

Traditional Marketing with New Media Techniques

It's both an opportunity and a potential apocalypse. There are more than 2,000 different feed readers or aggregators—web applications that aggregate syndicated web content—and hundreds of thousands of webcasters, bloggers, podcasters, and videobloggers who publish content all over the web. Cutting through the many options requires an expert who can recommend the most effective new media solution, refine the execution, and ensure that your message is hitting the mark.

Start with the message. If the content is compelling and valuable, new marketing techniques give marketing organizations an opportunity to get the most out of their efforts by leveraging information in a variety of innovative ways. For example, with webcasting technology, a single city product launch can become a global event, broadcast to customers and press around the world. Field sales people, who may be expected to demonstrate specific product capabilities that are outside their realm of expertise, can leverage in-depth demos given by a product expert. And a case study video developed for a vertical industry trade show can find new life as an offer in a direct marketing email blast, designed to reach the same targeted customer segment, nationwide.

 ***The possibilities are limitless. And, keeping up with the marketplace can be endless. But, here's a start. Below are descriptions of some new media marketing techniques that you can harness to extend your reach and enhance your marketing efforts.***

Webcast

A webcast is a live media file of audio or video content that is broadcast over the Internet—using streaming media—and distributed to simultaneous listeners or viewers. The largest webcasters include major radio and TV stations, which broadcast previously shown segments over the Internet, as well as a variety of popular Internet-only webcasters, who have found success delivering unique content optimized for Internet distribution.

For marketing professionals, webcasts can be used as a way to reach large audiences for activities such as press conferences, shareholder meetings, and customer or employee seminars. Participants are usually invited and need to log in to participate, allowing companies to selectively include individuals on a targeted basis, and create messaging and content that would fit a specific audience.

Podcast

A podcast is a unique type of webcast of audio and video files that are automatically delivered to the user's computer. The podcast resides at a web location with a unique feed address. Users subscribe to the podcast by submitting the feed address to an aggregator. New content is delivered automatically, whenever it becomes available, to all subscribers. Podcasts are not real-time feeds, rather information is pre-recorded and posted, allowing users to access content off-line, at their convenience. Unlike a webcast, which directly downloads or streams content, a podcast is syndicated and requires an intermediary, aggregator, or feed reader to deliver the content.

Feed readers include technologies such as RSS or Atom, and aggregators include technologies like iTunes. Podcasts can be interactive and feature a host, who controls an audience of users.

Marketers can use podcasts to deliver timely information to a targeted—or broad—audience. Companies can promote upcoming events, deliver information to the press, and inform customers and channel partners of new product or service updates via podcasts that includes multi-media content.

RSS Feed

An RSS feed is a format that is used to publish text, audio, or video content to a user's computer or mobile device. Content that is usually streamed includes podcasts, news, blogs, or other frequently updated material, which is either summarized or delivered in full text. RSS, which stands for Really Simple Syndication, makes it easy for publishers to deliver regular updates of web-based content, and for users to stay current and keep track of a large number of favorite web sites or blogs. For advertisers, RSS feeds eliminate the problems traditional marketing channels encounter, including spam filters, delayed distribution, and search engine rankings. RSS content is read using one of almost 2,000 feed reading applications. Some readers work exclusively on mobile devices. A user subscribes to a feed by entering the feed's link into the reader or by clicking an RSS icon, often called a "chicklet" in a browser window that initiates the subscription process.

The reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new content, downloading any updates that it finds. A marketer uses an RSS feed as the delivery method for podcasts or webcasts.

Email Blast

An email blast uses electronic mail as a way to communicate with multiple recipients, and inform them of announcements, events, or offers. Companies send most email blasts to current or potential customers in the hopes of enhancing the relationship and increasing customer loyalty. Email blasts can also encourage a predetermined behavior, such as making an immediate purchase, signing up for a seminar, downloading a document, or registering for an event.

Email blasts have become a popular and effective way to reach users for several reasons. First, companies are able to distribute information to a wide range of targeted customers at a relatively low cost. Marketers can accurately track results and user actions via web bugs, bounce messages, un-subscribes, read-receipts, and click-throughs. Results are immediate—users get information seconds after the email is sent, shortening the time-to-market of most promotions. Email marketing is second only to search marketing as the most effective, affordable online marketing tactic.

However, the success of email marketing is threatened by spamming—the hundreds of millions of unsolicited, commercial email messages sent over the Internet every day—which clog the web and end users' mail boxes. Spam has led to the development of filters, legislation, and other technologies and techniques designed to stop the barrage of junk email from spreading. These tools and practices sometimes prevent legitimate email from reaching its intended recipient.

It requires an expert to know the trade-offs. While the word “free” can get caught in a filter and land an email in the junk folder, it might also be the word that produces the best response. Sometimes the best response is to capture 20 high quality leads; other times, it's all about quantity. With this kind of program complexity and variety, it is critical that companies get expert advice and only work with organizations that have experience in the most current techniques, access to reputable lists, know the most effective technology solutions, and understand current legal regulations.

Flash Movie

Flash is a technology platform owned by Adobe Systems, that includes an integrated development environment player and application files, and has facilitated the spread of animation and rich interactive applications on the Internet. Flash Player is the client application that acts as a virtual machine that runs Flash files, and has become a popular method for adding animation and interactivity to web pages. The ubiquity of the Flash Player means that almost every browser—and every user—has access to movies, games, and videos. Adobe claims Flash reaches 97.3 percent of desktop Internet users. Companies have adopted Flash as a way to deliver animations, video, and interactivity in advertising, web sites, and emails. Flash demos allow users to see “live” demos of products over the web.