

ARE YOU MAKING THESE COMMON ONLINE BUSINESS MISTAKES?



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Introduction

Everyone makes mistakes. You wouldn't be human if you didn't. In the world of online marketing, you're going to make some minor boo-boos and some cataclysmic errors. Call it a part of the learning process. Although mistakes are going to happen, wouldn't it be nice if you could avoid common pitfalls that other marketers have made in the past? You can do exactly that by checking out the following internet marketing missteps.

The false moves and slipups that even veteran online entrepreneurs and bloggers make are listed below grouped according to categories.

Any time you are about to write a blog post, design a website or otherwise engage in some type of Internet marketing endeavor, check the relevant category.

Don't just assume a course of action you are about to take is going to be error-free and perfect. Sometimes failures lead to big successes, but when you can avoid making marketing mistakes from the start, you can save a lot of time and money.

Let's get started by looking at some common errors bloggers, entrepreneurs and other Internet marketers make when designing a website.

Website and Blog Design Mistakes

Not Making Your Site Mobile Friendly

It seems like everyone has a smartphone these days. That makes sense, because research shows that more people spend time on a mobile device when accessing the Internet than on a traditional desktop or laptop computer. This means that people will be interacting with your blog or website on a relatively small display. Whether you build your own web property or have someone else do it for you, make sure it is responsive.

Responsive is a web design term that means the software used to build your website automatically responds to the size of a display it is viewed on. A responsive blog or site will instantly change its appearance so it looks good whether someone views it from a small smartphone screen, a large desk monitor, a 10-inch tablet or 15.6-inch laptop screen. Ignore the massive mobile audience to your own peril.



Making Your Blog or Website Too "Busy"

It can be easy to get carried away when you are designing your blog. Whenever you build a website for affiliate marketing purposes or to sell your information product, you may want to include everything but the kitchen sink. People are inundated with marketing messages these days.

In almost every case, a simple, minimal, clutter-free web design is the way to go. This eliminates distraction and cuts down on analysis paralysis. You should have a minimal number of options on every one of your web properties. This lets you clearly dictate the call to action you want your visitors to take and makes it quick and easy for your followers to consume your information.

Not Building an Email List

Several times in this report on common Internet marketing mistakes I'll mention the power of building a list. The first and foremost task you should prioritize when creating an online business is how you are going to generate and maintain a list of email subscribers.



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Email marketing is intimate. When you send an email out to your list, it may be going out to 5,000 subscribers. However, each person reading that email believes that you are speaking to them and them alone. This is a very powerful connection.

Place an opt-in form in the upper right corner of your home page, and every page of your website or blog. Entice someone to join your list by providing them with a valuable freebie or some other type of opt-in bribe. The best time to start building an email list was yesterday, and the second-best time is today. If you have not been actively growing and interacting with your email list, start today.

Ignoring the Power of Apps

Did you know that 90% of the time people access the web from a mobile device they do so through an app? Apps are collections of software or code that perform specific functions. Creating apps to represent your blog, your products or yourself is important, because applications must be downloaded to a computer, tablet or phone before they are used.

This means a person will have a dedicated icon reminding them of your application anytime they use their Internet enabled devices. If you simply have a website or blog and no app, there is no constant reminder that improves the odds that someone will read your content or buy your products. Offer your app on your website and make it easy to download.

Blogging and Writing Mistakes

Not Blogging or Writing Frequently

Let's pretend you and your number one competitor have the exact same web theme and design. You're marketing to the same audience, your products are virtually identical, and everything about how the two of you do business is pretty much the same. Now let's pretend your twin enemy sends out 2 emails to her list every week, publishes one lengthy and valuable blog post on a weekly basis, and is always on social media.

In comparison, you publish one blog post a month and rarely reach out to your audience through email or social media. Guess which one of these imaginary marketers is going to be more successful?

You definitely need to be writing and publishing content to the web regularly. When you do so on a set schedule, your audience knows when to expect you will be interacting with them. However, don't just publish anything. Everything you write should be valuable in some way to your target market.



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Speaking to a Group Rather Than an Individual

Sometimes when you write, you think about the marketplace you are serving. It is easy to think about groups of people rather than an individual when you write. This is a serious mistake. Groups of people do not read your content online. Groups of "individuals" consume what you read.

When writing, pretend you're talking to someone across a coffee table, a friend of a good friend. Use casual conversation and write as if you're trying to share your content with a single person rather than a group, and traffic, conversions, sales and profits will improve.

Writing Long Sentences and Long Paragraphs

The average web surfer reads on a 6th or 7th grade reading level. That means you should write so that most 11, 12 and 13-year-old kids can understand what you are writing.

This means making your content easy to digest. Long sentences and long paragraphs not only convolute what you are trying to say, but they are also boring and tedious.

Paragraphs should usually not be more than 3 to 5 sentences long. Of course, there are going to be exceptions. When you can use a shorter word to convey the same meaning as a longer word, do so. People are all about brevity online, and this means short, to the point sentences, paragraphs and pieces of content.

Adding Unnecessary Fluff

A good copywriter will tell you that every piece of content you write shouldn't be a single word longer than it needs to be. This means removing fluff and unnecessary content from the blog posts, articles, sales pages and press releases you write. It's a shame, but people in the 21st century don't like to read as much as pre-Internet human beings.

As a matter of fact, people now spend more time online watching videos than they do reading text-based content. Accordingly, what you write needs to be of high-value, and it needs to hold your audience's attention. This means each and every time you sit down to write, you need to get to the point as quickly as possible, and eliminate fluff and unnecessary text. If you do, your readers will thank you with loyalty, return visits to your website, and more sales and profits.

Not Making Your Content Scannable

You should be using sub-headers and bullet points when you write. People like to scan when they are deciding if they're going to invest time and energy reading what you wrote. Sub-headers act as miniature headlines, telling your prospective readers exactly what that section of content is about. They also help get you free traffic when you include keywords and phrases relative to the content you are sharing.

Bullet points do the same thing. People love lists. When your lists are bulleted, they are easy to understand. Bullet points, headers, sub-headers and similar formatting tools help break up your content and greatly increase the chances that a visitor to your website is going to read everything you wrote.



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Big Blunders That Can Make Your Online Course or Information Product a Flop

Waiting for Perfection before Publishing/Launching

Internet marketing veterans will tell you to create an MVP when you're designing an online course or information product. MVP stands for minimally viable product. That means as soon as your creation is "good enough", get it out there. If you strive for perfection before launching your course or information product, you'll never get there.

Building a Course or Creating a Product without Knowing If Anybody Wants It

Just because you're passionate about something or think it's a great idea and needs to become an information product you can sell, the world will not necessarily beat a path to your door to purchase it.

Keyword research and market research absolutely must happen before you sit down to create an online course or develop an information product. See what your audience wants, and then give it to them.

The Worst Affiliate Marketing Mistakes

Not Building an Email List (Yes, I'm Harping on This Subject Again)

This mistake was mentioned earlier when we talked about building your web properties. We'll spend a lot of time here, except to remind you that if you're not building and interacting with an email list, there's pretty much no reason to be an affiliate marketer.



Relying on Free, Generic Search Engine Traffic

The best way to guarantee that you'll get people to your affiliate offers is to pay for traffic. If you only cross your fingers and hope Google and the other search engines will send you plenty of free traffic, people that are perfect for your offer, you're not taking control of the situation. There are plenty of paid advertising choices online. Experiment with a few, stick to those that convert the best, and your affiliate marketing career will be more successful.

Selling Instead of Helping

Affiliate marketers are in the business of selling other people's products and services. Then the affiliate marketer gets a piece of each sale, a commission. So you can be forgiven if you're constantly thinking about sales, sales, sales. However, when you first strive to solve problems and answer questions in the minds of your audience, those much-needed sales will take care of themselves.

Build a blog and start posting valuable content regularly. Don't ask for the sale all of the time. At least half of the content you post as an affiliate marketer should be geared towards establishing trust with your audience. You do this by helping them. It's okay to ask for a sale every now and then, but you should also be actively assisting your audience in an attempt to help them improve their quality of living.

Email Marketing Mistakes to Avoid

Not Including a Call to Action in Your Emails

Every time you reach out to your audience you need to give your prospects a call to action. The CTA is so important because without it, what's the point in marketing your business online? When telling your email subscribers what you want them to do, be direct.



Tell them exactly and precisely what step or steps to take to achieve the intended result, and only include one call to action per email. You don't want to confuse your list subscribers by offering a bunch of choices. Your messages get watered down, and a lot of the time, your email reader winds up doing nothing at all.

Even if you're just reaching out to convey a piece of news or deliver a piece of information, do so in such a way that a CTA is a natural part of the conversation. You can use these email marching orders to drive traffic to your website or blog, build a social media presence, or sell products and services that improve your bottom line.

Forgetting That Email Is a "Short Form" of Communication

Emails should be short and to the point. They should also be a little less formal than some other forms of communication. The HubSpot blog reports that data taken from 40 million emails shows emails of less than 200 words were more effective than longer emails.

If you can keep your word count to somewhere between 50 and 125 words, all the better, because that length performs the best.

Remember that you're speaking to someone in a personal, one-on-one basis. When someone decides to open your email, they feel like they are enjoying a face-to-face encounter. This means a casual conversation, and not a lengthy one. In some cases it may be necessary for you to write emails of 200 or 300 or more words. When that can't be avoided, don't worry about it as long as it is just an occasional situation now and then. If your email runs more than 300 to 400 words, consider making a blog post or article and just send a link to it in a short email.

Deciding Not to Use Pop-Ups

It's no great mystery that people either ignore or hate pop-up advertisements. You probably hate them yourself, or would at least prefer to do without them when you're surfing the web. Guess what? Even though everyone you ask will tell you they despise those annoying pop-up ads on websites and blogs, they work tremendously well to improve your email sign-up rate.

You should understand that the typical sign-up rate for visitors to your web property is going to be about 1%. If you're not using pop-ups, you are missing out on roughly 99 out of 100 people that you could be helping by providing valuable content to their email inbox. In study after study sign-up rates have jumped from 1% to 5% or 10% and even higher, just by adding a pop-up ad asking for someone to join your email list in return for a value-rich freebie.

Emailing on the Wrong Day

For whatever reason, research shows that Tuesday is the best day for sending emails. It may be the fact that a great majority of people begin their workday the previous day and are trudging along at the beginning of the work week, and they need a distraction. MailChimp, HubSpot and Campaign Monitor report that engagement, conversions and sales are higher for email sent on Tuesday than any other day of the week.

If for some reason you can't reach out to your audience on a Tuesday, Thursday is the next best-performing day to hit the inboxes of your list. Wednesday is the third best day. Most of the time, emails sent on Saturday and Sunday don't perform very well.

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However, you could use this strategy to your advantage. A lot of internet marketers skip the weekends, so fewer emails are sent then. Experiment by delivering emails on the weekend and watching how they perform, and don't forget Tuesday, Thursday and Wednesday as your best days for email marketing success.

If the Day You Send Your Emails Is Important, so Is the Time

The data referred to in the last tip also revealed the best-performing timeslots during the day for Internet marketing success. While this can certainly vary from industry to industry or according to your schedule and the needs of your market, the research was pretty compelling. Across multiple markets and niches, there were definite good and bad times of the day and night to send out email.

Shooting out an email between 10AM and 11AM in the time zone of your audience produces the best results. This is probably because people have already cleaned out their email inboxes earlier in the morning, so it isn't crowded.

Oddly, between 8 PM and midnight was the second time frame where emails were effective. It seems that a lot of people like to check their email before going to bed, so if you can't hit the 10 to 11AM slot, consider saving your email for a nighttime delivery.

Don't Go Long on the Subject Line

As I mentioned earlier in this eBook, most people access the Internet from a mobile device. Email marketing gurus in the know realize that approximately 55% of all emails are now opened on a smartphone or tablet. What does this mean as far as your email subject lines go? It means to keep them short my friend.

Smaller screens mean your email subject line may be truncated if it's too long, depending on the email service provider being used. Studies show that 50 characters is about the limit you want to flirt with on your subject lines.

Any successful copywriter will tell you it's much more difficult to write short copy than long copy. This means you may have to work hard to keep to that 50 character length, but the statistics tell us it pays to do so.



Are You Making These Way-Too-Common Social Media Marketing Mistakes?

Trying to Do It All Yourself

To say that social networks like Facebook and Twitter have taken the Internet by storm is like saying Mark Zuckerberg is wealthy. It massively understates the situation. This means as a successful entrepreneur or blogger, you probably understand the need for a social media presence.

There's a good chance you already interact with prospective clients and customers through Instagram, LinkedIn and other social media networks relevant to your business goals.

As important as it is to regularly post to at least a few of the dozens of major social media sites, that doesn't mean you should be doing the posting. Freelancers on UpWork and Fiverr can handle all your social media needs for what you may find is a surprisingly low weekly or monthly price tag. You have plenty to do yourself already, so why not try hiring virtual staff members to take care of your social media marketing?



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Being Irregular

Online, being predictable is sometimes a good thing. When your audience knows that you regularly post a new recipe video on YouTube every Tuesday at noon, guess when they will be looking for you? The same is true no matter what market you're in, what social media network you're posting content on, and whether you're simply trying to share information or achieve some business goal.

There are several benefits for posting content on a regular and predictable schedule.

First off, the people that love your work know when to expect interaction. This significantly drives up shares, likes, comments and other forms of engagement. Additionally, if you post live content, which is becoming extremely popular these days, your audience will reach out to you and tell you what the best time is for them. This means you enjoy a "*shooting fish in a barrel*" scenario where you're delivering content to a captive audience that can't wait to hear what you have to say next.

Going Too Long

Social media is so named because people are hanging out on these websites to socialize. They don't want to get caught up in lengthy conversations most of the time. When they do, they will hit you in your inbox or private message you. Remember that, unfortunately, your message is going to be on a person's newsfeed for only a short amount of time. This means it doesn't pay to waste a bunch of time and effort creating long pieces of content to share on social media websites.

People scroll on Twitter and Facebook. They're looking for memorable and engaging content that draws their attention and blasts out a short message. This means not only should your individual pieces of social media content be short rather than long, but it also means if you post too frequently you'll become invisible. Keep your messages on social media short, make sure your headlines grab attention and hold it, and include a call to action, which is our next social media marketing mistake to avoid.

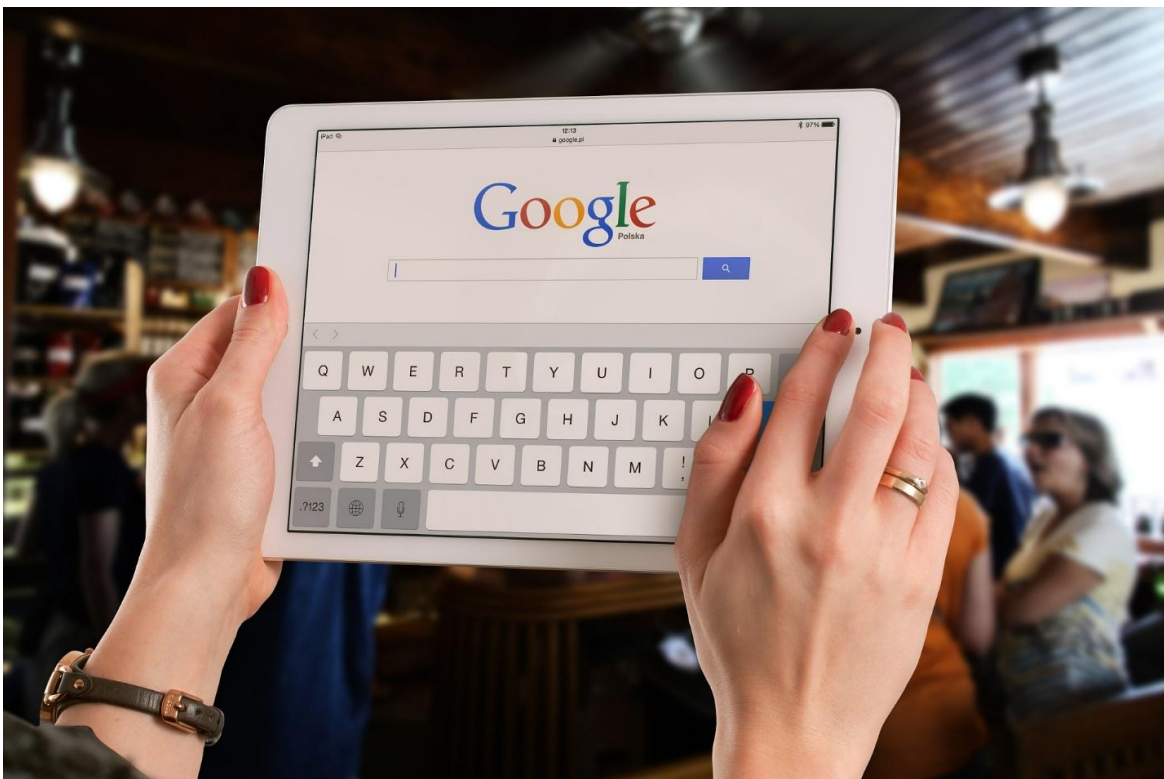
Don't Forget to Include a Call to Action

This is a little tricky, because people spend time on social media networks to socialize. This means if you don't include a call to action in every one of your Facebook updates, you're to be forgiven. Just don't forget to include some directives in most of your social media communications. You can't build your email list or sell your course without making a concerted effort to do so.

Add a reward or some other incentive to your CTA to get your social media followers to do what you want them to do. This drives up your conversion rate and establishes a sense of trust with your audience.

Trying to Establish a Presence on Every Social Media Network

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are just a few of the dozens and dozens of worthwhile social media sites. This means if you try to establish and maintain an ongoing presence on all of the sites available, you simply couldn't do it. You need to experiment with multiple sites until you find one or two that reward your efforts.



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Generic Online Marketing Mistake to Remember Any Time You Are Representing Yourself or Your Business Online

If you've come this far, you probably already have a blog or website that represents you or your business.

What does that web property say about you? Do you go about business exactly like everyone else, or do you have a unique identity? The answers to those questions bring us to the last but most important tip you need to remember no matter where your Internet marketing efforts take you.

Be yourself.

It's a common mistake to want to copy others who are successful. You can do so without becoming a cookie-cutter copy that has no originality or personality. People don't purchase goods and services from companies, they purchase goods and services from people. Be yourself. Add your unique flavor or style to everything you do.

Believe it or not, your personal characteristics, traits and behaviors are in high demand. There are tons of people out there right now looking for what you have to offer, in your own special way.

You are you for a very good reason. Make that reason known. Develop a "voice" online. Be the person you were meant to be. Not only will this resonate with your audience in a good way, but it will also weed out those people who are not drawn to your particular way of sharing content with the world.

That means you end up marketing to people who know, like and respect you, and that is the prospect pool you want to be swimming in.