



THE PROSPEROUS PARTNER



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As mobile technology improves, so do the marketing opportunities associated with it. What that means for local business owners is that nobody can afford to overlook mobile marketing as a way of generating sales and increasing profits. Geofencing is a classic example of targeted mobile marketing and this article will explore why you should take it seriously.

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2016 is rapidly drawing to a close, and it's a good time to take a step back and reevaluate your marketing strategy as you head into the New Year. It's important to acknowledge that some of the marketing tactics and tools that loomed large as the year started have already faded into obscurity. Let's look at the marketing fads that burned out in 2016.

Deconstructing "Lead Gen" Websites

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The key to building an effective lead generation website is to understand all the ways that such a website can work to help bring you qualified leads. This article will look at the specific elements of a lead generation website so you can use that information to attract leads and grow your business.

Welcome To The Prosperous Partner

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,
Eddie Hill

Prosperous Internet Marketing, Inc., based in Northwest Florida, is one of the leading small business marketing services in North America, and has been for over five years. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Prosperous Partner and feel free to reach out to us anytime.



7 CREATIVE HOLIDAY MARKETING IDEAS THAT WORK

The holidays are here, and companies all around the world are seeking ways to make themselves and their products stand out in the din of seasonal marketing. It can be difficult to find ways to reach your target audience at such a busy time of year, but here are some suggestions that may do the trick.

Get Creative with Email Marketing



Dollar for dollar, email marketing is still one of the most cost-effective ways to reach your target audience. The holidays are the perfect time to use your email list to your advantage by reaching out to your existing customers with unique offers. Here are a few examples:

- » Have a holiday preview sale and invite your most loyal customers to attend
- » Run a Cyber Monday sale and send a series of emails leading up to the big day
- » Create a holiday gift guide – complete with links to your online store – and email it to your list early in the holiday season
- » Offer special holiday coupons

There are dozens of other things you could do with your email list. The main thing to keep in mind is that your customers want to feel special and valued. Anything you offer that provides them with that feeling is likely to be popular.



Use Social Media to Spread Holiday Cheer



The holidays are the perfect time to interact with your customers on social media. In fact, if you put the emphasis on social interactions, you can still reap big benefits when it comes to increased sales and customer loyalty. For example, you might:

- » Share holiday-themed content that's relevant to your business. For example, a yarn store might share a pattern to knit a holiday stocking, and a clothing boutique might offer ideas for what to wear to a holiday party.
- » Encourage your customers to post holiday pictures and give a prize for the best one.
- » Ask customers to share holiday memories.
- » Host a contest or giveaway.

Don't be afraid to have fun with your social media accounts. You need to be true to your brand personality, of course, but that doesn't mean that you can't cut loose a bit.



Provide Special Holiday Packaging



It's not uncommon for holiday shoppers to leave gift wrapping until the last minute, only to be faced with what seems like an insurmountable pile of presents right before the holiday. With that in mind, you should consider doing one of two things:

1. Buying special holiday boxes or gift bags to make your products look festive as they leave your store; or
2. Offering a free gift-wrapping service to your customers after they make a purchase.

Free gift-wrapping will cost you a bit of time and money, but it will also earn you a ton of good will with your customers.



Get Festive with Other Business Owners



One idea that can help boost your online marketing if you own a brick-and-mortar store is hosting a holiday event. If your town has a holiday event, then you can participate, open your doors, and offer some free treats and other incentives to get customers to visit your store.

Even if your town doesn't have an event, you can pair up with other business owners in the area to host one. For example, you might come up with a theme and decorate adjacent stores to coordinate with one another. You could have in-store demonstrations of products, such as a fashion show or a mini cooking class. You might offer hot chocolate, spiced cider, or other seasonal treats as a way of saying thank you to your customers.

It's also a good idea to think about running a sale at the same time to reward people for visiting your store. You might offer a two-for-one deal, or give everybody who comes in a festive holiday coupon that has to be used that day.

Make a Holiday Video



A lot of companies make special holiday videos, and it's something you should consider doing too. Instead of making something that's a direct sales pitch or commercial, try focusing on the festive aspects of the holiday.

A good example of a video that reached a huge online audience – and earned the company that made it fantastic word of mouth advertising – was the video airline WestJet did that featured their employees working behind the scenes to deliver unexpected holiday gifts to their passengers. The video has more than 45 million views on YouTube, and it gave customers a behind-the-scenes look at some company employees while also spreading a universal message of holiday cheer and generosity.

Even small companies can use this idea by playing Secret Santa to a local family or making donations to a charity.

Remember All the Holidays



The push to market to people who celebrate Christmas can be overwhelming, but a good way to make yourself stand out from the crowd is to offer some holiday advertising and specials that cater to other holidays as well. For example, you might send a Thanksgiving email to your list, or highlight a New Year's sale. You can also offer marketing materials that are especially for people who celebrate Hanukkah or Kwanzaa.

Even subtle things, like including a menorah in your holiday windows, can do a lot to attract new customers and make them feel welcome.

Create Special Gift Packages



You may have noticed that a lot of businesses offer special holiday deals and packages that make attractive gifts. For example, a store that sells bath and beauty products might offer gift baskets that include bubble bath, body lotion, and a loofah.

Think about your products and come up with some creative ways to sell and package them. You might even want to consider pairing up with another local business owner to create something truly unique. When customers buy one of your products, you can present them with a coupon or small sample from another store in the area and encourage them to go visit it – or you and the other business owner can set up a joint sales point between your stores to sell your special offering.

These seven ideas can help you make the most of the holiday season – and increase your sales while spreading holiday cheer.





WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT GEO-FENCING

As mobile technology improves, so do the marketing opportunities associated with it. As of 2015, mobile searches on Google officially outnumbered searches conducted on desktop computers. What that means for local business owners is that nobody can afford to overlook mobile marketing as a way of generating sales and increasing profits. Geofencing is a classic example of targeted mobile marketing. This article will explore why you should care about geofencing.



WHAT IS GEOFENCING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Let's start with a quick overview of geofencing and how it works. Geofencing makes use of locational information collected from smart phone users and allows business owners to send targeted messages to potential customers based upon their geographical location.

All smart phones have GPS or some other form of location marker on them. As long as users have their GPS turned on, advertising networks can access that information. People

who use those networks can then choose to send SMS or text messages designed to appeal to people who are in the area and might consider stopping into their business.

In other words, geofencing is a tool that allows business owners to increase foot traffic to their stores by reaching out to people who are physically in the area – thus maximizing the chances that those people will respond to their ads.

GET THE MOST OUT OF GEOFENCING

If you want to try geofencing, there are some things you need to know if you want to make the most of it. Like any other form of marketing, you will have to test it out and try some different things to make it work for you and your business.

1. Set up the proper parameters. Depending on your business and service area, you may want to cast a wide net or keep your target area relatively small. For example, you might decide to target commuters on their way home from work, or people in a specific neighborhood. The parameters you choose will determine the audience your messages reach.
2. Narrow your parameters as much as possible. The most effective use of geofencing is marketing campaigns that are hyper-targeted, focusing on an area that's five square miles or less. The people who are closest to your physical location are those who are most likely to come to your store. You want to make it as easy as possible for people to respond positively to your ad.
3. Learn about your customers and target them as specifically as possible. If you

have a clear idea of your typical customer persona, you can use that information to narrow the reach of your campaign and ensure that your message gets to the people most likely to respond to it. For example, you might choose to target people based on their age, marital status, or whether they own pets.

4. Make sure that the content you send using geofencing is highly relevant to your customers. For example, it makes a lot of sense to send a message touting your happy hour specials at 4:00 on Friday afternoon, and significantly less so to send the same message at 11:00 on a Sunday morning. That's an obvious example, but it illustrates why timing is so important when it comes to geofencing.
5. Test all of your geofencing campaigns as you go. Just as you can use split testing for your website, you can do it for your mobile marketing as well. Even small changes, like adjusting the fonts you use or the colors in your message, can affect the response you get.

These tips can help ensure that you get a high return on your investment in geofencing.





IDEAS FOR USING GEOFENCING

Finally, let's look at a few specific examples of how to use geofencing effectively. The offers you send – and the times you choose to send them – can have a significant impact on the response you get.

- » Restaurant owners can send out offers, including coupons and other special deals, to pull in traffic at slow times of day. If Saturday lunch is not typically a money-maker for your establishment, you might try targeting shoppers at a nearby mall to see if you can get them to stop in for a meal on their way home.
 - » A florist might consider sending out a special offer or discount code that's targeted at people shopping for Valentine's Day. For example, sending a message to men in your target area on February 13th – or the morning of the 14th – can help attract last minute sales and give people an incentive to choose your business over others in the area.
 - » Service providers such as dentists, doctors, and veterinarians can use geofencing to attract new clients. Instead of spending money to print and mail postcards or coupons, you can save money by sending electronic versions of those offers to the people who live in your service area.
- » Any business hosting a special event, such as an open house, can use geofencing to spread the word about the event and convince people to stop by to take advantage of special offers and sales. People who might not normally come into your store might be tempted by the prospect of free food or early access to sales items.
 - » Likewise, geofencing is a great way to target people who are already customers when they are nearby. It can be especially effective when using in conjunction with an in-store concierge service. Geofencing can tell you when customers are in the area, and allow you to send them special offers to get them to stop in. And if you do it properly, it can also alert you when a customer is entering the store so you can greet them and provide them with the kind of personalized service that builds customer loyalty and appreciation.

As you can see, geofencing makes it easy for you to create hyper-targeted marketing campaigns that reach people when they are most likely to visit your store. Instead of wasting money on blanket marketing that mostly goes to waste, you can save your marketing dollars to spend on the people who are most likely to respond.

**Want to learn how a geo-fencing campaign can laser target your ideal customer?
Pinpoint your perfect customer by contacting us today!**

MARKETING FADS TO LEAVE BEHIND IN 2016

2016 is rapidly drawing to a close, and it's a good time to take a step back and reevaluate your marketing strategy as you head into the New Year. It's important to acknowledge that some of the marketing tactics and tools that loomed large as the year started have already faded into obscurity. So which marketing trends have run their course? Let's look at the marketing fads that burned out in 2016.



VINE



You're probably familiar with Vine. It's a video-sharing app that allows users, including businesses, to share six-second videos, or "Vines", with their followers.

While video content is still hugely popular as we head into 2017, Vine does not appear to be taking off as an effective means of branding and marketing businesses. Rather than spending money on Vine marketing, consider taking your video budget and using it elsewhere to maximize the return on your investment.

QR CODES

For a while, QR codes were all the rage. It seemed like nobody sent out a marketing text or email without a QR code, and customers happily presented their smart phones at check out so that cashiers could scan the codes for a discount or coupon.

However, QR codes seem to have largely run their course. The primary reasons for their demise are:

1. QR code scanners tend to be glitchy and ineffective, and that can be a source of frustration for consumers.
2. The overall conversion rate for QR codes is extremely low, rendering the ROI on using them negligent at best.

While mobile marketing is certainly on the rise, QR codes are a trend best left on the shelf.





YELLOW PAGES ADVERTISING

While in many ways, advertising in the print yellow pages might seem outdated, a surprising number of companies still do it. However, the overwhelming majority of consumers in the United States own smart phones, and as a result, they are far more likely to look up local business using their phones than they are to turn to a book.

If you're reluctant to give up your ad in the yellow pages, consider that the cost of print advertising is far higher than that of advertising online. You can still list your business in local business guides, online directories, and professional associations. Many of those places do not charge for listings, making them a far more affordable choice than any form of print advertising.

DESKTOP MARKETING

While many consumers still use laptops and even desktop computers to search and conduct business online, the fact is that as of 2015 mobile searches on Google outstripped desktop searches. That is a trend that will very likely not reverse itself, and yet many business are still in denial about the reality and what it means for their marketing strategies going forward.

The smart money in marketing or 2017 is in mobile marketing. You'll get a much higher return on your investment than you would with desktop marketing. Mobile marketing allows businesses to send out highly-targeted messages using sophisticated technology such as geofencing. It makes sense to reconfigure your marketing budget to allow for decreasing your desktop marketing and increasing your mobile outreach.

ORGANIC SEARCH

Google isn't going anywhere, but the fact is that as its algorithms grow increasingly more sophisticated, it gets harder and harder for companies to generate any traffic at all as a result of organic search.

Why? Because Google has moved away from being a true search engine and toward being a predictor of human behavior. Search results are targeted by geographical area and refined based on behavior. A consumer who does repeated searches for businesses in downtown Boston is likely to get only downtown business even if she does a search for "Boston florists" based on her past behavior.

SEO is still important, but it's likely that businesses will begin to place less emphasis on achieving a high organic search rank and more on the kind of targeted marketing that will ensure that the people who need to see their ads actually see them.

SOCIAL POSTS THAT DON'T ENGAGE

Social media continues to be a huge force in online marketing and advertising. Companies are using social giants Facebook and Twitter, as well as newer sites such as Pinterest, Instagram, and Snapchat, to reach their customers.

As social media use rises, companies are becoming increasingly sophisticated in the way they approach their social media strategies. It's no longer acceptable simply to blanket your Twitter feed with direct sales pitches. The most effective social content is content that encourages your followers to engage with you directly.

Examples include posts that request followers to create their own content, or posts that ask a question. The more engagement you get with your followers, the more likely you are to create brand loyalty and turn casual followers into paying customers.





FAILING TO INTEGRATE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Speaking of social media, the final trend to leave behind is any tendency you might have to keep your customer service separate from social media. Customers expect to be able to ask questions and register complaints on social platforms, and the companies who get the highest ratings for customer service have embraced that trend and used it to their advantage.

Instead of resisting the idea of Facebook being a place where customers come to ask questions, look at it as an opportunity to engage with them and help them in a public way. Even a negative comment

can turn into a net positive for your company if your social media team responds properly. Offer apologies when necessary, and calm solutions whenever possible. And if by chance a problem is too big to deal with on social media, you can provide the customer with a telephone number or send them a private message to deal with it offline.

The key to marketing success in 2017 is to take the time to assess your marketing strategy, revise it as necessary, and reallocate funds to the campaigns and tactics that are most likely to succeed in the New Year.

Deconstructing “Lead Gen” Websites



One of the most important things you do as a business owner is attracting new customers. Generating leads is essential for all businesses, but especially for service based businesses that don't have the benefit of a brick-and-mortar store where they can use window graphics, place signs, and find other ways to bring in foot traffic. To get leads, it's critical to find ways to stand out from your competitors, and building a website that's

focused on lead generation is one of the best ways to accomplish that.

The key to building an effective lead generation website is to understand all the ways that such a website can work to help bring you qualified leads. This article will look at the specific elements of a lead generation website so you can use that information to attract leads and grow your business.

Lead Generation Form

The first thing you need to think about is a lead generation form. A form can be a static item on the side or at the bottom of a page, or it can be a pop-up window that encourages visitors to your site to subscribe to your list or fill out a form for a free meeting or consultation. Collect and manage your new "leads" with services like Mail Chimp or similar services.

Keep in mind, the most effective forms are those that have relatively few fields for a lead to fill out. A 2010 examination of online behavior found that adding unnecessary forms to a lead generation form resulted in an increased bounce rate. Request the minimum amount of information you need to move forward and nurture your lead – and eliminate everything else.

Other things to consider for your lead generation form include:

- » Putting your form inside a frame to call attention to it
- » Placing your form above the fold to ensure that visitors to your site don't miss it
- » Including your privacy statement on the form to alleviate concerns that you will sell information
- » Making your value proposition clear

If you follow these guidelines, then you will very likely see an improvement in both the number and quality of your leads.

Form Scraping Tools

Don't let this next step scare you. But nowadays the best way to make the most of your lead generation website is a form scraping tool. These tools work by collecting information from your lead generation form and exporting them to a spreadsheet where you can access the information and use it to nurture your leads.

One tool that does a good job that also happens to be 100% free is the HubSpot Collected Forms tool. Once you have collected the information from the completed forms, you can use it in a myriad of ways to connect with leads and convert them into paying customers.

Calls to Action

If you want to generate high-quality, qualified leads with your website, you cannot ignore the importance of crafting strong calls to action for every page on your site.

The call to action is what tells visitors to your site what you want them to do – and what you're willing to offer them in return. Your goal is to get their email address and other contact information so you can nurture them and get them to buy for you. Their goal is not to turn over that information unless they feel confident that they'll be getting something valuable in return.

The solution is having both a primary and a secondary call to action on each page of your website. The primary CTA should appear above the fold, and it should feature the number one thing you want customers to do when they visit your page. It should include strong, enticing language such as "Sign up free" or "Try it now" – language that encourages people to take action immediately.

The secondary call to action should be below the fold. It can have the same goal as the primary CTA, but it should look different. Use slightly different language and different formatting to ensure that your site doesn't look repetitive or boring.



Gated Offers

Sometimes it is necessary to offer potential leads something tangible in return for their contact information. One of the most time-honored ways to do that is to use a lead magnet – a free piece of content that's relevant to your customers. The only way for them to get the content is to fill out your form and subscribe to your list.

Some examples of gated content include:

- » Exclusive Deals
- » Inside Tips or Advice
- » Short eBooks and reports
- » White papers
- » Videos

You can use anything you want as a lead magnet, but it is absolutely essential that it be both valuable and relevant to your customers. If you create the right lead magnet, it can kick your lead generation into overdrive.

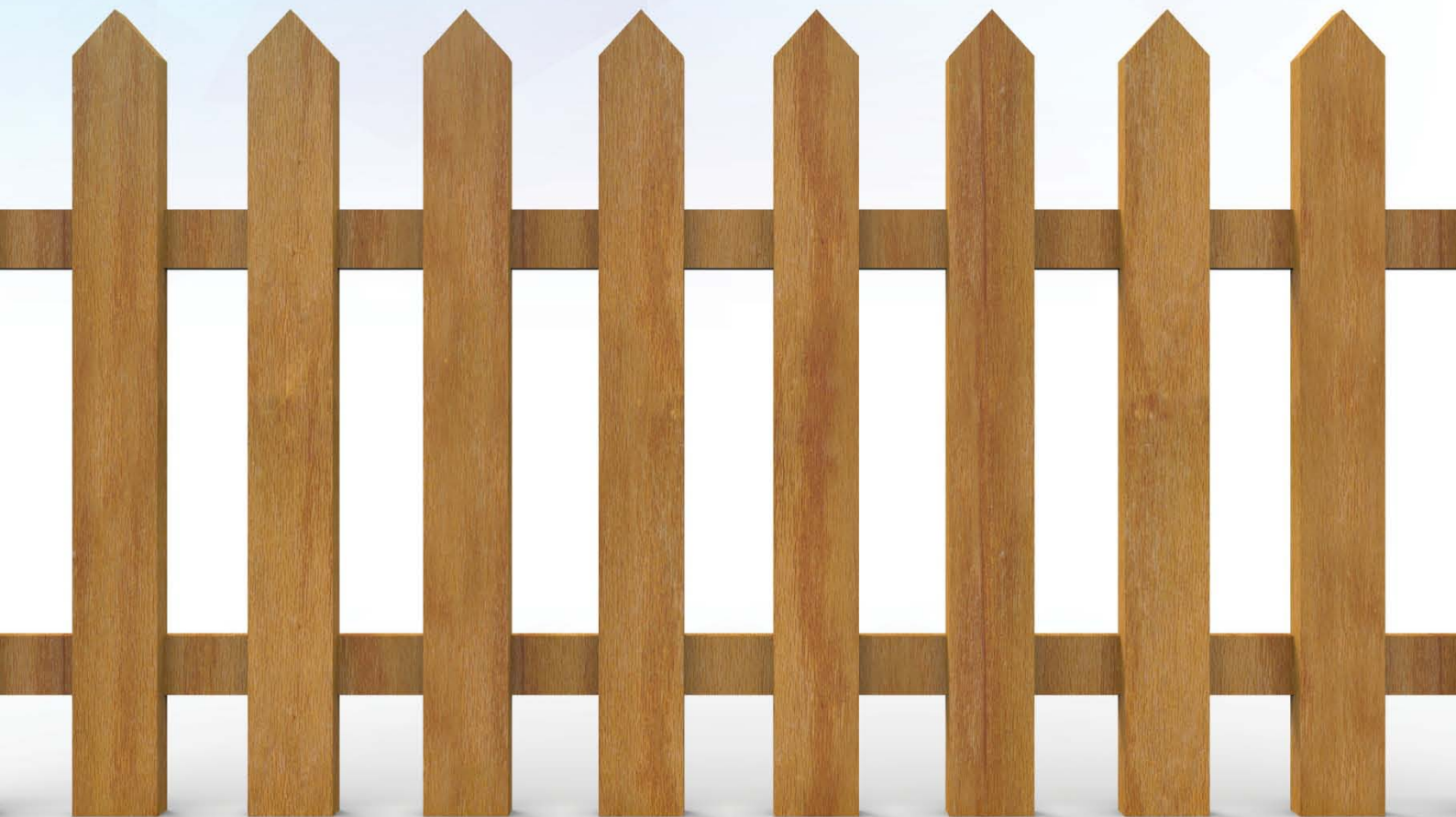
Pop-up Forms

While it's certainly understandable that people don't like pop-up forms, the fact remains that they can be extremely effective when it comes to drawing attention to important information and offers.

The key with using a pop-up form is to make sure that they are:

- » Relevant to the page on which they appear
- » Timed to coincide with visitors' actions to make them as unobtrusive as possible
- » Easy to respond to
- » Compelling, with strong language and visuals

If you use them properly, pop-up windows can help you increase your conversion rate and generate new leads.





Social Proof and Trust Marks

The final element of a well-designed lead generation page is social proof. More than 80% of all online shoppers rely on customer reviews and testimonials to assess products and companies.

Some of the things you may want to include on your lead generation page include:

- » Customer testimonials
- » Links to crowd review sites such as Yelp
- » Information about industry awards you have won
- » Social buttons that display how many followers you have

All of these items can help to demonstrate your trustworthiness and value. The subtle message is that if you have a large following, new leads can trust that you have something worthwhile to offer.

A lead generation page that includes all of these items can do a great deal to help you generate qualified leads – the kind of leads that are most likely to translate into increased sales and profits.

Intuitive Design

The design of your website has a lot to do with your bounce rate and lead generation success. If your site is poorly designed or doesn't flow from one element to the next, the likelihood is strong that people will leave, or bounce, to another site.

On the other hand, a site that flows and is simple to navigate – one that has thoughtful CTA placement that appeals directly to customers at the time when they are most likely to convert – will generate leads on a regular basis.

Blog

Bloggging remains one of the best ways to generate leads. The reason is that a well-written and relevant blog provides you with an immediate way to give value to your site's visitors. Every blog entry represents an opportunity for you to connect with a potential lead and demonstrate what you can do for them.

Each blog entry you write should include a targeted call to action at the end. That way, if a potential lead reads a blog post and wants to learn more about you and your company, they don't have to go searching for a way to get in touch with you.



**SMART
DESIGN IS
GOOD BUSINESS.**

To convert more visitors in to
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