

Data drive

Innovative offers, targeted advertising and an email database led to spectacular results for one golf venue, as **Sweta Patel** reports

Why are some people able to make millions with internet marketing and others think it is just a waste of money?

Having studied marketing and worked for a large PR agency, recently I started consulting for a large American golf course that was hoping to attract more visitors.

I analysed the resort's online marketing strategy and it became clear that it could be more efficient. For example, it was spending a tremendous amount of money on pay-per-click marketing, but it wasn't bringing about a very cost-effective return. The CPA (cost per acquisition) was more than £250, and the cost of a golf club membership was about £450. Furthermore, its social media activity was run down and had absolutely no influence.

I suggested switching it up and using email marketing instead. The club already had created a database of buyers, but it never really did anything with it. Why not reward loyal customers with an email marketing campaign and a VIP event? This is where a new marketing process came in.

First of all, we adopted a points system – in which loyal customers who secured a sufficient number of points

Marketing results

- The golf resort offered a free holiday as a reward to loyal customers.
- It targeted customers of a rival golf club and told them that it had the same benefits plus others that the rival did not offer, including the free holiday.
- It emailed its database highlighting the free holiday and offering a competition in which customers could stay at the resort for free.
- By doing this, it secured 433 new customers and an order for £160k of golf equipment it was selling.



from the amount of times they used the facility were given free rewards (which were also used for any unhappy loyal members). We were able to offer a reward of a free trip for two to Hawaii (the club is based on the west coast of the USA) – this helped with member retention and provided a marketing hook.

Then I created a campaign that targeted customers of the club's leading competitor. We knew this competitor was on top of its social media strategy and we wanted to reach out to its masses of followers and friends. Using Facebook, in which we were able to capture and build up our social networks, we launched an advertising campaign. In the 'interest' section of the campaign we put the leading competitor's name to ensure the advert targeted people who had a connection with the competitor golf club. We created an advertised story that talked about the rival competitor at first and all the great assets at its venue. Then we talked about our venue and how we had the same assets, but more: We had special events for members at least twice a month, for example. The sponsored story we had created generated much more controversy and interest than we expected. As a result, we received 3,885 'likes', 454 comments and 433 new customers. This was from one advert that was costing us about £160 a month. We used a CPC (cost per click) campaign as well to maximise our results.

As our social networks started to

build a strong foundation and community, our email marketing was ready to be fuelled as well.

We basically used our sponsored story and the subject line that talked about the trip to Hawaii. The club had an email database of 5,000 people at the time. These people needed to be woken up! How did we do it? The subject line and the heading are everything. Then, the body just talked about the new points system we were implementing. Our campaign created urgency by making them purchase within the next three hours in order for them to be part of a competition to win a complimentary stay at the resort. Then came the biggest deal ever!

One of the consumers used the 'forward to a friend' feature and forwarded our advert to a coach she knew. This California coach wanted to purchase £160,000-worth of TaylorMade drivers that we were selling for all the teams he had coached!

The secret we used was we didn't include any of the social networks or 'share this' buttons in our email. The only option was to forward to a friend so they were not distracted. As a result, the coach became a loyal customer of the golf club. All thanks to online marketing.

Think about the great things internet marketing can do for your business. I always like to combine traditional marketing efforts with internet marketing efforts to get the biggest bang for my buck. Before you jump back on the bandwagon thinking internet marketing is a gimmick, make sure you have tried every possible marketing strategy.

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Sweta is the founder of, and marketing entrepreneur at, Global Marketing Tactics, which can be found at globalmarketingtactics.com

