

A Look Ahead – Casting Online in 2007

by Angela Hribar

With 2007 here, now is the time where many marketing professionals evaluate their current programs and strategize new ones. While goals vary from company to company based on a number of factors, at the core of any successful marketing program are measurable results – targeted branding and exposure, plus quality sales and marketing opportunities.

How do you take the first step in achieving these results? Simple – *fish where the fish are*. And, now more than ever, that's online.

In recent years, there has been a significant migration of technical, engineering and industrial professionals to the Internet to search for products and services, and to locate manufacturers, distributors and service companies. With the Internet and online marketing finally being accepted and engaged at a scale level, the following trends will continue to emerge in the year ahead:

Measurable advertising (the concept of “clicks vs. leads”). As online marketing continues its upward trend, companies are looking for tactics that help them generate quality leads online. There is significant interest in true lead generation; specifically, intelligence-rich “hard leads” versus faceless, largely non-contactable “clicks.” Quality is now preferred over quantity, resulting in a greater demand by marketers for accountability from online media partners.

Balanced spend. Most companies have embraced online marketing at the intellectual level, but some have not yet developed the comfort level to reallocate their marketing dollars to closely align with where their target audience is searching. Yet greater numbers of marketers are beginning to “see the light” and better balance their media spend across many different channels, a trend that will continue.

A watchful eye on “new media.” Recently, there has been significant buzz surrounding podcasts, RSS and blogs, with “you should be doing this” being the popular message. While these communication channels have received a great deal of attention in the media, they may not be priority areas for marketers looking to reach an industrial audience. For example, in a recent survey of industrial marketing trends, 84 percent of engineers reported they have never viewed a podcast for work-related purposes.

Reaching a targeted audience through targeted means. As the online needs of audiences continue to become more specialized – and the audiences that marketers want to reach are more clearly defined – marketing on vertical search engines will become even more prevalent. Vertical search offers marketers more than just mere market segmentation; it provides a deep, highly filtered and intelligent entry point into a specific market. Also offering an outlet for marketers looking to reach a specific audience are highly targeted, opt-in e-newsletters covering specific business topics. .

When defining your marketing plans for the year ahead, keep in mind how you will become highly visible to, and discovered by, potential customers. Taking advantage of targeted online marketing resources will help you in your quest to *fish where the fish are* – and to hook them while they are hungry.

If you'd like to learn more about Food Processing and Wellness Foods targeted digital offerings, contact our sales manager, Faith Dalton at fdalton@putman.net.

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