

Top 5 Internet Marketing Mistakes Schools Make

by Phil Laboon

Let me begin by mentioning that I have been doing Internet marketing for secondary school websites for more than 6 years. Recently, it has become increasingly common to see schools making some very serious mistakes in regards to Internet marketing. For instance, it is common to see schools using some sort of lead generation company to boost their leads.

These lead generation companies may seem convenient, but they often use unethical methods to produce bad quality leads for the school. Observing these unethical methods and the problems arise from them, as well as seeing other easily avoidable pitfalls prompted me to write this article about the top 5 mistakes that schools make with regards to Internet Marketing.

1. **School have the lead gen company perform SEO:** Out of convenience, schools often hire the same company they purchase leads from to perform SEO services as well. This presents a terrible conflict of interest and might be the biggest mistake you can make since the company you are hiring is actually your biggest competitor for the keywords you would like to rank for. If they are selling the school leads, it is naturally in their best interest to outrank the school's site and sell the leads the school would otherwise be getting by optimizing its own site.
2. **Lack of monitoring:** Schools rarely monitor what lead aggregation companies are doing to produce the leads that they sell to the school. It very is important for a school to monitor exactly how a lead gen company gets its results because by hiring that company, a school is essentially inviting them (and their 1000's of affiliates) to create a permanent footprint in the search engines responses for the school's name and major keywords.

Some tactics these companies commonly use involve bidding on the school's name in pay per click campaigns, making dummy sites that mimic the school's official website, and buying and redirecting misspellings of the school's domain name. All of these common practices potentially damage the school's organic rankings and ability to generate their own leads. Even if a school ends their affiliation with the lead generation company, the old results will linger for years further hampering organic lead generation.

3. **Allow Web Designers to Do SEO:** Schools often agree to let their web designers do SEO for them as well as design their websites. Many web designers claim they are effective Internet marketers when they actually have little to no experience in the industry and certainly do not have enough time to keep up with the latest trends and methods. Subsequently, many schools believe they have an in-house expert managing their websites when they do not. While the core principals of Internet marketing are fairly basic, the industry is constantly changing and evolving making it extremely difficult for all but the most dedicated marketers to keep ahead of the curve.

4. **Failure to Optimize Corporate Website:** Nine out of ten Schools are not optimized correctly for the search engines to index them thoroughly, let alone to achieve high rankings once they are indexed. This is because most schools focus a bulk of their efforts on buying traffic via Pay Per click opposed to focusing on improving their rankings organically. This is a mistake as organic rankings lead to higher quality leads and is a better overall long term strategy.

5. **Lack of Google Local Focus:** Most schools don't pay enough attention to Google Local. Google local is a powerful search option that uses a different algorithm than organic search. It enables schools to appear above the organic search results and provides them with an extra piece of real estate on the Search Engine Results page. Google Local is a great tool for schools with campuses in multiple states.

We always encourage schools to do their due diligence when choosing the company that will help them craft their online presence. Internet marketing can be an incredibly profitable enterprise, but done wrong it can cause problems that will last for years and be expensive to overcome.