

marketing zen

ONLINE MARKETING PLAN

**A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR
GROWTH ORIENTED BUSINESSES
LOOKING TO MARKET ONLINE**

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How to Propel Your Marketing and Transform Your Brand in the Digital Age*

A Personal Note from Shama

I know the internet can be an overwhelming place. How do you choose from a million different programs, sites, and technologies-especially when they are changing every single day? Where do you start? How do you know what will work for your business...and what's a complete waste of your time and money?

Luckily for you, my team and I have plenty of experience in building and growing businesses online-without using hard selling techniques. You won't find any aggressive one page sales letters here. My last business was a successful coaching practice that I started, built, and sold-all online! Today, many clients have us on retainer to keep up with every new piece of technology and marketing innovation. We separate the chaff from the wheat and then recommend only the best! **That means as long as you are subscribed to our list, you get all the inside scoop for FREE!**

I wrote this **online marketing plan** for 2 big reasons.

- 01 } To show you that internet marketing CAN work for a serious, reputable business like yours. It's not about luck; it's about strategy and consistency.
- 02 } To lay out a **step-by-step** guide that shows you exactly how to leverage the internet to get more clients/customers... and increase profits!

This guide is NOT for everyone. My assumption is that you already have a solid service (or are committed to building a practice that offers such). If you run a business with integrity and are committed to providing value, this marketing plan is going to help you get clients with ease!

To make the most of this online marketing plan, I highly recommend printing this out. Feel free to take notes as you go along. This is by no means a static document. **Print, read, and start implementing it for maximum impact.**

This **online marketing plan** is broken down into 5 key areas:

- 01 } 7 Keys to Online Marketing Success
- 02 } ACT - The 3 Step Process to Getting Clients Online
- 03 } How to Become the Go-To Expert in your Field
- 04 } Website and Traffic
- 05 } Blogs, Social Media Sites: Where to Start?

7 Keys to Online Marketing Success

Before we dive into the how-to of internet marketing, it's important to understand the basic rules. If you take nothing else away from this plan but these rules, you will end up saving a lot of time and money.

- 01 **Never implement a tactic without a strategy.** It can be so tempting at times to just jump on the bandwagon of the next "big thing" without really understanding why. If you think you need a blog or a Facebook account or videos on YouTube, think again. When marketing online, always start with a goal in mind and then find the tool that fits. Never vice-versa.
- 02 **Stick to what feels good.** There are many tools that can be used to accomplish the same goal. Don't feel tied to any one method. If you are uncomfortable with the technology, learn how to utilize it or have someone implement it for you. But if you can't stand the practice itself, look elsewhere.
- 03 **Attention IS scarce, but your prospects are still looking for the right information.** Your prospects are being pulled in a million different directions online. Everything you have been hearing about information overload is true. Yet your prospects continue to search online for answers - and they want the information their way. (We will cover this in-depth later!)
- 04 **Content is KING.** Your online success is directly proportional to the quality of information you provide. You may get away with a lacking product or service once in a while, but repeat clients come to those who consistently provide a high quality service.
- 05 **Embrace the editor within.** The internet will always be a changing entity. You can't set up a website and then sit back and relax. (Sorry to break that to you!). You have to constantly keep up with it and edit and update accordingly.
- 06 **Advertising is Out. Expertise is In.** Only 14% of people trust advertising. Personally, I think that number is too high. Online advertising definitely has its place when done right, but not always. When was the last time you chose a doctor or a lawyer because of an ad you saw? Establishing yourself as an expert is the KEY to attracting more clients online.
- 07 **Community. Community. Community.** For brick and mortar businesses (aka offline shops) it's location, location, location. Location doesn't matter to an online business. Community does. Your job is to build a fan base online-a community of people who LOVE what you have to offer. Appeal to the select few; appeal to your ideal clients.

ACT Online: Attract, Convert, Transform

This methodology is what allowed me to go from a solopreneur to running a 23 person full-service digital marketing firm **within 1 year!** 90% of our clients find us online.

ACT stands for Attract, Convert, and Transform.

What do you need to attract prospects online? : A great BOD! No joke. :)

Brand: If your brand could be summed up in one word, what would it be? (More on this in the next section).

Outcome: What's the outcome you help clients achieve? Not the process you use, but the FINAL result. Sum it up in one line.

Differentiator: What makes you different than your competitors? And please don't say price. What makes you INHERENTLY different? For example, the online marketing field is a competitive one. However, most companies offer piecemeal services. Some do web design, some consult, and some specialize in SEO. But, no one offered all the strategic and implementation services under one roof. It's been an amazing differentiator for us!

Okay, so you have a great BOD. Now how can you attract prospects online?

Here are some tactics:

- Blogging
- Social Media Marketing (Facebook and Twitter)
- SEO/PPC (More on this Below)
- Videos
- Giveaways
- Joint Ventures
- Social Bookmarking

Boggled? Initially, choose 2, do your research, and implement consistently!

So, what happens after attraction? You **CONVERT**.

What do you need in order to CONVERT?

The Holy Grail of Online Marketing: **YOUR WEBSITE!**

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We will get into the technical details of the website a bit later, but for now let's focus on how to leverage your website to the max.

Every visitor is unique! Some are looking for more information, while others are ready to buy. So, what does that mean for you?

You have to cater to people on every spectrum of the marketing rainbow. A solid website will do all three.

E M S (The Online Marketing Version of 911).

Educate, Market, and Sell

Some prospects need to be educated about your process (educate), others need to know why you are special (marketing), and the rest want to buy (sell!).

When someone gets information from your website, they become consumers.

Consumption + Conversion = Client

When someone gets information from your website, they become consumers.

Not everyone who consumes your information (by signing up for your newsletter, reading your blog, or downloading your article) will become a client immediately. Some may never become clients, but they may tell a friend who will.

Your website has to cater to BOTH audiences: The Consumers and the (almost) Clients.

The better your ONLINE conversion, the more clients you will have.

Sometimes, conversion occurs over a period of time. For example, a new client signed on after being on our email subscriber list for over a year. Other times, conversion is immediate. People visit and buy.

So, what about the T?

T stands for TRANSFORM.

Once you attract a prospect and turn them into a consumer or client, you **MUST** deliver. Scratch that, you **MUST OVER DELIVER.**

Provide A+ service.

Then, harness case studies. You did a great job; now make sure you get that on record.

Share these case studies on your website and blog. Use these case studies to attract and convert.

The process comes FULL circle.

Doesn't this process take a long time?

Absolutely not. It just looks that way because it's so detailed. Once your system is in place, it will run on autopilot.

Imagine this scenario: An acquaintance from Facebook visits your website and signs up for your email newsletter. You have attracted an individual and turned him into a consumer of your information. At the same time, a veteran blog subscriber directly buys your new product after listening to a case study. You have a client. Yet another individual downloads your free eBook. This can all happen simultaneously. **You are constantly creating consumers and clients online.**

Online, you can move THOUSANDS of prospects at different junctures at the SAME TIME. All you need is systems.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- 01 } ACT stands for Attract, Convert, and Transform. It's a process!
- 02 } Once set up, it can happen seamlessly.
- 03 } Your website has to do all 3: Educate, Market, and Sell. Otherwise, it's not a marketing tool. It's just a brochure site.

My ACT Online Plan:

- 01 } Which current and past clients can I approach to obtain case studies from?
- 02 } How will I make my website into the "holy grail" of my online marketing? What do I need to do that?
- 04 } In what ways can I educate, market, and sell at the same time? (i.e. a blog for education, a direct product page to sell, etc.)
- 05 } Sum up your outcome in ONE line. What's the bottom line difference you make?

How to Become the Go-To Expert in Your Field

The Attention Paradox: People are overwhelmed with all the information online but continue to seek out what they need. So, how do you stand out in such a maze? Do it by establishing yourself as the go-to-guy or gal in your industry. (This can apply to a company, as well a company owner. Coca-Cola is huge, but they are a leader in the soft drink market).

Experts are natural attention magnets. People are drawn to them because of the value they provide. Once you are an established expert, not only will people give you their attention, they will let you keep it. (Quick note: I know that some people feel uncomfortable with the term “expert.” It doesn’t mean you have to know everything. On the contrary, the ultimate expert is always teaching and learning at the same time!)

Before we get into the how-to’s, let’s go over the benefits of leveraging the internet to set yourself up as the expert-

- **Everything you do will have a higher perceived value.** Our society rewards experts. We pay the bigger bucks, gladly, to people we consider to be at the top of their game. You attract highly desirable clients, consistently! Prospects will contact you ready to buy because they are presold by the perception they have of you.
- **Shorter sales cycle.** The people who come to you won’t think of you as a stranger! In fact, they may act like they have known you a lot longer than you think. It’s not odd for people to approach me at conferences and ask about the business and even my personal life at times. They feel like they know me because of the blog. I have managed to take them from stranger to prospect just by writing my blog!
- **More Joint Venture requests.** When you are the expert, everyone wants in on the action! Don’t be surprised if other top experts want to partner with you or if you get requests from the media. It’s all part of being the expert.

Okay, so now you just want to know HOW?! Before we get into the technical aspects of how to leverage the internet to build this expert-status, we have to go over the basic steps. This will serve as the foundation of all that you do online!

STEP # 1 - Cultivate an Attitude of Giving: I don’t know ONE expert online who doesn’t consistently give away valuable content. You don’t get points for keeping secrets. Giving away information is the FASTEST way to get the attention of strangers.

There are no to-do action points for this step. It’s just a mindset you have to get comfortable with! Don’t worry about people “stealing” your information. In fact, make it easy for them to take the information and share it with others. You aren’t selling this information; you are leveraging it to get clients and customers.

STEP # 2 - Show them that you feel their pain: Online expertise starts with empathy. The only thing harder than getting people’s attention is getting their trust; in order to gain your prospects’ trust, you have to show them that you understand their pain. Better yet, put it in words for them. Then, offer them the solution. Experts provide solutions and solutions come only AFTER a problem is properly defined.

Example: Businesses across industries struggle to understand and leverage the internet for marketing. Most of them dabble in internet marketing but shy away from full immersion because (1) they have no clue where to start or (2) wonder if it's even worth their efforts.

What they need: Someone to guide them to realistically and effectively market their services online and consistently grow their business.

Now you try:

- The Big Problem:
- What they need:

STEP # 3 - One Word Brand: This is probably the toughest exercise yet. I can describe every expert online using one word or one phrase. It's what EVERY bit of their identity is built around. No long paragraphs or pages worth of "who you want to be seen as." Just choose ONE word and let that be the essence of your expert persona.

Let's look at some examples:

Seth Godin: **Innovator.** Seth is an author of many marketing books and also writes a very successful blog. His take on marketing is the same as many others, but he conveys it in the most brilliant way. His latest book title: Meatball Sundae.

Shama Hyder (that's me!): **Passionate.** I LOVE marketing and I LOVE technology and I LOVE helping businesses leverage the internet. I am constantly speaking at conferences, learning new things, and testing ideas for our clients. I am passionate about businesses and technology...and it bleeds through in all that I do.

Now, your turn:

One word to describe my online brand is _____. Because _____.

STEP # 4 - Your Ultimate Vision: By now you have your target market's problem defined and your one word brand. Now, it's time to look at your ultimate vision. **This is where you get to decide what outcome you will consistently try to deliver.**

FedEx, for example, is all about overnight delivery. That's their promise and their vision. They may offer other services and they may have certain processes in place but that doesn't matter in the big scheme of things. Their bottom-line promise is what matters.

Domino's Pizza used to promise to get your pizza to you in less than 30 minutes. How many toppings do they offer? How do their drivers get to you in time? Those were just details. Their main promise was that you wouldn't have to be hungry for longer than 30 minutes.

The Marketing Zen Group is all about providing a one stop shop for online services. Essentially anything you need in regard to online marketing, we provide. You don't have to go to 10 different sources. We've hired all the best experts, and put them under one roof.

Now...

What's your vision?

Great, you now have all the basics to take the online world by storm. You have your giving mindset, your problem statement, your one word brand, and your ultimate vision. Now all you have to find is...

STEP # 5 - The Ultimate Communication Channel: This is where the rubber meets the road. You have to decide HOW you are going to convey all this information (Steps 1 to 5) to your prospects online. The beauty of internet marketing is that there are multiple ways to communicate the same ideas. Let's take a look at an example:

Gary Vaynerchuck: Gary was just a regular guy from New Jersey who used to help his family run a liquor store. He noticed that lots of people were shy about purchasing expensive wine because they thought it was snobby and didn't know much about it. Now, Gary had a giving mindset. He wanted to educate people! He understood his target market's problem. He was a regular guy from Jersey who liked wine-HIS BRAND. One word: Regular Joe. His ultimate vision was to get regular folks to enjoy more wine. So, he started his own mini show on the web called WineLibraryTV.com. It was a HUGE hit. He did 5 to 15 minute segments on a different type of wine each time and he did it in his usual "regular Joe from Jersey" kind of style. Last I heard, his "liquor store" was grossing 15 million dollars in revenue.

His communication channel fit his audience. You have to look at what fits your audience best. Sometimes you can even leverage multiple online channels to get your message across and establish expertise.

What are some of the communication channels available?

- Online Video
- Blogging
- Email newsletters
- Podcasting
- Social Media Sites
- Online Forums
- Wikis
- Online PR
- White Papers
- Search Engine Optimization and Pay Per Click Webinars

Website and Traffic

WordPress: This is my favorite content management system. It's free, easy to install, and offers many options that allow you to customize your site to suit your needs.

www.MarketingZen.com is fully built on WordPress.

Content is KING!

Your website MUST convey the following:

- Your one-word brand. (It doesn't have to ever state it explicitly, but it must be easy to discern your brand from looking at your website.)
- Your vision.
- The problem you are trying to solve.
- Always excellent content that educates your visitors. Don't try to skimp on this part.
- Your ideal client or audience. Who are you trying to reach?
- Your services. What do you have to offer?
- Social proof. Who have you helped and what results did they achieve?
- About your company. Use this page to build credibility with your visitors. Remember, the website should be more about them than it is about you.
- Contact Information. Give prospects at least 2 ways to reach you. (i.e. email AND phone number.)

Traffic:

A website is worthless if there is no one visiting it. Traffic refers to the number of visitors that come to your website on any given day.

How do you get traffic?

01 } Links from other sites:

- Sometimes other website owners and (usually) bloggers that like something you have to say will share your website with their visitors. You can also offer to write a guest post or article for another website.
- You can submit articles to other websites and get links back. The same goes for online press releases.
- Social Media Sites and Social Bookmarking Sites
- **WARNING:** Never buy or sell links. This is a very low level practice and if the search engines find out (which they have a way of doing), your site will be banned. Also, beware of people trying to sell you traffic for an x amount of dollars. Traffic cannot be bought in such a manner.

02 Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

- Official definition: SEO is the active practice of optimizing a web site by improving internal and external aspects in order to increase the traffic the site receives from search engines. Basically, it means tweaking website code and building links (ethically and legally!) in order to increase a website's ranking on a search engine result's page (SERP's).
- Why are links important? Search Engines rank sites according to their credibility. They call this a page rank. A site's credibility is measured by how many other websites link to it. The more inbound links you get, the better your page rank.

03 Pay Per Click (PPC) ads

- An online advertising model where you pay for each click your ad receives. Google's PPC service is known as AdWords.

04 Direct visitors

- This is when visitors directly type in your website address into the address bar of their browser. This is what happens when you hand someone your business card and they go home and type in your website address.

Website Marketing Plan

- 01 } **Domain Name:**
- 02 } **Hosted By:**
- 03 } **Business Email Address:**
- 04 } **Website will be Designed/Re-Designed By:**
- 05 } **Content Management System:**
- 06 } **Does Content Meet the Requirements laid out in this plan?**
- 07 } **Traffic Obtaining Strategies:**

Blogs, Newsletters, Social Media Sites: Where to Start?

I have a website. Why do I need more? Good question.

- 01 A website is no good unless it actually gets visitors. Some of these strategies help drive traffic to your site.
- 02 One time visitors aren't very helpful. You want people to keep coming back to your site or find some way to keep in constant contact with them.

Why?

- Because people forget. It's your job to stay connected. The internet makes this VERY easy because you can stay in touch with lots of people at the same time. You can practically put a follow-up system on auto-pilot.
- Most people need to hear from you an average of 7 times before they will actually make a purchase. This holds especially true for people looking to purchase services. You have to educate them, establish your expertise, and then make an offer.

Let's take a look at the 3 most popular ways to keep in touch with visitors and prospects.

Email Newsletters:

- There are many services that assist you in building and delivering an email newsletter. Our favorite services are InfusionSoft and Mailchimp. They are extremely robust, and we use them for all our clients.
- **Key Things to Remember:**
 - You must always get permission from someone before adding them to your list. Otherwise it's considered spamming and can get you in trouble.
 - Again, content is KEY. Your email newsletter will only be as good as what's inside it. You have to be comfortable writing or find someone who is.

Blogging:

It's best to send out email newsletters at LEAST once a month. Any less and it may not be worth it. The most should be once a week. Find the balance that suits your audience.

- There are many platforms that will allow you to build your own blog. WordPress is my favorites. A simpler platform may also be www.blogger.com.
- **Key Things to Remember:**
 - Don't start a blog if you cannot at least write 2 solid entries or posts a week. A blog takes more commitment than an email newsletter because you also have to drive traffic to it.
 - If you do choose to start blogging, allow readers to subscribe to your posts by email.
 - Make friends with other bloggers. It's a great community!

■ Do's And Don'ts For Starting A Business Blog:

- 01 **DON'T think corporate:** Think of a company. Any company, even your company. Do you want to have a conversation with it? Of course you don't, because people like to talk to other people. Keep this in mind when you're blogging, because your blog shouldn't sound like or actually be a string of press releases. You or your bloggers should craft a unique voice and use it when drafting new blog posts. Show a little personality!
- 02 **DO socialize:** Make sure your blog's comments are open to facilitate conversations between you and your readers. Once your blog comments are open, you're sure to receive a wide range of feedback. You'll hear good things and bad things, and there will definitely be spam. Make sure all members of the team monitoring and updating your blog understand your comment policy: you'll at least want to have one banning spam comments, and you may also want to ban offensive and hateful comments.
- 03 **DON'T just talk about yourself:** If a consumer just wants to know about your company, they'll go to your main website. If they come to your blog and find the exact same content regurgitated over and over, they're probably not going to stay very long (or ever come back). How do you avoid this? Write about topics of interest to your target audience that aren't necessarily about your company. Ask yourself: "If my customers are interested in my industry, what blog topics would interest them?"
- 04 **DO prepare yourself for the commitment:** Although starting a corporate blog is a great way to generate recurring traffic, this will not happen overnight. This will not happen in the first week, either. If you consistently provide valuable content, you could start to generate recurring traffic in the first few months. Blogging isn't a quick fix for your marketing strategy – it's something you need to devote time and resources to.

Social Media Sites:

■ Key Things to Remember:

- Start with one social media site and then branch out. I highly recommend signing up at Facebook when first starting out. Here is an article on [The Changing Face of Facebook Marketing](#).
- Manage your time. It's very easy to spend hours on these sites without accomplishing much in terms of marketing.
- These are all relationship building tools. Social media marketing is best for building affiliations with strangers. Don't try to sell people directly. You can't go straight to home. It's your job to get their attention, to give them information, and then provide an experience.

■ Other Social Media Sites for Businesses

- 01 **Foursquare** (<http://www.foursquare.com>): Foursquare and other location-based sites allow users to "check-in" at specific locations and connect with friends as they do, sharing useful tips and seeing what their friends are doing. Users can also earn points and badges as incentives for check-ins. Location-based social sites obviously work particularly well for businesses with physical locations, like retail stores and restaurants. However, brands can also use Foursquare and other similar sites by setting up brand pages and sharing their favorite tips (read more in our [blog post on Foursquare marketing](#)).

- 02 **Pinterest** (<http://www.pinterest.com>): Pinterest is a social photo sharing website, based on the theme of a “virtual pinboard”. Users choose photos and “pin” (bookmark) them to theme-based “boards”. You might not think photo sharing sites work for your business or industry, but with a little creativity, sites like Pinterest can actually be valuable marketing tools. For example, Indiana Tourism uses Pinterest to catalog interesting Indiana-related products and photos.
- 03 **Yelp** (<http://www.yelp.com>): Yelp is a site that relies totally on community reviews to help users find information on businesses in their area. Businesses can also post special discounts for Yelp users and create business profiles on the site. As more and more people begin to use Yelp to decide where to eat, shop, get their hair cut, and any number of other things, it’s important to monitor what people are saying about you and your business. A bad review or two doesn’t mean a lot, but consistent bad reviews could be the kiss of death.
- 04 **Tumblr** (<http://www.tumblr.com>): Tumblr is a quick and easy to set up blogging platform. An upside of Tumblr is that you can post content on it more frequently than you can on Facebook. The downside of Tumblr is that you can’t host your blog. Photos tend to perform better than other types of content on the site, which makes it a natural choice for those in the media or fashion industries.

Social Media Marketing Plan

Social Media Methods I Want to Research:

I will keep in touch with visitors by utilizing:

Action Steps to Get Started (i.e. research blogging platforms, look into email delivery services):

Congrats! You now have a solid plan of action that should help you get started online. I know things change very fast online, so I promise to keep this online marketing plan updated. As long as you are on my list, you will automatically get an updated version.

A Word to the Wise: Get help when you need it. I will be the first to admit that the internet can indeed be an overwhelming place. Do your research, ask the experts, and pace yourself. When in doubt, go to a qualified source.

Need More Help?

Please Contact Us to Set Up a Free Consult.



Known as the “Zen Master of Marketing” by Entrepreneur Magazine and the “Millennial Master of the Universe” by Fast Company, Shama Hyder is a visionary strategist for the digital age. As CEO of The Marketing Zen Group, she has led the organization through explosive growth, averaging 400% growth annually since its start in 2009.

Under her leadership, the company has grown to include a team of 30 employees, and clients that range from publicly held, Fortune 500 companies to privately-held small businesses and non-profit organizations across the globe.

She is the bestselling author of *The Zen of Social Media Marketing*, now in its 4th edition, and recently released her latest book, *Momentum: How To Propel Your Marketing and Transform Your Brand in the Digital Age*.

To receive a weekly dose of Zen marketing advice and curated resources guaranteed to elevate your business, sign up for the MZ newsletter today at <http://www.marketingzen.com>.