



Market your business successfully online

A general view during the Equine Marketing Conference 2013. Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

The most photographed horse in the world is High Kingdom, an Irish-bred horse, owed by Zara Philips. You can't buy that kind of exposure, but you can do a few simple things to help promote your business, Margaret Donnelly heard at the Teagasc Equine Marketing Conference recently

The world will not end if you are not on twitter, Ian Dodson, Digital Marketing Institute, told the conference adding that it's difficult for people to know what marketing or social media they should be using.

He advised anyone looking to tackle digital marketing to focus on one thing and do it well. "Start small. Don't try and turn your business on its head." He also said that when it comes to social media, Irish people mistakenly view their own business websites different to their own social media usage.

"We all book holidays online, use Facebook, Google and a host of other digital technologies. Something happens in Ireland when it comes to technology. At home in the evening you love the power of the internet, but then in work you are in professional mode and that's reflected in our websites and how our companies represent themselves on their website. We put stuff on our websites that as a consumer at home in the evening we'd laugh at."

Ian added that research carried out by the Digital Marketing Institute shows that the number one thing Irish businesses tweet about is press releases, and the most common thing Irish businesses put on their business websites is press releases. However, he said, no one wants to read press releases on websites or twitter, noting that if you don't know how to manage your own social media, you need to bridge the knowledge gap here – and get someone who does know how to manage it.

IRISH ONLINE

Cera Ward, Google Ireland, told the conference that the

average Irish person spends 19.5 hours online every week, which accounts for more time than is spent listening to the radio or reading papers and, for a lot of people, more time than they spend watching TV.

One quarter of that time is spent on social networks, she said, and Irish people look at smart phones 150 times a day. And when they're on their smart phones Irish people are searching, social networking, gaming, watching videos,

Horse for sale

The average monthly online search, globally, for the word 'horse' is 44m. And that's for 'horse' not 'horses' or any other variation of the word.

Cera Ward, Google Ireland, told the recent Teagasc Equine Conference that in Ireland there are 478,000 searches for the word 'horse' every month, 74,000 for 'pony' and 40,000 for 'racehorses' and 8,000 for 'riding schools'.

There are 22,000 searches monthly 'horses for sale in Ireland' she said, which shows that people are actively using the internet to find horses for sale and to sell horses in Ireland.

"The Irish horse exports well, so you have to be global. But small can be really big."

Youtube, which is owned by Google, she said, is the second biggest search engine in the world, after Google. There are 2.3m people online in Ireland, according to Google, and over half the population is online every day.

reading news or magazines and using coupons.

Also, Irish people are not afraid to spend money online, she said. Irish people spent €4bn last year online, but €3bn of it went out of Ireland. She said this is because Irish businesses did not give customers the opportunity to buy from them.

“Don’t put your business in that position.”

Data, she said, decides everything and companies should not fall into the ‘hippo effect’ – the highest paid person’s opinion. “Don’t let this happen. Let your consumers dictate.”

With 2.3m people online in Ireland, she said, it’s vital for companies to be online. However, 30,000 Irish SMEs don’t have websites, she said, even though 74% of Irish people research companies online. The average Irish person spends 5% of their time online searching and they wait, on average, four seconds for a website to load. Then, they’re gone...

“We (Google) know we have to be fast to win, that’s why you get the message that you got x amount of results in whatever seconds.”

MAKE THE WEB WORK FOR YOU

If you don’t have a website, Cera said, don’t panic. She advised to get a website provider, or a free website for one year, such as gettingirishbusinessonline.ie which is being funded by a number of companies including Google and An Post. This site is offering Irish companies a free website and a free .com or .ie domain for a year. She said any website must have “winning moments that matter”.

She also advised to make your message bespoke for the people looking on your website. “There is no point in having a website that does not have some form of analytics. Go bigger, faster. The internet is global: with cheap travel, etc, it’s a global market. You are not limited by where you are geographically located. If you have half breeds for sale, let the world know. Your website is a 24-hour shop.”

People are using the internet to find out how to buy and sell horses, she said, and the second biggest search engine, after



Ian Dodson, *Digital Marketing Uncovered*, speaking at the Equine Marketing Conference 2013. Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Google, is Youtube, which is owned by Google.

“How to...’ is the biggest search phrase on Youtube. You can answer that with videos.” According to Cera one must either be the content or be beside the content. “So you either create the video that everyone wants to watch, or you better put your ad beside it.”

Who clicked what!

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- There are 22,000 online searches for ‘horses for sale’ every month in Ireland
- There are 6,000 online searches for ‘stallions for sale’ every month in Ireland
- There are 2,000 online searches for ‘how to buy a horse’ every month in Ireland

An advertisement for Veterinary Ireland Financial Services Ltd. The top features a large blue stylized 'V' logo. Below it, the text reads "Veterinary Ireland Financial Services Ltd." and "‘Financial Solutions for a Better Tomorrow’". Underneath is the tagline "A dedicated, professional advisory service for members of Veterinary Ireland". A list of services follows: "Full Financial Reviews | Savings & Investments", "Income Protection | Retirement Planning", "Life Assurance | Business Protection | Health Insurance", and "Practice & Home Insurance | Motor & Travel Insurance". At the bottom, contact information is provided: "For more information please call 01 4577 987 or email finance@vetireland.ie". The bottom right corner shows a close-up of hands using a calculator. At the very bottom, in small text, it says "Veterinary Ireland Financial Services Limited is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland".