

Strategic Marketing From an Internet Perspective

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What is Strategic Marketing?

Strategic Marketing attempts to determine how an organization competes or how it will compete against its competition in a market place. In particular, it aims at generating a competitive advantage relative to its competition. From [Wikipedia](#).

Various marketing buzz words abound online. The above definition for strategic marketing is probably one of the most concise and defines it in a manner which can be easily grasped.

There are [strategic marketing firms](#) that will analyze the market place for the entire business structure and come up with a marketing strategy for their clients to compete on a global scale. While this type of service is needed to help determine a direction a company wants to go, there are however requirements for more specific strategic marketing evaluations that can have a major global marketing impact.

Understanding Internet Marketing

It is imperative for companies, as part of their strategic marketing, to understand the relationship the Internet has on a company's market reach in both vertical and horizontal markets. The Internet provides a wealth of information, tools, and potential to expand a company's sales through the use of the company website, online advertising, and Web 2.0 technology. Learning to use the Internet to fine tune (optimize the website) for various market segments are one of the keys to having more penetration both horizontally and vertically online.

Developing the penetration into these markets is what Internet marketing really is all about. A company can be all over the Internet, or not at all found online, but if it is not found in its industry specific area for engineers, buyers, and consumers searching for the products or services provided by the company, it will have little impact on the bottom-line sales generated.

Strategic Internet Marketing Evaluation

Marketing has what is known as a SWOT analysis tool. The acronym SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The SWOT analysis is a way of evaluating the direction a company wishes to go. For example below is a SWOT Chart courtesy of [businessballs.com](#)

Subject of SWOT analysis: (define the subject of the analysis here)	
strengths • Advantages of proposition? • Capabilities? • Competitive advantages? • USP's (unique selling points)? • Resources, Assets, People?	weaknesses • Disadvantages of proposition? • Gaps in capabilities? • Lack of competitive strength? • Reputation, presence and reach? • Financials?

• Experience, knowledge, data? • Financial reserves, likely returns? • Marketing - reach, distribution, awareness? • Innovative aspects? • Location and geographical? • Price, value, quality? • Accreditations, qualifications, certifications? • Processes, systems, IT, communications? • Cultural, attitudinal, behavioral? • Management cover, succession?	• Own known vulnerabilities? • Timescales, deadlines and pressures? • Cash flow, start-up cash-drain? • Continuity, supply chain robustness? • Effects on core activities, distraction? • Reliability of data, plan predictability? • Morale, commitment, leadership? • Accreditations, etc? • Processes and systems, etc? • Management cover, succession?
opportunities • Market developments? • Competitors' vulnerabilities? • Industry or lifestyle trends? • Technology development and innovation? • Global influences? • New markets, vertical, horizontal? • Niche target markets? • Geographical, export, import? • New USP's? • Tactics - surprise, major contracts, etc? • Business and product development? • Information and research? • Partnerships, agencies, distribution? • Volumes, production, economies? • Seasonal, weather, fashion influences?	threats • Political effects? • Legislative effects? • Environmental effects? • IT developments? • Competitor intentions - various? • Market demand? • New technologies, services, ideas? • Vital contracts and partners? • Sustaining internal capabilities? • Obstacles faced? • Insurmountable weaknesses? • Loss of key staff? • Sustainable financial backing? • Economy - home, abroad? • Seasonality, weather effects?

The table above can be used for all types of analysis. Using the four main keys and applying it to an Internet marketing plan is beneficial for helping visualize and evaluate what needs to be done.

While the particular example above is more general in nature, it can be applied to specifics. For example when determining how a website needs to be optimized and/or the Web presence, a person needs to look at the four keys. Some of the questions that can be asked are: What is the company's online strengths in meeting their marketing goals? How well is the website designed? Does the website provide quality information for readers, visitors, and the search engines? What types of links point to the website? Are these links quality links? What opportunities exist in the types of niche markets that the business can expand online? What are the current weaknesses with the business's Web efforts? How can the business improve their brand recognition online? Does the website provide a solid tool for the sales and marketing departments? What threats are faced from the competition and other market factors online? What other tools are available to take advantage of online opportunities? Is the company advertising online? Is the competition advertising online? All of these items and more can be written down or verbalized to help develop an Internet marketing plan to help grow and promote your company.

Once the market analysis is performed then a strategic plan needs to be developed, and then implemented. Certain items can be quickly changed or applied, while others on the list will need substantial time and effort to attend to. All of the items will factor into the viability of the company competing across the Internet.

Developing a quality web presence is one of the most important items a company can invest in. It is very shortsighted to think in terms of "the cost" of developing a website. It is a business investment, and it is an investment that has the potential to bring forth many returns.

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