

SEO Superhero - Breaking Through Marketing Silos

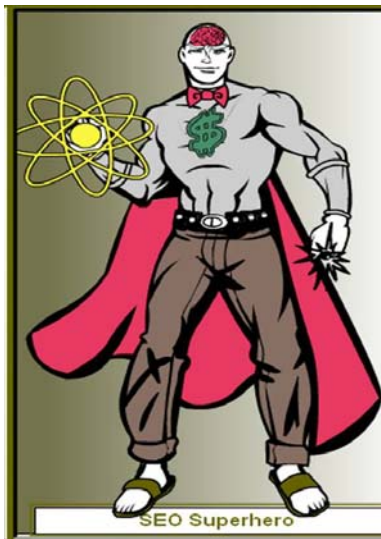
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A few weeks back (September 24, 2008), I attended the first meeting of the [Boston SEMPO](#) group. The topic of the panel discussion was "*No More Silos: Search and Marketing Must Sit at the Same Table.*"

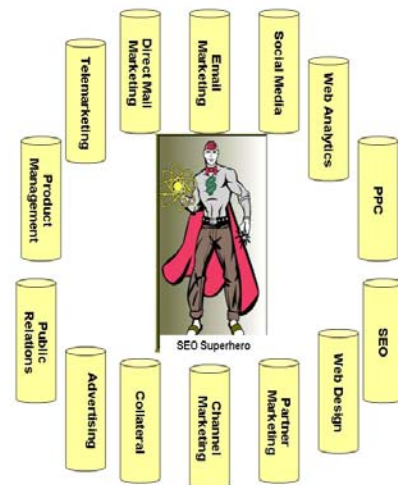
Because I helped organize the event, I had some time prior to the event to think about the topic, and then the **panel discussion further enriched** the thought process. The basic concepts were:

- 1) In order for search marketing efforts to be success, there needs to be **support** from the general marketing functions at a company.
- 2) The overall Marketing organization can benefit greatly from participating in the search marketing process at a **deeper level** than tactics.

Does this take an **SEO Superhero** to make this happen?



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Consider all of the various marketing functions/tactics at a company (a partial list to be sure):

- [Advertising \(TV, Radio, Outdoor, etc.\)](#)
- [Channel/Partner Marketing](#)
- [Competitive Intelligence](#)
- [Data Analysis](#)
- [Direct Mail](#)
- [e-Mail Marketing](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Market Research](#)
- [Paid Search Advertising](#)
- [Print Collateral](#)
- [Product Management & Development](#)
- [Public Relations](#)
- [Sales Team](#)
- [SEO](#)
- [Social Media Marketing](#)
- [Telemarketing](#)
- [Web Design/Development](#)

In an **ideal world**, none of these functions/tactics are tied up into "silos". **Everyone shares information** and works together to move the entire herd together as one unit.

Even at small organizations, with Marketing departments that have just a few people wearing multiple hats, it can be difficult to leverage all of the learning that takes place across these varied activities. And if we are talking about a large company, with **many people splitting up** these responsibilities, it is difficult to imagine that these efforts are coordinated to the point where each piece is learning from the other. And then you take Search Marketing - the **new kid on the block**. The misunderstood, mystical **mavericks** (and we're not talking McCain/Palin-style mavericks!).

So, how can the Search Marketing Superhero help break through all of these silos?

It will depend on the individuals of course.

But, here are some **thoughts about the feedback loops** that can happen between search marketing and the rest of the Marketing organization:

Advertising (TV, Radio, Outdoor, etc.)

Feedback to Search Team:

We are running **these campaigns** over the next months/year (give the search team a media plan!!). How can you support our efforts through content, PPC, link building, etc.? Let's make sure that we are putting the same message out there and using search to help reinforce our campaigns. If we build micro-sites or new pages on the site, how can they be optimized?

Feedback from Search Team:

Can you give us a media plan for the year?

Here is what people are searching for out there. These are the key **buzz words** that people are using to find what we are offering. See if you can incorporate some of this language in your ads.

Have you thought about how the website is going to support your campaigns? Will you be putting up new pages or possibly micro-sites? We should plan for this in advance so we can "be there" when you run your ads.

Can we test out any offers via paid search or messaging on the site **in advance** of your campaigns? Would that help you make decisions about what kinds of offers to make?

Channel/Partner Marketing

Feedback to Search Team:

Here is a list of our partners. Can you use this information for anything? (see below for the Search perspective).

Is there any way you can use search marketing to help us recruit more channel partners?

Feedback from Search Team:

Can you provide us with a list of all of our channel partners and other partners? Can we approach any of these partners to see if there are opportunities for them to link to our website?

Would any of these partners be open to providing us with content for our website? We would ideally want unique content, not copies of stuff they already post on their site. Content that might be beneficial would include descriptions of how their offerings integrate with ours, **comparisons of their products vs. their competition**, information about their view of the industry, testimonials, etc.

We could also potentially use some of their existing content such as white papers, demos, podcasts, videos, etc. for a **Resource Center** on our site.

Could we ask someone at these partners to contribute to our **blog**?

Competitive Intelligence

Feedback to Search Team:

Here are the competitors we monitor, the industry websites/publications that we read, **access to our CI repository**, etc.

What are you seeing out there in terms of search marketing efforts that our competitors are employing? Can you give us a brief of these efforts?

Feedback from Search Team:

Here are websites and resources that we monitor/use in relation to the competition. Would you be able to use any data we gather in relation to the language that people use in searching for our own offerings?

We have **recently seen a surge** in the search engine presence (organic and PPC) from this competitor. They are making a concerted effort in this area. Here are the places where our competitors are participating in social media - monitor their conversations.

Data Analysis

Feedback to Search Team:

This one is pretty simple - give us your data!

And, here are the reports we generate for product/service sales & profitability. You can use this data to focus on **profitable offerings** to promote.

Feedback from Search Team:

Here is all of our data (particularly sources of traffic and keywords that are generating business).

What trends are you seeing in our business/the market overall? Are there particular areas of our business that need a promotional boost?

Direct Mail

Feedback to Search Team:

See "Advertising" above.

Feedback from Search Team:

What kind of **segmentation** data can you provide? Are there specific **demographics** that would help us with link building/social media outreach?

What offers have you tested that have made the most impact?

e-Mail Marketing

Feedback to Search Team:

See "Advertising" (and "Direct Mail") above.

Feedback from Search Team:

Here are particularly effective keyword terms for us. Try using this language in e-mail **subject lines** and in the copy of the e-mails.

Can you **drive users to these** specific pages on the site? It will help us get more exposure for some of the viral content we are creating.

Events

Feedback to Search Team:

Here is the list of events where we will be exhibiting. Can you help us **promote** attendance at our booth? (See #3, Set Trade Show Appointments, in this previous blog entry [7 Search Marketing Strategies for Manufacturers & Distributors.](#))

Feedback from Search Team:

Can you give us a list of events where we are exhibiting/participating this year?

Are there opportunities for you to get a **link** to our site from the show's own website?

Should we be promoting this event through PPC in order to set booth appointments?

What kind of **demo**/booth materials have you created for the show that we might be able to use as content for our site?

Can someone on our team contribute to our **blog from the show** floor?

Do you have a list of exhibitors or attendees that you can give us? We might be able to use the information for link building or competitive analysis.

Market Research

Feedback to Search Team:

Tell us what you can about how people are using search to find our products and services. Which engines and keywords do they use? (and, because most search marketers are tapped into social media - which websites are sending us traffic?)

Do you use PPC to target any specific **regions or demographics**? That data might be valuable to us. Here is the market research we have compiled for X product or Y demographic. It might be useful to you in helping generate content ideas and find ideas for community outreach.

Feedback from Search Team:

We can help you with your market research. Tell us what information you are looking for and we might have it **on hand** or we can find ways to get it.

What can you tell us about the way our market is segmented? This could help us create unique content for particular **segments**.

What information needs do people in our market have? We can use this information to create valuable content for the site.

Do you have any market research that we can **share with the public** on our website?

We can collaborate on how to contribute to each other's research efforts. Going forward, if you have questions you want to pose to the market, we can incorporate those kinds of surveys and questions as part of our content/promotional efforts.

Paid Search Advertising

Feedback to Search Team:

If separated into different functions, the SEO and PPC teams should **absolutely be sharing** data about keyword patterns, hot conversion calls-to-action, and messaging/content that is resonating well.

If landing pages are being created, can the pages/concepts be used for both SEO & PPC? Do the landing pages need to be outside of the site architecture? Can good **landing pages be converted** into publicly-available pages?

Feedback from Search Team:

See above.

Print Collateral

Feedback to Search Team:

Can you give us a list of target keywords/phrases that are resonating with our audience? We can work on incorporating some of that language into our collateral. (get your collateral out of marketing-speak purgatory!!)

Feedback from Search Team:

What new pieces of collateral are you producing now? Is there anything that would be particularly valuable to add to the website? We would ideally want to use data, **benchmarks, comparisons**, etc. in the website content.

It could be interesting to use some of the base content you are using for the collateral, and we would use it in the HTML portion of the site, instead of/in addition to PDFs.

Do you have an **image bank** that you are using for the collateral? Are there images/graphics that we could take a look at using on the website or in social media efforts (think [Flickr](#))?

Product Management & Development

Feedback to Search Team:

Can you provide us with any keyword research about features that people might be looking for? If we saw that there was a common theme and/or trends that might **influence our priorities**.

Feedback from Search Team:

Do you have a product release and product features release schedule that you can share with us? Can we create any content on the website that either **previews** the new products/features or **sets the stage** for getting search engine traffic for the key features/benefits? SEO can take some time, so if we start with content development and roll-out now we can gain traction ahead of the full release.

Along those same lines, is there something upcoming that we can provide to **influential bloggers** for their opinions/reviews? This could help us build some high-quality links. We can ask the bloggers to hold off on their reviews until a date that you set.

Do you have any market research that you can share with us? Can we use any of that information for website content?

Do you have any **competitive comparison** data that we might be able to turn into content for the site? Would anyone on your team **be willing to** blog for us and/or write occasional by-line content that we can provide to external websites?

Public Relations

Feedback to Search Team:

Can you give us an overview of your link building efforts? We can collaborate on ways to approach influential editors, bloggers, thought leaders, etc. Let's make sure we are **not duplicating** efforts!

Can you help us optimize our press releases for specific keywords?

In your link building efforts, have you encountered **industry websites** that accept press releases?

Feedback from Search Team:

Do you have a press release schedule that you can share with us? This could help us with creating related content on the website and in finding link opportunities.

How would you like to split up the outreach efforts to websites? We need to be constantly acquiring high-quality links, and we don't want to create any duplication of effort or **conflicts**.

Can you let us know when something particularly newsworthy is about to happen? Again, we can create content and find appropriate link opportunities. "**Newsworthy**" can have different connotations, so let's talk about what might fit into this category.

Sales Team

Feedback to Search Team:

Thanks for the leads!

Alternatively, we are not getting the quality of leads through the website that we would like. What can you do to help bring in **more qualified** visitors?

Feedback from Search Team:

Can we set up time to give you an overview of what we are doing. Our primary objective is to generate more business for the company, and we would like you to have a clear picture of what we are doing.

Can you walk us through your **criteria for quality** leads? This will help us with keyword research, content development, and paid search advertising efforts.

Can you give us some ideas for keywords that your ideal prospects might type into a search engine when looking for what you are selling? Would you be willing to ask a few of your **friendliest customers** how they might go about a search on the web?

Could we sit in on an occasional (internal) **Sales meeting**? It would help us get a clearer view of the challenges and opportunities you face.

SEO

Feedback to Search Team:

See Paid Search Advertising above. PPC and SEO must be coordinated!

Feedback from Search Team:

See above.

Social Media Marketing

Feedback to Search Team:

If social media marketing is not housed within the search marketing team, then there should definitely be coordination of link building efforts, at a minimum. Social media marketers can also provide the search team with **ideas for content** that is resonating within the social communities.

Feedback from Search Team:

See above.

Telemarketing

Feedback to Search Team:

(I'm having a hard time coming up with ideas for this part of the feedback loop. Any ideas? Feel free to leave comments if you do).

Feedback from Search Team:

Within your process/script, can you ask a couple of questions for us? It would be very useful if you asked people how they might search for our products/services. It could also be **beneficial to you** as a way of continuing the dialogue (could generate a friendly conversation).

Web Design/Development

I am not going to list out the input/output feedback loops for this category. If the web development team and the search marketing team are **not working together**, the search marketing effort is doomed to **fail**. There are many, many issues that need to be addressed between these two groups. If your organization outsources web development and/or search marketing, you have to find a way to facilitate open dialogue between the two. It may not be practical to have outside parties be in direct contact with each other (expensive and creates a potential gap in communication for Marketing).

One area of frustration for some search marketers is when there is a very bright, highly-skilled web **developer who does not buy in** to certain aspects of a search marketer's recommendations. Restructuring URLs, implementing 301 redirects, providing a means to populate HTML page titles with unique & meaningful text, limiting the use of Flash, using optimal code within style sheets, etc.

On the other hand, web developers often see that they are being asked to do too much work at once, and they have to balance their overall development priorities.

So, good luck to all you **SEO Superheroes** who are doing your best to break through silos and make the magic happen!