



How To Outsource Internet Marketing

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The Pros And Cons Of Outsourcing

Internet marketing for one website can include many different tasks, from email marketing to website development. Even if you wanted to do everything yourself, there will come a time when you realize that it will be far easier and less expensive to hire out some of the work and to outsource it to others than to do it yourself. Handing over your baby to a total stranger, however, can come with some risks. It may free up your time to do more and get more done, but you have to start slowly and build up a relationship that you can trust before you hand over the keys to your kingdom.

THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF OUTSOURCING

Outsourcing works because of the difference in wages that you pay someone else versus the value of your time to do the same task. If you've figured out that you can make \$60 to \$120 an hour marketing online, and the task you are trying to complete on a daily basis, like answering customer emails, can be outsourced for \$8/hr, you stand to profit immensely from that arrangement. The wages are so depressed in other countries that you can get virtual assistants to help with email and with other tasks for as little as \$200 a month full-time. In general, however, you get what you pay for, and you can expect that if you want English proficiency to be a part of the requirements of the job, that the wage will increase.

It's not only a question of economics, however; it's also a question of your time and how it is best utilized. You really don't want to spend your time focusing on the nitty-gritty, boring, and repetitive aspect of your websites when those don't contribute to the bottom line. You want your time going towards creating income with the time that you have available.

THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF OUTSOURCING

One of the biggest risks to outsourcing is that the job doesn't get done to your satisfaction. It's one thing to save time, but it's a complete waste of money if you aren't getting the quality of work that will keep your reputation intact online. That's why when you start to think about outsourcing, you have to focus on reputable companies and job boards or get some idea of the quality of work of an online individual first before hiring them even part-time. You don't want to hand over sensitive areas of your website to people who are incompetent or who can use it for nefarious purposes. Keep tight control of what you allow others to access and have a back door key that can lock your operation up tight should the need arise.

Research People Online

In order to gauge the level of trustworthiness of your intended outsourcer, it's best to start the relationship slowly. There is bound to be piles of work available for just the right person, but flooding them with deadlines and work when you first start out can cause major havoc before you've even established if the relationship will work out or not. If this introductory period doesn't work out, then have someone in line to test out next. At some point, you will find someone compatible who can also do the job for you at the price you want. It just may take a bit of time to locate that person.

UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

The first thing you want to do is to figure out what you want to outsource. You can outsource website design and maintenance. You can outsource social networking. You can outsource content creation. You may simply want someone to answer phone calls or emails. Whatever your needs, make sure you have a good idea what tasks need to be completed and how you will measure the time that is spent on each project. Also figure out how much you are willing to budget for the project. Once you know what you need, you can start to look for people who match those needs.

HOP ONLINE TO RESEARCH PROFILES

Depending on your needs, there will be different job boards where you can post your project online. If you are looking for virtual assistants, you will need to go to places that hire these people out. If you want a website designer, you might take a look at RentACoder.com. If you want a content writer, you might want to check out Elance.com. On each site, you will be able to post a project and to review the online profiles of the professionals who are there offering their services. Once you think that you have found a match, add them to your list of potential people who you might use for outsourcing purposes.

CONTACT THEM WITH PROJECT DETAILS

Send out private project requests to the individuals you've targeted and see if they're interested in the small project that you have to offer. Let them know that it could lead to more work if the first project is done satisfactorily. Give them a two-week trial and outline the details of the project as accurately as possible. For a writer, provide writer guidelines. For a programmer, provide a specification document for your intended application. If they do well, you can start sending them more work and then see how they do for a few

months. Hire them as independent contractors to avoid employee issues. Now, the only thing you have to worry about is keeping them busy.

Where To Get Outsourcing

There are many online sites that deal with outsourcing. People from all over the world can put up a profile and try to bid on jobs that are posted within these sites, so you aren't just limited to people in your own country. Rules differ between sites, as do the fees. You have to check each site out and decide whether you want to join and use their services or where you want to try to contact a freelancer by targeting people who don't have a profile, but show some writing skill online in other areas.

THE BIG THREE

The three most popular sites, it seems, are Elance.com, GetAFreelancer.com, and RentACoder.com. They all offer different types of freelancers. If you want someone who does obscure programming, for instance, you can get him/her at RentACoder.com. Other sites will offer programmers too, but they may not be as highly specialized. If you want a site where you can hire a virtual assistant, you can find them by Googling "virtual assistants." Many virtual assistants today can manage websites, do search engine optimization, and perform some business development tasks as well.

BUYERS CHARGED DIFFERENTLY

In general, it's free for most people who are looking for work to look for jobs. In some cases, even posting a job online is free too. However, there are sites that offer memberships at different levels that let you bid on different jobs. The sites take their fees off of each job as a percentage of the total cost of the job. Your bid may or may not include the fees to the site for their commission, and you need to be sure when you set a bid range that you take that into account. Even if you bid a specific price, it doesn't mean you'll get it. Freelancers will bid on how much it will take to complete your job, and then you can choose to award someone the job on the basis of his/her bid from all of the respondents. It's not always the best thing to hire the cheapest bidder. There are other factors involved that should be considered as well.

CHECK OUT THEIR RATINGS

Sites will post feedback on freelancers to give you some indication on whether they will perform well or not. Be sure to check out what other people have to say about them before awarding a bid. You may find that someone who has a very low bid has awful

ratings too. You want to check to see how long they've been on this board and whether they are a new profile or not. Freelancers with a longer and better track record will work better than those with questionable things in their ratings.

Website Outsourcing

As a serious Internet marketer, you most likely have more than one site, one social networking profile, and one project going on at any given time. Online, you can set up websites very quickly, but managing them can quickly become unwieldy. You don't want to spend too much of your time trying to get backlinks, writing and posting blog posts, optimizing content for SEO, or keeping track of online problems and outages. In addition, you might not want to take the time to learn HTML and a host of other Web languages, and someone else may already have taken the time to learn all of that. All you would have to do is to hire them to manage the sites for you.

LINK BUILDING

One of the best ways to get a higher Page Rank (PR) on Google that places you higher on the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) is to just get a bunch of non-reciprocal incoming links going to your site. You can do this by paying sites to post your links, adding comments to popular blogs and news areas, and listing yourself in directories. All that takes time, and it's a job that is best left to someone who is getting paid far less than you are. Outsource link building during the times when things are slow.

WEB PAGE DEVELOPMENT

This is one area where it really pays to get help. If you don't know how to set up a blog, add a membership area, or just plain update an HTML page, you can't even get started with Internet marketing! While you're learning some of those skills, you're wasting valuable time! Outsource the website development to someone else. Just find a site that you like and then list the features that you want. Give them an idea of your color scheme or choose one from the templates that they offer you to view. Once the site is done, make sure everything is in your name, from the domain name to the administrative contacts. In fact, if you don't want to go through the development phase, just look up Internet marketing forums to find people who are offering websites for sale that are already in working order! It saves tons of time, and you can have them customized quite easily.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

This is another topic that is best left to people who already know what they're doing. You can order sets of keywords from companies and outsource the creation of SEO-optimized web pages to the people who are developing your site. In other cases, you may want to hire ghostwriters to fulfill the same purpose.

Content Creation

Content creation outsourcing isn't just useful for maintaining fresh content on your site. It has many applications, including creating unique ebooks or videos to market as your own products. Too many people make the mistake of trying to save money by creating their own content online. It comes off as amateurish and can actually turn people off instead of exciting them about your website. It can also take you much more time to churn out a 50-page ebook than it would take an experienced ghostwriter.

BLOG POSTINGS

Blogs are expected to be updated frequently, but often, Internet marketers just don't have the time. Yet, a blog is an essential link between high-traffic areas that don't allow you to post commercial links and the links on your blog that go directly to your products, services, and other websites. It's important to keep those blog posts coming and to keep your audience engaged. You can set up batches of blog posts in groups of 30 or 40 to farm out to freelance writers that you hire online through outsourcing boards. Get them done the month ahead of time, and you'll know that you'll have something new and interesting to add to the site on a daily basis. Get some SEO done on them, and your site will be search-engine friendly too.

NEWSLETTERS

Sites offer newsletters, although they're not as popular as they once were. They can be a way to entice people to sign up and to register to your site. It can be a way to keep everyone who visits updated with the news of the industry that your business is in and what's happening for your business. They can include helpful tips, discount coupons, and promotional features for your customers.

EBOOKS AND REPORTS

Include freebie offers that send out reports to people who are looking for information on various topics that are related to your marketing niche. You can offer these freebie offers

to them in exchange for their signing up to your email list. Thus, the reports serve to get people into the mouth of your sales funnel.

Ebooks, on the other hand, can be marketed in a value package or by themselves. They are an infoproduct that is instantly delivered; many people will purchase an ebook that's of interest to them. They can help bring in more income and provide your customers with more in-depth information than a simple report can provide. Whereas the reports might be free, your ebooks are going to be for sale or be included in a value package as a free bonus that includes multiple types of content for sale.

Expand Your Content Creation

Have you ever wanted to put out a YouTube video, but know nothing about video production? What about getting together a CD or a print book? The more formats you offer online, the wider the audience you will reach with your informational products. In some cases, you are going to hire people to create content to generate "buzz" for your site and offerings. In other cases, you are going to have content generated to create income. Once you buy the rights to some piece of content, it's yours forever, and you can do with it as you please unless the rights you bought were limited. Here's a few ways in which you can outsource content.

HIRE A YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Go look through YouTube to see channels that might match your marketing niche. You can sponsor any channel and offer them a monthly payment for mentioning your site in their videos and for posting links back to your site. Now, you don't even have to know how to put together a video. You just have to find someone who already does that and pay them to promote your site.

CREATE WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

You can even hire people to help you set up online workshops and courses in video format or audio format, while you keep the publishing rights. That way, you can market the material as your own and make money off of it too.

GET PEOPLE TO CREATE SALES COPY

Successful Internet marketing starts with sales copy. You can get people to create effective sales pages, sales promotions, email ads, and backend offers. There is software that can help you do that as well, which is a form of outsourcing, but you do it

with technology and not with people. You can set up your sales copy way ahead of time and get it lined up to roll out long before it's time to do so.

BRIGHTEN IT UP WITH CUSTOM IMAGES

Included in newsletters, ebooks, sales pages, and websites are spaces for images. You can outsource graphic design via Elance.com and get custom-made logos, banners, buttons, and even photography for your site. Images play an integral role in triggering the emotions of a viewer; putting up an image can help you look more professional and help you sell your products and services better too.

Outsource Email

You are going to develop several email campaigns for each website. They will include tiered lists of people who belong to different demographics, typically separated into income levels. You are going to want to offer these people an opportunity to purchase your products and services at regular intervals by sending out an email to them.

THINK ABOUT AUTOMATING FUNCTIONS FIRST

Before you go out and hire someone to manually send out all of these emails, take a look at a better way. You can hire a service like AWeber.com that will automate your email campaigns in a way that makes it cost-effective. It will feel like you've hired a team of Internet marketing assistants and not like you've just signed up for an email autoresponding service. For a very low fee, you can start to automate all of your contact lists and email campaigns. After that's all done, you can set up guidelines of items you want brought to your attention and those that can keep on running indefinitely. At that point, you can hire a virtual assistant to keep track of things going on in your email campaigns and to add and remove products and email addresses as you request.

VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS FOR EMAIL MANAGEMENT

Virtual assistants are very good with dealing with emails and phone calls. They excel at these simple tasks and can really open up your day for more important things. You can get a virtual assistant to screen calls, look up emails from customers online, and add them to autoresponder lists when necessary. You can set up business processes that only bring the most important problems to your attention, while the rest of the day-to-day correspondence and email campaigns are handled by your virtual assistant.

You can have them handle your own incoming email too as you start to network with many people online. You can set up different email addresses, have them go in and read each email every day, and trash the spam email or report it. They should learn how to deal with customers and how to relay information to them as a customer service representative for the basic questions and answers that people may have.

Once they go through your email, you can have them forward the most urgent pieces to another email address so that you won't be overloaded with all kinds of issues that keep you from performing at your peak. You can then call your assistant every day at noon or whenever you want and go over the tasks, issues, and escalated problems that might remain undone or that need your immediate attention. This is one way to manage the time you spend on your email, both with private and with business email campaigns.

Outsource Social Networking Tasks

Every online business should have several social networking profiles up to gain more exposure. Unfortunately, it takes time to post social networking profiles and then to target users to either befriend or follow. When you have a new release of a product or service, you will also want to notify all of your social networking friends. You will post status updates, network with other people online, and read emails on each of these sites to see who's in your network and what you can do for them, and vice-versa. Sounds exhausting, doesn't it? Well, it's actually very fun, but as a focused business owner, it can take too much time out of your day that can be used to generate income somewhere else. That's why you have several choices to outsource this. One, you can get automation software that does much of the posting, befriending, and following, but someone still has to check in once in a while to see how that's working out. Two, you hire a personal assistant to track the results of your automated campaign and also to tweak it. If they can't figure out how to make it work to create more interest in your profiles, your only other option, and it's a good one, is to hire a social media guru or company and outsource that function too.

SO MANY TOOLS!

For automating Twitter, there are a ton of products that can do the job, including SocialOomph.com and Tweetadder.com. Some make you pay monthly installments, while others have you pay once and download to use. You have to set up and schedule tweets; this way, you can have a list of promotions and just get someone else to add them in, or you can choose to do them yourself. Then, the problem arises of how you can also post them to other social networking sites, such as Facebook, at the same time? You'll have to get involved with other tools that are free, like Ping.fm, to start posting things to all of your social network sites at once.

YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT TWEETS

Instead of scheduling tweets and Facebook updates, you can have that be part of the tasks that you assign to your personal assistant. Not only will he/she have great fun at his/her job, but you'll be gaining valuable exposure for your products and services. You do need to have a list of links that you want to promote, and he/she should use a URL shortener so that the assistant can track the efficiency of his or her work and can modify it. Once he/she gets the hang of setting up profiles, managing social network accounts, and posting status updates, you will be able to put your attention elsewhere, but can still track the effectiveness of this activity through the URL shortener statistics.

Outsource To Social Media Experts

It's a lot easier to find qualified social media experts than you think. There are companies out there that can set up profiles, write articles, generate buzz, and track the effectiveness of your social media campaigns. They probably even do SEO too. Just be sure to go with someone who has proven results. Take a look at how many followers they've managed to generate on Twitter. See how many friends they have on Facebook. Ask them what types of techniques they plan on using and what results you can expect.

THEIR ONLINE CREDENTIALS

Check out their online credentials long before you hire them. What are other people saying about them? Do they have more than 200 friends on Facebook? Any serious marketer should have at least 2,000 followers on Twitter, and that is a very conservative number. The company should employ a good plan to help you get exposure online, including the types of tools they plan on using, whether you'll need to license them later on, and how many followers they expect you to have in a given month.

MAKE SURE THEY TARGET THEIR CAMPAIGN

It's not all about the numbers, but also about the quality of the people befriending or following you. If your niche is all about pets, do you want people on your list who can't stand them or have nothing to do with pets? Probably not. It's a waste of time just to pick up followers or friends who aren't going to be interested in buying your products if that's why you're on these sites in the first place. Any social media guru will have techniques to grab targeted followers as the majority of your audience.

ASK THEM TO MONETIZE YOUR ACCOUNTS

There's no reason why you can't find ways to make income with your social networking sites. The social media gurus have done it, and they should be able to provide information and products that will do the same for you. You may have to buy things from them to promote and may have to join memberships, but this should pay you back when you create a whole new income stream from these sites, and you're not even posting to them yourself. Once you have a couple thousand followers on Twitter, you should start seeing streams of traffic coming back through each tweet you send out. It should be easier to update people and to promote your products, and much of that you won't have to do yourself if you just hire the right social media expert to get you started.

Outsource Analytics

Everything you do online should be easily traced and reported. When you run several affiliate campaigns, you will generate reports on each one as to what products are doing best and why. You can have that information compiled into reports that tell you exactly what's going on with your sites. What you want to do as the manager of all of these online enterprises is to have all of the necessary analytics of all of your online actions so you can tweak the system here and there to create better exposure and gain more profits. You can hire experts to do that or have your personal assistant gather that information for you, and you can try and review it. Either way, it's best to outsource some part of this function of Internet marketing.

SET UP A SYSTEM

You should be tracking traffic, conversions, and marketing efficiency and having monthly reports to look at that give you a bird's eye view of your online performance. Some of these statistics show up in different places, such as in the Control Panel of your website, with each one holding their own unique statistics. Affiliate program performance is going to be available within the network that is offering those links. If you are a member of multiple affiliate networks, those stats will be all over the Web too. Have a way to centralize all of your information so that when it comes time to look at it, it will make sense, and you will know what's working and what isn't.

GET TESTING COMPANIES

Hire companies to analyze your Web performance and to give you advice on how to make it more profitable. Hire companies that know how to implement split testing in your advertising so that they can provide feedback on what types of advertising are working on your site and what types aren't. Keep track of the links that have gone out in your email campaigns, your newsletter, your social networking activities, and your ebooks. Which ones are generating income? Which are generating views or click-throughs? Track that information, get rid of underperforming products and ads, and replace them with something new. Repeat promotions that were really successful, unless they were limited time offers or limited quantity offers.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO DELEGATE

All in all, don't be afraid to delegate tasks that may prove to be cumbersome over time. The cost of outsourcing a particular function can quickly pay you back in additional time to generate marketing campaigns that directly add to your income revenue streams. By taking the time to network with people who have talents other than your own, you learn at a much quicker pace, and you get up to speed faster. You don't just build one website; when you outsource, you start to build a business empire. Just be sure to keep all of your taxes and file requirements up-to-date and in order. Heck, why not hire an accountant when the time comes for that?