 331 people was 208 opens (63%) and 68 clicks (21%), which outperforms any in-house projects I have seen recently. We also had no unsubscribe requests from the 331 recipients, a great indicator that the message was on track.
5. Feedback: Calling people who had clicked on a link was highly successful and was generally greeted by ‘Oh, you’re the girl from the video, thanks for calling.’ This was the right message, the right medium and right delivery method.

Tom Butlin, Trends Publishing International, <http://trendsideas.com/?region=4>

95 Traditional thought suggests that managing PPC campaigns with a B-to-B focus are a perilous journey. Contrary to this popular belief in our industry we have worked very hard this year, in conjunction with a client’s technical and marketing teams, to successfully deliver campaigns on all three major engines in the UK market space (Google, Yahoo! & MSN). Whilst undertaking the usual pre-flight planning is essential in delivering any campaign, we also launched a consultancy lead data analysis where we considered all (sale) inflow channels and lead times. It is through this analysis and also the buy-in from the client side that we were able to more effectively manage both the delivery of the campaign and the expectations of the client.

Damien Anderson, Mainspring UK Ltd., www.mainspringuk.com

96 When all else fails, and you can afford it, put a celebrity to work for you. In our case it was that great American icon, Elvis Presley. After a very promising initial meeting, when the prospective client gave every

indication that we'd soon be handling a lead-generation project for them, he ceased to acknowledge that I even existed. Repeated voice mails and numerous emails over a period of 10 weeks got us nowhere. So, I put the King to work. I ordered a life-size cardboard cutout of (the young) Elvis. Then I attached a letter to Elvis's right shoulder and sent him off to do what voice mails and emails could not do: Get a positive response from the prospective client. The letter opened, 'Dear Tom: As you know, I've contacted you a number of times over the last few months. And the fact that I haven't heard back from you, quite frankly, has me All Shook Up. Come on, Tom, Don't Be Cruel.' I then closed out the letter by saying that when Tom engaged our services he would soon hear his customers and prospects singing ... 'I Want You, I Need You, I Love You.' Elvis generated an immediate positive response. I received an email from Tom the day he arrived on the scene. The subject line was 'You Got My Attention.' We got together for lunch the next week and shortly thereafter we commenced a lead-generation project for his firm. And so it is with a swivel of the hips I say to Elvis, Thank Yuh, Thank Yuh Vuhry Much.

Ernest Nicastro, Positive Response, www.positiveresponse.com

Part #8: On the Job

97 Product managers in my organization are primarily technical people, not marketers. My communications group wanted to completely change the approach and content of our marketing materials. What worked was to take over their monthly meeting and conduct a mini-training session. We created a template blank that covered all the things you would expect to see in a brief: audience, problem statements, solution, differentiating features, benefits, drivers for growth, market barriers and objections, etc. Some of these are pretty specific to our business, but your template would as well. We took an existing brochure and deconstructed it in the meeting, forcing the product managers to come up with the brief by looking at the finished product. This was pretty painful for about 30 minutes but after that went fairly smoothly. Next, we had them sit with their laptops and work on an example right there and then. The last stage in the process was to have each of them present their worked example and do a peer review, with suggestions and improvements captured live. This gave us eight worked examples to start writing the copy and ensured that everyone had a shared view of the process and how it would be applied. This process really worked well for our organization and gave the product managers some needed training, immediate feedback and real world working, all within a three-hour meeting. They were pleased, their manager was pleased and the communication team avoided the general chasing and phone calls that normally happened during the creation of brochures.

Peter Davies, Motorola TTPCom Product Group, www.ttpcom.com

98 Over-train all employees on your specific campaign. You can't get great employee buy-in unless everyone has a great understanding of the campaign. Cover everything you possibly can and then give everyone a semi-generic default for making decisions. My favorite is, 'If it will make more money or provide an opportunity for great PR, do it.'

Adam Grant, AGM - Adam Grant Marketing, www.adamgrantmarketing.com

99 When answering emails, I have a habit of being as short and abrupt as possible, sort of like blurting out an answer in the office. I really do know that this is bad email etiquette and I usually excuse it away (lack of time). Then, I received an answer to an email from a former CEO of a Fortune 500 company who is starting a new company. It was probably the most polite email I have even received: with a formal salutation, when he would follow up and a formal close. I had asked him for a favor, and he even started out by telling me it his pleasure to help. The email made me stop and think. Compared to the way most of us answer the volley of emails, I bet this one only took 10 seconds longer and it made a lasting impression. That was six months ago. So, now, in all emails that I write and respond to, I try to:

1. Remember that there is a human at the other end and recognize

that fact.

2. Be courteous. Emails really are permanent and savable. I thank people for contacting me, tell them when I'll will get back to them, write in complete thoughts and don't assume they know all of my cute cyber-abbreviations.

An email may be the only chance I get with a prospect, so I take a deep breath, think of my friend's email and try to be memorable.

Marlene Olsen, Olsen & Associates Public Relations, Creative Collaborations, etc., [www.o-apr.com](#)

100 When coordinating any outbound campaign, always be sure to request contact lists from your reps by using a template fields list. Requiring that contacts are submitted in the same format ensures your reps know what fields they are expected to complete and will save you from about two hours of data sorting and cleaning per campaign. And we all know that every minute counts.

Kristin Sanders

101 Double-check every invoice that comes across your desk. Last year, I caught more than \$1,000 in overcharges from the main service vendor at our most successful trade show. This year, they tried to boost our invoice by more than \$3,000 in overcharges. I fought to get our money back, but also complained to the show organizer. The result? Not only did I get a written apology from the vendor, but they also comped all of our show expenses this year, which was about \$5,000! And they offered to comp all of our services for next year if we are not 100% satisfied! Always double-check your expenses and watch your company's wallet as it was yours.

Milka Pejovic, Hardy Instruments, [www.hardyinstruments.com](#)

102 Never trust your vendor. If they say Thursday, they actually mean Thursday in three weeks time!

Jake Taylor

103 I've always been told by my supervisors/managers that I have good marketing instincts. To anyone in a large company, you'll know that isn't great 'proof' when deciding on a creative campaign. So, I'm consulting now and working with a former employer on several projects. One piece came back from the Creative Services Department at the company. It was OK, but not exact. Two of my clients at the company said 'love the creative.' Against my judgment, I let it go. (Hey, I don't really work there anymore.) A few weeks go by, and now one of the clients says, 'I'm rethinking that creative.' When we tried for some modifications, Creative Services pushed back saying, 'No, we can't get anything closer to what you want, and now we don't have time.' They knew we were on a tight timeframe. Creative

Services calls my client and says, 'Can you just get her to approve this ...' The client calls me and says, 'Yes, I know about your concerns, but this will be OK.' So the piece is printed and goes to the trade show. Next, the president of the business unit sees it and says, 'What's with these pictures ... it's not right.' How many presidents really look that closely at a trade show piece? So, now we have to go back, re-create and re-print. The client does not see this as my issue since they approved it. However, I could have stopped this earlier by really trusting my instinct to convince the client to modify earlier. I figured they were OK with it. Lesson: Not often is a lesson learned that so clearly proves to a person to trust your judgment, say it. Say it. Say it. Even if you're not supported, you presented your case early on. And maybe can pull an 'I told you so' later ... for the next time it happens.

Jackie Kuehl, Kuehl Marketing Group, www.kuehlmarketing.com

104 Do not overlook the talent of your internal resources! Earlier this year, I worked as a volunteer at a local nonprofit healthcare service provider. This organization requested that I use my business experience to help enhance the success of their annual fundraising event. Every year for many years now, the organization has employed essentially the same thought process, and the attendance during the last few years has diminished substantially. This year, they asked for my assistance in generating fresh new ideas to improve attendance. I met with the event coordinators a couple of months prior to the occasion to brainstorm new possibilities, and, as a result, there were several new ideas introduced. I attended the event myself, and, you guessed it ... this year's event had the highest attendance ever! What you may not have guessed is that the majority of the new ideas introduced for this year's event did not originate from me. They came from the talented individuals within the organization. Realizing the full potential of your internal resources translates into extraordinary results!

Ek-Leng, JumpStart Point Of Arrival LLC, www.JumpStartPOA.Biz

105 This year was a big learning experience for me. Although I stayed in the same company, I moved jobs. This is always a stressful transition but illustrated some points for me. The first one being the importance of organization. My new team is extremely organized, and this made for a close to seamless transition. It really is the small things, from file naming conventions to structural email folders, all of these things that save five seconds in a day, but collectively save countless hours each month. So, I suppose this small bit of information is more of an homage to organizational skills (as lame as that sounds). Keep organized and share these little things with everyone in your group, it is well worth it.

Andrew Verescak, C3 Online Marketing, www.c3onlinemarketing.com

106 Sales loves when marketing gets them good leads. Unfortunately, they may give some credit to where they came from, especially when commissions are at stake. Even if it only takes an hour to close a deal that you know you spent hours setting up (SEM, proposal templates, response letters, Web content), usually Marketing is far outnumbered and even a lonely orphan. When I got to my current company, there was no marketing being done and online leads were only trickling in. No metrics were being done (and today I am still the only person in the company that gathers any customer statistics). We have launched a new product and overall leads (from online) are up 3x-7x at a fraction of what was previously being spent (wasted). We've spent a fortune on trade shows this year with almost no ROI (that's why Sales is so resistant to providing any stats), but 60% of our customers are still coming from SEM and our Web site. My 2 cents is primarily to people negotiating for a new job: assume you will be an orphan up against (poor) management that may not be tracking things properly. Ask in advance for goals they want to hit. If they have none, suggest modest target you know you can reach. Then get them to commit in your contract how they will compensate beyond salary for driving sales up.

Anonymous

107 Here's some quick advice on managing job offers: At the outset of your job search, define in writing (!!!) exactly what you want from your next marketing job — and do not be afraid to accept the very first job offer that comes along if it matches your specs professionally, financially, and geographically. As in baseball, sometimes your first pitch is your best pitch. I am working with an unemployed senior executive who declined a very nice job offer in December 2005 and spent all of 2006 wishing he had that one to do over. Remember, the difference between salad and garbage is timing. That's not a scare tactic, but rather a gentle reminder that some things are out of my control, such as the urgency of a client to fill a position, or the chemistry a hiring manager has with a candidate. Sometimes hiring managers leave before a position is filled, and when the candidate wants to 'revisit' the opportunity he finds that the game has changed. Seriously: Know what you want, be able to recognize it and hammer the hell out of it if it crosses the plate. You may not get another chance.

Harry Joiner, [MarketingHeadhunter.com](#), [www.MarketingHeadhunter.com](#)

108 Marketing is not just about the customer. More often, marketing needs to be about selling an idea internally so it gets executed properly at the front line. In 2006, we had discontent among the sales staff over a \$20 gift card Christmas gift. Rather than emphasize that every full-time employee gets profit-sharing annually — the real bonus, based on company performance — the top brass gets huffy when employees grumble about the 'cheap bonus.' If they would use marketing principals to

present the true bonus structure to employees, everyone would realize that, since profit-sharing is not a benefit at every company, they have received a huge benefit. This would also put the Christmas gift back in proper perspective and the whole sales staff would be focused on holiday sales instead of grumping about the company.

Trish

109 No matter how perfect your lead generation strategy, process and deployment may look on paper, your success is greatly dependent on getting the culture of the organization to embrace and enact that change. People are creatures of habit. Teach (and sell) your new methodologies and always provide business cases and examples that support the new direction.

Bill Lawler, LMG, www.lawlermarketing.com

110 Biggest lesson learned as MarComm Director: be careful of the brand promises you make and brand stories you tell. If they aren't backed up by the right behaviors from the rest of the organization, you'll do more damage than if you'd said nothing at all.

Kirsty Wertz

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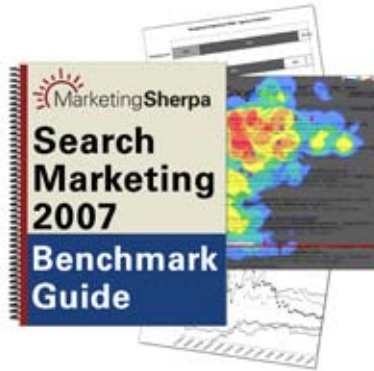
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- 3,944 real-life marketers' search budgets & results
- PPC paid search advertising data
- SEO – search engine optimization stats
- Eyetracking lab study results: how consumers view your search ads
- 262 pgs, Published Sept. 2006, ISBN 978-1-932353-61

Price: \$247



Email Marketing Benchmark Guide 2007:

Guide features:

- 100% re-researched edition
- 233 charts & tables
- 8 new eyetracking heatmaps.
- 3,637 marketers shared real-life open, click, conversion, test result, and budgeting data for this Guide.
- 324 pgs, Published Nov. 2006, ISBN 978-1-932353-62

Price: \$247



Landing Page Handbook

Handbook features:

- 59 samples from real-life campaigns (Use as templates for your own)
- 16 tables & charts
- 190 pages; Published Feb. 2005; ISBN 1-932353-43-7

Price: \$247
