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Is Online Marketing for You?

by Kelley Yates

Any producer who relies on niche markets will tell you having a marketing plan is critical to success. Being able to reach your target audience easily and effectively can be tricky and costly if not researched and properly implemented. Online marketing can seem overwhelming, even for the tech savvy. However, there are qualified companies who can help you create a marketing plan that is simple, concise and effective.

How do I better market myself?

Because there are so many people utilizing the Internet for information, shopping and social communication, it is an exciting time to be involved with online marketing. The Internet can bring millions of people right to your fingertips at a fairly inexpensive price.

What are the benefits of online marketing?

Regardless of the size or type of your business, it is important to let consumers know who you are and what you offer. A website can make both of these things available all the time. People can access the information either through their computer or smart phone. Thus, you can literally conduct business 24/7.

If I want to use a company to create a website, how do I get started?

1) Do some research. Ask other producers

how they got their website started. Find out what kind of design support they use and whether they created the site themselves or used a professional service like EDJE⁽¹⁾.

2) Look at other websites and have an idea of what information you want to share.

3) Look at the design company's cost structure. By using a company to design your website, you simply provide the information you want to share to consumers and the company does the hard work. If changes need to be made, you need to know if the company charges by the hour or with a predetermined flat rate. For example, EDJE charges a quarterly fee for unlimited changes.

4) Visibility is only as good as you make it. Therefore, it is important that the company designs your site to be as search engine friendly as possible. Your website needs to include lots of "metatags" (words associated with your page) so that when consumers search key words, your site comes up first.

5) How else can the company help you? Some companies can offer many different solutions to your marketing needs and help create an entire plan that includes logo development, placement in online directories, creation of a Facebook page that matches your website, print mediums and email marketing.

When using a professional web designer, what are some pointers?

- There are no dumb questions.
- This is your site and you need to be happy with it. If that means you need numerous changes, then don't hesitate to send them.
- You want to project the best image of yourself and your operation to consumers. Therefore, use the best photos and video footage on your site.
- Keep your information current.
- Look over your site and send in updates at least twice a year.
- The best companies listen and help producers overcome their challenges. They offer solutions that are reasonable and effective.
- The company staff needs to understand that your business is not necessarily 8am-5pm each day so, being available is important.

Footnote:

1. EDJE was founded by Ed Tlach and Jeff Denzin to help producers connect with one another and to promote their sales. The original plan was to create an online directory for show cattle producers. However, the plan soon incorporated other species and services. Today, EDJE is one of the largest agriculture marketing companies in the world. To learn more, visit www.edje.com.

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