



SEEK ADVICE FROM THE MARKETING MAGIC 8 BALL

 **Bethany Foyt**

You remember the Magic 8 Ball, right? You might even have one on your desk to turn to when things get fuzzy. When I was younger, it was fun to consult the Magic 8 Ball about my future: “Will I get an ‘A’ on my English test?” The answers usually consisted of “Don’t count on it” or “Outlook not so good”. I, of course, kept asking until I got the answer I wanted...and admit it, you did, too.

As we move into the New Year, our well thought-out business plans go into effect. You may already have your marketing plan in place for the next year, yet the outcome of marketing is always a bit fuzzy and hard to predict. And that’s why the Marketing Magic 8 Ball is here to share its words of wisdom!

PARTNER: *“Will social media continue to be important for our B2B marketing?”*

MARKETING MAGIC 8 BALL: It is decidedly so

Social media has had a good year. Most everyone has jumped on board or at least has admitted that they see the value social media can provide for their business. With that said, EVERYONE is doing something... so how can you stand out? Here are three tips to add to your social media marketing plan:

- » **Integrate video into your social media strategy.** Get a YouTube channel and connect your YouTube accounts to your Facebook and Twitter profiles. YouTube houses a collection of more than 100 million video clips. With about 70 million unique visitors a month in the U.S., it has become the clear leader in online video sharing. Learn more tips and tricks on how to take full advantage of YouTube here:

www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-integrate-video-into-your-social-media-marketing/

- » **Create a LinkedIn company group.** LinkedIn is one of the top B2B social networks out there and has a great framework for networking. Creating a company group just for your customers allows you to offer them another benefit by giving tips and tricks as well as sharing news about upcoming events, webcasts, or training.
- » **Use a social media dashboard to help you post regularly.** There are a few sites out there to simplify your social media posts. Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com) and TweetDeck (www.tweetdeck.com) are two of the more popular ones. They both allow you to post to multiple social media sites as well as schedule posts in advance.

PARTNER: "We have redesigned our website and now just need to wait for prospects to come to us...right?"

MARKETING MAGIC 8 BALL: Don't count on it

Search engine optimization (SEO) is more than just building a well-designed website. It is really an ongoing process. Here are three tips to add to your SEO marketing plan:

- » **Continually research keywords for your industry.** The words people use to search for you can change often, so it's a good idea to have a strategy in place to stay ahead of the game. Use tools such as Google's Wonder Wheel (www.googlewonderwheel.com) or Keyword Tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) to find relevant keywords for your industry.
- » **Ensure the performance of your website.** Make sure the load time for your website is fast enough to keep prospects on your page. This will also increase the chance that they will return. In addition, use Hyperspin (www.hyperspin.com) to monitor your website and receive an alert if it goes down. It's free!

- » **Refresh content on your website regularly.** This makes you much more visible to the search engines and increases your chance of being found. A great way to easily keep content fresh is through blogging on your website or updating news and events regularly.

PARTNER: "Is it really possible to get leads from blogging?"

MARKETING MAGIC 8 BALL: Without a doubt

Yes, it is sometimes difficult to track, but blogging does make a difference for businesses. Here are three tips to add to your blog marketing plan to make an even bigger online footprint:

- » **Ask around about group blogging.** Group blogging continues making a huge impact in the online community, especially among Microsoft Dynamics® Partners. If you're not part of a blog yet, this may be the best way to go. Check out a few popular ones: www.erpsoftwareblog.com, www.crmsoftwareblog.com, <http://accounting-software-blog.com>, and <http://distributionsoftwareblog.com/>. Ask if you can join.

- » **Get your whole team involved.** Blogging is a significant undertaking and one your co-workers and boss should help you with. Make a schedule, assign subjects, and define deadlines to ensure everyone's on board for a successful blogging strategy.
- » **Provide value to your readers.** There's a lot to read in the blogging world, and if your readers aren't getting the value they're looking for, they'll find it someplace else. Share your expertise, and your readers will appreciate you. TIP: Blog about your customer stories. Everyone loves a good story! (You don't have to name names.)

PARTNER: "Will our marketing efforts make 2011 a year to remember?"

MARKETING MAGIC 8 BALL: Follow these tips, and the signs point to yes... 🌪

Ask Bethany Foyt (Bethany@thepartnermarketinggroup.com) at The Partner Marketing Group a question, and she will be happy to give you an answer from her Marketing Magic 8 Ball...it is decidedly so!

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