



Marketing Services

**Tips for Implementing
Strategic Website Optimization[™]**

A White paper

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Introduction

As we've mentioned in our companion *Strategic Website Optimization*[™] [SWO] white paper¹ and *Do-It-Yourself Guide*², we've developed a continuous improvement marketing process that allows our clients to "cover all the bases" when planning and executing integrated marketing campaigns [ICMs]. Nowhere is this more important than for large enterprises with evolving ICM organizations, which is often done without a best practice roadmap such as ours. Although the detail in our *Best Practices Guide* and this *Implementation Tips* paper may seem like "overkill" if you are a small or medium sized business, it's based on our observations of what large enterprise marketers in Internet sensitive industries are and should be doing today. So we suggest that the smaller firm "pare down" our *Do-It-Yourself Guide* lists and creates a custom SWO process for your company [and therefore your market segments].

SWO as a Defensive Strategy

Although we are very practical people and not pie-in-the-sky dreamers, we do want you to consider that whether you are a large or small marketer, that you might be the first to implement such a process for your industry AND possibly obtain a business methods patent³. If you are first with the innovation, this may give you a real "leg-up" on your competitors in addition to a strong talking point with your investors. After all there is recent landmark legislation⁴ that has opened the way to business-method patents – and at a minimum we suggest you become aware of it – if for no other purpose than as a defensive competitive strategy.

SWO as a Offensive Strategy

Although SWO has its defensive benefits, as an offensive business strategy, we think you can be first in your industry to implement the process and pre-emptively does so in a way that can outflank your competition. Because they won't be as disciplined as you, you can sense market changes first, and improve products services and communications strategies to locate potential customers and converting them to loyal, repeat customers BEFORE your competitors can even figure out what you're doing.

First Consider These Marketing Governance Issues

When implementing any disciplined new business process, it's important to first consider internal and external governance issues which is largely about how all internal and external processes of the enterprise are to be managed. Wikipedia as usual has a great discussion of this important topic⁵. But specific to our SWO process we have found the following governance issues to be relevant.

Determine When the Time is Right for You

To optimize your Website conversion rates, and resultant increased sales and ROI, a marketer has to first determine when the time is right for SWO in their industry and product categories. It's already a strategic necessity in retail and some financial services segments and moving quickly into other industries. After getting everybody on the same page, you then need to put a strategic front-end on your integrated marketing campaign planning processes after getting your organization right as we show you how to do in detail in our companion *Do-It-Yourself Guide*.

Since not all marketers can do this in-house because of the many internal [cross-functional] and external [agencies] vested interests that resist organizational change, marketing services providers

¹ The Benefits of Implementing a Strategic Website Optimization[™] Marketing Process– A White Paper, www.Strategic-Reports.com March 2008.

² A *Do-It-Yourself Guide to Strategic Website Optimization*[™]. A Best Practices Guide, www.Strategic-Reports.com March 2008.

³ We offer a patent assessment service in this respect with top-notch Intellectual Property virtual partners.

⁴ The landmark case for business method patents is – [State Street Bank v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.](http://www.cafc.uscourts.gov/cases/signature-financial-group-inc-v-state-street-bank), (47 [USPQ](http://www.uspto.gov) 2d 1596 (CAFC, 1998)). See also Business Method Patents http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_method_patent

⁵ For an excellent discussion of internal and external governance issues please see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governance>

Strategic-Reports.com and GlobalFluency have teamed up to provide practical solutions for pieces of the process as it makes sense. Specifically the marketing services companies have integrated the Strategic-Reports.com *Intelligent Customer Engagement*™ (ICE) process with the GlobalFluency *Intelligent Market Engagement*™ (IME) practice, to provide a powerful new service that breaks down functional silos, and unifies market conditioning with customer persuading in the overall process we call *Strategic Website Optimization*™ (SWO).

Make your Marketing Plans are Fully Online/ Offline Integrated for All Your Website Constituent's Visits

An integrative Website design approach insures consistent and strategic messaging all media and importantly the effective use of behavior analytics in the SWO process. This integration organizes the often-fragmented marketing [silo] strategies and tactics into a cohesive strategy for demand generation market conditioning and prospect harvesting.

But there's obviously more to success than just throwing up a passive Website, so the first decision a marketer must face is whether to have a passive or active Website. If you choose an active site, then:

- The Website should be seen as the centerpiece [hub] of the firm's online marketing strategy.
- It should reflect the firm's strategic positioning and tie closely with all business/marketing plans.
- Landing pages should be different for different customer groups or the home page can offer a choice.
- Even if a site is designed to be passive initially, it should be capable of becoming active in the future.

Your Website should be Fully Active – not Passive

When creating an active Website it's important to "take your best shot" based on time and budget and then refine the process [in the diagram above], as data becomes available. This is preferable to getting caught in a never-ending "search for perfection" and end up with a case of career-shortening project paralysis that has unfortunately happened to more than one marketer who has failed in a Website project. Remember it's better to do something than nothing but it's also important that what you do is right. You just need to recognize that your first deployment probably won't be perfect and that it's OK – because you're probably ahead of your competitors.

Then "Organize, Plan, Execute and Fine Tune"

In our [companion] *Do-It-Yourself Guide* we list some "dos and don'ts" in achieving SWO [in our strategic sense] and also provide readers with over 50+ links that are full of additional information and tips to successful process implementation. Since there aren't any textbooks that are published yet on how to do it right, we want our readers [seeking to better understand the emerging art/science of Internet marketing] to have the benefit of an online marketing tutorial for which our *Do-It-Yourself Guide* does double duty. This Organize → Plan → Implement → Fine guide is for the do-it-yourselfer, although we are ready to help and provide a "fresh eyes" even if for an initial high level assessment. We suggest that successful marketers will treat the Internet as another creative and media investment option, and be more agile than their competitors in aligning all marketing departments and agencies behind a unified plan.

Knock-down the [Silo] Barriers to Communication

Organizationally you should make sure your Website isn't being developed and managed in a marketing department, ad agency or Web design agency silo. If you don't unify your agency planning and put a strategic front-end on your search advertising investments you can risk taking your finger off the pulse of your market and have your behavior analytics get siloed too.

We find that a graphical and storyboarding approach to the SWO process can be a good way to soothing department and agency territorial anxiety when preparing a written SWO plan. This is because the graphics can easily show who does what in the overall market conditioning, influencing processes and the customer engagement, acquisition, and retention processes. CMOs should strive to prevent in-house Web teams or outside Web or interactive agencies from becoming just another functional silo, with communication barriers that impede progress by siloing important strategic behavioral research data.

We can't emphasize how important it is that barriers should no longer be allowed to exist between sales and marketing, between the off-line ad agency, the on-line ad agency, the PR agency, the interactive agency the Web design agency, and between corporate marketing and product marketing. All continuous improvement process techniques such as *Strategic Website Optimization*⁶ (SWO) calls for transparency in process planning as a prerequisite to success. For SWO, an integrated campaign marketing organization [and the breakdown of all data silos] is one such prerequisite⁶. We describe a process that puts a strategic front-end on traditional marketing art, and on the emerging "conversion science" of Internet Marketing where both art and science are equally important to maximizing ROI and the art can with analytics and persistence become more quantified.

Insist on Cross-department and Cross-agency Unified Planning

You may have to really work at it but continuous emphasis on making sure that your search advertising plans aren't being developed in a marketing department, ad agency or Web design agency by strictly technical people without the proper creative or strategic skills. This can result in your search marketing being managed separately from other marketing activities and dead-end your most up-to-the-minute search tracking information. To avoid this marketing gotcha, you should unify all your cross-department and cross-agency strategies by shattering the silos that can often impede marketing effectiveness. Doing this will get strategically differentiated messaging consistently applied across all conventional and emerging media, with the creative message adapted as necessary.

The GlobalFluency Intellectual capital creation begins with the development of informed strategic knowledge. Pulsing and surveying identifies market needs, requirements, and key drivers. It provides market, channel, customer, and competitive intelligence. This puts solutions and services into context by more effectively mapping the market landscape to identify pain points, problems, or little recognized vulnerabilities, risks, or costs.

Then, GlobalFluency's exclusive Affinity NetworksTM initiate strategic conversations and knowledge exchange with key stakeholders and purchase influencers. Affinity NetworksTM also provides access to critical channels of influence with all market players and create interactive relationships with senior executives in a wide range of industries and sectors.

Re-align the Resources you Already Have

Our companion *Do-It-Yourself Guide* can help the astute marketer implement our project management based, business process management [BPM] approach to Website ROI optimization and to do so by reorganizing your people into an "Integrated Campaign Marketing" organization and by strategically tweaking both your in-house and out-sourced marketing/sales spending.

An Online/Offline & Department/Agency Budget-Balancing-Act

It's well accepted that Internet marketing, and Website marketing in particular, has steadily been cannibalizing budget dollars from traditional ["off-line"] line items. The Website has also radically increased sales force productivity, both through external Website [customer facing] content delivery, and internal Website [Intranet] sales training and support content delivery, proposal generation and competitive knockoff tools. In many cases firms have chosen to grow marketing and sales effectiveness through Website investments instead of through headcount. Key reason for this are that 1) through web

⁶ Using IT SOA architectures with BPM components that are both IT system and human friendly can aid this process as needed.

analytics, customer targeting can be done on a behavioral [versus demographic] basis, and 2) since all aspects of Internet marketing can be more easily measured and tested than for off-line marketing, ROI [and CMO accountability] is easier to determine.

But as the Website is rapidly evolving into the most strategic bottom line optimization tool available today, some marketers are being left behind. So we wrote this paper to help you see the big picture and then determine what if anything you should be doing differently after considering our proposed Website ROI optimization process. We have learned that optimizing Web ROI involves many marketing disciplines; that are usually not all to be found in the same people, and are even not well understood by people on the same team. Yet because of the importance of Website ROI optimization, we suggest a project management [matrix approach] to a Website ROI optimization process we call *Strategic Website Optimization™* or SWO.

If you hear what we have to say in this white paper, and then scan the useful links in our detailed Do-it-yourself Guide we hope you can do a sanity check on your own Web optimization process and see if you should tweak any of the elements. Since we are in the marketing services business, we would be remiss to not offer our services to provide a fresh set of eyes on your process should you find this an appropriate strategy. Whether you do-it-yourself or hire professionals to help, we firmly believe that you can leap ahead of your competitors in this rapidly emerging field by becoming aware of this leading edge approach to integrating and unifying your online and offline marketing efforts.

Treat Every Website Visitor as a Customer

To us, acquiring and retaining “customers” applies whether the [Web] customer [visitor] is a new prospect, a repeat customer, a partner executive, or one of your employee or investors. We use the term *Intelligent Customer Engagement™* in our consulting practices in the broadest sense to apply to all your Website constituencies. Our process-centric, Web-centric, and IT-centric SWO perspective accepts that all your company’s constituents, whether they are prospects, customers, partners, employees, investors or interested job seekers, are sooner-or-later going to visit your Website.

First Breakdown Silos, Pre-condition and Influence the Market with Intelligent Market Engagement™

By first harnessing the power of Global Fluency’s proven *Intelligent Market Engagement™* [IME] process, it’s possible to shatter department and agency silos, and condition and influence the market as a parallel activity to the constituency sales [persuasion] process. This powerful process-centric market-centric process helps clients through successful organizational redeployment to prepare for the customer engagement process.

Then Persuade the “Customer” with Intelligent Customer Engagement™

Working together, Strategic-Reports.com and GlobalFluency help client’s [such as you] determine when and how to also deploy the Strategic-Reports.com *Intelligent Customer Engagement™* process⁸ [ICE] which together form the integrated SWO process, an optimal system of prospect identification and harvesting can be implemented.

⁷ <http://www.globalfluency.com>

⁸ <http://www.strategic-reports.com>

Carefully Plan each Visitor's "Itinerary" and Map or their Desired Clickstream

We suggest you think of yourself as a travel agency and meticulously plan the "visit" for each of your expected constituencies. Although it may be obvious that an investor will go to your "Company" information button, where do you want him or her to go once there? Suppose he or she goes to look at your products first – can he easily get from "Products" to "Company?" Are you sure that the information you ask in a second "registration" page [prior to information download] are consistent? Are you implementing best practices and sending a non-pushy thank you email after registration and download? Are you sure your on/offline media partners are actually delivering the email and a positive clickstream messaging experience? This is why we strongly recommend that you not only storyboard all clickstream messages by constituent group, but also do pre-launch QA and post launch media verification. After all these are respected services provided by offline ad agencies, so why not have them applied for online messaging also?

Use the Value of Market Dominance when Calculating ROI

Although we have thought long and hard about how to calculate ROI from implementing the SWO process, we always conclude that it varies by industry, because the analysis ultimately needs to define the value of achieving and maintaining marketing dominance in a particular industry segment. The gist of the white paper is that it's hard to place an ROI on the benefit of "getting ahead" and "staying ahead" of competition. This is especially true for those marketers being dramatically impacted by the Internet.

Who can Benefit from the Strategic Website Optimization™ Process?

Based on our experience there are three types of businesses where SWO can have a significant benefit.

- For most marketers in profitable enterprises, SWO has an almost infinite ROI, since sustained market segment leadership is the return [i.e., the net present value of a significant profit-stream perpetuity], AND SWO can usually be achieved for almost \$0 in incremental investment.
- For marketers facing dramatic losses due to their competitors' use of the Internet, however, SWO may be more appropriately viewed as a disaster-avoidance tool.
- For marketers in industries where the majority of the impact of the Internet has yet to impact them, SWO can be likened more as a roadmap for a successful offline to online transition, and our step-by-step as required reading.

We caution our readers however, that implementing SWO may not be as easy as it first looks, since with any state-of-the-art business process, the majority of the advantages come from doing things that your competitors aren't doing and that are perhaps uncomfortable to your organization and agency staff. So in this regard, SWO implementation may not an easy task. It requires breaking down functional silos and orchestrating a multi-disciplinary multi-functional team to achieve maximum business value from your Website as the "hub" of your marketing cycle.

A "Fresh Set of Eyes" Can Often Pay Big Dividends

Since breaking down functional and agency silos is never easy business, it's sometimes productive for clients to take a shot at SWO without muddying the water with marketing services firms such as Strategic-Reports.com or GlobalFluency. So we've set forth a do-it-yourself process for the readers consideration.

Of course you might conclude that for political or skill reasons that a fresh set of eyes would be the best way for you to go. In this case you can learn more about SWO by visiting www.strategic-reports.com/aboutsw or GlobalFluency's IME Practice at <http://www.globalfluency.com/capabilities/ime/index.html> or contacting the authors Jim McBurney 408-733-9479 or Ford Kanzler at (650) 328-5555

About the Authors

The authors and their expert-teams are all seasoned strategic marketing and marketing communications consultants who are available to help you if needed. Our help can vary from high level marketing organization and business process reviews, that provide you with a “fresh set of eyes and fresh ideas” for your existing processes, or we can get help you with “nuts and bolts” marketing planning and execution. Our objective is to help all clients develop and internalize 6σ methods to constantly improve Website ROI using our *Strategic Website Optimization*™ best practices. We suggest you “do-it-yourself” as much as you want to, and use expert outsourced skills as much as make sense.

About Global Fluency, Inc.

GlobalFluency is a worldwide communications services firm offering its clients a distinctive combination of capabilities for shaping perceptions, developing and growing markets, expanding customer relationships, and building valued brands. With offices in over 50 countries throughout the Americas, EMEA and Asia, we provide the right resources to deliver effective, standout marketing campaigns anywhere in the world. The company uses proprietary methodologies to take clients to market faster and with more compelling and sustainable value propositions that separate and differentiates them from their competition. GlobalFluency’s special competency, *Intelligent Market Engagement*™ (IME), is a powerful new model for building brand authority, shaping market discussion and harvesting new business opportunities.

About Strategic-Reports.com

Strategic-Reports.com is the Website of Sr. Marketing Consultant Jim McBurney and his virtual team of consultants who provide an array of strategic Internet marketing services to help clients beat their competitors. Focused on the customer engagement, acquisition and retention processes, the consultancy has created strategic content with one piece generating 20,000 registrations/downloads with millions in resulting sales. A special competency, *Strategic Website Optimization*™, (SWO) is a powerful new model to strategically, creatively and technically navigate a marketer’s transition from offline to an online marketing/sales model. Implementing a comprehensive *Strategic Website Optimization*™ process enables competitive advantage by first helping clients understanding the Internet impact on their product/service/business models, and then help them organize plan, execute and fine-tune a custom SWO process to stay ahead of the competition.

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