

# 10 for '10

## Ten steps to greater exposure in 2010



**Welcome to 2010.** Are you ready? Are you confident that your website and web presence are going to help you close more business and find more prospects? To help you out, we've put together ten tips for greater exposure in 2010.



The most important part of everything you're about to read is this: the key to great marketing is active and strategic communication. Internet marketing is about getting your message through in the places where your prospects spend their personal and professional time. In other words, they're letting you in. And whether it's email or blogging (our two key recommendations this year for all small businesses), advertising or social media, your prospects are allowing you to communicate with them on their turf. Be respectful, be strategic, and be consistent.

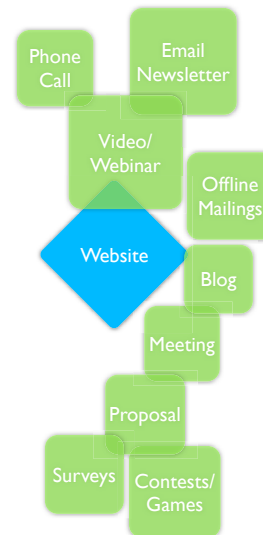
Without further ado, here are our top ten tips (in brief) for small businesses looking to improve their Internet Marketing in 2010!

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1.</b> Strategy                | <b>6.</b> Communicate - Email |
| <b>2.</b> Link Building           | <b>7.</b> Make it Personal    |
| <b>3.</b> Community - Participate | <b>8.</b> Talk the Talk       |
| <b>4.</b> Community - Building    | <b>9.</b> Give it Time        |
| <b>5.</b> Communicate - Blog      | <b>10.</b> Review and Analyze |

This list was put together by our team to help our clients -- and prospects and fans -- focus in on what's important for their marketing. These are things that every business, no matter what size, should be considering and thinking carefully about in terms of their marketing. So let's get to it.

Enjoy!

- Gabriel Blau, George Hermann, and the VisibleU Team!



VisibleU is an Internet Marketing firm devoted to empowering small businesses with services, support, and education to maximize their online marketing.

Our unique approach is designed around small businesses. After all, we are one too.

If you think you should be getting more clients and prospects from your website and on-line presence, visit us at

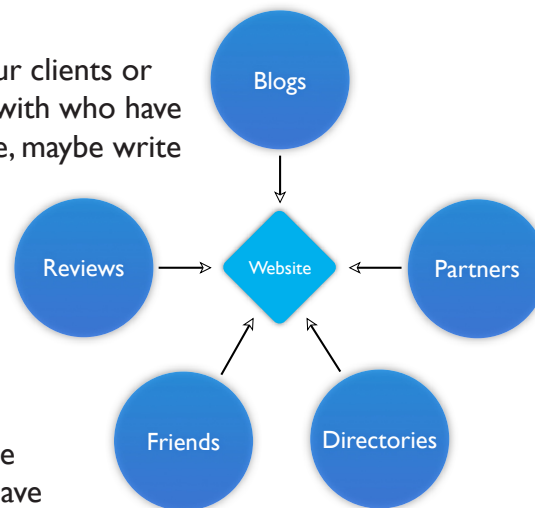
**VisibleU.com**

**1.** First is **Strategy**. Now, there are a lot of parts to your Internet Marketing. Where do you want people to come from? What do you want them to do? How are you going to interact with them and convince them to work with you, shop from you, contact you? You need to create a strategy - otherwise you just have a whole mess of pieces. Creating a strategy will help you clean it up, and allow you to *control your marketing*. The more you control it the more you can monitor it, change it, and improve it. Strategy is super important. If you've seen our webinars, watched our videos, or if you're a client of ours, you know that we're always talking about strategy. And we won't stop. It's important, even if you're a small business and think you don't have the time or the money, that you sit back and create some kind of plan. You need to know your goals and how you want to reach them.



**2.** The next thing that we think it's time that everybody focus on is **Link Building**. Link building is simply a matter of getting people to your website through links on other websites. You want real links, you want links that make sense and are appropriate. So here are five easy ways to get links to your website:

1. Reviews of your service, your product, or your website itself.
2. Blogs related to your industry.
3. Partners of yours: these could be your clients or vendors. People who you do business with who have websites and can put a link to your site, maybe write a little article on their blog. Perhaps they have a link section, or they have recommended vendors, and so forth.
4. Directories: it's really easy to get onto some good directories that are focused on your industry.
5. And finally, friends. Don't discount the friendships you've made. Your friends have businesses, have websites, have blogs, have all kinds of properties online, and they may be able to find good ways to link to you.



Link building is also super important for your search engine optimization. So even if you don't focus on search engine optimization, this process is going to get you better search engine results, and it's going to mean that you're out there for other people to see on these other websites. When people search for you, they're going to find you on all these different websites, which is going to help raise your

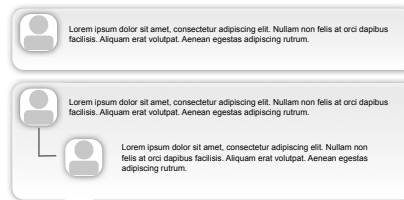
visibility. Even for people that you've met through networking, or some other sales effort: when they go to do some background checking on you to find out about your company or your service, they'll find you more easily and in more places.

There are two basic sides of "Community" that everyone should focus on in 2010:

**3.** The first is **Participating in the Community.** A simple way to get started is to go online and find blogs that are related to your industry, or things that you and your prospects are interested in, and comment. An easy way to find these blogs, besides using a search engine, is to look at the articles being posted on relevant groups on LinkedIn. Participate in the conversation. That's all.

You should be participating in two types of communities. One is your prospects' community, with your market: you should be where your customers are.

In addition, you should be participating in conversations with colleagues. This is important because you will learn, you will get referrals, and you will get an opportunity to build up your reputation in the industry. Participating is simple, but the important part is to keep it authentic. Don't go looking for blogs and put comments on there just about selling. Really participate in the community. You'll find that it's a great benefit on many levels.



**4.** The other aspect of Community is actually **Building your own Community:** gathering people around your brand. Even if you're a small company or a one-person firm, whether you're only selling hosting, or you're a law firm, or you sell products online, or in a store, you *can* build a community around who you are or what you have to offer.

The most popular ways, of course, are through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and we think it is important to use these tools. But you should only use them if it makes sense for your company. And what I mean by that is: don't go open a Twitter account if you're not the kind of person, or there's no one in your company, who will use Twitter regularly. If you're just going to do it and treat it like email, and push out sales messages, it's really not going to help. You want to use these tools as a way to build real community, to really get information out about what it is that you and your company have to offer. Think about it in terms of participating in a community. You're building a community around your brand, but you want to have real information people want to hear, and it often takes the form of information about what's going on in your company: new products, new services,



new hires, things you're looking for, challenges, new clients, and so on. You'd be amazed at how people really connect to that stuff, and they're willing to keep hearing about it. It will remind them of you time and again - and make them feel connected. When it's time for them to purchase again, or to refer somebody, they'll be thinking of you.

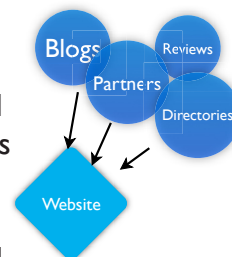
Community, of course, involves Communication. And there are two areas of Communication we think are simple for people to get involved in immediately even if you're a really small company.

**5.** Using a **blog** is a great way to get your message out there. And has three main benefits:

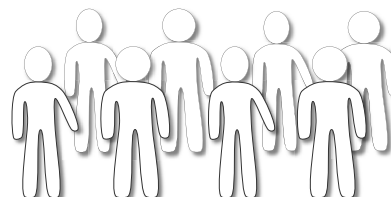
1. It's going to allow you to spread whatever message you have: sales, new opportunities, things you're looking for, your ideas, who you are. It's going to allow you to get information out there in a really easy way.
2. Your blog is going to help increase your search engine optimization, because blogs are designed to be easy for search engines to read.
3. It is very easy to keep adding new content to your blog. And that means it is that much more likely that you will keep adding content.



They're also great for link building, because people will share the articles you put on your blog. And when we say article, we don't necessarily mean a magazine or newspaper length article. It could just be a short, one or two paragraph post about something that's very timely in your business. You don't have to try to become a magazine for your industry. What you want to do is create a blog that matches who you are. So if you do produce a lot of real articles, then great - it becomes more like a magazine or a journal. If you are the kind of person that just wants to share what's going on on a day to day basis, or week to week basis in your company, do that. Or it can be a news section for your company. It's easy to ensure that you're blogging once a week and, again, they can be short, especially if you're not looking to create a blog that, on its own, is a major presence on the web. But it will support your marketing efforts.



Another thing that is great about a blog is that it builds a community. Your blog will provide opportunities for people who find you to participate through comments and sharing, and you can respond to them and create a dialogue. Your prospects, clients, customers, and vendors all have a place that they can go to both hear from you and respond.



**6. Email** is something that we've all been using for years – hopefully you've been using it. But it's still probably *the simplest and most effective way to stay in front of people*. Our rule is **Be Respectful**. Create an email that's actually interesting to the people who are receiving it. Don't send it to anyone who doesn't want to get it, don't go and just pull emails off websites, or take lists from associations. Send it to your prospects, your customers, your past customers, your vendors, your friends, your family, and allow them to opt out. Really make sure you're not spamming, that you're giving people the opportunity to not receive any more.

You want to be respectful, but you also want to make sure they have the opportunity to hear from you. And you'll be amazed at how few people choose to opt out, and rather just get it every once in a while. It's a good reminder that you're around and a great way to ensure that you're in front of them when they need you.

When it comes to the content of your emails, you don't have to produce an email newsletter that's a mile long or that has all kinds of articles. For example: our newsletter is all about *our company*, and it's about things going on *in our firm*. We highlight new customers, or vendors, things we've been doing, things we're thinking about. It's more personal, and it gives people a window into what VisibleU is all about. We find that we get a great response from it, and we have a very low opt out rate. So try finding an email style that's comfortable for you. Our rules are:

1. Make it look good – it doesn't have to be fancy, but just make it look good and clean.
2. Make it authentic – don't try to, again, be a magazine if that's not the kind of material you have.
3. Make sure it's consistent – come out with it on a regular basis. Choose a day of the month, and every month on that day, you come out with this email. Plan ahead to put the content together and put it up online.

There are so many great tools now for sending out mass emails, and doing it cleanly, helping you avoid spam filters and also avoid becoming a spammer. They will let people opt out, manage their own accounts, allow people to sign up on your website, and so on. It's really easy.

Make sure you add everyone to your email list. When you meet people, say to them – hey, I'm going to add you to our email list so you can hear about what we're doing. When you get new customers, make sure they're added to your email list.

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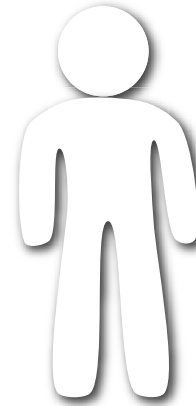


The next few tips span all of your Internet Marketing.

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**7.** First of all, **make it personal.** Be authentic. You've heard me say that before, and you'll hear me say it again. Make sure that all of your marketing is *real*, that it all comes from who you are. Your marketing should reflect your personality, and reflect what is unique about you. It doesn't have to be gimmicky. You'll find that your authenticity will come through, and will increase the response to all of your community building and communication practices. When you post to Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn, or send out an email and it's authentic – it's not just trying to get people to buy from you – you'll find that your followers will respond a lot better. And that means that when they are ready to buy, they will be interested in working with you. Just keep it real. Make it personal.

**8.** **Talk the Talk.** What we mean by this is: make sure you're using the right language. We always say it's a good idea to do keyword research. Every company really should do keyword research, because you should know the language that your prospects are using about the services you offer. And what I mean is: if you're an insurance broker and you're always talking about risk management, many small businesses or individuals don't think in terms of risk management. They're not even sure what that means. They've heard the term, they know it involves insurance, but they don't necessarily think "I need someone to help me with my risk management."

Find out what language is being used by your prospects, and use that language when describing your services. It will have a very positive effect on your search engine optimization, because you're going to be using the language that people actually search for. But also it will help all of your sales and communications, because you'll be using vocabulary and language that people connect with and understand. Your readers and listeners will immediately know what it is you do, what it is you have to offer, and what makes you unique. So when we say "talk the talk", it's really the opposite of talking the business talk. Don't use the jargon; find out what people are really talking about, the language that they're really using. Make *that* the focus of all your marketing material, your sales pitch, your thirty-second speech. Use the language that other people are using to describe what you do.

**9.** Now here's a key one: **Give It Time.** So many people, so many small businesses, and even big businesses, will do this. They start into some kind of internet marketing: maybe it's a Facebook account, maybe they did a contest, or started an email newsletter, or a blog. And they don't see immediate response. They give it maybe a week or two, a month, sometimes two months, and then they say "forget about it" and pull the plug. *You've got to give these things time.* With the



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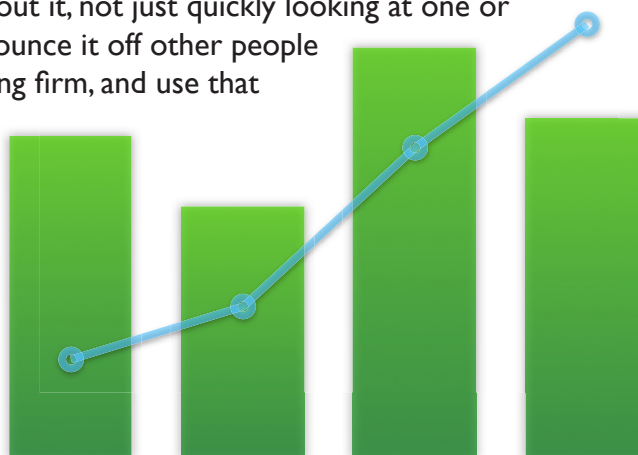
way the internet works now, we're able to measure so much of the activity around our campaigns. The more time you give something, the more information you'll be gathering. Even if it doesn't work you'll be learning a lot about *why* it didn't work. Or which parts of it did work and what can you build on.

While the internet allows you to do things instantaneously, or so it seems, it doesn't mean that people have changed in the way they react. They have to see you a few times, they have to be in their sales cycle, they have to really be convinced that you're right for them. *You still have to be in the right place at the right time.* So giving all of your marketing efforts time to really go through that full cycle with your prospects is going to give you the full picture of which parts of it are working and which aren't. Really make sure that you are being patient – hold yourself back. We know the feeling of looking at something and saying, "Wait, let's change this!" But we all have to help each other step back, let things run, and be disciplined so that we can get the most out of the marketing we put in place.



**10.** And now for something else you always hear from us: **Review and Analyze.** Make sure you have an analytics package – Google Analytics is excellent and it's free. It's relatively easy to install for most websites, and it has a lot of power. Make sure you're analyzing everything you possibly can, not just your website, but your whole online presence, and how it translates into sales. Whether you're selling services or products online, you want to pull all of your data together. It's okay if you don't have one fancy system where with one click you get a report that covers everything. What does matter is that you know that you're tracking your online presence so you can pull it all together at some point.

We suggest doing a mini-review once a month, with a more serious review every quarter to help figure out how you want to steer your marketing in the future. But make sure you're collecting the information, reviewing it, and really making sure you're taking the time to think about it, not just quickly looking at one or two graphs or sets of numbers. Bounce it off other people in your company, or your marketing firm, and use that as the basis for where you're bringing your marketing in the future.



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So that's it – that's our 10 for '10. This is the year that will change your business. Your prospects are more comfortable with online media than ever before. Using a blog, Facebook, Email, and Link Building are no longer for the early adopters or companies going after a young demographic.

These ten tips will help you think through your approach to marketing and engaging with your customers in ways that are effective, natural to you, and scalable. No matter what you're selling or have to offer, no matter how long you've been in business or what your prospects look like, no matter how you've been getting business till now, you can use these tips to improve.

Make 2010 the year in which you bring your company to the next level and established a strong marketing and communications strategy.



VisibleU offers a unique mix of online marketing services, education, and support to help small businesses build successful internet marketing strategies. Whether we support your in-house marketing efforts, or take on the job of managing your entire online marketing infrastructure, VisibleU has a unique approach that delivers more to small businesses.

To find out more about VisibleU visit us at **[www.VisibleU.com](http://www.VisibleU.com)**  
or call 1-646-213-1442

