

Effective Online Texas Marketing

This special marketing report is provided by



Website Helium, LLC

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"Rise to the Top of Search Engines"

Why Your Business Should Invest in an Online Storefront

In a recent study by [iCrossing](#) titled, "How America Searches: Online Shopping," it was revealed that not only does the number of online shoppers continue to grow, but that an increasing number of online shoppers are searching for a local business to physically visit in order to make their purchases.

According to the study, 39% of online adults made an online purchase every month in 2007, as compared with 30% in 2005. This is a 30% increase in adult online spending in just two years.

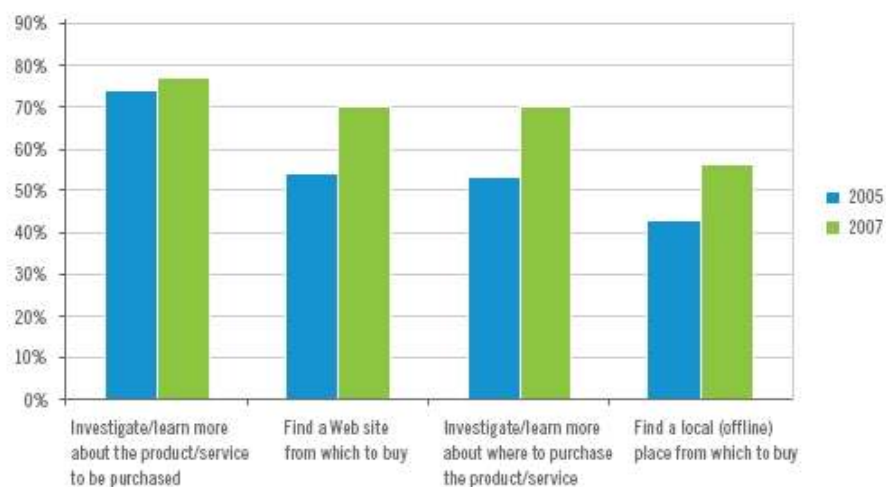
As shown in the following graph, the majority of online shoppers use the internet to learn more about products. Furthermore, the percentage of online shoppers who use the internet to find an offline (physical) business location from which to purchase products grew markedly.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES FOR SHOPPING ACTIVITIES, 2005 AND 2007

For which of the following shopping activities, if any, do you typically use search engines?
Please select all that apply.

Base: Respondents who use search engines to research products and services online before making a purchase
(2005 – n=1,302; 2007 – n=637)

Source: iCrossing



[Forrester](#), a leading online marketing research company, said in a similar consumer study:

The Web channel is affecting stores at a growing rate as consumers embrace the benefits of the Internet and incorporate it into their lives and shopping habits. Forrester estimates that almost \$400 billion of store sales — or 16% of total retail sales — are directly influenced by the Web as consumers research products online and purchase them offline. This will grow at a 17% CAGR over the next five years, resulting in more than \$1 trillion of store sales by 2012.

Getting Your Piece of the Pie

Your Website is Your Storefront

"If you have an offline business, don't just build a website; build a website that really drives customers to your business."

- Micah Morris, CEO, Website Helium, LLC

Marketing your Texas business with its own website is a great way to attract new customers and increase your business's overall profitability. Many businesses fail to realize the monetary benefits of investing in a quality website that visitors find useful, and throw together a quick, homemade website with a free template, copied or low quality content, and temporary links that go unnoticed by their target market. In the new competitive web 2.0 arena, the days of building a homemade website, hiring the cheapest search engine optimization company and immediately enjoying phenomenal results are gone. For optimal results, real-world business owners need to invest in online marketing companies like Website Helium that completely align with their clients and embrace their business vision.

The Basics for Online Texas Marketing

In the case that you do choose to "go it alone," we have a few suggestions that will greatly improve your results and help maximize the monetary rewards of having a web presence for your business.

Web Design

Your website design should be very attractive. This cannot be overstated. A website that isn't attractive to visitors is going to send them on to the next website in search of a quality website that provides adequate consumer confidence. The design of your website and all of the content on it, and all of the links leading visitors to your website should all be based on one theme. For example, if you are a veterinarian, your website should have a look that appeals to animal lovers and content that is useful and enjoyable for animal lovers.

Just as important as the cosmetic design is the actual coding of the webpage design. Many designers (such as websites that sell website templates and cheap web designers) build websites with many images on them. Images are very attractive and should definitely be utilized on websites. The two things you want to look out for are the sizes of the images and whether or not they hinder your search engine results.

Size of Images in Website Design

If the images on your website are "heavy," or use a lot of storage space, they will cause your website to take a very long time to "load," or show up on visitors' computer screens. Website surfers have very little patience, and will leave a website that doesn't load within just a few critical seconds. Oddly, the size of images does not refer to the amount of space they take up on a webpage, but to the amount of computer memory required for their existence. It is possible to reduce this size on your images if you have the correct tools; one such tool is Photoshop.

Images that Hinder Search Engine Results

What you see when you view a website and what a search engine robot sees when it "crawls," or views, a website are two very different things. You see attractive pictures with words on them that catch your attention, but robots don't see words on images. The only thing that a search engine robot can know about an image is that the image exists. This means that if your website images have your search terms on them, those search terms, or "keywords" are not being viewed and indexed by search engines ... at all.

You'll notice that on [WebsiteHelium](#), there are many images with text. The difference between us and most web designers and optimization companies is actually a part of our Customer Relevance Algorithm; the words on our images DO get viewed by search engine spiders, and yours will too if we design your website. You'll find that when you attempt to highlight words on pictures that are on other websites, you won't be able to because they aren't actual text; they're just part of the image. On WebsiteHelium.com, you can highlight text no matter where it's located because it is real text.

Relevant, Permanent, Quality Links

In the search engine world, a link to a website is a vote for that website. Many search engine optimization companies stop thinking at this point, satisfied with building thousands of links that temporarily increase a website's search results but end up being useless. As a business owner, you'll want to build links that are visible to your target audience, as well as improve your search engine rank.

Link Relevancy

If you own a hotel, you want the links that bring visitors to your website to be attractive to people looking to get a hotel room. If a person clicks on a link that is related to something other than hotels, and they end up on your hotel website, they're just going to

leave and go to another website that has what they want. This is why purchasing traffic and buying link packages from un-established businesses is not beneficial. This doesn't mean that purchasing links and traffic can't be effective, it just means that it is best to review the references of online businesses that you purchase traffic or links from.

Also, the more targeted you can make your links, the better. People normally don't search for just any veterinarian, hotel, or any other type of business. For the most part, people need to find businesses that are near them. In fact, local search marketing is the fastest growing segment of online search. Facebook.com, a popular social networking website, recently began offering advertisers the opportunity to market by location. AT&T's YellowPages.com has responded to the continental shift to local search by investing over \$30 million in 2007 with the opening of 14 new sales offices (they did have only two). From their press release:

Dynamic growth and a rising demand for more local-search advertising options have prompted YELLOWPAGES.COM (<http://www.yellowpages.com/>), a subsidiary of AT&T Inc. (NYSE: T), to roll out an unprecedented coast-to-coast expansion of sales offices, the company announced today. [[Source](#)]

Quality Links

Quality links are permanent, which means they aren't temporary links thrown on a webpage somewhere, only to be replaced with new links within just a few hours (think top lists and black hat SEO companies). An unethical search engine optimization company may even build links from websites that bring negative results you hadn't even considered, such as placing them on adult- and hate-related websites.

Quality links are also relevant to the website they're located on so that the audience that finds them is interested in the links. The links should also take the

person where they believe they will go, which is to a quality website that provides them what the link says it will provide.

Any other type of link is a waste of time and money and could quickly mark your website as one to be avoided.

Useful, Quality Content

It's possible to hire cheap writers to produce content for your website which is "keyword optimized." It is also true that this content will improve your search engine rankings when written correctly, but if your website visitors don't enjoy the content, they're going to leave your website and your business will lose credibility.

What most search engine optimization companies don't "get" is that high search engine rankings are not the "end-all." They're really just the beginning of the website visitor's journey because if the high search results don't convert to sales, the money and time invested was a waste. From a business owner's or manager's point of view, you want content on your website that is useful to your visitors and holds their attention, while simultaneously improves your search engine rank.

Writing content for websites is an art form very different from print. If the content on a website is written like the content in a print publication, it isn't going to be very useful. Website visitors want content that they can skim, not trudge through; just as well, search engines need to see that your content is relevant to specific search terms without being overly redundant. There's a happy medium to be found when writing for websites, and few people have mastered the skill.

In Conclusion

The goal of a website, a nice design, and useful content are to bring visitors to your website who want to be there and who stay there because they believe you have value to

add to their life in the form of a product or service. Your business's goal may be for visitors to purchase something directly from your website or to entice them to visit your offline store. Every business website is different and only by aligning with a proven online marketing (search engine optimization) company that embraces your business vision can optimal ROI be reached.

Creating a website that is optimized for search engines will bring visitors to the website quickly. But then what? It depends...

Creating a website with a bad design or low quality content that's optimized for search engines is a way of quickly telling consumers you offer little or no value and they should avoid your business.

Creating a website with a great design, useful content, and building targeted links to the website is a quick way of attracting targeted visitors, an increasing number of which will use your website to research your products and services, and purchase them in your offline store.

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