



Ranseen Marketing's

Top 10 Search Engine Marketing Myths

1. We've just never gotten much, if any, new business from our website before, and so there's little reason to expect that online marketing would work for us.
2. We don't think there are enough people who search online for what we sell to get into web marketing.
3. Realistically, our business (B2B or B2C) cannot sell our services or products online via a credit card, and so there's little reason for us to do much marketing-wise on the Web (AKA "The e-commerce-only" myth).
4. The best/coolest web design is what people want these days – and that's why we need a new website.
5. **Pay-Per-Click (PPC)**, especially using **Google Adwords**, is a rip-off and waste of money.
6. If we do get into **Search Engine Optimization, including Pay-Per-Click**, in a big way, we've got to be ranked in the top couple spots for our keywords...to get all the traffic we can to our site.
7. **Online marketing copy** needs to be essentially different than offline marketing copy.
8. **Websites** are mainly technology things—to be handled by our IT department.
9. Maximizing **ROI (Return-On-Investment)** is the most important objective for online marketing.
10. **Online marketing** works great for EVERY business.



SEM Myth #1

We've just never gotten much, if any, new business from our website before, and so there's little reason to expect that online marketing would work for us.

Can potential new customers even find you online?

The operable word here is “new”...even if a web “surfer” doesn't know your company name (or your product brand(s)).

You may be running a terrific business now, but if potential customers can't find your site online, you aren't going to get new web prospects or leads who email you, send in a contact form, or call you. And that does NOT mean...simply being able to find you by typing your company name into Google or other search engine. That much is assumed, although a lot of businesses with common/similar names are difficult to find by searching for the company's name. Which is, frankly, pretty pathetic, if that does occur.

Primarily, *it* means, rather, that your site can be easily found when people type words or phrases (AKA keywords) about your products, services, and/or customers...into [Google](#) or other search engines. Search engine marketing (SEM), AKA search engine optimization (SEO), is critical. [It's all about Location, Location, Location...similar to real estate](#). Usually, that is somewhere on the first search page for the keywords relevant to your business. Test it now by typing 5 or 10 search terms you'd really like people to type into [Google](#) and find you? Are you there on the first page? Or are you basically invisible online?

It also means, ideally, that your site (that is, links to your website) can be found on other websites – hopefully ones that are relevant to your products, services, and customers so that both web surfers and search engine “spiders” know about you online.

And *it* means that your offline marketing (brochures, business cards, print ads, direct mail pieces, tradeshow booths, TV and radio campaigns, etc.) also pitch your website url.

No Field of Dreams in 2008

Once upon a time, even just a few years ago, you could slap up a so-so business website, tell a few people you know, and folks would magically find you online. [Field of Dreams](#) is a dream, online. “Build it and they will NOT come—not in 2008. But with [online marketing](#), you can fill the seats of a humungous stadium.



If your website (and the particular page that a visitor arrives at) doesn't get a visitor's immediate attention and provide them something of value, they will click out almost immediately. Is that your site?

The prerequisite for successful online marketing is the [content on your website](#). Is your site a dull, boring brochure (maybe like some of your print materials)? Put yourself in a customer's shoes. If you were a potential prospect and found your website, what would you do? Is it interesting enough -- and offer you something of value -- so that you would be willing to part with your name, email address, phone number (or even make a purchase)? If not, [you've got content work](#) to do.

Get your visitors' ATTENTION! Give them something they want and need. Create a relationship with your visitor. [HOOK your visitors with compelling content](#) that gets them to ACT or they'll go someplace else online instead (assuming they can find you online).

[How well do you follow-up with your web visitors by email and/or by phone?](#)

If you don't quickly [follow-up](#) on your web-generated leads ASAP by [email](#) or phone, they'll disappear. Poof! Gone. It seems nonsensical, but a huge majority of web players who invest significant time and money in their respective [websites](#) and [getting seen online](#) fail miserably when it comes to [follow-up](#). But you need to:

- Be faster
- Be more professional
- Be more persistent & consistent...than your competitors...measure your results...and nimbly make adjustments as needed

[Online success takes work but help you grow your business like you'd never imagined.](#)

[Take this Quick Quiz](#) to see if you'd be a good candidate for [online marketing](#).

SEM Myth #2

We don't think there are enough people who search online for what we sell to get into web marketing.

[Maybe that's so, but here's the good news: you can check that out BEFORE you put a lot of money into your online marketing.](#)

And depending on your type of business and price points of your products/services, you don't have to get huge numbers of visitors to your site...to get [great results](#). Perhaps you simply won't see much traffic (e.g. for one of the reasons mentioned in SEM Myth #10), but it's still worth checking out what your potential is. [Ranseen Marketing clients](#) are



usually pleasantly surprised to find there are a lot more people looking online for what they have...versus what they'd anticipated.

Keywords are still Key

You're not alone if you might not realize the range of "keywords" that people use to search for your specific types of products and services online – and volume of searches those respective keywords generate. It takes some homework (by you or an [SEO professional](#)), but you can get some very good indicators of your keywords search volumes (and even click volumes) BEFORE you make a big online marketing investment.

A few basic Keyword Hints (and there are lots more):

Note: you can do as much or as little, initially, to get comfortable that you've got the likely potential for good traffic to your website.

Keywords Phase I – Make your Keyword List

- Make a spreadsheet list of keywords (usually phrases but sometimes also individual words) that you'd use to try and find your stuff on your favorite search engine (and keep adding/modifying...). If you have a site now, scour it for the words and phrases you think are most relevant.
- Run a report of your current web traffic by keyword. If you have a website and a web traffic monitoring tool, you should be able to generate the keywords (and a lot more information) relevant for people now visiting your site.
- Ask other people, even a few of your customers if possible, what they'd type into [Google](#) to find your products and services. Worst case, this step is usually quite enlightening.
- Type several of keywords on your growing list into [Google](#) or other top search engine and check out websites that come up near the top of the "organic" and "pay-per-click" listings. Check out what other words those competitors or related businesses use to describe their stuff (and take a look at their [organic SEO](#)).
- Note the number of [Google Adwords](#) ads for various keywords you try; if others are advertising online, that's usually a very good sign that quality traffic is there for you as well – if you want to go after it.
- Think out-of-the-box about related keywords or audiences that didn't necessarily match exactly what you initially considered.
- Use [Wordtracker](#)** to suggest other keyword iterations and add those. What usually happens is that you'll get even more ideas for others as well. Plus, [Wordtracker](#) spits out estimates of daily searches for any keyword, but these are only relative indicators (and usually way low). Put these (*daily*) estimates on your spreadsheet (but do NOT take them literally).
- To get better keyword volume estimates, though, go to [Google's External Keyword Traffic Tool](#) which generates Google's approximate *monthly*



volume of search for any keyword set (and notes other related keywords as well). Note that the default is for the US (for broad match) keywords. Keep “broad match” and keep the US (unless you are selling abroad as well).

- Add up the keyword search estimates to get total search volume for these keywords (including other major engines) and multiply by approximately 1.4 (since [Google](#) accounts for over 70% of all search traffic).
- Again, figure, best case you’ll typically get only about 1%-5% of all of those “searchers” actually clicking into your site IF you have relatively high rankings, and so multiply the search total for your keywords by, say, 3%. Yes, some of your keywords may get much higher CTR (click-through-rates) and others, less.
- Figure that you are still missing a bunch of keywords you haven’t even considered yet, and so you can add in a fudge factor below... (even doubling the number is not unreasonable).
- Also check out [Google Insights](#) (for free) to get a relative idea of how your likely top volume keywords are trending over time and geography.

***Note that while [Wordtracker](#) is a terrific tool (and the one SEO tool that [Ranseen Marketing](#) uses virtually every day) the search volumes generated are relative, lowball estimates, only (based on recent surveys of recent searches). [Wordtracker](#) virtually always underestimates (vs. overestimates) search volumes, and it doesn’t do a great job of small geography analysis (you’ll be looking at US or UK searches). They have a free trial or you can use [Wordtracker](#) on a per use or subscription basis.*

[Need help?](#)

[Keywords Phase II with a LIVE Google Adwords](#)

Still a “Doubting Thomas” about your potential search volume? The very best way to check out your online keyword volume potential is sign up for a [Google Adwords](#) account (for \$5). Then you’ll need to set up “real” [Adwords](#) campaigns (at least for) the most likely high volume keywords for any geography(s) you are most interested in. That means using the probable best keywords, excellent ads, bids, matching, negative keywords, etc, etc – and check out the real click volumes for a few weeks. If you’ve got a great site now, maybe some of those initial clicks will even turn into contacts or sales... you never know...

Phase II will take some investment, depending on how competitive your “space” is, how long it takes to get a good run rate on [Adwords](#), and if you decide to [hire an expert](#) to set this up for you. But it will cost a lot less money than going full bore into [online marketing](#)...if you are not already convinced of the potential.

In the event you want to tackle Phase II by yourself, at a minimum first read [The Ultimate Guide to Google Adwords by Perry Marshall and Bryan Todd](#) – before you jump in. If that’s too much for you to digest and implement right now, [hire a pro](#) to help. You’ll be able to turn your campaigns on and off at will and completely control the money you spend. If you’ve got a lot of [website work](#), do that next after your test, and then come back later and turn your [Adwords](#) campaigns back on. (and revise your campaigns as



necessary).

So make sure you check out your keyword potential before you give a thumbs-down to Online Marketing – or you could be missing a huge opportunity to grow your business.

The guidelines above are only a few things you can do to check out your [online marketing potential](#) before investing a ton of money. Virtually every [Ranseen Marketing client](#) has been pleasantly surprised by both the number of keywords that work for their business – and with the results.

Corollary Myth: OK, but if it only looks like we'd get a few dozen visitors per day, that's probably not enough, right?

There isn't a magic number of visits you need per day, week or month to be successful online. Ranseen Marketing has clients that get a few dozen visits a day to hundreds a day. You do, though, need to realize that it is a numbers game. A small percentage of your visits will become prospects and small percentage of those will become buyers. [It's a good idea to run some of those numbers with reasonable assumptions \(including the likely sale price\) to see if you could expect a reasonable ROI.](#)

Another Corollary Myth: from B2B companies...But even so, the right people who write the checks don't use the Web to find/buy our types of products/services.

That's simply not the case in 2008, and if end-buyers don't use the Web themselves to search for what they need, their immediate subordinates do – and then trickle that information back up to their bosses. Online searches are considered by more and more people – including busy executives – the fastest way to find any type of information, quickly. And if you use Pay-Per-Click with [Google Adwords](#), etc you can better "encourage" these top audiences to click into the right page(s) on your site -- depending on how well you write your ads.

SEM Myth #3

Realistically, our business (B2B or B2C) cannot sell our services or products online via a credit card, and so there's little reason for us to do much marketing-wise on the Web (AKA, "The e-commerce only" myth).

Obviously, there are tons of businesses that have great products and services but cannot expect to have customers buy them, immediately, using their VISA or MasterCard, online. For those, it usually takes a sales process before someone writes the check and places the order. Either your products/services are relatively pricey and/or complex (and require further discussions, negotiations, demos, etc.) before a buy-decision. Is that your business?



Yes, even better results than e-commerce businesses!

For more than seven years now, [Ranseen Marketing](#) (like many other online marketers) has found that non “e-commerce” companies can often realize an even [better return on their search engine marketing investment](#) than companies that solely sell their stuff online via credit cards.

Online is a great place to create relationships with potential B2B and B2C customers by offering them [something of value via your website](#), getting their contact information, and continuing to [follow-up](#) via [email](#), direct mail, etc. It might take a week, a month, many months or longer (and that, of course, depends on your particular sales cycle too).

Assuming that people are looking for your types of products and services online (and that can be researched – see SEM Myth #2), then a percentage of them are going to make it to the end of your [sales funnel](#) and end up as a sale. Because it’s likely you are selling pricier items and because a lot of your competitors are doing a lousy job marketing online (which can also be checked), you have a huge opportunity with your [web content](#), [search engine marketing](#), and [follow-up](#) to [succeed](#) as a non e-commerce player.

A lot of very smart business people still have the mistaken notion that they have to be selling widgets or services by credit card online to realize a significant financial benefit from [marketing online](#). They are dead wrong, and you don’t have to fall into that trap. Their lousy websites and lack of online marketing acumen are self-fulfilling prophecies for continued poor results online.

A B2B Success Story

META Associates (a healthcare program management company that helps manage the overall development of complex healthcare facilities – and a former B2B client of [Ranseen Marketing](#)) was purchased by [Parsons](#), a huge conglomerate, in part because Parsons found META online. Before being sold (and the owners doing very well as a result), META generated nearly \$2 million in new business in less than 6 months via online contacts (when their typical sales cycle as a year or more). In addition, the World Bank contacted META and asked them to write a book for Third World constituents (related to healthcare facilities development). With the help of [Ranseen Marketing](#) META did a lot of the right things, and it paid off. It can for your B2B or B2C business as well – even if you don’t sell widgets or services, via credit cards, online.

Businesses that rely on “custom” quotes for products or services can do exceptionally well online. Check out [Southeast Financial](#) and [Academy Looseleaf](#), both long time clients of [Ranseen Marketing](#), and [read what they say](#)...as well as [We Make Tapes & Discs](#), a more recent [Ranseen Marketing](#) client. The point is: you don’t have to have an online shopping cart and sell things via credit cards on your website to realize



impressive [online marketing success](#).

Corollary myth: Since we're a "feet-on-street" type of sales-driven organization and rely on personal relationships, the Web really just doesn't work for us.

While the Internet may never become your #1 lead source (e.g. versus word-of-mouth, personal relationships, cold calling, direct selling, tradeshow, or other sales/marketing) it can become a robust, complementary vehicle for generating new, high quality leads. In fact, sales people usually love *it* because online marketing can replace a lot of the tedious "cold calling," save them a lot of other time in digging up quality prospects, and make them and your company a lot more money. In fact, once you [start online](#), your sales people will very likely demand more and more [online marketing](#).

Another Corollary Myth: Our business simply isn't big enough (or doesn't have the geographic reach) to really invest in online marketing.

Do you want to get bigger and make more money? We'll assume, yes.

Unless yours is a pure e-commerce firm (by definition, you sell exclusively on the Web), [a great website](#) and [search engine marketing](#) are NOT prerequisites for overall business success. But, the question is: can you afford not to [do it – that is market – online](#)? And lose all of that that business to competitors? Even if you've got competitors online now (and most companies do), you can get more than your fair share if you figure *it* out sooner or later on the Web. Wouldn't you rather get there sooner?

If you have a ton of time on your hands, a knack for marketing, and patience to get up the learning curve, you can try *it* yourself with e.g. an inexpensive template type of website, the very [basics of SEO](#), and some [email marketing](#). But typically, the businesses [Ranseen Marketing](#) runs into are too busy get up that curve (because they are too busy running their business!), lack the marketing infrastructure, and need professional help now. For them it takes a reasonable investment and commitment, but [read what Ranseen Marketing clients say](#). These are not huge businesses, but many have come to depend on the Web for prospects and sales – and provide a positive ROI that complements their other offline marketing.

[Take this Quick Quiz](#) to see if you're a good candidate to take the jump into a serious online marketing program.

SEM Myth #4

The coolest, best Design is what people want these days – & that's why we need a new website.

Great design wins design contests, pumps up business owners' egos, and yes, impresses some visitors (at least that you look good!), But great design, by itself,



NEVER wins in terms of [results and success online](#).

Yes, I love [great design](#) which includes look, ease-of-use, and reliable backend functionality. My new www.RanseenMarketing.com site, I think it is a whole lot better than my previous site, design-wise (thanks to [iDesign](#)). Mainly, though, I needed to update my content so that I can continue to improve my own [online marketing results](#).

Way too many folks are overly enamored with how their business looks online, versus how it performs online, in [generating prospects and/or sales](#). Even in various entertainment, games, luxury products or other business niches where web design is obviously more important than for Joe & Son's Auto Parts, **content still trumps design every time**.

[Web Designers aren't Online Marketers & vice versa](#)

Rarely are marketers very good at designing and building websites or the technology that makes them possible. On the flip side, rarely are web designers very good at [online marketing](#) which is what really makes a website hum. Typically, designers have graphics and web page construction skills, and these days most have some level of back-end technology expertise (although other web IT expertise is sometimes critical, too for sophisticated sites). Few, though are skilled at the key things needed to create [business results on the Web: the copy and compelling content, search engine marketing, and disciplined follow-up](#).

[A website renewal, instead](#)

There is no reason to scare visitors away from your website with lousy design and a poor user experience. But that's not the point. The business objectives of your site need to drive the design of your website and not the other way around. You can have your cake and eat it too if you keep your [website design](#) in perspective.

[Ranseen Marketing](#) firmly believes in doing a significant revamp of your [website design](#) at least 2-3 years – because web design continues to evolve and this “renewal” process will minimally force some introspection regarding your [content](#) as well – especially if you really haven't been tending your web garden on a regular basis.

[PS: Flash yourself online at your own risk](#)

While Flash can be a great tool to show your content online, designing your site primarily in Flash means you'll be sacrificing a lot of your SEO potential since search engines still don't “read” Flash well (although this will likely change over time...) In the meantime, use Flash wisely – or at least provide an html version of your site as well.

Corollary Myth: The famous [Field of Dreams: ”\(Build it\) & people will come” thing](#). If we only had a really terrific looking site, we'd get crowds of visitors – and things



would start happening business-wise. Wrong. [Not unless you also do all of those things mentioned above](#) regarding your [content](#), [search engine marketing](#), and [disciplined follow-up](#). Then they will come in droves.

SEM Myth #5

Pay-Per-Click (PPC)**, especially using [Google Adwords](#), is a rip-off and waste of money.

There are a lot of facets to successful [online marketing](#), and [PPC](#) is definitely one of them. To decide, out-of-hand not to make it part of your online marketing repertoire is usually unwise. [Google](#) became a multi-billion dollar company because of one thing: [Adwords](#) – and the positive, measurable, and quick results [their customers get](#). [Google Adwords](#) is the real deal IF you know what you're doing, and then it can produce [terrific results](#) and ROI (and now you can even tie [it](#) to offline marketing deals to market your stuff via print, radio & other media...pretty cool!).

PPC is the ultimate marketing “leveler” – letting your business compete ASAP with any businesses, large or small in your “space,” online.

PPC (via [Google Adwords](#), [YahooSearch](#), [Microsoft adCenter](#) and other minor PPC players) is the ONLY sure way to become visible immediately (via search engines) to the types of audiences you want for the specific products and services you offer – if you're not already visible today.

You control how much you want to spend, what you want to say (in your ads), what geographies you want to spend your money in, and much more. Most importantly, you can monitor exactly what type of results you're getting – virtually real-time. [Google](#) generates about 70% of ALL search traffic with the next largest engines, [Yahoo](#), [MSN](#) and [Ask](#), far behind (approximately 35% of [Google](#), combined). It's simply nuts to ignore [Google](#) and not give [Google Adwords](#) a reasonable shot to complement your online marketing. Frankly, I've never seen it NOT work IF you do [it](#) right.

IF you know what you're doing...PPC works

No question that if you don't know what you're doing on [Adwords](#) or other PPC services, you can burn through a lot of dough in a hurry. There are too many knowledgeable players out there now, and the landscape is littered with amateurs, too. Anyone can schlep up an Adwords account (it costs only \$5 to start) and begin running ads on [Google](#) today.

But to figure out the right keywords, organize your campaigns, write and test effective ads, determine the best landing pages, bid the right amounts into the right search positions, use the right “negative” keywords, send visitors to the right landing pages, etc. takes some know-how.



If you have a lot of time on your hands and are into marketing, knock yourself out. But if you're a growing business, and don't want to spend a lot of time getting up the PPC & [Google Adwords](#) learning curve, [use a pro](#) to help. [Ranseen Marketing](#) specializes in PPC management using [Google Adwords](#), [YahooSearch](#), and [Microsoft adCenter](#), and PPC is part of virtually all of my clients' marketing arsenals. [Ranseen Marketing](#) clients get excellent ROI on their PPC investment, and the [proof is in the pudding!](#)

Note that while [Yahoo](#) and [MSN](#) lag significantly behind [Google](#) in terms of search traffic, it's also a good idea to try their Pay-Per-Click services as well (after you get some good data from [Google Adwords](#)). A couple [Ranseen Marketing](#) clients actually get better ROI using [YahooSearch](#) and [Microsoft adCenter](#) versus [Google Adwords](#), but maximizing ROI is not the only online marketing consideration you should have – Read [SEM Myth #9](#)).

***Pay-Per-Click is essentially paying an online search service like [Google Adwords](#) to display a short "ad" with a link to one of your web pages when someone types in one of your keywords (search terms) into their search engine (or an affiliate search engine). You pay only when someone actually clicks on your ad. Generally, the higher you bid, the higher your position and more clicks you'll receive. But with Google, your ranking also depends on your [click-through-rate or CTR](#) (the percentage of clicks your ad gets per total searches or impressions) and your [Quality Score](#) (e.g. how relevant your ad is to your keyword, landing page, etc). The higher your CTR and Quality Score the higher your rank and less that you have to pay per click. There's a lot more to PPC, but that's how it works in a nutshell.*

Corollary Myth: Any SEO expert can easily get us to the top of Google or other top engines without having to pay for "clicks."

Be very careful of the charlatans that promise you quick, high rankings on [Google](#) or elsewhere for your best keywords – without PPC. I get email "guarantees" like that daily, and you've probably seen such promises as well. But it's simply no longer possible with the billions of web pages out there now to do that immediately – or even guarantee you'll ever get those high rankings – for any given keyword. While there are lots of [SEO services and tools](#) that are legitimate and helpful, there are tricks and very shaky tactics that many of SEO types use – that [Google](#), in particular, does not like. And you don't want to be in Google's penalty box – or you'll quickly become invisible again online.

Yes, over time —and depending on a lot of factors -- you can develop some really good "organic" rankings, but beware of outlandish promises that sound too good – because usually they are (and none are without their own costs as well).

Another Corollary Myth: Since it's so crowded out there PPC-wise for our types of products/services, it doesn't make sense to jump into Pay-Per-Click now.

At its core, [PPC](#) is the ultimate, online auction market with you bidding against your competitors for the keyword/ad placements you want. Indeed, some industry "spaces" are incredibly pricey for [PPC](#)...with each click costing a lot of bucks. If so, the budget you have might not be enough to generate sufficient traffic to have [PPC](#) make sense



for you. But 95% of the time, the clicks are quite affordable. Also, the existence of [PPC](#) competitors is actually a good sign that there is business to acquire online. Even better if you see that the ads are lousy because you can do better – and spend less. Plus, there are still some “virgin territories” out there...you just have to locate them.

Yet Another Corollary Myth: People don't pay attention to “pay” ads anyway compared to “organic” search links.

Pay-Per-Click ads typically appear at the very top of search pages (on [Google](#)...in color) and on the right side of pages. Indeed, some people only use organic search links (that engines find by spidering sites worldwide). Others only view pay ad links on [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), and [MSN](#). Most web surfers use both, and it depends why they are searching. Each day millions of people who are looking for things to buy use the short, [well written PPC ads](#).

[Ranseen Marketing](#) has tracked several years of data that show impressive click numbers...for pay ads and organic links. They both get potential customers to your site. Another hint: you can't have enough Page One search real estate, and it's great to have BOTH organic links and PPC ads on Page One...especially for searches on [Google](#).

Note that each big PPC player, in turn, has partner search engines that also place the same ads on their sites. For example, if you sign up for [Google Adwords](#) your ads will also appear on [Ask](#), [AOL](#), [Earthlink](#), and [NewYorkTimes.com](#) (unless you tell [Adwords](#) not to include those).

Myth #6

If we do get into [Search Engine Optimization, including Pay-Per-Click](#) in a big way, we've got to be ranked in the top couple spots for our keywords... to get all the traffic we can to our site.

This myth is a bit more insidious than some of the others. Here's the thing: no question that, in general, the higher your search rankings (on any search page for any of your individual keywords) on [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), [MSN](#), [Ask](#), or other search engines – the more people will likely “click” into a page on your website.

Yes, if you want to drive traffic and create new customers online, you do need to aim for Page One search rankings because such a low percentage of web surfers go past the first page of search results (although some definitely do if they can't find what they are looking for). Depending on how competitive your business “space” is online, though, [it can take a LOT of time and effort to get super high “organic” rankings](#). If you eventually do get some Top 3 rankings, that's great, but if not don't worry about it. You don't necessarily have to be in the Top 3 to get enough quality traffic to your website.



Top PPP positions? Maybe...

Now, in the world of [Pay-Per-Click](#) (especially on [Google Adwords](#)) usually it's not even advisable to bid for the Top 3 spots for your keywords, at least initially. Why? A couple reasons: 1) In a lot of cases those spots can be a LOT pricier compared to slightly lower ones, and 2) The very top positions also tend to attract a much higher percentage of "window shoppers" and "browsers" versus "shoppers" (than other Page One ads). Many SEM pros bid into the 4 – 8 slots to get the best bang for their clients' PPC bucks. [Ranseen Marketing](#) typically tries for those mid-range positions initially, as well. You'll get fewer clicks into your pages, but the end results (which you can monitor) will usually be better (in terms of "conversions" per dollar spent).

Remember that with [Google Adwords](#) your bid is only one factor in your actual rank. Also important are your [Click-Through-Rate \(CTR\)](#) (the % of clicks/searches or "impressions") and your [Quality Score](#); the higher those are (for each ad and keyword) the higher your rank and less you actually have to pay per click (for any specific rank).

That being said, if you truly want to dominate a search category, have plenty of money to invest, and are getting good conversion results at the lower PPC positions, then shooting for the one of the top [Adwords](#) spots can be a good thing – at least for some selected keywords. Plus, if you're really good at writing PPC ads and doing all the other right things to improve your Click-Through-Rates you'll sometimes just drift up into the higher spots bidding only a little more...or sometimes no more at all. Why? Because your [Google Adwords](#) ranks are determined both by your keyword bids and the percentage of web surfers who like your ad (versus others) – and how Google likes your ad (per its criteria).

You can [succeed online](#) by knowing how to execute your [search engine marketing](#) – without obsessing about being in the top positions for your best keywords. BUT you do want to be visible, if at all possible, on the Page One of search results for your best keywords.

SEM Myth #7

Online marketing copy needs to be essentially different than offline marketing copy.

Great marketing/sales copy (the words and messages you use to sell) is great copy online or offline. Your copy must get your readers attention and grab them somehow, emotionally and intellectually, so that the message(s) resonates with them. You need to state your Unique Selling Proposition (USP): why your stuff is different and why they need to have it. Your copy needs to give them a reason to take an action – even if that's not buying something right away. Hit them with an offer of information (or something else) of value. Create a relationship. Keep in touch by email (and maybe direct mail). And leverage your copy writing efforts both online and offline.



Great copy is the same online or offline. Lousy copy offline is lousy copy online. This is something that [Perry Marshall](#) (the author of the highly recommended “[The Ultimate Guide to Google Adwords](#)”) has pounded into me in his terrific online seminars over the past couple years.

Corollary Myth:

We shouldn't be to “salesy” online or we'll turn off our visitors...and so a professional looking (AKA boring) “brochure” website will serve us fine.

This gets to the real crux of your [website and online marketing](#). How serious are you about using your site as a tool to sell more products or services – or not? If not, and you've already got more business than you can handle, you should do the very minimum, at the least cost, online. If you do want to sell more and succeed online, though, you have to wisely use words that, yes, try to sell. And no, you don't have to come off sounding like the minions of used car (oops, I mean “pre-owned vehicles”) guys and girls on TV.

Another Corollary Myth:

People aren't really interested in reading copy online. They want to be “wowed” but not with words.

The richness of the Web as a marketing medium is visual and auditory...and is already amazing – and we haven't seen anything yet. Creatively presented photos, illustrations, videos, audios offer exceptional advantages to dull, flat, print brochures and other traditional marketing vehicles. Sometimes a picture is, indeed, worth a thousand words,” but if you're in the business of selling online you've got to first [use words that get their attention](#): that's the prerequisite. The rest is still dessert.

Myth #8

Websites are mainly technology things — and need to be handled by our Information Technology department.

Unquestionably, an increasing number of businesses need more back-end web technology tools e.g. for things like e-commerce shopping carts, secure credit card transactions, secure customer data/account access, customer software access, contact (CRM) databases, dynamic page creation, database-driven content, email and auto-responders, online subscriptions/memberships, webinars, demos and other visitor/customer interactivity enablers, etc. Web technologies are getting better and better, and smart businesses are taking advantage of new tools and sophisticated expertise.

So technically speaking, websites are technology animals. BUT...



... only in the sense that, really, those are just the building blocks of websites. A huge red flag – at least for [Ranseen Marketing](#) – is when a website is directed and controlled by a company’s internal IT department or any techie types.

[Great websites that create prospects](#) and sales are primarily Marketing things—NOT technology things – and belong to Marketing. IT may have an important role to play, but that’s not determining business objectives or what is on the website. Webmasters, too, should belong to Marketing, not IT.

It’s usually the kiss-of-death from a marketing and sales point-of-view if a company’s IT department calls the key shots regarding its website. Although, back-end technology components are certainly critical to many sites, they are only the behind-the-scenes pieces and NOT what make [websites successful](#).

One big reason that there is still so much marketing potential on the Web is that a lot of B2B or B2C companies of all types and sizes see their sites predominantly as technology “things” and just simply choose not to understand [online marketing](#). But you can leapfrog all of those businesses if you decide to do *it*.

Myth #9

Maximizing ROI (Return-On-Investment) is the most important objective for online marketing.

I’ve made this ludicrous statement in the past myself. ROI (in simplest terms, a measure of net profit per sale) is often much higher for [well executed Search Engine Marketing SEM](#)) than other types of marketing. Why? Most experts think (and I agree) is that SEM is significantly more targeted, more flexible, and more directly measurable than other flavors of [offline marketing](#).

Yes, it’s important to try and get the best, positive ROI you can. But seeking the highest ROI is not the end game. It’s really a business decision between maximizing your return on an additional dollar invested and increasing your net profit. A lot of folks make the mistake of aiming solely to maximize their margin when they could still be increasing overall profits—even if the incremental dollars are bringing in somewhat a lower return.

ROI in 2009

[ROI online](#) has decreased for most businesses during the economic turmoil of 2009. The fools, though, say that the marketing is failing and make draconian cuts. The wise folks take advantage of the fools vacuum, stay the course (and still make wise adjustments)... or even increase their investment. They are happy to continue to gain market share and increase profits, even if their rate of profitability somewhat less per sale.

A note here: even though [SEM](#) efforts highly measurable compared to many other



marketing initiatives in the short term, [SEM](#) is usually underestimated (versus overestimated) in terms of its contribution --

- Via web-generated phone calls that should be (but are often not) tracked and result in eventual sales
- Via visitors who don't take any action immediately online or by phone but maybe put that order in at a later time.
- Via customers who buy one product or service now – but then continue to buy more later...and the future impact over their customer lifetime is ignored. Gaining a single sale is nice, but gaining a customer who is becomes a serial buyer of other products/services over time is quite another. That impact (even if estimated) needs to be factored into [SEM and other marketing ROI](#).

Myth #10

Online Marketing works great for EVERY business.

There is no guarantee of [online marketing success](#) for any business, much less every business. Your degree of success is going to depend on a number of factors...with no hard and fast rules. You don't have to sell globally or even nationally to be successful online. You don't have to be a big company or a well known "brand" to be successful online. You don't have to sell a ton of different products or services to be successful online. You don't have to offer any of your products or services by credit card to be successful online. You don't have to be a B2C or B2B company to be successful online. You don't have to be an e-commerce company that sells stuff via credit card online.

[Take this Quick Quiz](#) to get a quick read and see if your business is a likely candidate to jump into *it*: [Online Marketing](#).

Execution is where the majority of businesses succeeds or fails with their [online marketing](#). But, that being said, online marketing is not necessarily for everyone...*it* does work as one key marketing component for the vast majority of businesses, but yours may be exception, e.g. if:

- You sell only commodity-type products (e.g. are a retailer whose products are available tons of other sites online) that don't even offer pricing advantages.
- You sell stuff that is so new and different or otherwise so unknown (or unpopular) that virtually no one searches for that kind of product/service online. It doesn't even fit into a "category" that people would know about or understand yet.
- You sell a single product or service. Actually, if that one thing is terrific, you can still succeed, but you've got a LOT better chance by being able to offer a number of products/services – and being able to up sell those into your client base.
- You've got lousy, low quality stuff (products or services) now. Trust me, it's not likely you'll fool too many people online either – at least for very long.
- You really don't want to get involved at all in [your online marketing](#) (especially if you've decided to farm it out). [Online marketing](#) does not well work in a vacuum...at least very well for a long period. This point touches execution,

16



perhaps, but it's key...along with the financial willingness to do *it* right. [Ranseen Marketing](#) only “fires” clients for two reasons: 1) not communicating (or mis-communicating) about their respective business and 2) not paying their bills as agreed.

Will your “next thing” be a successful business?

P.S. You might not think that the Web is a great place for selling “ideas” that aren't businesses yet (and don't have fully baked, real products or services at this point). Actually, it's one of the best places to test your great idea(s) with a cheap landing page(s) and [Google Adwords](#). The Web is a terrific place to check out your customers' appetite for...and feasibility of...your “next new thing” without spending a ton of money. [Find out more.](#)

The Web is NOT the only place to sell. There are a host of other [traditional offline marketing vehicles](#) that work great – sometimes better than online marketing – but you've got to try them and execute well to fairly judge the results. [Online and offline marketing](#) can and should complement one another at all times to get the best results from both.

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