

# Inside Intel Online

**Intel turbocharges its media mix by tearing down its silos and centralizing its search-marketing strategy.**

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**A**t 10:15 a.m., on Wednesday, August 24, 2005, Intel introduced Intel Viiv™—a new kind of home-entertainment technology—at the Intel Developer Forum. At the precise moment this news was announced, an online campaign was launched on Google and other search engines that directed consumers to Intel’s web site, where they could get more information.

It was the first time Intel was able to integrate its offline and online marketing activities so precisely—and it did not come easily. Intel’s ability to optimize search-engine marketing so exactly—to deliver relevant information to consumers when and where they were demanding it—is possible at Intel only after three years of intensive analysis and a major reorganization.

Of course, Intel’s interest in search marketing is not hard to appreciate. As a technology company, its consumers do tend to use the web quite heavily; research shows that about 90 percent of Intel’s customers are online and approximately 87 percent are using search engines to make purchasing decisions.

The importance of search marketing applies across virtually all product and services categories, however, and big brands of every kind need to take a hard look at how to make best use of this emerging medium. Every big brand today faces similar issues—the fragmentation of media, consumer lifestyles and distribution channels.

When ads are being “time-shifted” via technologies like TiVo or avoided altogether via satellite radio, new approaches are required, regardless of whether your product is a microchip or a potato chip.

Search marketing is an attractive option because it shows up exactly at the moment a consumer is seeking information. However, the option is open only to marketing organizations that find a way to integrate their search marketing strategies with the rest of their marketing and media plans.

For Intel—and likely for most other marketers, as well—the solution is relatively simple, although not exactly easy. In fact, it can be summed up in a single word: Centralize.

Intel centralized its search marketing activities for the simple reason that if different divisions and geographies are left to manage their own campaigns separately, both conflicts and waste are inevitable. The customer experience suffers, too.

For example, the software group might be using search marketing for software products while the embedded architecture team is using search marketing for embedded architecture. Each of the divisions is using search marketing because of its importance as part of the media mix, but they aren’t looking at it holistically; they only see things from within their respective silos.

When Intel analyzed this situation from a corporate level, it found that 19 percent of the keywords it was buying as a company were being used in two or more campaigns. Some keywords—like “Pentium”—were being used in as many as nine campaigns. In other words, the company was wasting precious marketing dollars bidding against itself for the same keywords.

This situation is very unlike that typically found in traditional media, where a marketer can easily target a message through niche publications. Traditionally, it’s easy to target audiences using media that’s appropriate to a particular marketing objective. If a marketer wants to target game developers, for example, they can buy an ad in *Game Developer* magazine or a similarly focused publication.

With search engines—because there are only a small number of major engines worldwide—marketers don’t have that luxury. When Intel buys a keyword such as “Pentium” in a search engine, anyone searching on “Pentium” is going to find

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it—whether they’re looking for software development tools for the Pentium architecture or for embedded Pentium processors.

The challenge is magnified when viewed on a global basis, because different markets also require different approaches. Right now, Intel is running roughly 16,000 keywords across about 500 campaigns worldwide, in every major country in the world, in 13 different languages.

Obviously, people look for terms—for information—differently in different languages. It’s critical that your keywords and your creative are specific to them, and that you use different messaging based on the research, instead of just translating campaigns from English. That would not be possible if Intel had not centralized its search-marketing activities on a worldwide basis.

## How Intel Did It

Intel first had to buy into a fundamental belief that investing in search marketing was the right thing to do. The company arrived at that belief based, in part, on metrics provided by Google and other sources that demonstrated in very concrete terms the value of search marketing throughout the marketing organization.

Key to this process was data on how customers were using search engines and the types of information for which they were searching, and when. Solid intelligence was developed on how many people were looking for information on Intel products, services and technologies via search engines.

Intel also had the benefit of a few in-house success stories. Intel’s interest in search marketing began—as this type of change often does in large organizations—as a grass-roots effort. It was led by champions at a divisional level who understood the power of using the platform for their own specific objectives.

As the success of those efforts became known, that knowledge became a catalyst for change.

Naturally, there were points of resistance to a change that was so fundamental. Intel had been doing marketing the same way for about 30 years, and to change things so drastically wasn’t easy. But a passionate belief in search engine marketing helped pave the way.

At the senior level, it was decided that search marketing was important, that it had to be treated as a new and different form of media, and that it should be included in the media mix. Once there was agreement that search marketing was important, it was a matter of evaluating the organizational structure and effecting a fundamental shift.

## Management & Measurement

Today, Intel can easily manage all of the countries in which it does business to make sure that it is meeting specific customer needs and that its campaigns are appropriate to each market. It’s also possible for Intel to gain a comprehensive view of everything that it is doing, up from the divisions, worldwide. The information can be broken out in any format management needs to make informed decisions.

As the saying goes, what is managed can be measured. Intel typically quantifies results by depth-of-involvement. In other words, if a consumer arrives at the Intel web site via a search engine, how much time are they spending on the site, and how deep are they going into it? Are they viewing a demo? Are they downloading a white paper? Are they signing up for a newsletter?

This type of analysis helps evaluate whether consumers are finding the information valuable, and if Intel is communicating its brand message effectively—and it can be analyzed for each and every keyword the company buys.

This much is clear: Marketers can’t afford to continue to treat search marketing as an “emerging” form of media; it should be afforded the same level of attention and importance as traditional media.

Search marketing is a distinctly different medium that presents distinctly different challenges. So, tear down those silos, and centralize—and your search for online marketing effectiveness will be a success. ■

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formed an internal creative services group as a strategic communications manager for the developer audience. In 2003, Martin worked with the corporate internet marketing team to centralize all search marketing activities across the company. Previously, Martin spent several years as a senior support engineer at Microsoft, working with the Windows® desktop operating system.



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