

# Connecting with your Customers in a Web-centric World.



## Do you find your customers or do they find you?

With the ever increasing amount of content, opinions, and “experts” popping up on the web, decision makers are now more actively engaged in looking for answers and opinions than ever before.

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80% of technology decision makers claimed to have been the ones who found the vendors they worked with rather than the vendors finding them.<sup>1</sup>

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As prospects move from site to site, and source to source they are exposed to numerous companies offering solutions to their issues. These sources are influencing their decisions more than what they read on your site.

## Be all over the web like your prospects are.

So how do you gain your influence back? You’ve got to create a presence on the web outside your own site. You need to be the vendor that keeps showing up everywhere they go. Whether it’s a link, an article, a syndicated white paper, or blog post, the trick is to get in front of your prospects when they’re looking for answers.

## Think like your prospects.

So how do you find out where your prospects go on the web? Start thinking like them. Here are some tips on how to get inside their heads and in front of them on the web.

### 1. Search like them.

We’re not talking about how they find you, but how they find information about the issues they deal with on a daily basis.

- » Specify how you’ll Google the top 5 phrases your prospects would use to find information about the products and services you offer or the issues you help solve. See what analyst sites, blogs, online publications, and organizations show up.
- » Check your site stats and see what keywords (other than your company name) your prospects use to find you. Google those words and see what resources show up. Check out both the paid and natural listings.
- » Drive prospects to targeted landing pages or microsites for more information.

### 2. Ask them where they hang out.

Send out a survey asking customers and prospects where they go for information about job related issues. What are their favorite blogs? Online Publications? Organizations and associations?

- » Pick the top online publication and either start writing for it or advertising on it. If they have a resource center, share your content (white paper, case studies, articles).
- » Pick the top blog and start participating. Get the experts in your company to chime in too.
- » Sponsor an eNewsletter for a leading association or organization.
- » Don’t forget to ask your tech team, product managers, and other employees what sites they visit to keep up-to-date on the latest in the industry. It’s likely they’re visiting many of the same places.

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<sup>1</sup> MarketingSherpa, 2007, Business Technology Marketing Benchmark Guide

### 3. Ask people you respect where they go.

Word of mouth still plays a valuable role in generating awareness, so ask industry analysts and leading speakers where they go for information. What sites do they write for, provide information to, or blog on?

- » Spend a couple days reading the latest posts and comments.
- » Get a feel for the number and quality of new posts. Are they talking about things relevant to what you do? If so, join in the conversation.

### 4. Recreate their path through the web.

Using analytics that show you who's linking to and from the sites you identify can be a helpful way of following your prospect's path around the web.

- » Identify sites that link to your competitors. Are they influential? Create a presence on those sites too.
- » Find out who's linking to notable experts, industry publications, and organizations. Join in the conversation, share your content and expertise, offer valuable content and offers to the readership.

## Go where your prospects go – see what your prospects see.

Once you know where your prospects go on the web, start to visit those sites – regularly. Subscribe to blog feeds and eNewsletters. Then, start creating a presence on these sites.

Push out your content, publish articles, join in the conversation. The more you get out, the more opportunity your prospects will have to find you and the more likely you'll be able to influence their buying decisions.

### About Erickson Barnett.

It's a web-centric world. At Erickson Barnett we leverage this new landscape to create smart marketing programs that drive measurable results. Our clients depend on us to create:

- » Clear Messaging
- » Remarkable Identities
- » Unique Campaigns
- » Engaging Web Sites
- » Influential Rich Media

The world has changed. Get results.

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