

## The Three Pillars of Successful Online Marketing

Regardless of what you sell, there are three fundamental pillars of success in the online marketplace. You'll need all three to grow your business, or like a stool with only two legs, over you will go. Here they are in order of priority:

### 1. Target Your Niche

Niche marketing is an essential element of your Internet success. You must present your offer to your true prospects - those individuals who already have a genuine interest in what you have to offer.

The good news is that once you've carefully defined your target market online they can easily be found. Subscribe to your market's newsletters, join their discussion lists and forums, frequent their sites and become a 'presence'.

More and more, niche marketing is the key to online success (symptomatic of this are the latest 'theme indexing' practices of the search engines). Become a working expert in your niche market, and people will navigate the vastness of the Internet to seek you out.

Most important of all, know the 'hunger' your niche market feels. Your profitable job is to give them what they need.

### 2. Measure Your Results

You must know what marketing works, and what marketing needs work. Many Web businesses don't calculate this basic information, and take an unfocused 'shotgun' approach by trying to do as much of everything as they can. This approach is a waste of resources, and just plain poor business.

It is key to separate the unprofitable tactics from the profitable. Then, invest in and roll out the profitable tactics in a bigger way.

For example, before launching an affiliate program you must know that your site 'works' to generate a reasonable conversion rate. According to expert Marlon Sanders, you only need a visitor to sales ratio of 1-3%.

Which clearly states that volume is critical to your success, so the big question is: "Do you know exactly how to bring people to your site?"

You have to know what works before you can grow your business.

### 3. Expand Through Leverage

Your strength will come in numbers, so be fruitful and multiply. This third step can only come after the first two pillars of your business are rock-solid.

You want 'buzz' to take place about you and your Web business. This is the concept of viral marketing: your information spreads across the Internet like a virus. There are four key ways to make this happen.

**a. Strategic Alliances / Joint Ventures**

Find online business owners, e zine publishers, forum administrators, discussion list moderators and online associations that serve your market and logically fit with your own business. Work with them. Be generous.

**b. Affiliate / Associate Program**

Set up your own affiliate program. Offer your virtual sales team all the support and tools they need to succeed, and pay them well. Loyalty breeds 'buzz'. Make this happen.

**c. A Site Linkage Campaign**

Find Web sites that fit well with your own business, product line and services. Reciprocate this relationship. Be willing.

**d. Articles and Site Content**

Generate articles. Deliver them to publishers of ezines reaching your target audience. Market through your sig file. Add this content to your site. Get recognized. Give without counting the cost.

Whatever changes are in store for Internet business, these pillars of success are fundamental and will serve you well.