



how to market a daily deal website

How to Market Your Daily Deal Website

So you plan to launch a daily deal website and reap whirlwind profits. Woo hoo. You're obviously brave and bound to be rolling in the dough. BIA/Kelsey predicts that consumer spending on daily deals will reach \$3.9 billion by 2015. With over 521 daily deal websites in the U.S. and over 13,000 cities with populations over 25,000 that could sustain a hyper-local daily deal provider, the sky's the limit!

Now let me break the bad news to you: unless you market the heck out of your daily deal website, you won't cut through the daily deal inbox clutter.

Want to woo subscribers and capture more than your fair share of daily deal industry profits? Consider these 8 seduction marketing secrets for daily deal websites.

1. Brand First

Nail your brand positioning, brand logo, market niche, and point of difference versus the competition first. Some examples of strong daily deal website brand positioning? PawsLife encourages humans to spoil their pets. Zozi promotes adventure tours and outdoor activities. Forget trying to appeal to everybody. Stand for something or you'll stand for nothing.

2. Affiliate Marketing and Opt-In Email Lists

Affiliate marketing -- partnering with like-minded organizations and websites -- draws customers to your front door. You can monetize affiliate partner email lists with very little effort, sharing the wealth. Cross-promote your daily deals with the highest return and demand. Your best potential affiliates are media sites, neighborhood organizations that distribute e-newsletters, local charities, locally-based bloggers, your deal merchants, and national advertisers.

To boost success, you will also need to build your own opt-in email list. The secrets to opt-in list building? Use a "squeeze page." Make signup easy. Award prizes for signing up. Offer different frequencies and types of email communication. Add an opt-in form to your Facebook page. Encourage subscriber referrals. Tap bloggers. And be sure to comply with unsubscribe requests.

3. Event Sponsorship and Street Teams

Event sponsorship can create awareness, promote dialogue with your target market, and ultimately increase brand loyalty. Create an event sponsorship activation kit -- complete with tabletop coverings and table tents, pocket-sized flyers, banners, and a suggestion box. Be sure to bring a laptop or iPad so you can collect email signups.

If you can't afford sponsorship fees, position street smart street teams in high-traffic locations and at popular local events as did Groupacho, a daily deal website that celebrates the Hispanic lifestyle, during L.A.'s Cinco De Mayo Parade. Equip street teams with logoed T-shirts, iPads, brand-centric flyers with special promo codes, and information. Better yet? Leverage street teams to create a public scene worthy of local media coverage. One hundred synchronized blonde ballet dancers wearing short skirts should do it.

4. Promotions and Contests

Monthly drawings and contests like Plum District's "Mom's Rock Photo Contest" drive subscriber acquisition. You'll generate website traffic and acquire contact info from potential subscribers. Invite public voting on contest entries. Offer prizes from deal merchants.

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619.342.4411 • 312.635.1350

5. Banner Ads

Once you've finalized your deal calendar, you can create targeted banner ads for little to no upfront cost. Expect to pay \$1 CPC (cost per click). Create attention grabbing ads, leveraging your key words, benefits, and best features. Facebook Ads are cheaper than Google AdSense. Be sure to block competitor ads so they can't steal your customers.

6. SEO

First page ranking in search engine results increases website traffic. Basic strategies like targeted keywords, building backlinks, commenting on blogs, social bookmarking, meta tags, and creative content can boost site ranking. Although organic search typically beats banner ads and sponsored links hands down, Google's entry into the daily deal market will make SEO planning more difficult for independent deal sites.

7. Mobile and Social Marketing

SMS transactions and alerts reach shoppers on the go. MobiNotify, Voupons, and Replybuy have already successfully tested and launched SMS daily deals. Go mobile or miss out. Social networks also drive traffic to daily deal websites. Tweet your deals and develop a branded Facebook page. Offer something to encourage new Facebook fans to "like" your page: deeper discounts or limited offers from merchant partners. Fans want perks. The best days and times to post on Facebook? Thursdays before 9 a.m. Eastern Time so your content isn't pushed down in news feeds. Pepper your posts with words like "today," "limited time only," "best," "most," "why," and "how" to increase your Facebook EdgeRank™ algorithm.

Remember Facebook is about engagement, crowdsourcing, and community. Encourage fans to share recommendations and opinions on your Facebook wall. Ask fans to share your posts with their friends.

8. PR

PR can demonstrate the benefits of your daily deal website, drive website traffic, and position your executive team as thought leaders. According to a PRWeek survey, startup companies that engage in PR campaigns are 30% more successful in getting funding within three to five months than those that don't. Want to win press and social media buzz? Stop broadcasting and start connecting. Research local reporters and bloggers. Contribute to online conversations, share, comment on articles and blogs, and build relationships long before you ask for anything. Write tip sheets and submit how-to articles. Donate a portion of sales to a charitable cause. When you do finally "pitch" a company story to media or bloggers, make it unique, relevant, on trend, and if possible, controversial. Never pitch reporters on Fridays or Mondays.

Start marketing early. Increase marketing intensity as you approach launch. Re-invest 30% to 40% of revenue in ongoing marketing. If you think that's plenty, realize that Groupon re-invests nearly 70%. And remember that crappy product + great marketing never works. You'll need great daily deals and memorable promotional copy. Now go do it.

About the Author:

Kirsten Osolind is CEO of RE:INVENTION, a marketing consulting firm that helps startups affect consumer behavior, increase sales, attract investors, and earn national media exposure. RE:INVENTION has worked with numerous daily deal websites like Deal Current, Groupacho, and Clever Finds, as well as high growth tech startups like Jajah, Phatnoise, Brickfish, and Brightscope. A Duke MBA who has helped launch 40+ new products during her career, Osolind is the former National Marketing Director of Whole Foods Market. She currently serves on the board of the International Stevie Awards for Women in Business.