

## Find and Convert March 09 Newsletter

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**As I See It...**

## Unlock the Power of Personal Branding on the Social Web

Bernie Borges

How can you help members of your staff build their personal brands while also benefiting your organization? Start by embracing the concept of personal branding because you will both benefit. Next, set out to build your own personal brand if you haven't already.

In most cases, whatever you do to build your personal brand, you should encourage members of your staff to consider doing in their unique way. Know the areas of expertise of your team members and encourage them to build personal brands that highlight those strengths. Start by ensuring your team has a complete profile on LinkedIn and Facebook. LinkedIn is strictly business and Facebook is a hybrid of business and fun.

Once you've filled out your personal branding profile, you're just getting started. Start connecting with people you know directly or indirectly. Use the Search feature to find former coworkers, classmates or friends from your hometown and connect with them. In LinkedIn you connect with others. In Facebook you friend others. In Twitter you follow others.

Chances are you're already using at least one of these social web platforms. That's great! But, are you building your personal brand with them? Are you encouraging your staff to do the same? Perhaps members of your staff are active social networkers and they've been bugging you to get started. You've resisted either because you thought it is for kids or because you think you don't have the time. Well, Mr. or Ms. CEO, I've got news for you. Many of your peers are already using social networking websites because they recognize the branding potential and business value of participating. Your absence is obvious.

Perhaps you belong to an association of professionals with a private online group. The same personal branding principles apply. Even if LinkedIn or Facebook aren't appropriate for you, chances are there are places on the social web where you should be connecting with people who can help you build your brand and your business.

Once you have your social profiles completed, how often do you upload content to your personal profile or to industry social sites? How often do you recommend others in your network? How often do you answer questions in online discussions? How often do you ask

questions? How often do you check each of these platforms – once per month? Once per week? Daily? To develop your personal brand, you must be active in these online social platforms. Think about your favorite networking situations. If you show up to the networking club just a few times a year, you will not build your personal brand or create any meaningful relationships.

Here are some tips to help build your personal brand on the social web:

- ✓ Be visible: Stay active in whichever social web platform you choose to participate. When you are active, you will be noticed more and you have more opportunity to engage others.
- ✓ Be interesting: Whatever your subject matter expertise, you have ideas and opinions to contribute. Think of creative ways to express your thoughts. Ask questions meant to get people thinking. What is obvious to you about your industry may not be obvious to others.
- ✓ Contribute: Share your insights. We live in an economy where our content is our marketing. When you have good content to share, by all means, share it! Don't be surprised if you get invited to join more conversations, or to speak as an industry expert or to write an article for a trade publication because you have contributed good content on a social networking site.
- ✓ Push the envelope: This one requires discretion. Especially if you are employed (as opposed to being self employed) or you are the CEO, you don't want to create a controversy that has a negative impact on both you and your business.
- ✓ Be real: This is critical. The social web is not a place to act or be someone you're not. You might get away with it for a little while but not for too long.
- ✓ Be found by the right people: How do you want to be found? Center your personal brand on something specific that you can use as your unique value proposition. Even if it doesn't boil down to a single phrase, you can still become known as "the woman you want to hire when you need to launch a new product in the (fill in the blank) industry."

Building your personal brand is too important to ignore. Businesses led by people who understand the value of a personal brand, do more than accept the efforts of staff members to build brands, they embrace and reward them. One of my favorite personal branding examples is Matt Cutts from Google. His personal brand is very recognizable to people in the Internet industry. Google benefits greatly from Cutts' personal brand because he is extremely effective as a brand ambassador. His personal brand is a great asset of his and of Google's.

Personal branding is nothing more than the new media version of reputation management. You can't fight it. Embrace it for all its value. Personal branding does not have a line item in your marketing budget, but it is a marketing asset. It takes time to develop and maintain. But, there is a strong argument for the opportunity cost of not encouraging and rewarding employees for developing personal brands. One way or another, your staff members will have personal brands. You should encourage them to create personal brands that benefit your organization as much as Matt Cutts' personal brand benefits Google.

## Marketing Insights...

### **Internet Marketing is Not a Luxury but a Necessity**

Billie Ginther

As a marketing professional, you know the marketing paradigm has shifted. You already understand that for your company to forge ahead, effective Internet marketing is not a luxury but a necessity. Still, many industry knowledgeable key decision-makers continue to balk at implementing Internet marketing strategies because they do not understand how Internet marketing works or how Internet marketing strategies can impact their business.

Our best approach is to talk more about Internet marketing basics as we share the importance of a strong Internet marketing strategy with colleagues and clients. We must emphasize how much money can be lost by having a website without a comprehensive SEO and Internet marketing strategy backing the site.

Internet marketing is melding mathematics, science, psychology, sociology and the arts into one objective...generating revenue. Done wisely, Internet marketing is an ongoing process that is measurable and delivers a positive return on investment (ROI). Or, in other words, Internet marketing more than pays for itself.

### **Consider a Popular Alternative to Traditional Advertising**

Dollar-for-dollar, traditional print and media advertising are returning fewer qualified leads than Internet marketing. Not surprisingly, the cost of generating prospects from print and other multi-media is on the rise. Material costs are increasing while audiences continue to respond less to these various forms of "shouting." Print media experts concur that it takes at least seven impressions for an ad to even register with a prospect. But buyer behavior is changing. Buyers have become adept at filtering out the deluge of messaging directed at them and are relying more on trusted sources like friends, colleagues and their own Internet research for purchasing decisions. Companies that are intent on staying competitive while reducing cost per lead must shift focus toward Internet marketing to benefit from these changing purchasing behaviors.

### **Consider Your Most Valuable Marketing Asset – Your Website**

In this economy your website must be a "show me the money" asset. Your website is often your prospect's first introduction to your business. While it is important to have a well designed, easy-to-navigate website, this alone is not enough. A business website generally has two functions:

1. Provide Information
2. Generate Revenue

In order to deliver on either of these promises, prospective customers who do not know your company but are looking for products or services that you offer must be able to find

you. Once they find your website, the SEO optimized content must engage, the design must lead the visitor toward conversion and the navigation must be easy for the visitor to use. Regardless of your business, industry experts continue to tout that as many as 90% of buyers do some form of research prior to purchasing. Businesses can not afford for their website to be ineffective.

## **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Having a website that your prospects can't find is like opening an ice cream store in the desert. Your ice cream may be delicious, but that doesn't matter if no one can find you. Gaining favorable position in search engines is the reason for search engine optimization (SEO).

Search engines deliver both organic and sponsored pay per click (PPC) results based on key words and phrases. SEO requires the development of a plan to bring qualified traffic to a website that includes considering architecture of the website, keyword strategy, content strategy and link strategy. SEO requires significant work when a new website is created and continual refinement during the life of the site.

Think of optimizing your website like an exercise program. At first, it is hard work but then you get into a groove. As time passes, you're trimmer, healthier. But you can't stop exercising or you will regress. You must keep exercising to stay in shape. Search engine optimization is like an exercise program because it takes a lot of work in the beginning and requires continual effort to maintain optimal page rankings and the flow of visitors to your site.

## **It Takes a Village**

Successful Internet Marketing requires aligning business goals, marketing strategies and technical resources. If you do not have the expertise or people to plan and execute Internet marketing strategies, find a partner like Find and Convert. Contracting with a reputable and knowledgeable SEO and Internet marketing agency will let you harness the power of the Internet to find people searching for what you sell and convert them into clients.

In looking for the right Internet marketing, SEO specialist or social media agency to help you build your Internet marketing strategy:

1. Talk with friends and trusted colleagues
2. Do research on the Internet
3. Read articles and blogs

After all, isn't this how your prospects are using the Internet to search for you?

## Search This...

### Three Cool PPC Tips for Improving Landing Page Conversions

Michelle Berdeal

Compelling pay-per-click (PPC) ads drive traffic to your site. However, it's the PPC landing page that sells. Your ad is like a PPC hors d'oeuvre, tempting potential customers into your site. Once they land, your job is to entice them in less than 10 seconds, provide useful information and show your prospects why they should take the next step (making a purchase, filling out a form, etc.).

The three cool PPC tips below can help you experience "landing page heaven." And what could be better than improved conversions, higher conversion rates and potentially more sales?

#### **1. Drive prospects to a campaign-specific page, not your home page.**

You want potential customers clicking on your ad and hitting your site. But, you don't want them hitting your home page and not finding the information you promised them in your ad.

Prevent this from happening by driving potential customers to campaign-specific PPC landing pages, not your home page. For example, if you advertise "IT management software," then drive traffic to an "IT management software" page. If your PPC ad promises a free demo if prospects fill out a form, send traffic to a landing page with specific, compelling content and a short form. Simple, campaign-specific landing pages are an easy step all companies should take and a way to immediately increase your conversions.

#### **2. Communicate specific information your prospects desire.**

Your prospects are most likely busy. Who wants to spend valuable time looking for information? If your prospects can't find the information they are looking for on your site, chances are they will go somewhere else to find it. Is this what you want to happen?

Your PPC landing page needs to provide solid information prospects need to make an informed decision. It's not enough to list all your product features and hope for a lead/sale. You will need to literally spoon feed them the relevant benefit information they desire.

Say you are looking to purchase red running shoes. Which headline captures your attention? "Check out our latest selection of shoes in all sizes" OR "Red Running Shoes – browse through the latest brands and collections. We sell red running shoes for both men and women in all sizes." Then, you have to entice your prospects even further by giving them photos of red running shoes and drive them to purchase a pair in their size TODAY! You could even offer free shipping or 20% off a purchase that same day.

See the difference a few specific details make? Transforming specific details into tangible benefits will increase your conversions.

### 3. Test, test and did we mention, test again?

Prospects can surprise you. The stellar PPC landing page copy you spent hours writing can get few click-thrus. But, changing the headline, call to action or adding a few testimonials can have a dramatic positive impact on clicks-thrus and the number of forms being filled out. Test different variations of your landing pages, carefully measuring conversion rates. After all, it's all about testing to see what works and what doesn't work! Consider these PPC landing page best practice tips in your testing:

- ✓ Offer top left to lower right flow of information.
- ✓ Bold the headline and keep it laser-focused.
- ✓ Personalize the message as much as possible to your visitor.
- ✓ Keep the landing page simple, clean and focused. Remember, less is more.
- ✓ Allow at least one month to measure test results.
- ✓ Revise landing pages based on results and keep testing.
- ✓ Test 1-2 variables at a time. Testing too many at one time can make it hard to tell which changes are affecting results.
- ✓ Keep accurate tracking records.
- ✓ Remember that what worked 6 months ago may not work as well today. Keep testing.

As with all aspects of search marketing, PPC landing page testing requires planning, attention to detail and a fair amount of analytical scrutiny, not to mention time and patience to measure results. But when it's done effectively, landing page testing and optimization can provide good ROI (return on Internet).

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## Partner Corner...

### The Top 10 PPC Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make

Erin Colbert, Hubspot Inbound Marketing Consultant



I've worked with hundreds of B2B marketers running paid search campaigns for their businesses. The immediate gratification of PPC can be quite tempting, even for an inbound marketer, but it's tough to get it right. Recently I've seen an influx of frantic marketers saying their boss has pulled the "recession card" and want them to cut PPC spending in half. What do they do? They call me begging and pleading for a way to stop the bleeding.

We open up their account, and 9 times out of 10, I find the same thing...they haven't covered the basics. So, here they are: The top 10 mistakes B2B marketers make when running their own paid search campaigns.

## **1. No landing pages**

Unless you are getting paid for traffic to your website, your PPC efforts should be focused on driving more leads. Stop wasting money sending people to your home page! The number one mistake I see marketers make is sending visitors to their home page instead of creating a custom landing page for each of their ads. How can you expect to convert traffic if the user has to click down 3 levels before they even get to the offer that enticed them to click your ad in the first place?

## **2. No conversion tracking**

Now that we've established you're looking to drive leads, make sure you're actually tracking the leads that result from your paid search campaign. Marketers should not rest on click through rates (CTR) alone. How many leads resulted from those clicks, and how much did you have to spend to obtain each one?

## **3. All broad match keywords**

Google has sustained a multi-billion dollar company on AdWords profits, so it's easy to see why they make it so simple to launch your campaigns and pick the keywords to target. Funny that the broad match keywords – those that allow Google to show your ad for any search term they deem relevant – are the default. As a best practice, launch your keywords with all 3 match types – broad, phrase, and exact match – so you can get a true picture of how well that keyword is performing.

## **4. Too many keywords in each ad group**

If content is king of organic search, then micro-segmentation is king of paid search. The more targeted your keywords are to your ad copy and landing page (a la quality score), the less you're going to pay for those clicks. If you have 100 different keywords in your ad group, how targeted can your ads really be? Break them up into multiple ad groups, the smaller the better. As a good rule of thumb, try to raise the relevance of your ads to the people who see them by limiting yourself to 10 to 15 relevant keywords per ad group.

## **5. Poor quality scores**

Now that you have more ad groups with fewer keywords, start to customize your ad copy and landing pages to improve your quality score. Your keywords should be relevant and included in the ad copy and landing page. Google provides a list of their landing page guidelines that are measured by three factors: (1) relevant and original content, (2) transparency, and (3) navigability. And if that confused you as much as it did me, stick to optimizing your landing pages as you would if you were performing on-page SEO for your website (i.e., page title, H1 header, URL, meta data).

Not sure how to find your quality score? Click on the "customize column" and then "show quality score" from the keyword tab on your ad group.

## **6. Only running one ad**

Copywriting is a tough skill to master. If you're running your own paid search campaign, test out various ads to see what works well for your audience. Try dynamic keyword insertion in the headline or switching up the call to action. Be sure to select "show better performing ads over time" to determine which ones are working for you.

## **7. Running the same keywords in multiple ad groups**

Hello! Did you not know that this is an auction? That's why they call it bidding. Putting the same keyword into multiple ad groups is like bidding against yourself, especially when you've bid different amounts for each keyword.

## **8. No content network placements**

If you're new to paid search, don't run your ads on the content network. Just don't do it. But, if you're going to do it, at least set up placement targeting so your ad for a luxury corporate retreat doesn't show up on the financial services website.

## **9. Worldwide geographic targeting**

I know it's nice to think that you could sell your product anywhere in the world, but unless you actually do, turn off worldwide targeting. Even if you sell nationwide, create custom ad groups for specific regions, states or cities to better target your ads and improve the quality score. Remember, micro-segmentation is king.

## **10. Not pausing under-performing keywords**

Now that all of your campaigns are launched and Google's happily helping you spend your budget, start to optimize your performance. The reason we launched all of those keywords in the three match types is so we could see which ones performed the best. The ones with low CTRs, conversion rates, or quality scores should be paused. Of course, we need to be somewhat statistically relevant, so make sure you've received a few thousand impressions before deciding which ones get the axe.

Looking for more advanced PPC tips? Check out this webinar on getting the most out of pay per click marketing.

## Results in Motion...

### **Attorney 2.0: Brent Britton, ESQ (an excerpted story from Bernie's forthcoming book)**

Bernie Borges



I have witnessed firsthand the Marketing 2.0 style of a hip attorney named Brent Britton. I asked him to summarize his marketing strategy for my book. When I received his email I decided to publish it to give you insight into his personality and marketing style. Clearly Mr. Britton understands the power of personal branding. Google his name and you'll find several links to him on the social web.

Below is Mr. Britton's first-hand account of his Marketing 2.0 strategy that has helped him create so many successful business relationships both online and offline:

"I am a lawyer running a very busy technology law practice. I use the Internet to connect with my current and future clients and instill in them the necessary confidence that I am the right lawyer for all of their legal needs. I do this with my web bio, emails, and direct messages of various types, as I have done continuously since I first began using the Internet in the early 1980s.

More recently, however, I have been able to imbue my business development efforts with unprecedented breadth and scope using some of the new social networking tools, including my pages on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and with my blog and my podcast.

Few business people hire lawyers they do not know personally. Clients almost always hire a lawyer based on some history of personal contact; hence the adage, "Clients hire lawyers, not law firms." In most cases, a law firm's brand is largely meaningless. Unless the attorneys that the firm is named after are hanging out in the lobby serving cocoa, they are absolutely irrelevant to my clients and me. My personal brand is far more important. And my personal brand is the aggregation of every interaction I have with my current and future clients.

In this business, networking rocks the house. Successful lawyers have always been great social networkers. The new tools available on the Internet today just make that process much easier and more efficient, for those who are willing to adapt their client development strategies accordingly. Those who are unwilling to adapt will, as in nature, undergo attenuation in their capacity for survival. If you're not on the net, you have no brand. You do not exist.

In the past, to build my personal brand equity, I had to meet the vast majority of new clients face to face and impress them in that context, often on the spot. Turns out I'm pretty good at that, but no one gets a slam-dunk every time. Perhaps they would hear me speak at a conference or read a magazine article I wrote, but there was little else they could

do to learn about me or get inside my head short of meeting me and spending time with me in person. And my bandwidth for that has been and always will be, regrettably, quite limited.

Social networking tools have increased my networking bandwidth substantially. The power of these technologies is in how they increase the power and reach of my brand. My future clients can now time shift how they learn about me and discover how I think in a manner that is completely untethered from scheduling conflicts.

Here's what I do when I am communicating with current and potential clients:

1. I assume everyone is a potential client if they aren't a current one. Every caller, every emailer, every reader of every Tweet.
2. I always answer emails and phone calls on the same day.
3. I always answer text messages as soon as I see them.
4. I write/post/communicate with as high a level of authenticity as I can possibly muster. Nothing, absolutely nothing, will ruin you and your reputation on the net faster than dishonesty. And the truth always comes out. Everything is on the record and the record will be preserved and studied. On the net, dishonesty is a big fat CFIT<sup>1</sup>.
5. I Tweet once or twice daily, on average. I try to keep my Twitter presence relatively constant, though I do experience highs & lows. I try to mix my Tweets about 50/50 about the law versus about other things, even just silly puns. LinkedIn is my resume; Twitter is my personality.
6. I autodirect my Tweets to update my Facebook status. Lots of people who do not use Twitter read me on FB.
7. I join LinkedIn groups and participate in the conversations, especially answering substantive legal questions.
8. I try to blog every Monday morning, usually about entrepreneurship. If I do not have time to compose something thoughtful, interesting, or at least entertaining, I do not try to phone it in. The minute your blog gets boring, no one comes back. It's got to be great every time.
9. I accept nearly every Facebook friend request and I follow back nearly every Twitter follower.
10. I honor requests from other sites like Plaxo, but I do not actively participate in these communities.
11. I am fortunate to co-host a radio show that gets posted as a podcast on iTunes. I am also working on others."

I am Brent C.J. Britton  
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<sup>1</sup> CFIT definition: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controlled\\_flight\\_into\\_terrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controlled_flight_into_terrain)