

2. EVOLUTION

As I previously alluded, TEs have been around for many years, but not in the form in which they exist today. The industry of exchange grew out of the time when people first began arriving on the internet in large volumes. Back in the day when receiving an email was still a noteworthy event.



The concept of exchanging ‘views’ was not limited to web pages and included items such as banners, small ads, emails, start pages and exit pages. Exchanges of this kind still exist today, but they are largely dominated by the TE formula. In the early days, however, imaginations ran riot and many new concepts arrived and flourished within a short space of time.

The effectiveness of these exchanges was often boosted by combining the ‘exchange’ concept with Multi-Level-Marketing stylings. This viral effect generated a huge amount of interest in a short amount of time, along with incredible volumes of traffic. But often the benefits were only experienced by a few early adopters, while the vast majority of members eventually left, disillusioned with the concept.

These problems were exacerbated by ‘cheaters’ who developed software and systems that grossly

YOUR NOTES

Definitions

As new vocabulary is introduced, a definition will be displayed in these boxes. All of these definitions are reproduced in alphabetical order in the “Resources & Glossary” book.

Start Pages

Pages are displayed on the ‘Start’ or ‘Home’ page of a user’s browser.

Exit Pages

Pages are displayed through a pop-up (or pop-under) when a visitor leaves a website.



2. EVOLUTION

YOUR NOTES

Pyramid

A form of 'ponzi'. For more information, see Chapter 2 of Book 5: Black Hat.

Traffic Exchange Ratio

The relative value between the number of pages you surf and the number of page views you receive in return.

One-Time-Offer

Usually referred to in the abbreviated form: OTO. This is an offer that is only available at the time of presentation. The online OTO commonly prevents the visitor from returning to the page once they have exited.

manipulated the programs in their favour, reducing or eliminating the benefits for the loyal users who persisted.

In a way, the TE industry is still burdened by the poor reputation that exchanges acquired at this time. But, for many people, these failings only spurred them on to develop the model into something stable, equitable and honest. The TE was the answer and the following developments of the model have allowed it to survive to the present.

- 1) The elaborate, but doomed, pyramid system faded out to be replaced by a simple tiered approach that used ratios to ensure the economics were sound.
- 2) Cheat protection became common and then eventually mandatory to reduce the risk of manipulation. At the same time, TE owners became ever more proficient at identifying and weeding out those attempting to cheat other users.
- 3) As the quality of the traffic improved, TE owners became better placed to sell traffic and upgraded memberships. This profitability resulted in the creation of glossier and more sophisticated TEs.
- 4) The trappings of Internet Marketing, such as one-time-offers and elaborate product launches, were adopted by many TE owners, resulting in increased credibility for the industry as a whole.

- 5) More experienced internet marketers began to recognise the potential within the TE industry, and effective strategies were developed and then honed to maximise the benefit of the model.

All of the above means that there has never been a better time to add TEs to your marketing mix. Effective use can make this a powerful addition to your business.

It's interesting to note that, although the TE websites themselves have become more polished and more elaborate, one thing has never changed.

And that's the focus on...

SURFING

The term 'surfing' means exactly the same as it does in the context of 'surfing' the internet – the practice of browsing from one website to the next. The key difference is that surfing at a TE is not an empty pursuit, designed solely to kill time. Surfing at a TE is a practice that is both educational and profitable.



Above all else, this is why TEs have stood the test of time, and why they are set to thrive for many years to come.



2. EVOLUTION

YOUR NOTES

Of course, all of this paints a very rosy picture of the TE industry and, although, it has much to commend it, I would be remiss if I didn't discuss some of its inherent problems.

The sleaze and incompetence that plagued the industry in the beginning is still around. It simply exists in smaller quantities and in a form that is much easier to identify. This has contributed to the perpetuation of myths and the unjustified dismissal of the use of TEs by many internet marketers.

Read on to put some of those myths to rest once and for all and, at the same time, fireproof yourself against some of the snares that lie in wait for naïve and unprepared surfers.