

Marine Marketing Report
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A Marketing Revolution

How 'new media' and cross-media marketing and communications are changing the way we do business.

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A Marketing Revolution

New-Media

'Advertising and Publicity' has always been the main marketing tool – mainly print-centric in the marine marketing arena (I am taking out TV and Radio for the purposes of this marketing report – although outdoor-media is widely used around boat shows etc).

Print-centric media – display advertising, direct mail – press activities etc - has provided the platform for brand-building, front-of-mind awareness and product placement, all key communication methods. Today, one other important 'new' usage is to drive enquiries to your website.

'New-Media' is the name given to all electronically delivered publicity, sales and marketing messages beyond having your website. In simple forms, pay-per-click (ppc), emails and the banners and towers you see on websites everywhere – plus a host of other channels (including 'Rich Media' electronic interactive newsletters and brochures that save on print bills) – these are the basics of 'new-media'. I say 'simple' because it is another 'one-way' marketing media. Other web-marketing techniques such as using blind landing pages on your website to track advertising effectiveness and adding Country URL's for ranking in those territories, plus international languages on home pages are 'new media' extensions. Viral games are becoming a powerful way to build databases for 'new media marketing' use. The real marketing revolution begins when all of the marketing delivery methods are harnessed in unison with the added power of two way communication. This is the new revolution in marketing.

The next section deals with the 'engine' at the centre of this new marketing revolution – your website and your future.

The power of the Internet

It was not so long ago that businesses, rather reluctantly got 'on-line' with a website – if you did not have the 'www' you basically did not exist (surprisingly many businesses today 'do not exist!').

For many smaller companies just getting a website 'up' meant that this box had a 'tick' in it and nothing more was done. Others used graphic designers to produce a 'moving brochure' using flash as their web presence. Bigger organisations realised the power of on-line sales in the business-to-consumer mass market (and speciality niches) and built the sophisticated e-commerce sites we are all familiar with today.

Generally speaking, especially in the marine marketplace, the power and use of the internet has been left in a back-water. At best the websites have been developed as 'static' sites using more sophisticated graphics and treated again as just an updated 'tick in the box' web presence. Although some sophistication has been added to the better sites in the form of limited content-managed sections to operate dynamic areas (e.g. charter listings and product 'catalogues' etc) in the main the websites in the marine market are substantially out of date and not at all 'fit-for-purpose' in the internet environment today.

We are all now familiar with the need to have our websites 'optimised' hence the acronym SEO (Search Engine Optimisation). For a few big brand leaders, SEO is not such an important issue because the brand name will be used in the search process but they will miss out on general keyword searches from emerging markets. For all others, SEO is an important issue because of the interest span and expectations with 'searches' requiring pretty-well instant fulfilment! We all expect not to have to go beyond the first page searched! In my experience the top of the list in website FAQ is 'how do I retro-fit SEO into my existing website?' Sadly the answer to this is 'sorry-not possible'.

Quite often this is down to the original construction of the site. Search engines love fresh content that is regularly updated. They also love compliant templates that meet the requirements of associations promoting accessibility. Without these two fundamental requirements built into the foundation of a website, it will always under perform where SEO is a key requirement.

How do I upgrade my website?

Search engine algorithms change at great speed, so updates and refinements are constantly needed to keep optimisation at maximum efficiency. But first you will have to build a new fully 'content managed' (CMS) website ideally using html and ensure it meets with the current guidelines (www.w3.org). It is important to realise that SEO and ranking is now driven mainly by the activity levels of your site hence the need for regular copy updates on multiple pages....that's why it has to be totally 'content managed' by the user not the web-provider...keywords are also important to elevate the SEO to an acceptable level. If you would like Owens to run a SEO test-scan of your current site and give you a 'rating' figure, please ask. Your current design and graphics can be incorporated but as search engines look for the copy elements in html, so the common 'flash' elements have to be radically modified or reduced as any text included in these areas will not be visible to search engines. Our creative team can carefully blend your existing design and graphics into the upgraded site without losing the familiarity and recall-value of your website in a cost effective manner. Many Owen clients have opted for a 'micro' website (or series of sites) to promote individual propositions (eg a new yacht series or a brokerage yacht, perhaps a new range of products..). This creates a SEO/CMS module that acts as your optimised website and uses links to access your main site.

With a fully operational html, SEO-friendly/CMS installation you now have a powerful marketing tool which can be extended and developed to run a wealth of new and fundamental marketing, sales and prospecting tasks. You can add data capture forms and develop client tracking using Google analytics. You will be able to monitor the value of all your marketing programmes.

You can employ webmail (Owenwebmail) enquiry gathering tools that can track activities within an email campaign and through to your website, start prospecting in a highly accurate way using forms within email campaigns or on your website. With a SEO-friendly website built with an appropriate html software package...it could be a proprietary system or open-source for your particular needs, you are ready to fully utilise all the opportunities available to you to move your marketing to the next level both in effectiveness and for ROI.

An important thing to remember is that online activities are far more cost effective, cheaper if you like, and offer greater 'trackability' where reporting is concerned.

The embedded message here is that in the future all marketing campaigns will run in this software domain. The earlier you embrace this technology the better your prospects will be in surviving the current downturn.

Cross-Media-Marketing – The new power

Are you ready for the next leap forward? This report so far has outlined the journey in marketing tools from the 'print-centric' ('traditional') methods, adding 'new-media' into the mix and outlining how to rebuild your website engine to take full advantage of the fast moving advances in marketing communications.

So far all the marketing methods outlined are one-way – other than the ability to track, evaluate and collect data – the next step is two-way 'intuitive' marketing communication. This is Cross Media Marketing Communications.

It is now possible to communicate with your customers and prospects across all media channels. You will be able to reach your targets with consistent messages, more importantly with relevant messages to each individual. The added ingredient is to develop a dialogue – a continuous cross-media conversation – both with outbound messages and inbound responses. This interactive system is run on new software recently acquired by Xerox and called XMPie and now part of the suite of software solutions used by The Owen Agency and available to clients of Owen Marine Marketing.

An important feature of this highly efficient and cost effective software solution is that each individual marketing/advertising/publicity channel can be designed to optimise the visual and creative impact without compromising the state-of-the-art advantages of the chosen media, including fully utilising our own in-house 'variable data' digital print responses – personalised for each individual if you want!.

Once a fully fire-wall secure database channel is established, a 24/7 integrated programme can be run. Webmail, SMS, Purl, websites, micro-websites, texting and print can run, collecting data as it operates in a dynamic way. If you are running your own CRM system XMPie can communicate with this platform too.

Cross-Media Marketing Communications is here – and here to stay – it may sound somewhat complex but its power is in its simplicity – sharing data in a seamless fashion within your marketing programme and providing two-way communication with your customers and prospects to develop clear purchasing intentions and when they are in-the-market.

I hope you have enjoyed the marketing journey in this compact marine marketing report and appreciate that the challenges of 2009 onwards can be met with a much smarter and cost effective approach to your marketing.

There is no doubt that cross-media is the future in marketing communications – welding together all the different media channels, gathering data and statistics and at long last, providing a truly accountable marketing platform – all the guesswork has been eliminated and you can concentrate all your efforts on the customers and prospects that really want to do business with your company.

The marketing tools outlined in this marketing report are very flexible and can be simple or complex depending on the business objective. Please contact me and my 'new-media' team and we will be able to advise you on the smartest, best-cost solution.

Executive Summary

Of the many milestones reached forty years ago in 1969, this was the year nominated for the 'birthday' of the internet.

Talk of the 'information super-highway' changed into reality with the development of 'browsing software', pioneered by someone I knew personally at this point – Doctor Jim Clark and his 'Netscape' web browser product.

The World Wide Web at last had a real significance for anyone who had a computer 'on-line' but the big marketing change-over happened with the development of the search engine, dominated now by Google – unheard of just ten years ago and probably the most well known brand name today.

Parallel to the Information Technology boom grew computer power and sophisticated software programmes that 'empowered' the search engine process beyond recognition. The same software sophistication and power soon found its place in the de-regulated financial and banking industry when the 'quants' enabled hedge funds, future markets et al to run the world's 'securitised' financial affairs on high risk computer 'auto pilot' before it all flew at full speed into the hillside and created the 'credit-crunch'.

Just in the same way the world's financial institution will use the power of software to re-engineer the way that money circulates around the globe, computer software will help an enlightened marketing community to be smarter and engage in more sophisticated ways of obtaining Return On Investment (ROI) on marketing spend and better ways of engaging with clients and prospects.

Forty years on from the 'birth' of the internet a new marketing revolution is taking shape which harnesses the modern IT infrastructure in a new integrated manner. This marketing report has explored the basic methodology available now using proprietary software programmes and Owen's in-house programmers own developments, to deliver a very powerful set of marketing tools that are relevant to the marine marketplace.

The 'new-media' team at The Owen Agency constantly monitor the more diverse IT tools in the marketplace that add more layers of sophistication to the web-based marketing solutions such as 'Rich Media' and content management, and will form part of the extended marketing and sales tools to be discussed in my second marketing report due soon.

It is important to note that modern IT sales and marketing processes do not 'displace' the 'traditional' forms of print-centric publicity methods but adds a new and powerful dimension to this media and now enables you to track the effectiveness of all these campaigns.

This marine marketing overview explored how 'new-media' engages with the internet and uses sophisticated software with two-way communication to pull together all the marketing elements into one potential 'intuitive' marketing and prospecting programme including your advertising, brochures, PR, data base/emails and direct mail.

It will outline methods available so you can measure the effectiveness of all your marketing campaigns, identify and track your clients intentions, locate new customers and identify when they are 'in the market' and with 'cross-media' software create a two-way communication environment which will engage your customers and prospects in a **revolving** sales programme.

About the Author

Roy Owen Roberts NDD, founded what is now The Owen Agency Limited in 1969 and has led this vibrant marketing agency as CEO for 40 years. He graduated in Fine Art before starting his first career as a professional musician playing saxophone and guitar in a 1960's R&B band making records and touring with the big names of the period.

Since 1969 and after a very successful decade of growth, Owens purchased, renovated and moved to the Georgian 'Manor House of Havant', Hall Place, and operates from these hot-wired freehold premises today.



Always keen to adopt and embrace new technologies The Owen Agency survived fitter and healthier through the last two recessions and is determined to surmount the current economic problems with the same zeal and application.

By embracing new technologies with his clear vision of the future in marketing trends, led to the serious engagement in internet activities over six years ago and building a specialist in-house team to complement the creative groups within the marketing agency plus the infrastructure/software and hardware investment to deliver the programmes.

Brought up in a sailing family environment, Roy Roberts has used his love of all things 'boating' to combine this interest with the commercial aspects of running a marketing agency. The result is a successful marine division, Owen Marine Marketing.