

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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### Virtual Marketing Benefits for the CEO



Almost every company has a web site these days.

But, are you using the internet to market more effectively?

The internet has allowed marketers to promote their value propositions and talk directly to customers in ways never before possible. And, we constantly hear that this way of one-to-one marketing has fostered more customer centric strategies.

However, from what I see not every CEO has adopted a completely proactive approach to dealing with customers using the internet. Many have just taken their literature and posted it on their web sites with some forms for interested customers to fill out and e mail to the company. Others have gone one step further and have set up other forms to allow for ordering off of the their web sites.

The internet offers many more wonderful ways to promote your business more effectively than traditional methods of the past. It certainly allows you to cast a much wider global net and directly motivate more customers, if you use it properly.

Some of the more obvious benefits of marketing via the internet are:

#### Professionally done product presentations

One of the best things the internet provides is the ability to create professionally done product presentations and demonstrations. One of the things that used to bug me as a CEO was the way in which salesmen would present our products to prospective customers. After some sales calls I would ask "whose product were you selling"?

Depending upon the experience, education and personality of the salesman each would make a different presentation. If we were selling a product that required technical knowledge and experience, it was even worse.

Now with the internet you may not even need a sales force any more because everything that any customer needs to know should be available in a standard professional format with graphically sophisticated demonstrations of how to use the product, as well as highlighting its benefits and advantages. This can be supplemented with online availability of a company expert to talk to or FAQ's.

Selling today can be conducted via phone with access to the internet. You can show customers where anything that they need to know can be found on your web site and you can take them through demonstrations over the phone referring to your site on their screen.

Webinars further enhance this process of continuous customer education about your value proposition.

#### Broadcast product updates and promotions

Another beautiful aspect of online marketing is that you can broadcast updates to your product offerings to your e list of customers. In addition you can broadcast promotions, sales and other incentives. This ability to motivate customers and keep them directly aware of new product developments instantly is a powerful tool.

Historically, you would hope that customers would see your advertisements, or react to a snail mail promotion, or see something new in your store. This was a haphazard, catch as catch can approach, at best. Now you can be assured that every customer on your e customer file receives information about new developments.

#### Share success/application story's

Customer success story's sell product – it's a know fact. Now you have the ability to share these success story's

over the internet with the confidence that all of your good customers will see it! Business is about solving problems for customers.

### Customer profiling/market research

Every time you have a transaction with a customer it is a great opportunity to capture another piece of their DNA as a consumer. Over time the bits and pieces of these transactions create a mosaic of individual customer types and their preferences and requirements.

In addition, now that you can establish a one-to-one relationship with customers you have another wonderful opportunity to ask them how you can continue to help them with their individual requirements or solve problems that they have. These solutions for individual customers usually become very saleable enhancements for other customers.

This is about customer relationship marketing – CRM. The goal should be to use all of the tools now available to you via the internet to collect invaluable information about customers so that as I have said in other articles – you can **delight them**.

I hope these few practical examples motivate you to explore how you can take advantage of the internet to market your value proposition more effectively, if you are not already doing so.

If you would like to start a dialogue on internet marketing – let me know.

### Just think about how you have been motivated via internet promotions.



An entrepreneur himself, Bob has spent most of his career involved with starting, growing and selling businesses. Having held managerial positions with IBM, Pfizer and Exxon, he draws upon extensive organizational experience with large and small companies in advising CEOs of growing firms. He is available online to answer questions from Chief Executive readers, as well as offer workshops, tips, books to read and a monthly online column about common issues facing CEOs of growing firms. Bob has been featured in USA TODAY for his work with Inc 500 firms and is associated with NYU's Stern Graduate School of business in their Center for Entrepreneurial Studies where he is a Venture Mentor, Marketing Strategist and Business Plan Reviewer.

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