

[Relevance And The Online Traffic Formula](#)

For going on forty years, the mantra of marketing is that he who yells loudest is heard. There's been an ever growing backlash as people get tired of being manipulated by marketing, and a growing case of ennui about marketing and options. You've seen this for yourself - you've probably seen TV ads that made you go "Eh, no" about their claims, and the revolt against advertising has taken many forms.

What catches modern consumer's eye is an ever moving target, as the escalation and arms race between ways to insert ads, and the ways to avoid them continues. Television commercials are omnipresent - they used to be zipped past by viewers watching on their VCRs. Now, they're edited out completely by TiVo and DVRs. On the Internet, pop up ads can be easily blocked; more customers are abandoning hitting web sites because they can get the content delivered by RSS feeds without having to shut down pop over and pop under ads.

So the real question is "How do I get my message through the clutter? That's part of your online traffic formula. How do I get heard without trying to shout down a football stadium?" The answer is relevance and concomitants. People are cynical of marketing claims, and have been for years. Instead, they're looking for people who are like them and making actual recommendations about products they've used. Here's an easy litmus test - do you read online product reviews? If so, how do they influence your buying decision?

Conversely, on your marketing site - how do you handle the occasional negative commenter? The smart answer is to let them be. They're looking to get a rise out of you, to get a debate going and to generate traffic to the links they're posting. The old Usenet adage still applies: Don't Feed Trolls which is key part of your online traffic formula.

That isn't to say that you shouldn't read negative posts. Negative posts are a filter. They're being put up by someone who cares enough about your message to tell you what didn't work about it for them. If you make or design a product, this is the most valuable feedback you can get. Remember not to attack back - just thank them for their input, and if you can, offer a few suggestions, in the form of "In the interests of making this work for you, how do you feel about options A or B?"

Another thing not to do is scream for attention. Kids have fits to get attention, but it is negative attention. Don't throw a fit. It has been proven that the more aggressive you get, the more the consumer distances themselves. Start connecting with your audience. Keep your attention positive. There are many rewards to being relevant. That is what consumers want and need.

Let's look at two sites that do a good job of maintaining relevance and a customer commitment, Amazon and Google. With Amazon, they track what you last purchased and, based on what other people who've purchased similar things have bought, can make recommendations. Some people get terrified about having their purchase data tracked, but it's one of Amazon's major breadwinners.

Sites that have maintained and enhanced their relevance through clever work include Amazon and Google. Amazon, in addition to being the first major retailer to "trust their audience", also uses their audience's buying patterns to make recommendations to them. This causes enormous numbers of repeat sales, and the software to do this is now standard on virtually every shopping cart on the planet. Google does it a different way - every search you do is an avenue for them to show you links to something related. Gmail, their email service, shows ads based on keywords in your messages. This allows Google to tailor advertising to subjects relevant and important to the recipient. And notice, Google's ads don't shout or blink, or jump, or cover the actual content. Google's ads work because they're relevant to what you're reading, and that's a good model to follow which should part of your online traffic formula.

About the Author

[Trisha Frauenhofer](#) is an online marketing expert who enjoys teaching her most powerful online secrets including the [Online Traffic Formula](#)

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