

## Internet Marketing In South Africa

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nbsp;Part 1

This article is written from my own experiences, on the many problems facing South African based internet marketers. As a South African, myself, I have been trying to establish myself in internet marketing, for the last three years, but have come across a number of obstacles, which have proved seriously detrimental to my efforts. If you are South African, you can probably relate to this. If you have been battling what seem insurmountable odds, or if you are new to this concept, the message is the same. Stop wasting your time and your money on what is bound to be nothing less than - wasting your time and your money and I will explain why I said that. If you are an internet marketer, who is not South African, you should also read this article, because you are, unwittingly, leaving a lot of money on the table.

As we all know, South Africa is a part of Africa and is unfairly considered as a third world country, with the incorrect perception that this second largest continent, is nothing more than a waste of time, in the field of internet marketing. Well, I beg to differ. I will attempt to outline some of the misconceptions, obstacles, causes and remedies that I have encountered.

Yes, it is true that Africa has not progressed as much as the so called first world countries, but it is taking giant strides towards that. The advent of the internet, is only just beginning to catch on and the vast majority of the population, still have no access at all, but it is coming and it is coming fast. The internet is now available in all countries around the world and Africa is no different. We all know about the Nigerian internet scams. It is just that the vast majority of the population are poverty stricken and cannot afford the service, many are illiterate and the majority of the continent consists of large open spaces and small villages, making the physical provision of any basic services such as electricity, clean water, telephones and other communication devices extremely difficult. It is also an ongoing problem, where these desperate people steal cables and anything that can be traded for a meal. So, at this stage the internet is only available in the bigger metropolitan areas. It makes sense, doesn't it? Imagine how easy it is to supply services to a very densely populated area like England and where everyone is literate, in a fixed abode and living above the poverty line.

South Africa is the most technically advanced country in Africa and not far behind the standards of the other technology rich countries, but we are seriously lacking in internet technology. The internet is still very new to South Africa and has only just begun to catch on. It is experiencing a phenomenal growth rate and more and more businesses and individuals are "hooking up". All of the major cities are able to offer various means of connection such as ADSL, bluetooth, wireless and people are getting connected on their pcs, laptops and cellphones. The rural areas are battling to get connected and the only option available to them at this stage is the old antiquated dial up system using a telephone line, or via satellite. Promises have been made by government, that in a few years, everyone will be able to get a telephone and therefore, will have internet access available to them. This represents an enormous potential for wary marketers.

This is the overview of the situation with internet access in Africa and more particularly, South Africa. In the next article, we will look at some of the problems faced by South African users and the effects they have on internet marketing.

Part 2

Recent political changes, have reversed the fortunes of the South African population, in that the previously disadvantaged black community, now have money and the fine things in life, including access to the internet. Whereas before they wouldn't have been considered a viable market, they are now able to access the internet and dabble in small business. They want more. The whites, on the other hand, now find themselves out of work, unsure of the future and desperately seeking an alternative means of income. Both groups make good target markets, and both are particularly keen on using the internet to improve their lot in life. Remember, the internet is the biggest employer in the world and does not recognise age, colour, education, physical disabilities, wealth etc. People hear

of the successes achieved on the internet and are fooled into looking for a quick fix. The internet and marketing via this medium, gives everyone an equal opportunity, well, almost everyone. Not South Africans, unfortunately.

Something like 70% of the S.A internet community, access the internet on the computers at their places of employment and as much as two hours each workday, is lost to private usage of the internet. Obviously these people are not all looking for ways to make money, but a large percentage are. These people who are newly exposed to all the hype on the internet are easily sucked in to believing the sales pitch. A lot of money is being spent on all sorts of junk and causing many heartbroken families. I was like that too. I firmly believed I could make a lot of money on the internet and set about joining all sorts of schemes. They do not work, but these desperate and naïve people don't know that. Imagine if it was possible to guide them, to channel all that energy and curiosity and of course all that money into your bank account? If those people all trusted you and listened to your advice, if you were able to develop well thought out plans and business opportunities? If those people all joined your membership site?

One of the biggest drawbacks in S.A is that the internet and allied services are still very expensive and difficult in finding a good service provider. Other first world countries have direct, fast, unlimited service at very reasonable prices and if they do experience problems with the service provider, there are plenty of others to try. According to a recent survey, something like 70% of all internet users, regularly access the 'net from their places of employment. The employer provides pcs and internet for business purposes and these curious people cheat their employers, by using his service for private usage. People send emails to friends, go shopping, download files, look at pornography, play games, gamble and read classifieds and other adverts for a better job, or an easy method of earning more money. From this survey it was estimated that as much as 85% of this target group were looking for self employment opportunities. Now, that's a lot of people! If the price of internet access was cheaper, all these people would use it at home. In fact, most do have internet access at home, but due to small caps on their usage and exorbitant prices, they rather use the employer's service. My point is that millions are searching for opportunities on the internet and the fact that crime is rampant only makes them more determined, to start a business from home. This is a huge potential for marketers. So what is the problem? Why are more South Africans actively getting involved? In the next article, we will start looking at these problem areas.

### Part 3

As the internet is still relatively new to South Africa, we don't have many experts, or experience in the field. Those calling themselves experts, have only a limited knowledge and are far too expensive, when compared to overseas competitors. Simple things like service provision, web hosting, design and site building, software, tools, optimisation and advertising, are grossly overpriced. In most cases, they are bought overseas and resold here. I was given a quote, last month, of R120 (\$17) per month, for basic, small webhosting service, excluding the domain registration and excluding the internet service provision. That was only the hosting! I was quoted R6000 (\$857) for a designer, to look at one of my websites and to make a couple of small changes. It is crazy. We pay between R8 and R12 for an mp3 song, which costs from 10c to 90c in the U.S.A.

The state owned telecommunications company, Telkom, have the monopoly and squash all opposition. This has led to very highly priced access and an indifferent service. Nearly all packages offered by them, or sub contractor service providers, are restricted and capped. The actual service, the technical help and the customer relations are dreadful. The dial up service is very unreliable, the speeds are far lower than advertised, due to the poor state of the physical 'phone lines and the modems cost the earth. Take the U.S.A for example, where there are something like 800 million people with regular access and hundreds of competitors all offering better prices. The internet is a way of life and the huge speeds and download capabilities are taken for granted. In South Africa only something like 27 million have any form of access, largely due to the high costs. I got a quote from Telkom last week for satellite service. The basic installation cost is R3100 (\$443), paid upfront. The monthly rental for the satellite service, capped at 3 Gigs, is R1263 (\$180) and I still need a service provider who comes in at a basic charge of R284 (\$40) plus consumption and of course I still need to keep my basic phone service for R110 (\$16) plus call usage. Once the cap is reached, the service is suspended and additional packages can be purchased for R120 (\$17) per 250 Megs. So in all it will cost me, monthly, around R2317 (\$331) for a basic internet service of 4Gigs and a phone at home. Obviously there are cheaper options available in the cities, but living out of town, there is no choice. By the way, a friend living in the U.S.A got a similar quote for only \$40 (R280) per month and his service boasted more facilities and no capping whatsoever.

For some reason, probably the old apartheid days, South Africa was boycotted by the wealthy first world countries

and nobody has told them yet, that times have changed. South Africans suffer many discriminatory obstacles in the use of the internet and over the last few years, I have repeatedly been stumped by these. I have two messages of advice here. To the frustrated, aspirant South African marketers and those who will follow shortly, stop and listen. Do not waste more time and money trying all sorts of offers, you will not succeed. Rather use the time to brush up on your skills. Select a market niche and learn to use control panel, FTP, html, php, hyperlinks and all the other things, that will help you to run your business. Wait for the solution. I have enlisted the help of two of the world's top marketers to find a way around the problems, for you. To the marketers who are knowingly, or unknowingly discriminating against certain countries, you are leaving money on the table and missing out on a huge potential market. But, that's okay, I'll take it. These are some of the more general problems experienced by South Africans. In the next article, we will look at some of the specific problems affecting our marketing abilities.

#### Part 4

By now, you are probably wondering what other problems I'm talking about and how they are affecting our chances of success. If you have been involved for a while, you have probably encountered a few of these yourself and if you are a newbie, you are likely to still come across these problems soon.

There are obvious generalities that exclude South Africans from participating. We joined about 163 survey companies, when we first started out on the internet. We soon found out that most were American companies and only for Americans. That makes sense, when the product, or service being rated is only available there, but why do they mislead us and take our money. You must have seen the misleading ads about how quick and easy it is to earn money by doing simple surveys. A lot of them claim to be international, for anybody who understands English. The same thing happens. You are invited to do the survey, but as soon as you type in your address, you are told it is not available in your area. We wasted a lot of money on these. The foolproof unconditional money back guarantees are a lot of hogwash. Just ignore them.

The same thing happened with the typing services. My wife joined a few of them, with the promise, that as long as she had a basic working knowledge of English, no experience was necessary. Money as easy and fast to earn, on simple assignments. Well, she wasn't given any assignments and on enquiring as to the reason, she was told that we spell differently. That was not ever mentioned at the time of joining and was also money wasted. For Pete's sake, we speak and spell correctly. It is the Americans who changed the language.

We also joined a lot of companies who promised to pay us for surfing and reading emails. We worked our butts off and eventually, after almost a year, had earned a whopping \$247000! We tried to cash in, but were then told that no cheques could be issued. Monies were only paid into American bank accounts. They said they were an international company and anyone in the world could join. But, not get paid.

We often see special promos on free hosting, free domain registration and other all too important services. All looks great from the outside, but as soon as we apply we find out that we are unfortunately not eligible. I don't know how many times I have won prizes. Cash, free products, a trip, ocean cruises, but on trying to claim them, I'm told they don't apply to South Africans.

Very often, freebies are included to sweeten a deal. I joined a music site for mp3 downloads. The price was inclusive of a whole bunch of bonuses. I was to get meal tickets, petrol (gas) coupons, membership of some or other club, discounts on shopping, blah, blah, blah. Needless to say, I joined and paid full price, but never got any of the goodies that all my American counterparts received. I am very into music and 2 years ago I purchased Music Match Jukebox, with free updates for life, access to the online music shop and full usage of something I think was called Radio Gold. It was full access to 150 live radio stations. After I received my purchase, all I had was the jukebox and the promise of updates. On enquiry, I was told "Sorry, but this offer doesn't apply to you", but I paid the full price. Why don't they tell us before we pay? Why don't we get a discount? This seems to be common practice and apart from the obvious discrimination and disappointment is false advertising.

Anyway, these are some problems I have experienced, but not really connected in any way to our functionality at internet marketing. What are the problems facing South African marketers? More in the next article.

#### Part 5

We have covered quite a few problems facing South Africans already and here are some more.

Overseas companies, particularly those in the U.S.A, offering opportunities, services and resources, usually require a fixed email address, at the time of joining. This is to prevent temporary accounts and others such as Hotmail, from being used, as it is very easy to cancel, or change, after joining and the marketer is left with a useless address, in his contact list. South Africans have another problem, in that most of our suffixes, such as .co.za, telkomsa, za, are not allowed. Usually your country is required and many of the drop down menus have small, insignificant countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mauritius, Ivory Coast listed, but not South Africa. So we have to get ourselves an email address with an overseas company, just to comply. Why?

We, as South Africans, have no shopping carts, or payment processors, suitable for international use, or integration, into overseas websites and the biggest culprit is PayPay. They are the first choice, worldwide and any marketer not offering PayPal, as a means of payment, is seriously disadvantaged. Why then, do they not deal with South Africa? Sure, you can make a purchase through them, but they will not collect monies for you, or allow you to make a withdrawal, if you are South African. Other smaller countries are catered for, but not S.A. There are other options, but none as popular. Most payments, affiliate plans and opportunities, pay through PayPal. I joined dozens of respected affiliate plans and spent a great deal of effort, on advertising, before I found out the truth.

A few months ago, I was experiencing the common problems all new marketers face. I knew what I wanted to do, but not how to actually get it done. I'm talking about the setting up, in order to start business. I needed a domain name, a website, content and products, a hosting service, a shopping cart, a mailing list facility, a form for grabbing visitor's details, a payment processor, or two, etc etc. You know what I'm talking about. There are so many options available. The web is full of them. Some are free, some cheap, some having special offers, but which was the best for my needs? Nobody tells you that sort of information. How much space do you need for a bookstore, how much bandwidth do you need for customer downloads? How does the speed affect you? I had played around a bit with wysiwyg editors and done a little html coding. I had used a couple of free websites and hey, the last one I built without their website templated builder. I thought I was getting good, but still a little out of my depth. That scared me a bit, so I decided to look for a ready made, turnkey business. They all say the only thing you need to do is to enter your password and account details, then sit back and watch the money roll in. Well I eventually found something that sounded ideal. It was expensive, but I thought I would be saving in the long run. I wanted to sell ebooks, articles, plr, courses and so on. I paid for this business, as I had seen the example and even test drove the shopping cart prior to purchase. Just when I thought I had found a shortcut to starting my business, the problems began. What problems? Read the next article to find out and to see the solution.

## Part 6

We were talking about the problems I encountered after I had bought the bookstore. Well firstly, the whole bookstore was inphp with cpanel control panel, my sql and a whole lot of Greek terms. You remember I had worked with online and offline editors in wysiwyg and a little html. Well now I was lost. I was warned not to try to edit in an html editor, or I would corrupt the php. I had never used these before and couldn't understand why I couldn't find the pages, to edit them. Then I found that the currencies shown on the products were not compatible with the Rand, but I thought so what, I'll just sell in dollars. Then I found that PayPal was not an option. Damn, but hey, I could still use NoChex, or the other one, I forget the name. No way, Jose, those weren't allowed either. I had to have a banking account in USA or UK. I eventually got EGold to work, but how many people pay with gold? That bookstore is still sitting, gathering dust.

There are no local, South African internet companies, for memberships, product sourcing, resources, search engine optimisation etc, so we have to look abroad. Although these are offered reasonably, overseas, we are still subjected to the exchange rate. At present the rate is 7 to the \$, 14 to the Pound and around 9 to the Euro, but even so, it is usually cheaper, than our own prices and of course you are spoilt for choice.

Training is another area seriously lacking. With all the conferences, seminars, teleseminars, video training and group discussions unavailable to us in S.A, how are we expected to learn and to keep abreast of developments? Dial up is not powerful enough and anyway it is limited to times between 7pm and 7am, which is a bad time, as even if you stay up all night, it is roughly midnight to midmorning in the States. So how do we learn?

So, with a very limited number of companies prepared to do business with us, with our lack of choice, with our very expensive internet service, with very little access to all the great offers, with our SA email addresses, with our antiquated dial ups, without access to genuine training videos, with the exorbitant exchange rate, with our different spelling, without any reciprocal banks or payment processors, without a compatible shopping cart, with

the scams and rip offs and all the rest we have discussed, can South Africans ever hope to get involved in internet marketing?

The truth is rather bleak. Nobody is worried about us, or the problems we have and nobody seems to care. The big "guru" marketers don't seem to be able to think outside their statelines and regard us as a waste of time. They are happy to take our money, though. But wait, there does seem to be a solution for you. As I said earlier, I have teamed up with two of the world's top marketers and together, we are trying to resolve these issues. We will put together a complete, turnkey package deal, a ready to run business, with domain, hosting, website, content, decent affiliate plans, a stream of products, an exclusive membership, a working shopping cart and payment processor, training and ongoing support, a proven plan, optimisation, adsense and other monetised methods for those poor South Africans, who want to be marketers. The hardest part of having your own business, is setting it up and getting it working. You will be able to enter the market place and do very well for yourselves, with our help, so in the meantime, there are a few things you must do.

Familiarise yourself with market trends and choose a niche market, in which you want to trade. Start practicing the basics and learn how things work. Get your mind sorted out. Tell yourself you can do it and will change your life. Sign up to our newsletter and mailings. If you really want to finally realise your dreams, give up the job, work from home, earn a good income, have flexibility and satisfaction, and be competitive in the international arena, then there is only one way you are going to acquire this - through us.

To remain informed of our progress, by newsletter and mail, to get recommended tools and lessons and to start your journey to wealth, sign up here. It's free. Click this link : <http://dersalsites.com/newsletter/>

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