

MARKETING – THE NEW PARADIGM

Marketing is going through a mid life crisis as it comes to terms with the Internet . Many of the traditional elements of the marketing mix are having to be re-thought. Advertising is an obvious early casualty. Why pay for advertising in a trade paper if the reader is getting the same information for free over the Internet? More fundamentally, how do you reconcile the narrow focus required by the search engines with the broad, one-stop-shop approach favoured by most companies? All in all the Internet is going to cause many companies to re-think the way they do business in ways which were not obvious two or three years ago.

This short paper deals with the promotional aspects of the internet revolution and, specifically, how to promote a web site to get the traffic which produces the enquiries which convert into sales. There is a formula and a working methodology here:

↑ traffic ⇔ ↑ enquiries ⇔ ↑ sales

The traditional method of boosting web traffic relies on *Search Engine Optimisation* and *Search Engine Marketing*. SEO+SEM constitute traditional 'search marketing'. Tick these two boxes and you can lay claim to having an internet marketing strategy. Times change however and the advent of all sorts of other signposting options means that your on-line marketing has to be so much more than just SEO+SEM.

Internet strategy now has three legs with social marketing making up the third. Social marketing consists of what are known as Web 2 sites: blogs, community sites such as MySpace and YouTube – sites which require participation from users rather than just communication of information .

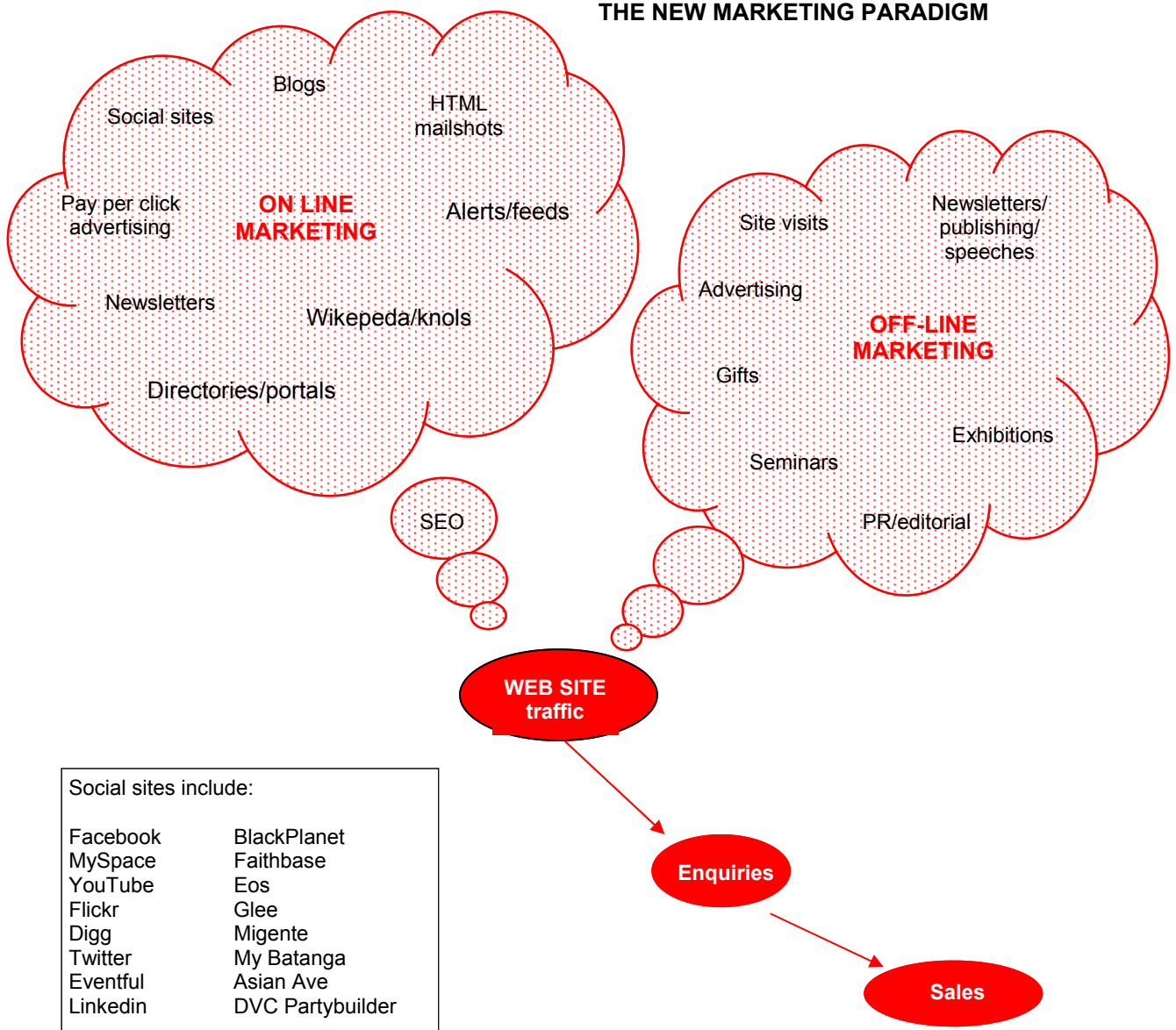
What is more interesting for marketers is that social marketing sites solve the problem of obtaining links to your site. Search engines judge a web site's relevance by a number of factors but one of the most important is the links to the site from other sites. An inbound link is a strong indicator of relevance: the more links the more important the site. One way of boosting links is to persuade other site owners to add links to their sites in return for links from yours. As can be imagined this is very time consuming and beyond the resources or the inclination of most smaller companies.

Social networking sites provide an alternative. Sites such as YouTube and MySpace allow you to add links directed to your site which are user generated and thus under your control. Blogs and News sites share this ability as do articles placed through the various article sites.

To give an example, you can now log a video on YouTube and link it to your site and the search engine will use this link as a measure of your popularity. Search marketing is suddenly back under the control of the marketer.

Add these to the mix and the new paradigm looks like the diagram below. How does this affect your marketing?

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Of course, building the traffic is only half the battle, conversion is what it is all about but that is the subject of another paper.