



What is Internet Marketing

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Determine how your Internet marketing strategy fits with your overall marketing plan

What is Internet Marketing

What it Looks Like

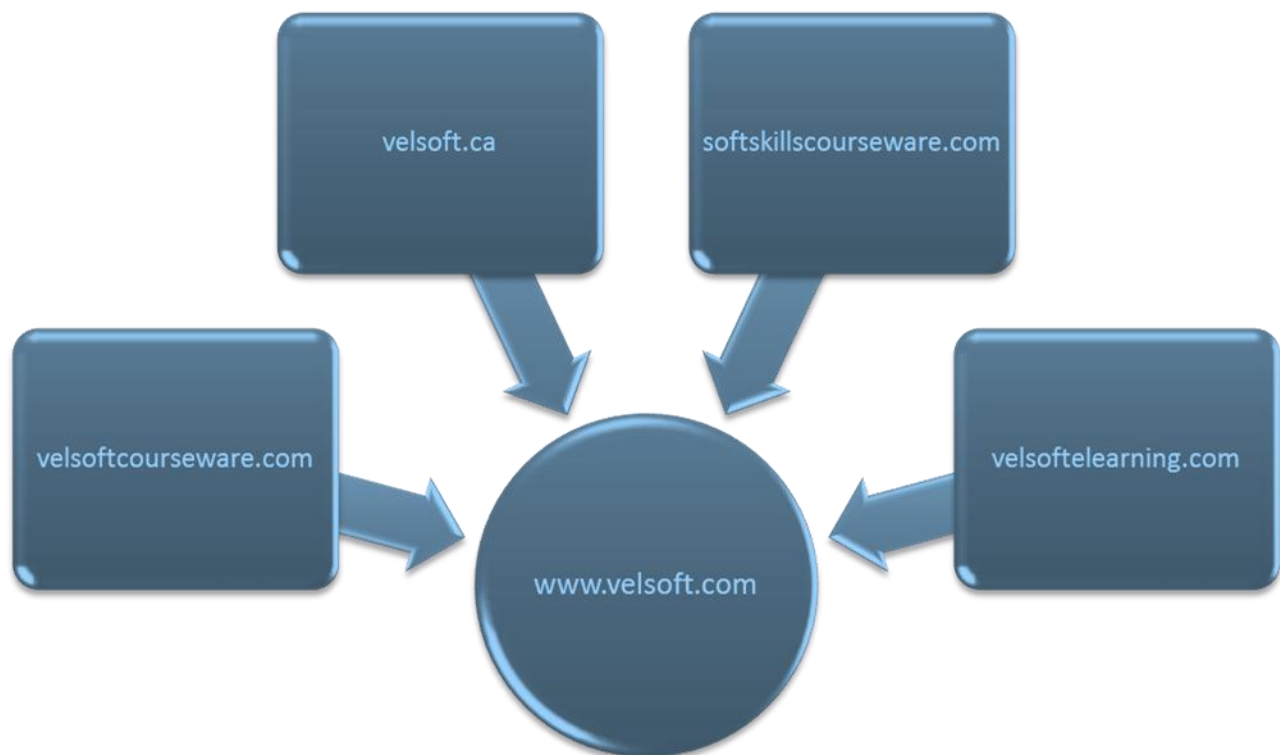
What is Internet Marketing?

Internet marketing is just what it sounds like: using the Internet to leverage your marketing strategy so that your company flourishes. Marketing strictly by the Internet is not the goal, so you will see that we refer to an Internet marketing strategy as an element of your overall marketing strategy.

If you are going to have an Internet marketing strategy, you need to be ready to establish (or if you already have one, expand) your digital presence and reach. In this course, we will sometimes refer to your **website**. Since you may have several sites that are related to one company or one individual, we sometimes also refer to a **hub site**. Your hub site is your main web site, to which any others are linked.

Sample Site Structure

Here is an example of Velsoft's different sites, which are built around the hub site www.velsoft.com.



Test Your Knowledge

What is the hub site for your company?

What other sites does your company own/use (sub-domains, blogs, social networking sites, etc.)?

Popular Strategies

There are some preferred and effective strategies that companies use when it comes to Internet marketing. You may find that only some of them fit with your overall marketing strategy, but we recommend that you consider each of them. Your goal is to use the strategies which best connect you to your customers and prospects, and also fit into your overall marketing strategy.

Web Design and Development

Your business is going to be reflected in your website, so it needs to look good. Your website needs to be a comprehensive and engaging demonstration of what you do with and for your customers. It is no longer enough to have a brochure style website (which just lists your products and services with a few pictures).

In 2007, I met a business owner who said that she budgeted \$10,000 a year for her website, which supported her two-million dollar a year company. This gave me a lot to think about, because on scale \$10,000 for a couple of million dollars in revenue doesn't seem to be too much. How much should a business budget for a website? The answer depends on what you want to do.

There are plenty of templates available to get you started if you want to create your own website. Some small businesses manage to start with a tiny presence and a free page on a site like Facebook or Etsy. However, if you plan for your company to grow and be taken as a serious member of the business marketplace, consider what your web presence will be, how much you will spend on it, and what you want to accomplish. Bigger isn't always better, but content is most important. Unless you are putting good content on your site, don't bother with a website at all.

Affiliate Programs

With affiliate programs, you can use your web presence to recruit others to sell your products, or you can sell products for other companies from your website. This approach can be helpful if you do not have a lot of products to offer of your own, or if there are complementary products out there that can help you get started.

As an example, if you write a blog and include posts about great books that you have read, you could set up affiliate links to a bookseller, where you get a portion of sales (a commission) that come from people who click on the ad on your blog.

If you have plenty of products available and you want people to sell them for you, then you can set yourself up where you act like the book wholesaler in the example above, and people who sell for you receive a portion of every sale that originates from their web links, while you get to keep the profits from the overall sale.

E-mail Marketing

You can create a list of subscribers and create an e-mail that goes out periodically and engages readers. There are lots of services you can use (both paid and free) to help you get your messages out in an appealing format that can be read on computers, tablets, smartphones, and so on. Make sure you check the rules (often called **terms of service**) about e-mail marketing, since the law in many places now states that you cannot just send these messages to whomever you want. (Typically, you need people's permission to add them to your mailout lists.) We'll get into more detail about e-mail marketing in Session Five.

Using Social Media

Social media is an effective and growing resource that allows you to connect with your consumers. Whether you use one site or many, if the people you want to connect with are on social media, you probably need to be there too. Social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are almost essential for companies with lots of consumers using those sites, but the return you get depends on your business. Niche businesses may be better off using niche social networking sites.

Social media marketing takes a lot of very skilled work and patience in order for you to see a return on your investment, but it is an effective way to connect to lots of people.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

There is now a whole industry called SEO (which stands for Search Engine Optimization) that helps you get strong rankings in major search engines. This helps people to find you easily and for you to engage with them. We use SEO to understand what our consumers want, how they look for it online (through analyzing what search terms and patterns of usage they use), and then we design our digital spaces so that they can find us easily. We'll discuss SEO in more detail in later units.