ALAN CHARLESWORTH

Internet

Marketing

A Practical Approach

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Alan Charlesworth

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Preface

INTRODUCTION

Before telling you anything about this book, I'll enlighten you about the aspect that caused me the most trouble – its title.

I'll come to the sub-title, 'a practical approach', in a moment, for it was the first two words that were undecided right up to the final manuscript being submitted. The problem was, What is the book about? Is it *Internet marketing*, *e-marketing*, *online marketing* or *digital marketing*? I must admit, in the classroom I tend to use 'e-marketing' – my modules have that title – but I think that is a combination of habit and laziness (of the options, it is quickest to say). The book I co-authored with Richard Gay and Rita Esen uses 'online marketing'. Despite this, I was drawn to what I eventually opted for – Internet marketing – because it actually tells potential readers what it is about, that is, marketing using the Internet. What the book is *actually* about was the problem I had with the term that eventually came second in the contest – digital marketing. When I asked them, many within the industry advised me that 'digital' was the term that was in vogue in the boardrooms and at conference discussions. However, I felt it might be rather 'faddish' – the term that is trendy when people talk about something they don't really know about. More important, however, is that

I do not think it is digital marketing in which I am an expert (if indeed I am an expert in anything).

My thinking is that 'digital' covers so much more than just the Internet. As we near the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, all media use digital technology, those rotating adverts around the side of the pitch at major sporting venues, the advertisement on the bus or train, on the treadmill at a health club, in the lift, even those promotional messages in rest rooms – all digitally transmitted and part of what is being dubbed 'out-of-home advertising'. And that's before we consider *digital* TV and radio. Sadly, apart from the basics that any marketing lecturer should know, I have little specialist knowledge on any of these aspects of the discipline. Furthermore, I had no intention of covering such subjects in this book. This book is about marketing on the Internet – so it's called *Internet Marketing*. In reality, however, I don't suppose it really matters, and I am certainly not saying that everyone should adopt my way of thinking. Perhaps us Internet/e-/online/digital marketers should get our act in order? (To read my thoughts on the subject in more detail, follow the link on the website.)

> " this book is designed to be more practical in nature … in contrast to many other academic texts on the subject … which tend to concentrate on the strategy itself, rather than how that strategy is implemented "

The sub-title is, I think, self-explanatory. It was always my intention that the book's ethos would get down in the e-marketing trenches rather than standing back and taking a strategic point of view on the subject. Although strategic issues are included where appropriate, this book is designed to be more practical in nature – addressing tactics, operational and functional issues in detail. This is in contrast to many other academic texts on the subject of online marketing, which tend to concentrate on the strategy itself, rather than how that strategy is implemented at the virtual coalface.

After reading this book, and completing the exercises within it, the reader will be equipped to undertake any Internet marketing role within a variety of organizations. The practical case study exercises, based on theory and recognized good practice, will ensure that readers will be able to analyse situations within the work place, identify the most appropriate course of action and implement the strategies and tactics that will help the organization meet its online objectives, which leads me to the final point in this introduction. Although this book is primarily aimed at an academic market, the practical nature of the content and its presentation means that it will be equally useful in both training and self-learning scenarios.

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THE SUBJECT

This is a book on Internet marketing – it is not a book on marketing per se. To get the best from this book, the reader should be aware of – although not necessarily an expert in – common marketing theories, strategies and

tactics. To spend time explaining aspects of marketing – segmentation, for example – within this book would be to diminish the focus on its titular subject area. The content is, therefore, driven by Internet-based marketing applications rather than elements of traditional marketing, although naturally there is some commonality.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that each chapter will integrate elements of marketing within its subject area. For example, facets of the marketing mix are a constant throughout the book, as are issues associated with buyer behaviour, product/service, customer/consumer and market orientation. Other more strategic elements of marketing permeate the book. Relationship marketing, for example, is an inherent component – or objective – of many aspects of online marketing.

Any book that has pretensions as an academic text must have appropriate academic underpinnings, which this book has. There are, however, three addendums to this:

1. The practical nature of the content means that there are also significant 'practical' underpinnings – that is, there are also references to the work of practitioners who have proved themselves at the coalface of Internet marketing.
2. Many references are also made to statistics or research findings from commercial organizations. Although there may be an element of bias in some of these, they are up to date and represent real world issues.
3. The academic research in the subject area is limited, out-dated or, in some cases, of dubious quality.

Considering the third point in greater detail, a comment taken from one of the better pieces of academic work is worth noting, Doherty & Ellis-Chadwick (2006) make the comment that:

> *Much of the discussion of the internet's potential has been conducted at a conceptual level, and there have been rather fewer contributions that have empirically explored the actual benefits delivered via the Internet, or the wider organizational impacts that it might engender.*

Although this particular comment refers to literature about Internet *retailing*, I find it to be equally applicable to most Internet marketing-related academic articles. Other criticisms I would make of academic research include that:

- Although some findings pass the test of time, many conclusions do not. For example, any comments with regard to online buyer behaviour made in 2000 – a time when Google and Myspace did not exist – are not necessarily true for Internet users now.
- A continuation from the previous comment is that some later work uses the findings of earlier research without question, making subsequent conclusions potentially flawed.
- A surprising amount of the research is conducted only on university campuses, with respondents being either (a) academics, or (b) students.

Although this might be acceptable in *some* research, when looking at anything Internet related, this sample is not a reasonable representation of the population, as these two groups are experienced users of the web and in the case of students, representatives of the first Internet generation.

Also with regard to academic research, I find there is confusion in the crossover between computing and business subject areas, with examples of both disciplines making basic errors when they stray out of their own field. This includes marketers making 'technical' statements that are flawed as well as IT writers who – without the qualification or experience in the subject – make erroneous comments about business applications, or of specific relevance to this book, marketing. The language used by the two can also cause problems for students. For example, Maulana & Eckhardt (2007) make the point that in an IT environment, research into 'connectedness' concentrates on physical dimensions, whereas in a social setting the concentration is on the emotional interpretation. Naturally, there are exceptions to this edict. There are a number of subject specialists, academics and practitioners, in both business and IT who have successfully crossed over and can now be considered to be experts in both. These are however – in my experience – rare. And in case you are wondering, although I have a smattering of IT knowledge, any expertise I may have is firmly in the *marketing* side of Internet marketing.

Anything related to the Internet is bound to be a very dynamic subject. Online marketing is no different. For example, the book I co-wrote with Richard Gay and Rita Esen, *Online Marketing – a Customer-Led Approach*, was published in March 2007. In that book, I wrote the content that included 'social media marketing', and it warranted a small section within a chapter that also covered several other aspects of Internet marketing. In this book, not only does social media marketing get its own chapter, but it is one of the longest chapters. I have endeavoured to make this book as up to date as possible, but inevitably, between my writing these words and you reading them, some aspects of the book's content will have changed. To address this phenomenon I will use the accompanying website to keep things up to date.

I have decided not to include a glossary of terms in the book. In this regard, the key problem I faced was that once I started to list terms that might be new to readers I did not know where to stop. In an attempt to address this I have tried to explain terms within the text itself. Indeed, a number of online marketing-related descriptions used are based on, or adapted from, definitions from another of my books, *Key Concepts in e-Commerce*. When you consider that book has over 1200 definitions and is around 100 000 words long, you can perhaps appreciate my dilemma in trying to develop a two or three page glossary for this book. My decision was, therefore, that I would include a limited glossary on the book's website and suggest that if you are new to the discipline and find some of the terminology new – buy my Key Concepts book as a companion to this text!

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

Each chapter is divided into a number of sections that address specific aspect of the chapter's subject area. Throughout the book you will come across a number of content 'boxes', each serving a specific function. They are as follows.

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

These are snippets of information taken from published research – sometimes academic, but more often the information has commercial origins.

MINI CASE

As the name suggests, these are short examples that illustrate a concept or model. They are often examples of good practice in that concept.

Practical Insight

These give readers an insight into how elements of Internet marketing are practiced in real life, with many serving as 'tips' for students when they might become practitioners.

Go Online

From these inserts, readers are directed toward the book's website. There, links are provided that take them to information, articles or comments on the subject being discussed in that section, which will supplement the content of the book.

With the exception of the early part of Chapter 1, at the end of each section readers are presented with the challenge 'you decide', where a case study-based question is posed. The following sample is from section 4.4.

You Decide

Advise Robert Terwilliger on the advantages and drawbacks of using a third-party website to sell the Modeller's Stand (case study 9).

Alternatively, conduct the same exercise for your organization or that of your employer.

The case studies are designed to make clear how the impact of each online application varies between organizations and markets. For each section, I have tried to select a case study that is pertinent to that section, although you are welcome to switch case studies for each question if you wish. Alternately, if you are employed or run your own business, you can ask that question to your – or your employers – organization. A similar format is followed at the end of each chapter, but at this time you are invited to advise one of the case study organizations on all aspects of Internet marketing covered in that chapter. The following sample is from Chapter 9.

CHAPTER EXERCISE

Giving justifications for all your decisions, advise the board of the Matthew Humberstone Foundation Hospital (case study 6) on all aspects of social media marketing covered in this chapter. This includes taking a look at the 'dummy' blog that can be found by following the link from the chapter's web page.

Alternatively, conduct the same exercise for your organization or that of your employer.

THE CASE STUDIES

Throughout the book, case studies are used as both examples of how theory might be practiced and as exercises for readers to complete. Although the case studies are fictional, they all characterize real life situations. The cases are not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive – merely a snap shot of a particular state of affairs within what is normally a complex environment. The case studies have been compiled in such a way that all aspects of Internet marketing can be addressed, with each element of the chapters having its own case-related question, with one case being presented as an end of chapter exercise.

The case studies are as follows:

1. The Rockridge Museum – a not-for-profit organization with a mix of public and private funding.
2. Clough & Taylor Engineering – a small engineering company that makes bespoke products.
3. The Gilded Truffle Hotel – a new boutique hotel opening soon in a prime city centre location.
4. Cleethorpes Visitors Association – a publicly funded tourism centre.
5. BethSoft – a small business that sells a range of specialist software to the engineering industry.
6. Matthew Humberstone Foundation Hospital – a private medical facility with hospitals and clinics around the world.
7. 22 Catches Fish Products – a consumer packaged goods manufacturer.
8. Hill Street Motorist Shops – a chain of retail outlets with a limited online presence.
9. The Modeller's Stand – a single product sold in a niche market.
10. Huxley University – a small academic institution.

11. Two Cities Manufacturing Ltd – a medium-sized manufacturer and distributor of commercial and private grass-cutting appliances.
12. Lindsey Naegle Consulting – a sole trader who works as a consultant in Internet marketing.
13. Phelps Online Department Store – a pure play online retailer that sells women's clothes and accessories.

Note that all of the above are UK based, but their geographic location could be changed to suit readers' needs.

Note that the actual case studies are not included within the book – rather, online on the book's website where they can be printed off. Although I accept that might cause you a small inconvenience, I have made this decision for a very good reason. If the cases were within this text, I would not be able to change them – at least not until a second edition of the book is published! Online, however, it is relatively simple for me to change, add or delete any element of each case. This means that as the Internet, the way it is used by the public and how it is adopted by organizations' changes, I can adapt the scenarios to suit the environment in which those case study organizations operate. I have also made the conscious decision not to offer any answers to the case studies. The key reasons for this are fourfold:

1. As with all marketing, there is no single answer that can be considered to be unambiguously 'right'.
2. Such is the nature of not only the web's development, but also the global environment in which it exists, that the answers might actually change on a monthly basis (as I write this in November 2008, the last two months have seen the world's economy change in a way no one could have imagined – with all the resultant impacts on business).
3. As teaching staff may choose to use the case studies for summative assessment, I do not want sample answers in the public domain where misguided students might be able to get hold of them and present them as their own work.
4. The objective is that you should work to develop the answers yourself. If I put suggested answers in the book too many students would succumb to the temptations to read them rather than doing the work necessary to understand the subject.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Throughout the book I occasionally refer to *companies* or *firms*, but mainly I use *organization*. This is deliberately vague. Whenever you see the word organization feel free to replace it with any other term that you feel is relevant to the context or your own circumstances. As well as company and firm, other examples might include government department, university, hospital, foundation, school, society, not-for-profit business, association, college, religious body, charity, club or any other entity, including individual.

In a similar vein, it is common for marketers to use the term *customer* to describe anyone who uses or partakes in the service on offer – not just the person who pays for a tangible product. In some cases, the customers have

their own descriptor – opticians have patients, universities have students, political parties have voters, sports teams have supporters, churches have members and so on. Likewise – and this is particularly relevant online – the objective is not always to have the target customer *buy* something. The objective could just as easily be to elicit a donation, a subscription, an order, an application or to have someone become a member. Again, please use whichever term you feel is relevant wherever you see the word *customer* or *buyer* within this text.

Wherever possible, I have avoided any promotion of specific brands or products within the text. This is particularly the case where Internet marketing tools, services or technologies are concerned – naming a particular website hosting company or software that helps with search engine optimization, for example. This is deliberate for two primary reasons: (1) I have not used all of the applications/companies and so am not in a position to rank one above another, and (2) to name one and omit another would appear to show favouritism which may be construed as prejudice. There are instances, however, when to not name names would be to the detriment of the content – for example, some aspects of the ubiquitous Google empire have become common terms to describe elements of online marketing and so are difficult to replace with a generic description. Indeed, to 'Google' something is now frequently used as a generic term for using a search engine. Note that it is also the case that for many of the tasks described within the text, there are software applications that *claim* to do the job for you. As I have used very few of these I am not in a position to either recommend them or otherwise. I am sure some work, just as I am certain that some do not. I have deliberately not mentioned the availability, or suppliers, of any such software – effectively, this book is about the *manual* way of doing online marketing. A slight deviation to this rule comes where I have used organizations as examples to illustrate a subject, concept or practice – often with an accompanying image. This is not to promote any organization, brand or product, it is simply that these are examples I have come across as I surf my way around the web.

ONLINE SUPPORT

As well as the online elements of the case study exercises, this book makes extensive use of the Internet as source of information. This includes the book's own website, features of which include the following:
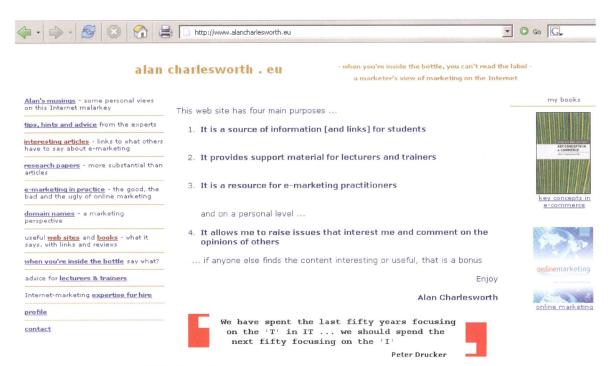
- Each chapter having its own page that includes references to websites that provide more details on subjects covered within the text and links to information that will enhance the book's content. For example, in section 9.6 reference is made to how Cadburys released clips of their 'drumming gorilla' advert as part of a viral campaign. Although it is expected that the majority of readers will have seen the advertisement, some may not be aware of it, so there is a link to a web page where the advertisement can be viewed. There are also links to
  - additional subject material
  - websites of organizations mentioned within the text.

- All case studies in pdf format.
- Tips and advice for lecturers and trainers – including 'what to look for' in the answers to the case study questions.

In addition, the dynamic nature of the subject is acknowledged by there being – where appropriate – chapter 'updates'. Although it is not feasible to produce complete re-writes of chapters, on occasion it might be prudent to add to or amend elements or sections in accordance with changes in contemporary practice. Although I cannot predict the future, before a second edition of this book might be published, it is pretty certain that there will be, for example, changes in how search engine algorithms work. Similarly, the Microsoft–Yahoo! merger failed to materialize (in May 2008), but any similar union in the future would have a significant impact on the Internet marketing environment.

In addition to the book's website, I also maintain my own website, which – amongst other things – has sections on Internet marketing-related articles, research papers and practical tips, hints and advice. Ultimately, I would like it to be a one-stop-shop for researching all aspects of Internet marketing. Judging by the visitor numbers around assignment time, this is already a popular site with students.

My website can be found on www.alancharlesworth.eu and blog on getoutsidethebottle.blogspot.com

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http://www.alancharlesworth.eu   Go

alan charlesworth . eu

- when you're inside the bottle, you can't read the label -
a marketer's view of marketing on the Internet

my books

Alan's musings - some personal views on this Internet malarkey

tips, hints and advice from the experts

interesting articles - links to what others have to say about e-marketing

research papers - more substantial than articles

e-marketing in practice - the good, the bad and the ugly of online marketing

domain names - a marketing perspective

useful **web sites** and **books** - what it says, with links and reviews

when you're inside the bottle say what?

advice for **lecturers & trainers**

Internet-marketing **expertise for hire**

profile

contact

This web site has four main purposes ...

1. **It is a source of information [and links] for students**

2. **It provides support material for lecturers and trainers**

3. **It is a resource for e-marketing practitioners**

   and on a personal level ...

4. **It allows me to raise issues that interest me and comment on the opinions of others**

   ... if anyone else finds the content interesting or useful, that is a bonus

Enjoy

Alan Charlesworth

key concepts in e-commerce

onlinemarketing

online marketing

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We have spent the last fifty years focusing
  on the 'T' in IT ... we should spend the
   next fifty focusing on the 'I'

                           Peter Drucker
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Finally, whether you are a student, trainee, lecturer, trainer or practitioner, I hope you find this book *useful*. Note that I have refrained from wishing that you *enjoy* reading it. Although I have tried to make it easily readable, you should *enjoy* a John Grisham mystery or Robert Ludlum adventure whilst relaxing in a comfy chair or sun lounger. I have written this book not to entertain – but to help you achieve a professional or educational objective. Of course, if you do get pleasure from it, that is a bonus.

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Acknowledgements

To all at Butterworth-Heinemann who helped make this publication possible. In particular, Francessca – who from day one showed an enthusiasm for the project that sold BH to me – and Sarah who took up the reins when Francessca left for pastures new.

Karen Hadley – on whose 'old' laptop much of this book was written.

All the students, trainees and audiences at any event at which I have spoken – if you hadn't asked the questions, I would not have had to find out the answers.

All those practitioners, writers, bloggers and researchers who do the work that keeps people like me informed.

All those organizations that have asked me to monitor or participate in their online marketing efforts – you learn more in an hour at the sharp end than you do in days of reading the theory.

All those individuals and organizations that gave me permission to use content or images that are copyrighted to them. In particular, Elliance (www.elliance.com) who were kind enough to let me use a number of their 'infographics' throughout the book. Elliance is typical of organizations who recognize that all aspects of online marketing are inextricably linked (I particularly like their tag line of 'Art + Science of e-Marketing').

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