

Marketing Minute ~ Marketing Updates on Brand/Demand & Online Domains

There were some announcements last month that you really need to be aware of.

Brand/Demand Study Results

A new study by b-to-b agency Stein Rogan & Partners, in conjunction with *Forbes* and Ziff Davis Enterprises, found that marketers are taking a balanced approach to brand building and demand generation in the down economy. The study, "Balancing Brand and Demand: Measures and Methodologies for an Economy in Transition," was based on an online survey of 278 marketers and agencies conducted in May of this year.

When asked which is more important to a company's success, brand or demand, 65% of respondents said brand building and demand generation are equally important; 23% said generating demand is more important; and 13% said brand building is more important. The top marketing tactics used to build brand include out-of-home advertising (72%), social media (69%), PR (69%), broadcast advertising (68%) and print advertising (64%). The top tactics used to drive demand are outbound telemarketing (86%), sales promotion (70%), sales enablement tools (69%), direct mail (68%) and e-mail marketing (62%).

So, when you look closely at your marketing budget, perhaps these statistics can help guide you as to what the top marketers are using today for their branding and demand business.

New Domain Names Coming

Hundreds of new domain names are about to compete for attention with the old standbys such as .com, .org and .edu. Big businesses will shell out for customer Internet domain names. In the next few years, when hundreds of new suffixes become available to supplement .com, .gov, .org and others, expect domain names such as .dupont, .Exxon-mobil, .amex and .pepsico to flourish.

There'll be lots of generic domain names, too. Look for .realtor, .food, .green, .wine, .nyc, .boston, .music, .hospital and others. They won't come cheap: the application fee will be \$185,000. That will cover legal costs, processing fees and work needed to ensure that an applicant is legitimate and technologically capable of running a separate domain. To stave off disputes about what company or organization will get a prized domain name - .airline, for instance - the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the non profit global traffic controller of Internet assignment matters, will aim to award proposed names to logical recipients, such as giving the domain .realtor to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), even if several independent realty firms bid for the rights. The NAR would then be empowered to manage the domain and allow interested real estate agents, for a fee, to sign up and be part of the domain. It's expected that many companies in a given industry will want to be part of the custom domain to show customers and clients that they are legitimate industry players.

Cities may also see a custom domain name, such as .Kansas-city, as a revenue raiser, enabling officials to charge merchants - a barbeque restaurant, for instance - that want to be identified with the city for marketing purposes. ICANN will hold a tight rein on the process. It may approve .restaurant, for instance, but not endless variations, such as .restaurants or .dining or .formal-dining.

ICANN is expected to formally approve the initiative later this year and begin accepting proposals for custom domains in the first six months of next year. In some cases, ICANN will use an auction (after the application fee) to determine what company or organization may be awarded a favored domain name, such as .fourseasons for either the gourmet Four Seasons restaurant or the Four Seasons hotel chain. ICANN will retain the right to reject applications rather than get bogged down in endless disputes over names such as .islam or .Einstein, or whether a proposed domain may be seen as offensive. The organization is also setting up a dispute arbitration and appeal process in anticipation of hard to resolve domain right issues.

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