

# Use the *World Wide Web* to Reach Your *Local* Customers

by Anne Richardson, President, Channel Marketing

## Why should you advertise online to find local customers for your products and services?

Because every day, more and more people are using the Internet to find businesses and services close to where they live. As broadband becomes prevalent, and consumers routinely use the web to research products and services, the importance of local search is becoming increasingly apparent.

- 27% of all Internet searches are local in nature, meaning local customers are looking for local businesses
- 70% of US households now use the Internet when looking locally for products or services
- 68% of home Internet users connect via broadband

The main reason for people going online is not to buy online. They find it more convenient and informative than the traditional methods like Yellow Pages or newspaper ads. The growth associated with local search is simply a reflection of the growth in usage of search engines, and the rise of the Internet as a daily utility in peoples' lives.

## Local Paid Search Advertising

The great news for small businesses is that it doesn't cost a fortune to get started with internet marketing. Until recently, most local businesses stayed away from online advertising because the only option was to advertise nationally. But with technology advancements last year by Google, Yahoo, MSN and others, the information superhighway now goes through Main Street.

Thanks to these new "geo-targeting" capabilities, advertisers can aim their ads on major search engines specifically to potential customers within designated geographic areas, making this form of online advertising one of the most cost-effective marketing channels for a wide range of businesses.

## What is Pay-Per-Click Advertising?

Pay-per-click (PPC) is a service in which an advertiser selects specific keyword phrases and then creates an ad that will show up when someone searches for that phrase. The advertiser selects an amount they are willing to pay for each click on their listings which results in a visit to their website – thus the term "pay-per-click."

This ad copy usually shows up in special sections of the search engine results pages, typically labeled as "Sponsored" and appearing at the top and to the right of the "natural" or main search results. Pay-per-click listings can guarantee that your site appears at or near the top of the search results and your costs are directly tied to your ads' performance.

This kind of advertising has proven effective because your ad appears at the very moment people are looking for specific products or services. The value of the paid search advertising is its relative simplicity, affordability and effectiveness.

## Keys to Success

Just because it can take less than 30 minutes to set up a PPC campaign doesn't mean you should! Here are the main elements you need to focus on when setting up and managing a local search campaign:

- Choosing the right keywords
- Writing ad copy that attracts prospects, not browsers
- Effective keyword bidding
- Landing page optimization
- Ad distribution — search vs. content network
- Geo-targeting
- Daily/monthly spending limit
- Tracking & optimization

## Common Concerns about Paid Search

**How can I make sure I don't run up a huge expense?**  
You can set a daily or monthly limit to your PPC ad costs.

**How do I make sure I don't pay for people clicking who aren't really prospective customers?**

By carefully selecting your keyword phrases and precisely crafting your ad copy.

**I've heard of Click Fraud – how can I prevent it?**

There is no guarantee that some click fraud won't occur — but there are two things you can do to help prevent it — don't use the Content match options for your ad distribution and carefully monitor campaigns for any unusual results.

**My customers are local – how do I make sure that I don't pay for someone in another city or state?**

Use geographical targeting.

## Time to Test the Waters

Right now, there's a gap between what customers are doing and where local companies are putting their money. More and more businesses are beginning to realize that they if they want to reach customers, they will have to go where they are — online. Now's the time for you to allocate a portion of your marketing budget to local paid search advertising — before your competitors do.

*Channel Marketing, www.ChannelMarketing.Net, is a full service Internet Marketing firm, providing strategy, creation, execution, management and/or training for the most appropriate online marketing campaigns. Our Web2Local program focuses on helping local companies use the Internet to reach their local customers.*

# MEET the MEMBER!



Jeff Johnstone

President  
Party Perfect

## COMPANY PROFILE:

Party Perfect is a special event equipment rental company. We provide equipment such as tents, tables, chairs, china and linens for family affairs such as weddings as well as working closely with corporate clients to help with picnics, open houses and customer or employee appreciation days.

## HOW PARTY PERFECT CAN BENEFIT OTHER CHAMBER MEMBERS:

We can provide rental equipment for a wide variety of events. We rent tables, chairs, tents, concession equipment and even a chocolate fountain. We are proud to say that we have partnered with numerous chamber members over the years.

## HOW THE CHAMBER BENEFITS PARTY PERFECT:

The greatest benefit I experience is from the knowledge gained from our Executive Dialogue group. I have made great friends and have received great wisdom over the years.

## FAVORITE CHAMBER ACTIVITY:

I enjoy Schmoosa Palooza, the annual Chamber picnic. I may be a little biased as we provide the tenting for this great event every year.

## CONTACT:

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Celebrating Our 10 Year Anniversary



Want to learn more? Look for details on page 3 about an upcoming seminar called "Interactive Marketing: Reaching Your Local Market Online."