



10 TOP SECRETS ABOUT FORUM MARKETING

**10 SECRETES THAT CAN TAKE YOUR BUSINESS
TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

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INTRODUCTION PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

If you are looking to promote your online business on the internet, you have your work cut out for you. You really do. The difficulty does not come from finding traffic options. In fact, the difficulty comes from the fact that there are just simply too many options out there. It is too easy to get caught up in all the available traffic generation options, and spend a lot of time, effort and money only to have very little to show for all your marketing efforts.

If you are serious about driving highly targeted traffic to your website, one of the best moves you can ever make is to carry out a forum marketing campaign. It is easy to understand why forum marketing works. Regardless of how obscure your niche is, there are already people congregating online at certain websites who are talking about different aspects of whatever it is you are promoting. They are congregating at online message boards, also known as forums. This is a tremendous marketing opportunity because it is like fishing by shooting fish in a barrel. The fishes are already in the barrel. They

have already selected themselves and they are in a tight space. It is almost a sure deal. It is very hard to miss.

However, you have to do this properly; otherwise, your forum marketing efforts will fail. Just as it is very easy to see the opportunities apparent in forum marketing, it is also very easy to completely blow those opportunities. Here are the 10 secrets to forum marketing that can take your online business to the next level.

SECRET 1: NICHE TARGETING

Niche targeting is critical to your forum marketing success. If you want to drive high-quality traffic to your website, you have to understand that you cannot just target any and all forums. That is a sure recipe for disaster. Why? You are not targeting these forums based on interest.

Every forum has a specialization. Every forum is geared towards certain subject matter categories. It is very important to find forums that are specialized in the particular niche of the product or service you are promoting, and stick to those forums.

Do not fall for the common trap of thinking that since there are few forums that deal with your niche directly, you have to pick any and every forum. That is completely wrong. You are only setting yourself up for your failure if you think that way.

SECRET 2: FORUM TRAFFIC

Unfortunately, as the forum visitors have become more sophisticated over the years, the old tricks simply are not going to fly. People expect more. People are not simply going to convert right off a link. I do not care how well written your landing page is. I do not care how well put together your sales page is. People expect more.

Moreover, for you to maximize the traffic benefits of your target website, you need to make sure that it is achievable. It means that the content on your website must be arranged and handled in such a way that search engines can send traffic to different parts of your website. This is why I highly recommend that you create a blog. Many people think that a blog is a waste of time or it would take too much effort, but the reality is that thanks to outsourcing, it has become very easy to keep a professional blog.

You want that traffic to go to specific pages on your blog, and you want other specific pages on your blog to work to convert whatever traffic you drive to your blog. You have to remember that different people have different interests. They have different reasons for clicking on a link to go to your blog. Your blog has to present the value proposition you bring to the table in many different ways, so as to maximize the commercial appeal of whatever it is you are promoting.

SECRET 3: STAY AWAY FROM FORUM LINK DROPPING

One of the most commonly used forum marketing methods is to take simple links and just drop them in posts in the forums. The problem with this way of marketing is that there is really no added value as far as forum readers are concerned. They do not have a clear idea as to the context of the link and how that link will add value to their lives. All they see are some catchy text encouraging them to click on the link. They do not even know in advance whether the link will be directly relevant to the niche of the content that they are interested in.

Not surprisingly, many marketers that engage in simple link dropping campaigns have very little to show for all their efforts. In fact, most of them have nothing to show for their efforts because these forums end up banning them. That is right. If your account gets banned, all your posts get deleted.

This is a serious problem because many forum marketers market by simply dropping a link in either the body of their post or in their signature line. Regardless of whether you are using forum post body text or signature lines to promote your affiliate product or your own

website, if you get banned, you will get to no benefits. This is why it is really important to understand that while you are, at the end of the day, promoting a link, you should not just promote the link. You have to promote content. You have to provide some sort of context for your link.

At the very least, this would give people enough information so they can make an informed decision as to whether that link will add value to their lives. If you are just dropping mysterious links all over the place, you probably will not get too many clicks since people are very scared of landing on Spyware injection or virus propagation sites. At worst, you will get banned.

If you keep up this behavior, chances are quite high that your account will completely disappear from the forums that you are marketing at.

SECRET 4: CREDIBILITY

In forum marketing credibility is the name of the game. In secret3, I have outlined the importance of content. Content is crucial because you cannot just drop naked links all over the place. People would not know what to do with your link. They would be very suspicious. They would be very skeptical and would often end up wasting all your time, effort and energy just dropping those links.

Also, forum posts that only contain naked links look awkward. They look incomplete. At the very least, they look suspicious.

This is why it is extremely important to clothe your links with credible content. Not only do you have to provide context for your link by including the content, the content has to be credible. Credibility really can be boiled down to giving people reasons to trust you. That is the bottom line. People will only listen to you if they feel that you know what you are talking about.

Unfortunately, too many forum marketers are completely ignorant about this forum marketing secret. They are very happy with simply dropping links. It is no surprise then that they enjoy very little success. If you want to really maximize the amount of benefits and value you can get from a forum marketing campaign, it is extremely important for you to focus on credibility.

How do you build credibility? First, you have to offer real content. This is content that adds value to people's lives. This is content that actually answers specific questions that people have.

Credibility arises from the usefulness of your participation in a forum. One thing is clear. Somebody who simply just drops links all over the place is a completely useless forum member. On the other hand, somebody who is always there to answer people's questions and steer them in the right direction will not only be viewed as a helpful person, but people are more like to click that person's link because they trust that person's information.

I hope you see the difference. In fact, the difference is like day and night. If you are serious about making more money online through forum marketing, you need to start with a serious credibility building campaign.

SECRET 5: HOW TO USE COMPETITORS CONTENT TO BUILD CREDIBILITY

I know that the discussion on secret #4 may have gotten you worried. This is completely natural and perfectly understandable. If you think that building credibility will take quite a bit of time, effort and money, you are absolutely correct. If you are simply going to be posting completely original content and answering other forum member's questions directly on your own, expect to spend a lot of time and possibly quite a bit of money building credibility.

Unfortunately, not everybody has that kind of capital. Not everybody has money set aside for a serious credibility building campaign on the forums. Many online marketers are actually self-funded. In other words, they are using whatever meager income they generate from their online marketing efforts to bankroll their promotion efforts.

If you are just starting out, then you are stuck in a classic chicken or egg dilemma. You do not have any money, but you need money to promote your website through a credibility building forum marketing campaign. The good news is that you can build credibility without spending money on original content.

Best of all, you can build quite a bit of credibility quickly. The solution is actually quite simple. The solution, at least in the beginning, is to simply use your competitor's content. That is right –you piggyback on their best content.

You might think that this is some form of plagiarism. You might even think that this is some form of theft. That is absolutely wrong. In fact, your competitors would love you for this because at the end of the day, you are driving traffic to them. Little do they know that their best content is actually benefitting you as well.

When you answer questions on forums with the best content produced by your competitors, you build credibility. People can see that you are always ready with the very best useful content. This can only improve your stock as far as forum popularity is concerned. If you keep this up long enough, you can become quite an authority when it comes to certain subjects. That is where you need to go and the best way to do that is to simply piggyback on your competitor's best content.

How do you do this? You compile a decent list of all the top competitors in your niche who offer the very best content. When you see niche-related questions on the forums, you can then do searches on your list of target blogs and websites to find the very best answer. You then post a link along with an explanation of as to why that link is a good resource. At the very least, the link answers the question being asked as well as providing other value. If you keep this up long enough, people will consider you the "go to" source for certain concerns. You can quickly become an authority on certain subjects.

SECRET 6: THE KEY TO FORUM AUTHORITY

By being quick to answer niche-specific questions that deal with the subject area of the items you are promoting, you quickly become indispensable. Other experts might not be available. Other authorities may not respond quickly.

If you respond to niche-specific questions very promptly and you always supply really good answers, it is very easy for people to think that you are simply indispensable. The forum simply cannot continue to talk about certain subjects without you being in the mix. This is exactly the kind of perception you want to build.

Unfortunately, it is not going to build itself. It is not going to happen on its own. You have to make it happen. The way to do this, of course, is to simply be there and be quick to respond to niche-specific questions.

Try to be the first person to answer. Not only will you be able to build your credibility answering quickly, but the high placement of your answer ensures that you get more eyeballs. The more eyeballs you educate regarding your subject matter expertise, the easier it is for

people to think you are indispensable. You need to keep this up until you become a solid authority.

The good news is that the timeline from zero to hero varies from forum to forum. Highly active forums take a longer time to be viewed as an authority at very busy forums because there is a lot more content being published. However, in slower forums, you can expect to become an authority quickly since you are one of the few people posting on a regular basis.

The secret to all this, of course, is to keep it up. Do not expect things to happen overnight, just do this out of habit, just respond out of habit, and you will become an authority sooner rather than later.

SECRET 7: ADOPT A LARGER THAN LIFE PERSONNA

Most people want to post just like everyone else. Not surprisingly, they don't stand out. Their posts, no matter how awesome, simply fall between the cracks.

There's no OOMPH power behind their posts.

If you want your posts to truly stand out and GRAB and SLAP eyeballs, you need to put your personality on CENTER STAGE. In fact, you need to adopt a larger than life persona.

You need to be SO LOUD, SO DEMANDING, SO COMPELLING, that you become UNAVOIDABLE.

SECRET 8: USE ONLY YOUR BEST CONTENT

The secret to forum marketing, of course, is to get people to click on your links. This is going to be a problem because as I have mentioned in secret #5, you are using other website's content to build your credibility. This is going to conflict with your overarching end goal of getting people to click only on your content.

How do you make this happen? It is very simple. You mix your own content with the best agreed or high quality content produced by your competitors. In the beginning, you are only offering competitor content. However, as your authority begins to build, you start mixing in more and more of your own posts and your own website links.

It is really important that regardless of how much of your own materials you mix in with best agreed competitor content, that you exercise a high degree of discrimination as far as your content is concerned. Do not just mix in any of your posts. That is not going to cut it. You have to zero in on your best content when mixing content sources.

It is important to note that "best" is defined in this context as something extremely relevant. In other words, if somebody asks a question regarding toothpaste, you need to show your own blog's content that deals directly with toothpaste. I hope that much is clear.

Also that content must pack enough information so that not only is the direct question answered sufficiently, but the blog post or article is rich enough that it answers other related questions ahead of time. That is how you can tell a high quality piece of content with a shallow piece of content.

A shallow piece of content will only answer direct questions and nothing else. There is really not much added value there. A high-quality piece of content not only is deeper, but it also has the right graphics. If possible, it should even have video.

SECRET 9: AUTHORITY IS THE KEY TO ALL YOUR POSTS

As I mentioned earlier, you should mix your best content to your posts. However, regardless of what you do, all your posts must lead to you becoming an authority. If you are posting just for the fun of it, you are not doing it right. If you are posting just to get along, you are wasting your time.

You have to be very careful as to what you post on a forum. You have to understand that authority is a very fragile thing. If people see you posting garbage, all that hard work, time and attention to detail that you put in previous posts go straight down the toilet. You do not want that to happen. This is why you really need to be very careful regarding how you engage other forum members as well as the specific materials you post.

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regarding how you engage other forum members as well as the specific materials you post.

If you abuse or make fun of other forum members this kind of behavior can only undermine whatever authority you built up to that point. Always be aware that you are on a forum for a reason. Always treat other people respectfully. Always be serious about delivering solid value to the lives of the readers of that forum.

This is the best way to build authority. It is all about consistency. It is all about sending a clear message that builds up your credibility.

A forum is like an online neighborhood or an online city. In any city, there are influential people. These are the people that other neighbors pay attention to. These are people who call the shots.

There are two kinds of leaders. There are natural leaders and there are self-made leaders. Natural leaders simply ooze charisma. For some reason or the other, people are inexplicably drawn to these people. For some reason or another, other people give these individuals the benefit of the doubt. They simply attract people naturally.

There are forum leaders that fall into this camp. For some reason, the way they post, the way they joke, and the way they carry themselves naturally draws others to them. They have a very strong personality that is very hard to resist.

On the other hand, there are self-made leaders. This is probably where you come in. These are people who build their authority by their actions. It means that they really go out of their way to share certain types of content and engage with people a certain way, so people can trust them. These people are self-made. In other words, their actions made them.

Regardless of which type of forum leader you are interacting with, it is extremely important that you consistently work to get them to help you build your credibility. How do you go about doing that? It is very simple. By sharing high-quality content and then referring to them for their feedback or referring to their previous posts, you end up dragging them into your posts.

This is not going to work all the time nor do not expect this to produce stellar results overnight. This is something that you do consistently

over a long period of time. The more you mention these other forum leaders, the sooner you will get on their radar. Once they start looking at you as some sort of ally or some sort of equal, do not be surprised when they start talking about issues that you raised before. Do not be surprised if they start sharing links that you shared in the past.

This is what you want to happen because they lend you their credibility. They lend you whatever authority that they have built. If people in a forum think that they are people to be trusted, subconsciously those followers would start trusting you as well. Why? The people that they trust find you credible. In other words, these forum leaders vouch for you.

The best way to get them to lend you their credibility is to simply engage them with high-quality content. Always draw them in by mentioning them or referring to their previous posts. The key here is to be viewed as a peer. You cannot do this if you are simply just posting your own stuff over and over again. You are not giving existing opinion leaders and influential forum members a reason to lend you their credibility if you are just so focused on self-promotion.

SECRET 10: INCREASE CONVERSATION THROUGH TARGETED POSTING

If you apply the first nine secrets of this list, chances are very high that you can drive quite a bit of traffic to your landing page or your squeeze page. That is all well and good, but the problem is all that traffic is not really going to benefit you all that much if you cannot convert that traffic into sales.

The whole point of online marketing is to convert online traffic into dollars in your bank account. Unfortunately, if you turn a blind eye to conversions, you are simply rolling the dice with all that traffic. Nine times out of ten, that traffic is just simply going to bounce out of the landing page, squeeze page or blog post that you are directing the traffic to. In other words, you are simply wasting your time. You have to focus on conversion.

In the beginning of your forum marketing campaign, you can be forgiven if you forget about conversions. The key focus at that point is to simply position you as an authority. At that point in time, your main goal is to build your credibility, so people can trust you enough to click your own content links once you start sharing your own content.

However, once you start sharing your own content, it is really important to make sure that the traffic that you are sending has a high chance of converting. One of the best ways to do this is to post selected content. In other words, you create highly specialized conversations that deal with topics that are directly relevant to your own content links.

The key here is to get people excited about the subject matter that they read your forum posts. Open their minds to different possibilities, and open their minds to wanting to know more. You then offer a link to your blog or website that gives them information regarding the topic that you raise in your discussion.

The secret to all this is the know-like-trust buying process. When people click on your link, they are not yet ready to buy. They do not know enough to trust you. The key here is to give them more information. Get them to feel that they know you.

You do this of course with your blog or website content. However, your content is engineered in such a way that people who feel they know you already can click a link, so they can compare whatever options you bring to the table with the other options available out there. These are people that are looking for reasons to like your solution.

Once you give them that content, and they really like your solution, the next step is to link them out to your sales page. The sales page should then be written in such a way that it maximizes the trust people have in your solution. That is how it works. For anybody to buy anything from you, they must first trust you. However, for them to trust you, they must first like you.

In turn, for them to like you, they must first feel that you know what you are talking about. These are all interrelated. You cannot just jump from the know stage all the way to the buy stage. It does not work that way. Keep this in mind, so that your blog or website content mirrors the know-like-trust process that is playing out when people read your targeted posts on forums.

Forum marketing can either be a hit or miss affair or it can be like shooting fish in a barrel. It all depends on how you carry yourself.

Follow the 10 secrets outlined above to take your forum marketing results to the next level!