

Online, Offline and Bottom Line: Making Online and Offline Marketing Work Together – To Work for You!

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Session Handout

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Online/Offline Integration Q & A

Submitted by: Helen Foster
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Q: What is online/offline integration, and why is it important in marketing 50+ real estate?

Online/Offline integration essentially refers to the combined use of traditional media and new media in the marketing, sale or distribution of a product.

An integrated marketing effort involves using online and offline strategies in tandem, to support lead acquisition and sales objectives. Online marketing efforts include search, pay per click (PPC) advertising, e-mail, social media, blogs, and site development/content management.

For builders targeting 50+ consumers, online marketing spending is easy to justify for the following reasons:

- Online use among consumers 50+ is on the rise and it is significant among affluent 50+ households
- Online strategies can be quickly implemented and content can be easily updated and changed
- Online marketing can be very precisely targeted: by context, demographics, geography, interests/industry, online behavior, etc.
- Online marketing is highly cost efficient
- A well-executed online strategy can deliver a better marketing return on investment than can be achieved through traditional means alone
- And finally, prospects and consumers are already talking about your company/community online, and you have to be part of the conversation

For most 50+ builders and developers, online marketing spending is increasing while offline spending is decreasing, but traditional strategies – like print/broadcast advertising, direct mail and sales support materials – still command a larger share of budget. The online/offline split will continue to shift in favor of online as 50+ consumer adoption continues to increase and businesses

become more comfortable with new technologies. According to Borrell Associates, an advertising research and consulting firm, spending on online real estate advertising will exceed spending on print advertising within the next five years.¹

Today, the most critical online marketing strategies for builders and developers are search (a.k.a. “search engine optimization” or SEO) and website development/content management. According to Forrester Research, 71% of all site visits are generated from search results from general search engines like Google, Yahoo, etc.²

When prospects visit a site, they should find that its quality and content are an authentic representation of the product. Further, it should resonate with the consumer and provide easily navigable, engaging content.

For tips on developing winning online/offline strategies, see Section 2 of this handout: **Five Steps to Implement Online & Offline Marketing Integration.**

For more tips, rationale and resources, visit www.hubspot.com. There you can find links to statistics, articles, marketing blogs and more. Also, you can download internet marketing white papers, such as “5 Tips to Turn Your Website into a Marketing Machine.” Other great online marketing resources are www.50plusdigital.com, www.clickz.com, www.marketingsherpa.com, and www.eMarketer.com.

Q: What percentage of 50+ consumers are online?

It depends on who you ask. The Boomer+ research firm, Focalyst, reported in results from a 2006 study that 80% of Boomers are online. Another source – Pew Internet – reports the following:

Internet use, by age ...

50-54	68%
55-59	68%
60-64	55%
65-69	57%
70-75%	26%

Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006
www.pewinternet.org

¹ Borrell Associates. "Real Estate Outlook 2007-2012." November 2007.

² Forrester Research. Charlene Li, principal analyst. October 2006.

Of note here is the slight uptick from 60-64 and 65-69, likely a result of persons having more free time to spend online as they enter the retirement lifestage.

It's also worth noting that several studies suggest that online adoption increases with income – according to Pew Internet (2006), 64% of all persons earning \$100K+ are online, and that number drops to only 10% at incomes of \$10K and below. Thus, if you target a high-net-worth clientele, you are likely to have more success with online strategies than you would with a middle-market product. Also, geography matters. Online strategies are particularly effective for urban/sub-urban and destination communities.

Again, for more information and statistics, visit www.50plusdigital.com, www.clickz.com, www.hubspot.com, www.marketingsherpa.com, or www.eMarketer.com.

Q: How much should you spend online vs. off?

The right mix is dependent on your product positioning and your target market, but in today's marketplace, online marketing must be included in the mix for all builders and developers targeting consumers 50+. Today, active adult developers could easily justify spending 50%+ of their marketing budgets online, while most CCRCs or service-enriched communities should still emphasize offline marketing.

Even active adult communities, however, have to realize that not all of their prospects are online, some traditional efforts must also be employed.

Determining the ideal mix will take testing, and the great thing is that online marketing is easy to measure. Further, marketers can start small, and build the online budget as success is proven.

According to Charlene Li, lead researcher in a Forrester Research study on online usage and demographics, "To plan effective integrated campaigns, marketers must start with search and layer on site messaging in media that resonate with target consumers." Li adds that "buzz, blogs, and banners" are most effective for Gen Y, while product "packaging" and the written word are more effective for Boomer+. Boomer+ consumers still spend more time with newspapers and magazines, and they are the most likely of all internet users to visit sites they find in print ads or news stories.³

³ Forrester Research. Charlene Li, principal analyst. October 2006.

Q: How are 50+ consumers spending time online?

According to the Pew Internet study, the following are the top online activities of Boomers:

E-mail	86%
Health	68%
Product purchase	66%
Travel	59%
Financial research	43%
Online banking	37%

Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006
www.pewinternet.org

Experts suggest that 50+ consumers are less likely than their younger counterparts to “browse” online and use the internet as a source of entertainment. And, while social networking, blogging, and online audio and video are more popular among younger cohorts, 50+ users are becoming increasingly comfortable with these new media channels. Responsive to this trend, several social networking sites have been developed specifically for 50+ consumers, among the most popular:

- **Eons.com**: the largest of the 50+ social networking sites with 700,000 members. Initially, the site *required* members to be age 50+, but the was recently lifted. Associated with eons.com is cranky.com, a search engine for Boomers.
- **tbd.com**: “Tee Bee Dee,” as it’s marketed, is a lifestyle-rich site for persons 40+ and a promising social networking newcomer.
- **Boomj.com**: for Boomers and the next-younger generation, Generation Jones.
- **Boomertown.com**: an online community that you navigate almost as you would an offline community, where site members are “citizens.”

Despite the availability of sites tailored to their interests, 50+ online users are significantly more likely to visit Myspace and Facebook. According to the Boston Business Journal, MySpace had 11 million unique visitors age 50 and older in the six months from March and August 2007, in contrast to Eons, which had only 320,500 unique 50+ visitors. For the same six-month period, Facebook had 3.7 million unique visitors in the same age group.⁴

⁴ Boston Business Journal (online), “Baby Boomers hit the web, but not to find each other.” Jesse Noyes, Journal staff. October 5, 2007.

Possibly, many 50+ online users visit MySpace and Facebook to connect with younger family, especially to access photos/updates on children and grandchildren. Nevertheless, data from comScore, Inc., the digital marketing analyst firm, indicates that persons 35+ account for 44% of Facebook's visitors and 48% of MySpace's.⁵

As social networking sites and blogs respond organically to participant interests and content, they offer great consumer insights. In real time, anyone can participate in or observe an uncensored dialogue about a product or company – or anything else, for that matter. This has propelled us into an era of business and information transparency, where the brand/product experience is no longer defined by companies alone, but also by their consumers.

Savvy marketers embrace this – they monitor, participate in, and facilitate consumer interactions, and they learn how to neutralize negative dialogue. They also skillfully use social networks as low- to no-cost forums for testing new product concepts and ideas.

Beyond social networking, a few notable content-oriented sites geared to the 50+ set include:

- **aarp.org**, which was just re-launched to incorporate social marketing features
- **ThirdAge.com**, a popular lifestyle/information portal
- **rl.tv**, the online property of Retirement Living TV (RL TV), a network launched in 2006 by John Erickson, founder of Erickson Retirement Communities
- **grandparents.com**, information and resources specific to the lifestage

Erickson, it should be noted, is a very interesting study in online/offline integration. Erickson Communities owns and operates 20 continuing care communities (and counting). Targeting persons 65+, the company's website is well developed, and interactive communications are an integral part of the marketing plan. John Erickson, owner of Erickson Communities, has also created an online and offline media powerhouse. His content-rich newsletter, The Erickson Tribune, is second only to AARP in circulation to persons 60+, and it is the primary marketing vehicle for Erickson Communities. Most recently, John Erickson launched Retirement Living TV, which broadcasts on Comcast and DirecTV to 29 million households. RL TV announced in March this year a partnership with AARP to create AARP TV, original programming that now airs on RL TV and is available for download on aarp.org.

⁵ comScore, Inc., December 2007.

Q: What are the cornerstones of an effective strategy to reach 50+ consumers – online and off?

Efforts that seem to be most successful are those that reflect an understanding of 50+ consumer values. As 50+ expert and author David Wolfe advises in his book, *Ageless Marketing*, we become more self-actualized as we age beyond 50, and this has a major impact on our consumer behavior. We become more pragmatic, holistic and intuitive, and we value experiences more than things. The brands and products that have the most traction with this demographic are those that connect with the consumer at an emotional level, not a rational level.⁶

Many successful 50+ marketers also are responsive to the needs and interests of women. While women represent only 50% of the population, they are the primary driver in 83% of all consumer purchases and 91% of home purchase decisions.⁷ Women are collaborative by nature, and will strongly advocate brands with which they have had positive experiences. In the words of Faith Popcorn in the book *EVEolution*, “Women don’t buy brands. They join them.”⁸

Lifestages are also an important 50+ marketing consideration, online and off, as people experience more changes in lifestage in the 50s than at any other time in life. These periods of change and transition are precipitated by life-changing events such as empty nesting, divorce, retirement, widowhood, caregiving, etc. These events trigger major changes in consumer purchasing behavior and online usage habits.

For these reasons and more, it is essential when marketing to 50+ consumers that we build relationships and rapport. And, unlike traditional media, online media support relationship building, by engaging customers and facilitating dialogue, even one-to-one.

In a recent discussion about this presentation to NAHB’s 50+ Housing Symposium, author David Wolfe reflected on the old online mantra, “content is king.” Today, he suggests, *community* is more important than content, and this is especially true with respect to 50+ consumers.

⁶ David Wolfe with Robert Snyder, *Ageless Marketing: Strategies for Reaching the Hearts & Minds of the New Customer Majority* ©2003.

⁷ Tom Peters’ presentation, “*New Markets, Stupendous Opportunity*.” October 2007.

⁸ Faith Popcorn with Lys Marigold, *EVEolution: The Eight Truths of Marketing to Women* ©2000.

Shereen Remez, Chief Knowledge Officer at AARP agrees. Speaking recently of the re-launch of the AARP site, “We’re connecting AARP to the members, the members to AARP, *and* members to other members.”

Remez added that AARP is adopting a more customer-centric marketing and information management philosophy, a trend that’s occurring across all business sectors. “We communicate with the member in their language and on their terms, and organize information in the way they want to absorb it,” she said.

Five Steps to Implement Online & Offline Marketing Integration

Submitted by: Meredith Oliver MIRM, MCSP
Meredith Communications

I think we can all agree that the Internet is one of the most important weapons you have to drive traffic and sales. *You know "why" you need it.* But many builders don't know "**how**" to implement the great ideas presented in today's seminar. Fasten your seatbelts--- here comes the HOW!

Step #1 – Evaluate your current website presence.

Your website is the foundation of your marketing efforts. Invest wisely and make sure it is WOW!

Does your website coordinate with your offline marketing?

- Content
- Design

How FLEXIBLE is your website?

- How easy is it to make changes?
- How expensive is it to make changes?
- Do you have in-house control?

Offline integration requires **maximum** website flexibility. You need to make changes in-house to customize your website content in a timely manner with little expense. There are three basic types of websites. What type of website do you have?

- *HTML brochure website* – This type of website requires a webmaster with HTML expertise to make changes.
- *Hybrid HTML/Database website* – This type of website allows you to make some changes in-house but not all changes. You may need some basic web editing skills to be able to use the editing tools.
- *Database driven website* – This type of website allows you to make 95% of the changes in-house including editing copy, updating pricing, adding

photographs, adding new content pages, adding new community pages, floor plans and elevation images. Little or no web editing experience should be needed. Find out in advance if your webmaster uses an off-the-shelf database or if the database is custom built. Also, determine in advance if you own the database code so you can move your website to another host or if your webmaster owns the database code.

A database driven website will be more expensive. It can be twice the cost of an HTML website, but consider the money saved over the life of the website in change order fees.

Step #2 – Formulate your campaign strategy and concept.

What is the goal of the marketing campaign? In other words, what ACTION do you want prospects to take as a result of seeing the campaign?

- Register online
 - Walk into a community
 - Register for a pre-sale interest list
 - Book a weekend visit and tour
 - Call a sales representative
 - Buy an inventory home
 - Pre-qualify for financing
 - Attend a special event
- ✓ Use your website as the HUB of the campaign and use the offline marketing to drive prospects to the HUB to initiate or complete the targeted action.
- ✓ Select your offline media wisely and make sure the audience is a good fit for the action you want prospects to take.

Step #3 – Create specific landing pages on your website and start the offline media.

Don't link your campaign to the homepage on your website. Instead, create special landing pages that are specific to the campaign. Drive all the prospects to that landing page to keep the message as focused and consistent as possible.

Landing page options:

- Registration form
- Survey
- Content
- Flash movie
- Live chat
- Video/Audio

- Virtual tour

The copy on the landing page should be SALES oriented. Ask the visitor to take an action. Invite them to register or chat. Create urgency with a limited time campaign and add value if they take an action before the deadline.

Step #4 – Follow-up with every prospect!

What is your follow-up strategy? Only 20% of your eLeads will engage in a conversation with you immediately following the first contact. 80% of your eLeads need on-going, consistent, WOW follow-up.

- ✓ Follow-up instantly with all eLeads
- ✓ Follow-up multiple times
- ✓ Follow-up using multiple media types, i.e. direct mail, email and phone
- ✓ Follow-up with a dedicated Online Sales Counselor

Step #5 – Track and measure everything!

The beauty of online marketing is that everything “clickable” is “trackable.” When your website is the HUB of your marketing, you can track and measure campaign results and dollars spent. What type of website tracking do you have now?

Ask your webmaster if you have website tracking reports available to you. They can be in the form of a paper report or online account.

If you don't already have website tracking services, we recommend Google Analytics which can be found at www.google.com/analytics.com. It is a **FREE** website tracking service that is excellent! It is as good as any of the paid services.

What can you learn from your website tracking reports?

- Number of unique visitors
- Time spent on site
- Favorite pages visited
- Number of pages viewed
- Percentage of goal conversions
- Where visitors came from
- What search phrases visitors used

Website tracking is a goldmine of information. Use the data to refine your offline and online integration for the next campaign!

Del Webb Case Studies

Submitted by: Deborah Blake
Del Webb/Pulte Homes

Case Study #1

Objective: Generate interest, leads, and stays at Vacation Getaway accommodations at Sun City Festival and Sun City Anthem in Metro-Phoenix, AZ.

Target: Age qualified prospects via AARP Magazine in key feeder states (California, Pacific NW, and Great Lakes Regions) reach of approx. 6.5 million and a cost of \$125,000 for 3 full page ads)

Solution: Improve the effectiveness of this very expensive print medium with a custom Landing Page, Website, E-mail response, and follow up by an Internet Sales Associate.

Results: Achieved 100% booking for first quarter at both locations. Conversion rate of stays-to-contract is above 50%.

Case Study #2

Objective: Generate interest, leads, and traffic for an on-site BBQ Competition and Hot Air Balloon Festival at Sun City Festival and BBQ and Tribute (Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash) Concert at Sun City Anthem on the same Saturday.

Target: Local residents and “Snow Birds” in Metro-Phoenix

Solution: Fully integrated marketing plan including TV, Radio, Newspaper, Landing Page, and Website, E-mail response, mass E-mail, and follow up by an Internet Sales Associate.

Results: 5000 + attendance at Sun City Festival and 3000+ at Sun City Anthem.

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Helen is the owner and principal of Foster Strategy, L.L.C., a marketing consultancy that provides innovative thinking and solutions to clients across the U.S., emphasizing consumers 50+ and age-qualified real estate. Prior to launching Foster Strategy, Helen was partner and co-manager of JWT BOOM (formerly JWT Mature Market Group), where she was instrumental in building the group and helping it achieve status as the nation's leading communications firm focused on consumers 50+. Foster was recently named among 50+ Builder's top 50 executives, and she's a member of NAHB's 50+ Housing Symposium Education Committee.

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Meredith and her team of experts work with homebuilders who want to WOW. The foremost industry expert in Internet Sales and Marketing, Meredith is the President and Founder of Meredith Communications, a sales seminar and marketing services company based in Orlando, FL. She is an eight time speaker at the International Builders Show with several appearances in the Super Sales Rally and Sales Management Summit.

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During her 18 year career, beginning with Del Webb Corporation, Deborah has held various positions directing the vision, development, marketing, sales and operations of many award winning, age-restricted and multi-generational master planned communities. Deborah is active in the NAHB's 50+ Housing Council and has contributed numerous years as a member of the education committee and Speaker for the 50+ Housing Symposium.