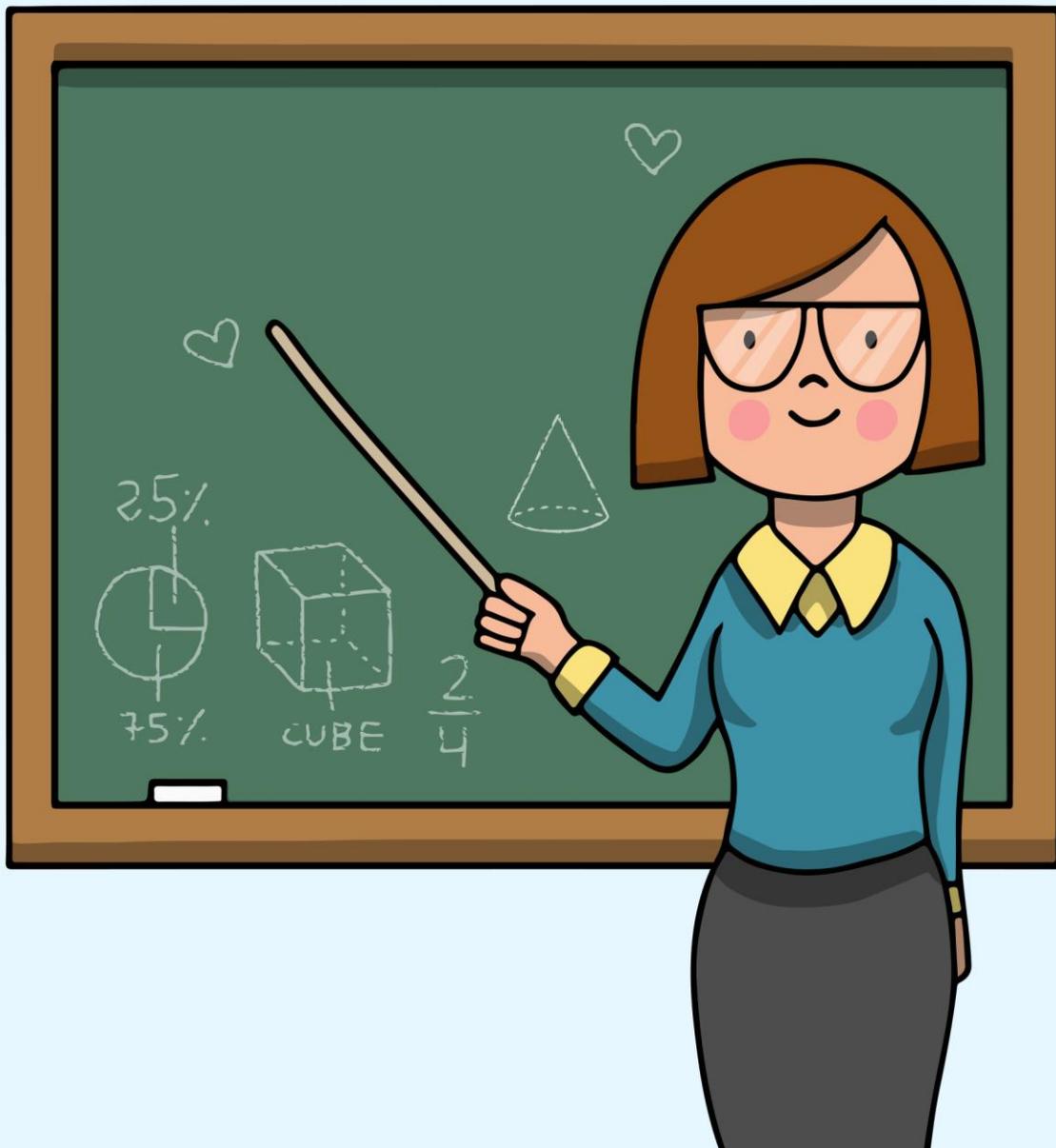


The Rules To FORUM MARKETING



LEARN ALL THE KNOWN RULES
TO FORUM MARKETING

The Rules to Forum Marketing

Introduction

There is nothing which screams out 'brilliant opportunity' as does Internet marketing. That is why if one does not want to lose out on serious profit-making chances then one should read the basic forum rules posted on each site.

This provides guidelines as to what can or cannot be done on the forum, helping you draw your limits as to how aggressive your marketing can be on these forums. Lack of this often leads to carelessness leading to unnecessary bans, and black marking against a particular user's name.

So, reading the rules before joining any forum is absolutely crucial, and comprises the first rule in successful internet marketing. The rules of the forum are posted right in the beginning under the guidelines or general discussion category and are not too detailed or tedious.

They simply ban or disapprove of any kind of aggressive self-promotion and untoward comments which may offend the sensibilities of the other forum members. But the degree of strictness in implementing these rules differs from site to site, so checking beforehand is the safest way not to get yourself in trouble.

Remember you are a fellow forum member who has joined because you like the sound of the forum and the topics being discussed in it, you are not supposed to be here to market yourself.

So, do not start singing your own praises and that of your website and product the moment you enter, especially without context. Read what is being discussed, see how the forum is (formal or informal) and respond to it.

Moreover, get to know some of the people on the forum, build a rapport before broaching the subject of your website, that also subtly. Following threads also has another bonus. If you follow, then you can keep track of certain queries raised by members, and if this falls in

your area of expertise then you can help them out and solve their problems, maybe even lead them subtly to your site containing matters about these issues.

This not only gets you traffic to your site but also creates your reputation. This procedure becomes even more relevant for sites which let you to add the links to your websites along with your name. Thus, in time, your credibility will increase and people will flock to your site to get help or buy your product, increasing your sales. So just go ahead and follow the etiquettes and all will be fine.

You Should Start with Forum Marketing

Forum marketing can make your online business get noticed. Forum users, by and large, are tech and net-savvy and like purchasing things online. Many forum frequenters are also authorities in the topics discussed in the forum.

Forum marketing, thus, helps make a good impression in front of a knowledgeable and influential audience, which can help spread word all over. What follows is a step-by-step guide that will tell you how to effectively make forum marketing a part of your marketing strategy.

Not all forums host the people you want to communicate with. You have to choose a set of 5-10 forums to concentrate your energies on.

Ensure that these forums have at least 10,000 posts from at least 1,000 members; that there are at least 10-15 new posts every day. Avoid forums which are hosted by your direct competitors; and those which are flooded by spam.

Create your forum accounts as soon as possible. This is helpful because seniority is given a lot of importance in most online forums:

some even require you to wait a few days before posting for the first time.

When you sign up, you'll be asked to agree to their user agreements and posting guidelines.

Read these documents carefully. A lot of people skip this and just click yes, because there is a lot of legal jargon. But some important things to look for are:

- Are you allowed to include links in your posts?
- Can you promote your business?
- Can you use commercial messages as your signature?
- Can you contact other members for business purposes on the forum?
- Are there restrictions on new and privileges for old members?
- Your user name is the first thing that'll be noticed. Pick one that's memorable, simple and can be easily pronounced. You might want to use your real name and/or the name of your company. Do not use random combinations of letters and/or numbers, or something that's significant to you and you alone.

Create a profile that will help you establish credibility. Put up a description of your experience and expertise. Personal information can help break the ice, but don't venture into topics that can alienate anyone, like race or religion or political affiliation.

Above all, treat forum marketing as an integral part of your long-term strategy, not just a one-off opportunity to bombard the message-boards with information about your hot new product.

Take Your Business to The Next Level

If you are looking to promote your online business on the internet, you have your work cut out for you. You really do. The difficulty does not come from finding traffic options. In fact, the difficulty comes from the fact that there are just simply too many options out there.

It is too easy to get caught up in all the available traffic generation options, and spend a lot of time, effort and money only to have very little to show for all your marketing efforts.

If you are serious about driving highly targeted traffic to your website, one of the best moves you can ever make is to carry out a forum marketing campaign.

It is easy to understand why forum marketing works. Regardless of how obscure your niche is, there are already people congregating online at certain websites who are talking about different aspects of whatever it is you are promoting. They are congregating at online message boards also known as forums.

This is a tremendous marketing opportunity because it is like fishing by shooting fish in a barrel. The fishes are already in the barrel. They have already selected themselves and they are in a tight space. It is almost a sure deal. It is very hard to miss.

However, you have to do this properly; otherwise, your forum marketing efforts will fail. Just as it is very easy to see the opportunities apparent in forum marketing, it is also very easy to completely blow those opportunities.

Niche targeting is crucial to forum marketing success

If you want to drive high-quality traffic to your website, you have to understand that you cannot just target any and all forums. That is a sure recipe for disaster.

Why? You are not targeting these forums based on interest. Every forum has a specialization. Every forum is geared towards certain subject matter categories. It is very important to find forums that are specialized in the particular niche of the product or service you are promoting, and stick to those forums.

Do not fall for the common trap of thinking that since there are few forums that deal with your niche directly, you have to pick any and every forum. That is completely wrong. You are only setting yourself up for your failure if you think that way.

All your forum traffic must have an archive-able HOME

It really would be a shame if you put in all this time, effort and energy driving traffic from forums to your target website only to have that traffic evaporate.

Unfortunately, that is precisely what you are doing if you are just promoting a link. Many old school marketers used to do this, and it used to work fine. Unfortunately, as forum visitors have become more sophisticated over the years, the old tricks simply are not going to fly. People expect more.

People are not simply going to convert right off a link. I do not care how well written your landing page is. I do not care how well put together your sales page is. People expect more.

Moreover, for you to maximize the traffic benefits of your target website, you need to make sure that it is archivable. It means that the content on your website must be arranged and handled in such a way that search engines can send traffic to different parts of your website. This is why I highly recommend that you create a blog.

Many people think that a blog is a waste of time or it would take too much effort, but the reality is that thanks to outsourcing, it has become very easy to keep a professional blog.

You want that traffic to go to specific pages on your blog, and you want other specific pages on your blog to work to convert whatever traffic you drive to your blog. You have to remember that different people have different interests.

They have different reasons for clicking on a link to go to your blog. Your blog has to present the value proposition you bring to the table in many different ways, so as to maximize the commercial appeal of whatever it is you are promoting.

Forum link dropping campaigns WILL blow up in your face

One of the most commonly used forum marketing methods is to take simple links and just drop them in posts in forums. The problem with this way of marketing is that there is really no added value as far as forum readers are concerned.

They do not have a clear idea as to the context of the link and how that link will add value to their lives. All they see are some catchy text encouraging them to click on the link. They do not even know in advance whether the link will be directly relevant to the niche of the content that they are interested in.

Not surprisingly, many marketers that engage in simple link dropping campaigns have very little to show for all their efforts. In fact, most of them have nothing to show for their efforts because these forums end up banning them. That is right.

If your account gets banned, all your posts get deleted.

This is a serious problem because many forum marketers market by simply dropping a link in either the body of their post or in their signature line. Regardless of whether you are using forum post body text or signature lines to promote your affiliate product or your own website, if you get banned, you will get to no benefits. This is why it is really important to understand that while you are, at the end of the day, promoting a link, you should not just promote the link.

You have to promote content. You have to provide some sort of context for your link. At the very least, this would give people enough information so they can make an informed decision as to whether they link will add value to their lives. If you are just dropping mysterious links all over the place, you probably will not get too many clicks since

people are very scared of landing on Spyware injection or virus propagation sites.

At worst, you will get banned. If you keep up this behavior, chances are quite high that your account will completely disappear from the forums that you are marketing at.

Credibility is the name of the forum marketing game

I have outlined the importance of content. Content is crucial because you cannot just drop naked links all over the place. People would not know what to do with your link. They would be very suspicious. They would be very skeptical and would often end up wasting all your time, effort and energy just dropping those links.

Also, forum posts that only contain naked links look awkward. They look incomplete. At the very least, they look suspicious.

This is why it is extremely important to clothe your links with credible content. Not only do you have to provide context for your link by including content, the content has to be credible.

Credibility really can be boiled down to giving people reasons to trust you. That is the bottom line. People will only listen to you if they feel that you know what you are talking about.

Unfortunately, too many forum marketers are completely ignorant about this forum marketing secret. They are very happy with simply

dropping links. It is no surprise then that they enjoy very little success. If you want to really maximize the amount of benefits and value you can get from a forum marketing campaign, it is extremely important for you to focus on credibility.

How do you build credibility? First, you have to offer real content. This is content that adds value to people's lives. This is content that actually answers specific questions that people have.

Credibility arises from the usefulness of your participation in a forum. One thing is clear. Somebody who simply just drops links all over the place is a completely useless forum member.

On the other hand, somebody who is always there to answer people's questions and steer them to the right direction will not only be viewed as a helpful person, but people are more like to click that person's links because they trust that person's information.

I hope you see the difference. In fact, the difference is like day and night. If you are serious about making more money online through forum marketing, you need to start with a serious credibility building campaign level!

Increasing Your Exposure

SO, you created your website for whatever purpose, to sell a product or service, to show off your photographic genius... whatever its YOUR pride and joy!! But you have no visitors to see your wonders in design or marketing?

The VERY FIRST STEP in driving traffic to your website is through what is commonly referred to as Online Forum Marketing. Online Forums are very interactive web pages that allow you as a registered user to read, interact and participate in discussions about a certain topic of interest.

You would do everything you can to participate in as many discussions as you can about your favorite topic, wouldn't you?

The reason is that with these 'discussion groups', you realize that this is your opportunity to learn as much as you can from these people in the shortest amount of time! and more importantly, you can establish your credibility as an authority on your chosen topic!

Forum Etiquette - Every forum has its own set of rules. It is your duty as a member to find out what is acceptable and what is not. This can include how to set up your signature.

Do they allow links? If so how many? How long can your signature be? Some forums do not allow you to post links that are of the certain type of nature. This can include links to porn sites, gambling sites or even affiliate links. What is the general subject matter of the forum?

If using a Homeworker Ideas forum, for instance, don't post things that are off topic unless they have a specific thread for that. There are forums that do not allow discussions of a political nature or discussion of religious topics. Even others discourage talking about specific products and companies.

The bottom line is that each forum is different and if you are to be an outstanding member, you have to play by the rules. If you don't, you might get slapped and even publicly humiliated. That doesn't amount to good marketing.

In conclusion, the best way to market yourself in a forum is to not really market yourself at all but rather to be a consistent member that contributes quality and substance to the community.

When your motive is to help others, contribute good content and become an integral part of a community, you end up marketing yourself without even trying.

When you start participating in various forums, you'll notice the various Signature Boxes on the bottom of the majority of the comments posted by forum members. You'll also notice that after you read a member posting that intrigues you, you'll find yourself clicking on the link of that particular member's signature.

Just like that, you just created a click through to that particular member's website!

When you simply register for your first online forum, the VERY FIRST THING you should do is create your 'Signature'. As mentioned in the section above, a Signature is basically what is used at the end of email messages to give your recipient that 'feeling of credibility' about you.

However, the SAME THING could be accomplished by adding that signature at the end of EVERY SINGLE ONE of your forum posts.

This is one of MANY times you're going to hear me teach you about the importance of your CREDIBILITY when marketing your product or service online.

Your first major accomplishment as an Internet Marketer is to first ESTABLISH your credibility. As you are well aware, the Internet is enormous – and being able to establish even a small amount of credibility is a major accomplishment, and COMPLETELY doable! Do everything you can to use Online Forums as your first step in establishing your online credibility! Why not, it's free! Warning!

Forums are VERY interactive in nature, with back-and-forth replying from just ONE particular post lasting for weeks and months at a time! You should post as frequently as possible: 2-3 times a week in as many as 5 different forums.

Try not to spend a tremendous amount of time on the forums. Just simply log in, locate your prior posts to check out any possible responses, respond if necessary, then go ahead submit your NEW POST, maybe read a few other members' posts, then LOG OUT!

Forums could be VERY ADDICTIVE if you let them affect you in that way. Millions of other forum members around the world find themselves investing TOO MUCH TIME in forums.

So, don't forget the reason why you are a forum member - that is to learn as much as you can, and DRIVE TARGETED TRAFFIC to YOUR WEBSITE! Another reason why you want to be careful in forums is that, depending on the forum, it may be a case of 'the blind leading the blind'.

You'll notice that the MOST SUCCESSFUL internet marketers may not even exist in the forums anymore because of this.

Just to remind you, when you are just starting your internet marketing career, establishing your positive professional credibility is your first and main concern. Forums are one of the PERFECT places to accomplish this goal.

However, as your credibility starts to rise and you start to 'brand' yourself, you may make the decision whether or not you still want to invest your valuable time in the forums. This is completely up to you and your business.

Your Action Step for driving massive amounts of targeted traffic to your website using Forum Marketing TODAY! Simply sign up and register for as many RELEVANT forums as you can, insert your Signature Box, and publish your first posts! Don't hesitate to involve yourself with 3-5 separate forums - of course, the more the merrier!

The first step is to modify your profile to include your Signature Box. When you create your first post, make sure you can 'preview' your post to make sure your Signature Box appears. Don't forget to make sure your website link is WORKING, then post away my friend!