ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES – UK AND ROMANIA

A. TĂLPĂU[1]   T. VIERAŞU[1]

Abstract: *This paper presents successful online marketing strategies, more specific "Pay Per Click" publicity and social marketing strategies. Both practices target a well-defined market segment and can be used to increase exposure, generate traffic and in the end generate conversions. While "Pay Per Click" means buying every action (visit/Like etc.), social marketing is looking to establish one to one interactions and to provide value to customers. These two online marketing practices were analyzed both in regards with their theoretical aspects and in regards with the way in which they are applied by companies. The examples used in this analysis are from Romania and from the United Kingdom.*

Key words: *online campaign, online marketing, online strategies, pay per click publicity, social marketing.*

1. Online marketing practices

The Internet has become more and more popular especially during the past decade, and has now become even indispensable for many people and organizations. It is a way of socializing, exploring, finding information, playing games, watching movies and videos; simply said, it is a way of living, working and spending leisure time.

When it comes to online marketing practices, the internet is the newest, fastest and one of the most efficient ways of doing business. It is used not only by companies that want to gain new customers and increase their brand exposure, but also by non-profit organizations, celebrities, politicians and many others.

There are many types of online marketing practices. The most important step in creating an online presence is that an organization develops a presentation site or page. An organization can opt for several online marketing practices, each having its strengths in a given period of time and for well-defined objectives. The most well-known practices are: internet advertising, social marketing and optimization for search engines.

Internet advertising takes the form of banners, buttons, pop-ups, sponsorships, paid advertisements and so on. Social marketing is "the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole" (Kotler, P., Roberto, N., Lee, N., 2002, p. 5). Search Engine Optimization (S.E.O.) means implementing practices that help a site show up in search engines (such as Google, Yahoo, Bing etc.) as high as possible. In this paper we will refer to only

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[1] PhD Student, Dept. of Economic Sciences and Business Administration, *Transilvania* University of Braşov.

two Online Marketing practices that are more and more popular: paid advertisements ("Pay Per Click" publicity) and Social Marketing.

2. Pay Per Click strategies

Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising is the primary way of advertising on the internet. As of 2009, the three largest search engines players in the market are Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Besides search engines advertising there are several other Medias of advertising. We will refer to the most popular two Pay Per Click services currently available on the market: Google AdWords and Faceebok Advertising.

A PPC campaign allows you to determine exactly who visits your website. You only pay for clicks to your site / page if a person clicks on a search engine result or on a recommended ad, link, or banner and lands on your site. If the person only sees your link, but does not click through, this is called an impression and is free of charge.

Facebook Advertising has the major advantage that can target a specific market segment taking into consideration personal information, such as interests. For example, there are over 2.6 million UK Facebook users that are interested in Golf, Charity/Causes and/or Event Planning; for the same criteria, there are only 148,000 Romanians. By setting a well-defined market segment, a company ensures reaching out to its targeted population and directly displaying ads that recommend potential customers to visit its site, get the support they need and ideally convert (place orders, complete a contact form, sign up for newsletters or whatever the main objective of a campaign is).

Unlike Facebook advertising, Google AdWords works the other way around, by displaying search engine results as a consequence of a search query on a specific topic. Therefore, when somebody is typing queries related to the company's activity, the site will be displayed in search engine paid results and the company will pay each time a person clicks on it. The steps of setting up an effective PPC campaign are:

a) Choose the market population to target and / or the list of keywords

b) Write *AIDAS* ads (the AIDAS Model means ensuring an ad can: get **Attention**, hold **Interest**, arouse **Desire**, urge to **Action** and promise **Satisfaction**)

c) Set campaign details in Facebook Advertising and / or Google AdWords

d) Set tracking campaigns (an effective way is to use Google Analytics) to monitor visits and conversions.

Each time a user views a page that displays ads, an auction takes place to determine which eligible ad(s) will be shown on that impression. Each market segment and each keyword has different bidding average costs and might vary in time. A recommended practice is to set a maximum level for bids and, therefore, never pay more than the maximum bid, but possibly pay less. Still, the higher the bid, the more likely it is the ad will get shown.

3. Social Marketing strategies

Social Marketing creates a relationship with individuals. It is most successful when treated as a one to one communication channel rather than one to many (like a website or radio ad). Unlike Pay Per Click campaigns, Social Marketing campaigns are looking to generate a daily dialogue with the targeted market and increase brand exposure.

By opening a dialogue with existing and potential visitors, a public organization will create a dialogue and make its existing customers 'evangelists' for its site / page. As they share their experiences via their own social media accounts, more people will be exposed to the organization's

services, become fans and in the end converts.

The biggest advantage of social marketing over any other internet marketing channel is that it captures customers. Once they add a social presence to their account, an organization will be able to maintain top-of-mind awareness anytime it releases company information indefinitely. Viral content works best in social marketing, but it is not easy to create a viral campaign.

When we think of social media marketing, we think of social networks, blogs, forums, image and video sharing websites (Talpau, A., Boitor B., Boscor, D., 2011, p. 223). Social media is a great new marketing tool. Its best known channels are: Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon, Reddit, photo and video sharing sites like Flickr, Youtube or Trilulilu and others. As social media becomes increasingly expressive, consumers will be able to increasingly influence other consumers with their opinions and experiences (Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., Setiawan, I., 2010, p. 8). Social media networks have a great impact on the behavior of consumers, not only on the behavior of young people but also on the behavior of the other segments. The number of social network users is increasing and it now includes people of all age categories.

4. Case studies – Romania and UK

The globalization played an important role and allowed the internet to spread worldwide. With small limitations, same information is available from any corner of the world. Still, it is important to point out that there are different strategies that work best and different costs involved when it comes to specific locations.

When referring to search engines, semantic search means looking into the meaning of a word and into what relates with it. Besides the actual search query entered, there is another important clue that helps identifying the most relevant results for a user: the location. Search engine results differ if a person searches from another country and even from another city. The location of a user can reveal a lot about what is / might be relevant for a certain person. For example, depending on how general or how specific a search query is for a given location, users from Romania can see similar or completely different results than users from the United Kingdom.

This paper will present the results of a personal research that compared Online Marketing practices used in Romania with campaigns used in the United Kingdom.

When it comes to Pay Per Click campaigns, a major advantage is that an organization can set the exact targeted market and display ads only for that specific segment. As already presented, depending on the competition (number of existing bids), a click's cost can vary significantly from one day to another and from one location to another.

The analysis made compared forty different queries in different time intervals, targeting two countries: Romania and the United Kingdom. It is important to mention that all the keywords were identical for both Romanian and English (e.g.: tourist info, restaurant, laptop, mall, electrician etc.).

There are three statistics that showed significant differences between the two locations: the cost per click, number of monthly searches within each location and displayed results.

The cost per click is significantly higher when advertising in Romania and when advertising in the UK. If for "tourist info" the cost is with ~300% higher in the UK than in Romania, for "electrician" a click in the UK costs up to ten times more than a click in Romania. This is understandable

since there are twenty times more queries for this key-word in the UK than there are in Romania. In terms of search engines results, the conclusion says it all: more than 80% of the organic displayed results differ and more than 95% of the paid results differ for location-based queries, since paid results are a lot easier to control.

When it comes to Facebook Advertising, there are over 30.6 million people that can be targeted in the UK at an average cost per click of $0.87 and there are 4.8 million Romanians that have a Facebook account, the average cost per click being $0.18.

5. Conclusions

Online Marketing strategies are, without a doubt, more and more popular and are greatly used all over the world. Depending on each location, practices are a lot similar but, despite the globalization and despite the global character the internet has, costs and competition differ significantly from one location to another via the internet.

An organization needs to set very well its targeted market, continuously monitor its direct competitors and needs to be able to keep up with online marketing best practices which are incredibly dynamic.

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