7 STEPS TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS SITE
FROM A MARKETING PIONEER

The daughter of the man who invented the instant replay knows technology.

Laura Betterly knows how to use technology to market businesses. In fact, she was one of the first people to use online marketing; one of the first 100 on Google AdWords.

In the 90's, Laura founded the company Visiosonic, or PCDJ.com, the first dual MP3 player. She found something very interesting: their email newsletters were making more money than the software itself. This made perfect sense, though; the emails were filled with great offers for products the target audience loves.

So Laura quickly learned the power of online marketing and the importance of permission-based, targeted emails (even before CAN-SPAM came into play). Eventually, Laura started Yada Yada Marketing, which she continues today.

Laura helps businesses begin, improve and advance their marketing every day. We talked to her and identified the seven steps every business should take.

Step One: Do the Research

The biggest mistake that businesses make when they're starting out? "Not doing the research," says Laura. Before you even launch your website, you need to do some research.

"People are getting 1500 marketing messages a day. You better have something that's really wanted, really unique, or a different spin on it because at the end of the day it's not about you as the business owner and your product, it's actually about your consumer. What can you do for your consumer?" asks Laura.

Prior to launching, make sure you know:

- What your competition is doing
- How you plan to be different
- What your target audience wants

Once you have a plan nailed down, you'll be ready to get your site up.
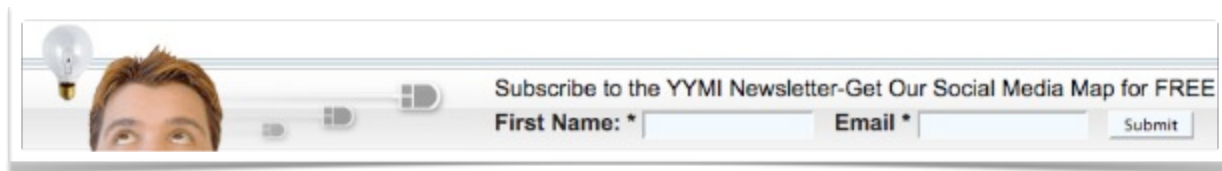
Step Two: Launch Your Site With an Email Subscription

You've done your research and you're ready to launch your site. You can have your web developer or designer take care or this, or do it on your own with online resources such as Smashing Magazine's "15 Essential Check Before Launching Your Website."

Now you'll need to start thinking about how you're going to collect visitors from your site and get them on your mailing list. Adding a web form makes that easy, but how do you convince them to sign up?

Laura's advice: don't go for the hard sell. And don't use an incentive that's no longer valuable. "Who wants another social media ebook? I could Google 'social media' and find more information than what's in that ebook," says Laura.

Here's an example:

The form on Yada Yada Marketing's site offers a unique resource (the map links to various websites in different categories) but it's clear to the visitor what they are signing up for and why they should sign up.

Steps Three & Four: Work on SEO and Social Media

Now that you're ready for visitors, it's time to start bringing them in. SEO (Search Engine Optimization, helping your site show up in searches) and social media are both tools that increase traffic - and social media also helps SEO.

Laura says the first thing you need to do is research again. This time, you'll want to look at keywords in your industry. Not sure where to start? Here are three programs she recommends:

- Keyword Spy - learn what competitors use for keywords
- Market Samurai - free SEO guide
- SEO Quake - shows SEO parameters such as page ranking and Alexa index

For those just starting out, try longer keyword phrases to start off until your site gains some ground.

Facebook and other social networks are playing a huge part in SEO. Search engines are now looking at social signals (likes, retweets, pluses, etc.) when it comes to page ranking.

Google has begun to put more weight on its Google+ service when looking at ranking. With Google being such a huge search engine, this means you should definitely sign your business up for a Google+ account.

If your business uses a lot of images, Pinterest has had a major impact on social signals. Each photo can be linked back to your site or blog, improving your SEO.

Then, there's the other benefits of social media:

- You can give your business a personality
- You can get noticed by more people
- You can keep your audience engaged more easily

Provide easy sharing links on your site and emails so your audience can easily join you on social media networks.

With all these social media tips in mind, remember, social media is supposed to be social. Laura recommends for every one promotional post you make on these networks, you have eight to nine fun things to share. This will help increase sharing, boosting your social signals and improving your SEO.

Step Five: Keep Content Fresh

In order to keep people following you, you'll need to continually produce fresh, valuable content.

If you have trouble coming up with new ideas, Laura has some suggestions:

- Set up something like Google Reader to subscribe to various blogs in your industry
- Look at what content catches your attention and ask yourself why
- Do a hash tag search in Twitter to see what people are talking about

Ultimately, you need to find what works for your audience, which brings us to our next section...

Step Six: Test What's Working

"You don't have to ask me or anyone else what to do. If you have an idea, test it! It might fail, so what? It might be a gangbuster; you might be the next #1 guru. Who knows? The only way you're going to know is by doing it," says Laura.

People can get too personally attached to what they're doing and lose the ability to try something new. **Don't let this be you**. Either it works or it doesn't, but you'll never know unless you try.

Here are some good things to test:

- Adding a pop up web form, ideally in tandem with an inline form
- Changing the layout of your landing page
- Signing up and using different social networks
- Changing the frequency of your emails
- Altering your call(s) to action

These are just some suggestions, and if you think something else would benefit your campaign, try it out!

Step Seven: Build Based on What Works

When you find something works, run with it and work on improving that. But also remember that some things may fail, and that's fine. Learn from it and move on.

"Look at it as a game. We're either winning the game or losing the game. If we're losing, we have to change tactics. When we're winning, we just have to put the pedal to the metal. If we win every game, it would be really darn boring. I would be bored as hell if I didn't fail every once in a while," says Laura.

About AWeber

What do leading sites such as Social Media Examiner, Copyblogger, Which Test Won, ProBlogger and Harvard Business Review all have in common?

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