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E-Commerce Tutorial: Building a Customer Base

Building a Customer Base

Once your online store is up and running and you are accepting online credit card payments, you can begin working on getting customers to your site and keeping them there.

Short term solutions for drawing qualified traffic to your site include pay-per-click search engines such as Google, Yahoo! Search and MSN Search. There are dozens of less known PPC engines that you can research on the web. PPC is a good short term solution because it draws targeted shoppers to your site overnight. Search engine web promotion is a more cost effective route to drawing targeted traffic to your site but it is not a short term solution. It can take months for search engine spiders to crawl and index your site.

Traditional (offline) advertising methods are less cost effective but can be useful- it is best to start with online advertising and search engine optimization before investing heavily in offline medias such as direct mail, radio spots, billboards, yellow pages, flyers and television commercials.

You can also create banner ads and email management. To optimize your advertising initiatives you must track what kind of customers you are bringing in and focusing on converting visitors to buyers. You need to be able to keep track of your customer base and observe which visitors are actually buying.

Tracking Statistics

Website statistics and "hit" logs maintain traffic patterns-how visitors found your site, which pages they visited, how long they stay on the site, and which customers made a purchase. With this information you can study which methods of advertising and marketing are bringing you the most profit and which ones are non cost effective.

Tracking sales leads is another way to determine which marketing tactics are successful. If you document the source of the lead, customer information, and orders that were placed, you have data that can calculate your return on investment. In addition you can continually improve your marketing and design portions of your plan by seeing why certain people stopped on certain pages.

Staying with E-Commerce

How do you establish the most cost-effective plan for you online e-commerce shopping cart? You must experiment with different advertising and marketing methods and keep a close watch on all sales. Be open-minded and try new things, but always make sure you know where your money is going. Track each advertising initiative. Marketing is key to online success- it is important to keep up-to-date with new technologies and methods of advertising. Constant re-evaluation is important due to the ever-changing nature of marketing on the web.