

INTO

INTO – BEFORE GOOGLE

After two decades in online marketing—going back to before Google even got started in online advertising—the development of INTO has followed the emergence of eCommerce itself. As one of the founders of INTO, I was there to see it.

In those early days, everyone accessed the internet through landlines and dial-up modems to connect with America Online. (Remember the sound of the modem?) Email was the new miracle of communication and was replacing fax machines. The eCommerce company that we had started was among the first to be listed in Yahoo’s “Directory.” The bursting of the internet stock bubble shocked everyone. News of Amazon spread. (“Oh look, that’s cute, they are going to sell books online.”) Netflix took on Blockbuster. We made the



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Inc. 5000 list as one of the fastest-growing companies in America in 2008. ([Here's what the site looked like.](#))

INTO was known as “Home Reserve” at that time. Change blew through in the form of browser wars, the craziness of pop-up ads, the rise of the search engines, search engine optimization, pay-per-click (PPC), blogging, Facebook topping Myspace, content marketing, YouTube, viral videos, smartphones and an app for everything.

It was an exciting time for online marketers, but it was also unsettling. We were afraid that our competitors would discover something we were missing. That they’d find some hidden, brilliant new way to get traffic and we’d be left behind. Everyone was looking to get a big spike in visitors and thought in terms of finding the ultimate sales channel.

Even now, as we move to the present where the focus has shifted to machine learning and marketing automation, there is still a vestigial sentiment toward ruse, that there exists—if only one could be initiated into the secret arts—the one tactic that will rule over all other methods for building an internet company.

However, these initial forms of eCommerce marketing have become obstacles to its success. They were oversimplified. Now we see that sustainable growth comes by way of a different attitude, a thing I’ll get to a bit later. But first, I want to mention the relationship that developed with UPS.

INTO AND THE UPS RELATIONSHIP

INTO started as an eCommerce business, and all our packages were shipped by UPS. As box count increased, the UPS rep assigned to our account started asking us questions about our marketing and advertising tactics. Intrigued by these new “online” ideas, he began explaining them to other members of the UPS sales team because of the potential to increase revenue for other aspiring eCommerce prospects.

The word spread, and UPS representatives from across the country began inviting us to talk with their clients about how to build the online portion of their businesses.



This budding relationship with UPS developed in two different ways. The first was to hold seminars with UPS reps, showing them that by helping their clients grow they were fulfilling the UPS corporate initiative to become “united problem solvers” and “trusted advisors.” The events also gave them insight into providing specific marketing information to their clients, which helped them differentiate themselves from FedEx.

The seminars also introduced them to the idea of “challenger selling,” which is being equipped to present a client with specific insights about key problems in its brand position and marketing. It was in demonstration of those subjects that the INTO Brand and Demand Scorecards were developed.

The second path along which our UPS relationship advanced was that as the UPS reps took scorecard presentations to their clients, we began to offer services that would equip the companies to implement the advice contained in the reports. We evolved from being an internet company that gave marketing advice into a marketing agency that also just happened to own an eCommerce company!

THE BRAND AND DEMAND PRINCIPLE

As we became an internet marketing agency, our first concern was to save managers from spending time on programs that didn't work. Because of our long history, we'd already wasted our own money chasing many such things! Over time, we discovered that there are only two ways to consistently drive more traffic and more conversions, and that they must always be done together. These two elements are the principles of brand and demand.

The purpose of brand is to capture conversions through audience understanding applied to customer experience. The purpose of demand is to drive targeted traffic to a website. Only by implementing both concepts at the same time can a company create an exponential effect on performance.

It doesn't matter how well you tell your brand story if no one is listening and it doesn't matter how much demand (traffic) you drive to a website if it isn't sticking. Both things are required for there to be any marketing sanity.

The components of the two strategies form a sort of equation, a formula for online success. If you can solve the variables effectively, and in a particular order, the result is higher revenue, improved return on ad spend (ROAS), increased customer loyalty and more brand equity.

BRAND + DEMAND = ^REVENUE, ^ROAS, ^CUSTOMER LOYALTY, ^BRAND EQUITY

The role of INTO is to assist our client companies in applying this formula for success; we want to equip them in their marketing and help them know what to do and when to do it.

The Elements of Brand

BRAND POSITIONING

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION (PERSONAS)

UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGICAL DRIVERS

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MAPPING

WEBSITE AND LANDING PAGE CREATION

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION (PERSONAS)

BRAND VISUALS

BRAND REPUTATION

IMPLEMENTING THE BRAND NARRATIVE

These elements work toward the ability to communicate a unique value to each prospect and to using every touchpoint on the customer journey to create an experience that will set a company apart from its competition.

The Elements of Demand

AUDIENCE TARGETING
THROUGH ALL DIGITAL CHANNELS

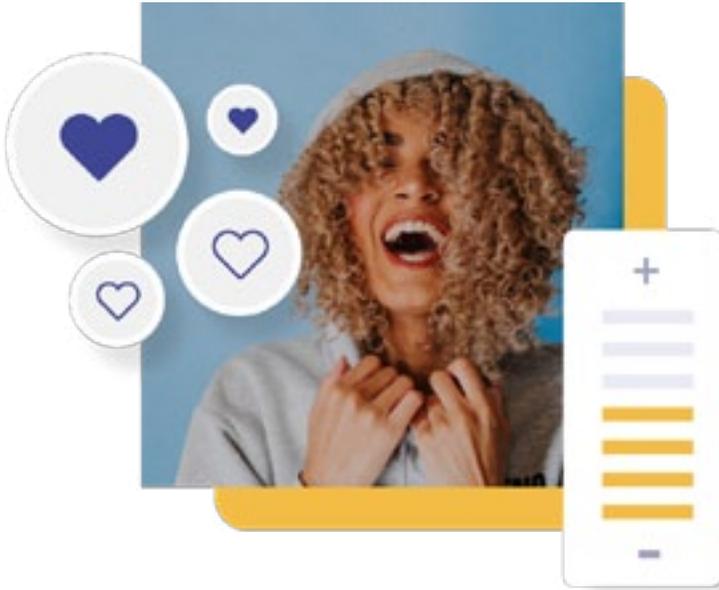
DELIVERING THE RIGHT MESSAGE,
AT THE RIGHT TIME, USING THE RIGHT
MEDIA, ON THE RIGHT DEVICE

OPTIMIZING CAMPAIGN
MANAGEMENT FOR ROAS GOALS

PRESENTING DATA THAT
GUIDES DECISION-MAKING

The elements of demand bear the burden of finding the targeted audience members where they live online, getting them started on a journey toward purchase, accompanying them through the entire experience and reinforcing the relevant brand messages at all the moments when they are planning and considering the purchase.

SCORECARDS



Progress in the implementation of the brand and demand success formula can be scored. The elements can be ranked according to how you compare with others in the market, how you line up with your own objectives and how it all resonates with your audience.

INTO has developed reports to provide these scoring measures and to answer the question “How are we doing?” (These reports are provided without cost as part of UPS value-added services to select clients.)

INTO Brand Scorecard: This scorecard includes research and performance graphs along eight different factors that contribute to the development of a brand. This report reveals a company’s strengths and weaknesses in the market and shows how it ranks compared with the competition. [Sample Brand Report.](#)

INTO Demand Scorecard: For most companies, the contact with prospects and customers flows through digital channels. This report looks at this communication—website, mobile, video, social—and the execution of your digital advertising. [Sample Demand Scorecard.](#)

SERVICES

Every manager knows that there is a big difference between seeing a problem and fixing a problem and between having a great opportunity and taking advantage of it. An organization is often frozen from growing because it doesn't support the learning or the ability to act and change.

INTO has developed services to provide the implementation and management of strategy and action items contained in the scorecards.

▲ **The Digital Audit (provided as part of the INTO partnership with UPS)**

The audit is an examination of your digital advertising. With temporary access into relevant accounts, we can analyze performance. The results are expressed in terms of key performance indicators, comparisons with competitors, industry benchmarks, suggestions for conversion improvement, changes to lower cost and next steps in demand generation. [Sample Audit](#).

▲ **The Strategy Consult (provided as part of the INTO partnership with UPS)**

The INTO Brand Scorecard will reveal leaks in the value of a company's brand equity that may result in a loss of sales, low conversion rates and a lack of differentiation. In this follow-up phone call meeting after the scorecard presentations, the INTO brand specialist will craft a plan to fix these leaks and build a stronger brand presence.

▲ **Management of Advertising**

INTO can set up, run and manage digital advertising campaigns, including those on PPC, social media, display and video.

▲ **The Target Audience Guide**

We offer a complete guide to your audiences. Personas (key buying groups) are identified along with the characteristics, psychological drivers, buying patterns, behaviors and dynamics involved in reaching specific audiences online. Building your audience understanding is always the best thing you can do because it multiplies all your other tactics. [Sample Target Audience Guide](#).

▲ **Customer Experience Map**

This is a “high-res” understanding of your customer journey. Discover where you are leaking ROI, conversions, customers, loyalty, etc. It is an analysis from initial interest to post-purchase. This map contains insights into customer actions, thoughts and feelings as they make their way through the entire experience of the brand. The map highlights barriers to purchase and provides an action plan to increase conversions and brand satisfaction. [Sample Map](#).

▲ **Brand Renovation**

The comprehensive brand project begins with a discovery phase, which includes the production of a target audience guide and customer experience map. Solutions for problems and opportunities in the brand strategies are then planned, designed and implemented. [Sample Discovery Stage](#). [Sample Production Phase Chart](#).

▲ **Brand Retainer**

A complete brand project can be conducted over a period of time incrementally, with INTO managing all aspects of the implementation. The retainer method allows for continuous improvement to both the brand and demand strategies. Constant iterative gains are the way to maximize returns on all marketing investments.