

\$ALES \$EN\$E - April 2003 - from BaerMarketing.Net

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from BaerMarketing.net, representing Thomas Regional
(see further description of BaerMarketing.net at bottom)

This month's sales advice:

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Be sure to read them all!

PERSISTENCE PAYS!

80% of all sales are made on the fifth call... but only 10% of all sales people call beyond three times! If you believe in your product then be persistent!

Buyers won't commit for many reasons. Some are afraid to say "no". Some are afraid to say "yes". Some don't really have the authority to say "yes" even though they pretend they do. Some have legitimate reasons such as budget timetables or project timetables. Some have hidden objections that you need to uncover. Sometimes there is another decision maker or influencer hiding in the wings. You have to find out why they're delaying!

Find out who all of the players are. You can't simply ask the person you're talking to if they are the decision maker. They'll almost always say they are. They want to feel important and if they're involved in the decision at all, they'll say that they are "the" decision maker. If they have the power to say "no", they will usually still say that they are the decision maker, even if they don't have the power to say "yes" to your offer.

So it is critical to find out all of the players before you spin your wheels with a person who doesn't have the authority to commit to you and your product. Using my research links at BaerMarketing.net, you can dig up additional names. I can help you with additional names at a company. Then be very specific and pointed with questions. Ask the prospect, "who is Bob Smith?" "What is his role at your company?" "Is he involved in this decision?" "What would he like about this proposal?" "What would his concerns be?" "When can we get all of us together?" "What is his extension?" "When is the best time to reach him?" "Can I call him directly?" "How are these decisions made at your company?" With persistent questioning, you'll find out who the players are and how their decisions are made. Plus, the prospect will probably be impressed that you know a lot about his company.

Be persistent! When a prospect tells me repeatedly that they haven't made a decision yet, I'll say something like "I don't want to be a pest, but I do want to stay in touch." I've even said to prospects, "Please tell me 'No", and I'll quit bugging you." Either way, you usually find out if you're still in the ballgame. The prospect will give you a time to call back. Then do it! Plus, my motto is "A 'no' never really means 'no'...it just means not right now." Or course, one of my colleagues in my old territory in Rochester New York changed that motto to "A 'no' never means 'no' until they get a restraining order." This is the attitude you have to have if you want to be successful at selling! Be Persistent!

INVEST IN YOUR INVESTMENT!

72% of all leads are never followed up! This information from Thomas Publishing surveys shows that we all drop the ball! So invest in your investment and follow-up on leads! Most won't work out. But it usually takes just a few good leads for your investment to pay off! Sales is all a numbers game. You have to play the game if you want to win! The only way to find out which leads will work is to aggressively go after them!

OVERTURE - PAY PER CLICK SEARCH ENGINE - Weeding Out Smaller Advertisers

(Source: By Stefanie Olsen, Staff Writer, CNET News.com, February 7, 2003, 12:00 PM PT)

"In an anticipated move, Overture Services doubled its U.S. minimum bid price for advertising placement in Web search results...The pay-for-performance ad company raised its minimum bid price from 5 cents to 10 cents [per click]..."

By upping its minimum bid price, the company may be helping to weed out smaller advertisers that are deadweight to its network, industry executives say. The company last raised its bid price little more than a year ago, from 1 cent to 5 cents."

Brian's Note: Formerly known as GoTo, Overture is a "paid placement" service where sites are ranked based on how much they are willing to pay per click. Overture search results feed the top position paid placements on Yahoo, Altavista, alltheweb, iwon, MSN, and Lycos.

A minimum bid of 10 cents per click doesn't sound like much, but there are many other factors to consider. First of all, you have to consider your time. Who will monitor your Overture ranking and how often will they check it to assure you remain at the top of your keywords. Secondly, are you even bidding on worthwhile keywords? It is easy to get to the top of a term that nobody searches. But how much will it cost to get to the top of your most important and competitive keywords?

Additionally, you need to estimate the cost of acquiring a new customer with pay per click. Can you even track it? If you can track it, then how many clicks-thru's result in a sustained search on your site, as evidenced by increased time spent on your site, different entry and exit pages, and page views per visit? Have all of these stats improved since you started a pay per click advertising campaign? Have unique visitors gone up as well as repeat visitors? So if a percentage of click thru's result in a sustained search, how many searches result in a

customer contacting you? Then, how many contacts result in an order? How many orders does it take to break even on your pay-per-click budget, after factoring in your margin?

So it's not quite as simple as "wow, only 10 cents per click!" But don't let me mislead you. It can work! Like anything else, there are no free rides! Your return is proportionate to the effort and dollars you invest. If you invest in a serious, sustained, and well managed pay-per-click effort, it can work! But it can be expensive, time-consuming, and challenging. If you're up to the challenge in addition to all of your other responsibilities and in addition to the effort you should be investing in following-up on Thomas Regional leads, then go for it!

8 CRITICAL SECONDS

When a prospect visits your website, you have only 5-8 seconds to capture their interest and their attention. Among industrial buyers, it is critical to give relevant information immediately! Look at your website. Have others look at your website. Will you pass the test? Will a visitor be intrigued enough to want to dig in further? If they are intrigued, will it be easy for them to navigate forward and backward thru your site? Will it be easy for them to find what they need? Will it be easy for them to place an order or for them to find your contact information? Will your site pass the test?

Please let me know if you'd like me to do a 15 point evaluation on your website.

SEARCH ENGINES & YOUR WEB SITE

Among search engine spiders, it is essential to give word content immediately on your front page!

Search Engines send out "spiders" to crawl the web. "Spiders" are automated programs that follow links from one site to the next to find new or updated content to register in their databases and make available to the public for searches. Spiders recognize text, not pictures! They do not recognize fancy graphics, flash presentations, splash pages, etc. Spiders want content! So do industrial buyers!

When a spider crawls your website, it is looking for keywords, key word relevancy, keyword density, keyword placement, keywords in your title tags, and links! If it doesn't find these, your site will be passed over or ranked low.

So, make sure your title tags are relevant. They should include 4-5 keywords about the content of that particular page and then your company name. Make sure your keywords are repeated a 4-8 times in the text on that page. Of course, for the user's sake, these keywords must be worked into a coherent and meaningful structure so the site is informative and user friendly. And try to fit this at the top of the page; don't bury it at the bottom beneath a bunch of graphics. When a spider finds this, your page will be indexed.

Next, the spider will follow your links within your site that appear on your front page. So you need to make sure that every page follows those same rules so that every page can be

indexed on the search engines! (Next month: How to avoid “spamming” the search engines with too many keywords.)

LINK IMPORTANCE

One way that search engines rank listings is by analyzing the importance of site as measured by the number of other sites that are found linking to it! How many other sites link to your website? To achieve higher link status, you have to actively pursue and manage your link program. Go to every vendor from whom you buy anything and ask them to set up reciprocal links with your site. Go to every trade organization to which you belong and ask for reciprocal links. Go to your local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations and ask for reciprocal links. Go to your customers and ask to set up reciprocal links. And for very qualified traffic setup a Weblink program with ThomasRegional.com!

MONTHLY SUBMISSIONS

They don't really matter any more! Content and Links are now king (see above)! Most sites have gone to paid listings for priority positioning. You can still make submissions, but I don't recommend spending much money on it. If your content, structure, and links aren't good, submissions won't help you much anyway. In today's competitive internet world, the only way to really get found is to pay for positioning, to partner with relevant sites such as ThomasRegional.com, and to set up reciprocal links with relevant businesses and associations.

WHAT NOW? MAXIMIZING YOUR WEBSITE AS A SALES & MARKETING TOOL!

Does it all sound rather complex? It is! The world of search engines is constantly changing as they battle amongst each other for supremacy. Their criteria for ranking constantly changes. Their alliances constantly change as do their arrangements for which search engines feed results to which search engines (ask me for a copy of a search engine relationship chart).

How much time do you spend and can you spend managing your website and getting your site found? How many people can you dedicate to this task? How much money can you allocate towards improving your website and getting found? You probably already wear many different hats within your company and have plenty of other pressing responsibilities. And believe me, you can't leave this up to techies alone! Your website is a marketing tool so it needs to be managed by sales and marketing! Are these additional tasks really something you can fully tackle?

Let Thomas Regional help you! We can help you build and manage a well designed website optimized for search engines and for usability by your prospects! We can help drive qualified traffic to your website! We have a dedicated staff who specialize only in search engines and another staff specifically for website design and maintenance! We have the resources of a large company to achieve paid search engine placement, to manage and monitor the search

engine placement of hundreds of Thomas Regional websites with one single result in mind; gathering qualified traffic of industrial buyers and driving them to your website!

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BaerMarketing.Net represents the Thomas Regional Industrial Buying Guides and ThomasRegional.com (a part of Thomas Publishing/Thomas Register). We help connect manufacturers and MRO companies in North Carolina with their target customers. We offer comprehensive marketing solutions and lead generation programs for manufacturers and for any company selling to the manufacturing or MRO marketplace.

BaerMarketing.net also offers complimentary marketing services such as websites and internet marketing, eCatalogs and online order taking solutions, online RFQ bidding for industrial buyers and sellers, direct mail, logo design, telecommunication solutions, and lead research and follow-up training.

Additionally, BaerMarketing.Net will partner with local and regional industrial development and economic development groups to conduct marketing/business promotion seminars for existing industries and businesses.

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