

## **Offline Marketing for your Online Business**

**Niche Content Millionaire**

[www.NicheContentMillionaire.com](http://www.NicheContentMillionaire.com)

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Hi I'm David Eedle from nichecontentmillionaire.com on a pretty wild, wet, windy evening here in Melbourne. I don't know if you can see the trees and the bushes behind me in our garden but it's all a bit wild and woolly so I thought I'd take the time to put together my first video blog for nichecontentmillionaire.com and I was prompted because I wrote a blog post the other day talking about offline marketing for your online business. I think some days some people get a little bit caught up in all the fancy cool things that you can do online marketing and there's no question there's some great stuff, the rise of Twitter and Facebook and all of the social networks and so on give us a bunch of tools that we can use to spread the message about our product, our service, our website, whatever it is that we're doing.

I actually come from a quite traditional marketing background, I spent 12 or 13 years working in the arts and theatre where marketing consisted mostly of putting posters up around the town and then sitting in a box office trying to sell some tickets and maybe occasionally getting the odd story on radio or in the newspaper so very much marketing 101 and a lot of foot slog involved, walking the streets putting up handbills and distributing flyers.

And that was one of the reasons why I wrote the post. I think I just wanted to highlight that there are all sorts of opportunities in your own town to promote your service, and whilst the internet is a global business and it's fantastic to be able to deal with people all over the world, ignoring your own backyard is a missed opportunity.

We live here in Melbourne in Australia, it's a city of 3 or 4 million people in a state of 4.5 or 5 million people. Now that's obviously not a huge place, not as big as London or New York or somewhere like that, but the reality is a large number of people live in places this size or even a bit smaller. And Melbourne's a fantastic town, it's easy to get around, it has all sorts of media outlets, newspapers, radio, television. It has community television, so not for profit TV, and also community radio – not for profit radio – run a bit like public radio in the US, for example. And all of these offer really pretty good ways of reaching out to a pretty large group of people. My theory has always been that if, you know, you have a great product an easy test is to see whether you can sell it to your family first – or first and foremost. The next step is to see if you can sell it to your neighbours and if you can sell it to your family and your friends and your neighbours then maybe you have a chance of being able to sell it to somebody you've never met.

And at the end of the day that's what marketing is, it's about trying to communicate about your service or your product to somebody you've never met and quite likely never will, and to be able to reach out and put a proposition in front of them about the product, about the value of it to the person, and then obviously hopefully get them over the line to buy it. So I'll just pick out a couple of the items in my post, and I'll link to it from this post so that you'd go back and read the list but it was a top ten list of things that you can do to promote your online business offline and locally in your own town or your own city or your own neighbourhood.

I've already mentioned posters and flyers – I know it might seem old hat and a bit old fashioned and a bit traditional and so on but when we started ArtsHub, our online subscription content business in 2000, for a start we didn't have Twitter, we didn't have Facebook, we didn't have MySpace. In fact we barely had email. So we were much more limited in avenues to promote the service. We couldn't afford to buy advertising online, and we really couldn't afford to buy advertising even in traditional media like the newspaper or on radio. And one of the first ways we promoted ourselves was to ask ourselves, well, OK, if we just put the rest of the world to one side and look at our own city here in Melbourne and we want to reach out to people – they're the people who are going to join the service – where do they hang out? How can we reach them? And the obvious one was cafés, bars, restaurants, movie theatres, the university colleges. All the places where the sorts of people we were trying to attract might hang out.

We printed off a whole bunch of flyers, little handbills – so what we would call DL size – that's about a third

of an A4 page. It didn't cost very much, we did the layout and everything and the design in Microsoft Publisher. We found the cheapest printer we could and printed thousands of handbills. We then paid a couple of university students we knew to foot slog around the streets and distribute bundles of the flyers to cafés and to bars, flyer racks in in local theatres. And then we did the same with posters as well – so we did a big version of the flyer and made sure that we had it stuck up on walls and so on. And we did pretty well out of that. The budget was just literally a couple of hundred dollars and yet it absolutely drove sales and drove memberships onto the website.

Another thing that we found that worked extremely well for us was community radio. I think community radio work operates roughly the same way around the world. Of course it's the not for profit version of radio, run by volunteers – Australia has a pretty strong network of community radio stations and there's a big one here in Melbourne and another big one up in Sydney as well. And they're pretty networked together, so they do share some programming as well as creating their own. They don't officially accept advertising because they're not for profit but of course what they do is accept advertisements that are couched as sponsorship, so you're able to buy 30 seconds, 45 seconds, 15 seconds, just like you would on commercial radio. You're able to do it at a fraction of the price. Each ad – although they call them sponsorships – each ad has an announcement at the end, saying something like, such-and-such company is a proud sponsor of XYZ radio station, but at the end of the day, it's an ad. We were able to buy packages of 30 or 40 30 second spots on the local community radio station for three or four hundred dollars, and that included production.

So we worked up a script in conjunction with them, they provided the voice-over artists, they cut the ad together, let us have approval and then once we signed it off they put it on air. And we ran community radio ads for several years. We knew that one of the ads had gone to air because we could see the spike in the sales. And because they were so cheap we were able to be in relatively high rotation. If you're buying TV ads for the Super Bowl or something where it's four or five million dollars or some ridiculous amount of money just for 30 seconds then high rotation ads become pretty expensive but on community radio, where you're only spending 10, 15 or even 12 dollars for each 30 second spot you're able to run a bunch of them and in a relatively short time span.

So we actually used to pick out programmes on the station that we liked or programmes that we believed our audience were listening to and then we'd make sure that we had two or three ad spots in each of those one hour programmes, and that repetition really helped, so we knew, as I say, we knew from our sales numbers that our radio ad had gone to air because we'd see the spike, the traffic into the site, and most especially a couple of sales going through. And on our sign-up page we always used to ask, where did you hear about us, and we gave people a choice, and so that also helped us with confirmation, so people would select the radio station as the place they'd heard our advertisement when they were joining up. So community radio, absolutely worth a look. They also run a whole host of different types of programmes, and that means you can get some editorial support as well. I used to go in and do some interviews from time to time about what we were up to. Again, they're looking for content, they're looking for things to talk about. It's run by volunteers. They don't have vast numbers of journalists and staff and producers and so on all sitting around able to create content, and so if you package some information together and you're prepared to go and talk on air at a time that's useful or convenient to them you can get some air time as well, and of course that's free, you don't even need to pay for it.

And finally the last thing that I just wanted to highlight is, it can seem a bit daunting as a start-up business particularly or just as a really small little internet company to try and attract some media attention but there's actually a couple of ways you can do that. And by media attention I mean the mainstream larger commercial media. A couple of those ways is local media – again, Melbourne's very similar to cities all over the world, we have our big daily newspapers, we also have a whole host of smaller neighbourhood and community newspapers as well that cover various suburbs or groups of suburbs around town and again, whilst they're commercial operations they tend to run pretty lean, they don't have great big journalist staff, writing staff, editorial staff, and they love a local story, so we used to regularly make sure that we were in contact with our local neighbourhood and suburban newspapers, trying to pitch them stories about things that we were doing with our business. And very often they'd pick up on it, and we'd try to make sure that we essentially wrote the story for them, so we'd produce a media release that they could copy and paste – is the nicest way to put it – copy and paste and maybe top and tail with a bit of an introduction and so on and then try to set up a photo opportunity, which – I have to say – when you're running an internet company photo opportunities can

get a little bit dry and boring – there's only so many ways that you can take a photograph of an internet entrepreneur sitting at his computer, although we did do a few of those. But we used to try and find interesting angles or at least interesting ways to pitch a photo opportunity to them. And again, because we did, or tried to do a lot of the groundwork, they were always pretty receptive to that.

The other part of the mainstream media was making sure we were getting coverage in some of the the big press. So for example the largest, the biggest financial newspaper here in Australia is the Australian Financial Review. It holds the dubious record of being one of the most expensive newspapers in world to subscribe to, apparently. And its readership is obviously relatively tight, people who are involved in finance and business in companies and corporate affairs and so on. Not dissimilar to the Financial Times in London and similar papers around the world. But once or twice we tried to pitch stories to their emerging companies or new companies section. So they had a couple of journalists who particularly focused on new companies and also on internet businesses as well so we tried to slide story ideas to them, for example if we were doing something particularly big, for example when we launched our new website in the United Kingdom, which was the second marketplace we went into, after Australia, that was a big story for us, a big investment, a big commitment, and we were rewarded with a couple of stories in the mainstream press about it.

I've mentioned this in the blog post the other day, there was actually an interesting little sidebar to all of that which was that at one stage I had to go and see our bank manager to talk about an extension on our overdraft. This was before we were making profits and doing quite so well as we did in the final stages of owning the business. So we did run an overdraft, having a line of credit that we used to use from time to time. And its renewal came up, it was an annual thing, and I had to go in and be interviewed to talk about the business and ask for the overdraft to be renewed. And I rolled into the bank manager's office and she was sitting there with our file and all of our financial statements and all of those sorts of things and I was pretty nervous as you are with these sorts of things, I mean the line of credit was a pretty big thing for us, it made sure that we had the cash day to day to keep operating. But lo and behold, she opens up the file and sitting on top were a couple of press clippings, there were a couple of news stories about us, including one that had been in the Australian Financial Review. And she was really pretty impressed with this and she read the story and said, look I've read the story and this is great, sounds like you're doing really well. What of course was interesting was that she saw our appearance in the newspaper, particularly in the Financial Review, because it's the record for business and companies and so on and is seen as an authoritative voice, she saw that as a real confirmation that we were a real business, that we were selling real products, you know, something real online, even though we were an internet based business, and she renewed our overdraft on the spot, so that – a bit of work to get a story in a particularly important newspaper paid of for us, and was worth all of the effort.

So there's a few things that you can be doing. I've put together a list of ten, you can read about it on [nichecontentmillionaire.com](http://nichecontentmillionaire.com) and I'll, as I say, I'll pop a link off to that particular blog post from this one. But I guess the final thing to say is, just don't get caught up in all the hype and the spin about the things that you can do online from a marketing point of view. There are some great things you can do, but don't forget your own backyard, don't forget there's a whole host of opportunities to promote yourself and just remember that if you can't sell it to the people in your neighbourhood, the people in your city, your friends, your family and your neighbours, then you could find it hard to sell your product to people you haven't met, on the internet.

Anyway, thanks, and I hope you enjoy [nichecontentmillionaire.com](http://nichecontentmillionaire.com), and you can read more about the book that we wrote, *Niche Content Millionaire*, it's available for sale from the website, and you can sign up for our free report about some of the internet scams and so on with Google Ads as well. Thanks.