



The Importance of Search Engine Optimization / Search Engine Marketing for B2B Marketers – Part 1 of 2

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Is Search Engine Marketing cost effective enough to increase profits for B2B marketers? You bet, and here's why. It's always been conventional wisdom that the fastest and most efficient way to research products and pricing is on the Web. Now Enquiro has documented survey research on the role of search engines in B2B transactions.

As you know, B2B transactions differ from most consumer transactions because these decisions require coordination between a number of different personnel before the final transaction is made. Therefore, the process requires a period of time between researching the product and placing the order. It's an ongoing rather than snap decision.

"The Role of Search in Business to Business Buying Decisions" is a well-designed study of approximately 1500 participants responding to a 40-question survey that was validated with pre-testing before implementation. You can [download the entire report](#) for free, and here are a few highlights:

- When participants were asked to indicate how they would go about making a B2B purchase, 93.2 percent said they would research the purchase online.
- When asked if they would use a search engine at some point in this task, 95.5 percent of participants indicated that they would.
- When asked where they would start their search for information, 63.9 percent of participants chose a search engine over consumer review sites, e-commerce sites, manufacturer's sites, and industry portals.
- When taking budget into consideration, manufacturer's sites and industry portals were the chosen starting place as budgets increased. However, 86.9 percent of participants said they would visit a search engine after visiting those sites.

The study is rich with too many details to cover in this article, but following are some important conclusions:

- Search engines play a dominant role in B2B purchases.
- Search engines are used in the early or mid research phase in the buying cycle.
- Google is favored over other search engines.

- Search engine research takes place at least one to two months before the buying decision.
- Good balance between organic and paid search is necessary. Organic SEO gets over 70 percent of the clicks.
- Position is a factor, with over 60 percent clicking on the top 3 listings.
- Most users decide which listing to click on in seconds upon scanning the page.

With all this qualified traffic originating from search engines, it is more important than ever for B2B marketers, wholesalers, and B2B exchanges to ensure their Web sites are correctly optimized for good positioning in search results. There is also great value in SEO/SEM as a user-friendly marketing tool.

The Uniqueness of Search Engine Marketing

Search engine traffic is highly targeted. That's because potential buyers who find your B2B offerings through search engines are looking for your products and services on their own, so they are predisposed to hear your marketing message. You can't find a more qualified prospect than that. Here's what distinguishes search engine marketing from other types of advertising:

1. **Non-Intrusive:** Search marketing is a non-intrusive marketing tool. Most advertising, both online and offline, interrupts consumer behavior. If a user goes to a web site for info, up pops an intrusive ad. Reading a newspaper? Ads dominate and force articles to be continued on another page. With search engine marketing, the user is actively seeking your products, services, and information. They are delighted to be driven to your site.
2. **Voluntary:** Search marketing is the result of user-originated behavior. Your visitors from search engines and directories have voluntarily clicked on your listing rather than any competitors, thus they are motivated to explore your offerings.

How good is the ROI? How effective is search engine marketing and optimization for B2B? What are the key-points to consider regarding a B2B search engine optimization and marketing plan? Please join me next month for Part 2 when we examine the answers to these questions.

http://marketingtoday.com/emarketing/0305/b2b_importance_sem.htm