



**MEREDITH OLIVER, MIRM, MCSP**

# **CLICK POWER**

The Proven System Home Builders  
Use To Drive More Traffic, Leads, and Sales

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To Drive More Traffic, Leads, and Sales

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Also by Meredith Oliver

*FANtastic Marketing: Leverage Your Fan Factor,  
Build a Blockbuster Brand, Score New Customers,  
and Wipe Out the Competition*

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meredith Oliver, MIRM, MCSP, helps home builders drive more traffic, leads, and sales. She is a professional speaker, consultant, and founder of Meredith Communications, a digital marketing agency located in Raleigh, NC.

Meredith holds a Master's Degree in Communication Technology from the prestigious Rollins College and a Bachelor of Arts Degree, majoring in Psychology, from the University of Central Florida. During the dot-com boom and bust, she worked for Move.com (now Builders Digital Experience, theBDX.com) as a Regional Sales Manager. Meredith has both the education and the real world experience to help you WOW your customers online and offline.

Meredith has been speaking professionally for fifteen years. She is a fifteen-time presenter at the NAHB (National Association of Home Builders) International Builders Show. She is a frequent speaker and moderator of the National Sales and Marketing Council's Super Sales Rally and Sales Management Summit. Her convention seminars are consistently standing room only and rated by attendees among the most popular, entertaining, and educational seminars offered. Meredith speaks at a number of local and regional home builder association events like the 21st Century Building Expo and Conference and the Southeast Builders Conference and Expo. Meredith holds the prestigious CSP (Certified Speaking Professional®) designation, the highest designation conferred by the National Speakers Association. She is

a Past President of NSA/Carolinas (National Speakers Association Carolinas) Chapter.

Meredith is a member of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Past Chair of the Institute of Residential Marketing (MIRM), and Past Chair of the NAHB PWB (Professional Women in Building) Communications Committee. Meredith holds the Master Certified New Home Sales Professional (MCSP) designation and is an approved instructor for the IRM and CSP courses.

Meredith Communications delivers digital marketing solutions to homebuilders, including website design, search engine optimization, paid search marketing management, and social media management.

Meredith is also the author of two books, *Click Power: Drive More Traffic, Leads, and Sales* and *FANtastic Marketing: Leverage Your Fan Factor, Build a Blockbuster Brand, Score New Customers, and Wipe Out the Competition*.

Meredith currently lives in Raleigh, NC with her husband, son, and two shih tzus.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The picture above my desk reads: *Inspiration—many people have gone further than they imagined they could because somebody else thought they could.* How true. I couldn't have made it as far as I have without all the support and encouragement of the people around me.

- **For my number one fan**, best friend, and love of my life, Allen Oliver. Meredith Communications, my Master's degree, our family, and this book would not exist without you. You make me a better person every day we spend together.
- **For Brady Allen Oliver**, who is (by far) my best WOW yet.
- **For my parents and brother**, Rodney, Carla, and Parker Miller, who taught me it is okay to be an independent, smart business woman who can do anything she wants to do.
- **For Melinda Brody, John Palumbo, and Kerry Mulcrone** who are the best coaches, cheerleaders, and confidants a girl could have.
- **For the team members at Meredith Communications**, who make sure our business runs smoothly despite my hectic travel schedule.

I thank all of you for your contribution to my journey.

## CHAPTER 1

# WHY ASK WHY?

WHEN WE MOVED from Florida to North Carolina, I researched, planned, and executed every aspect of the move online—everything from finding a place to live to selecting a pediatrician. Google made the moving process so much easier. We didn't make multiple visits to the area before the move or wait until after we moved to drive around and look for services. Instead, I viewed our options, narrowed down the list, and scheduled appointments all from my computer and mobile phone.

What was the last product or service you bought online? According to a 2015 Synchrony Financial Fourth Annual Major Purchase Consumer Study, 80 percent of consumers go online before they go to a store. 27 percent of consumers conducted mobile research while in the store itself and 50 percent of people used a mobile device at some point during the purchase process. Consumers spend an average of sixty-eight days researching information, down from 80 days in 2014.<sup>1</sup> We know this as consumers, but why as business owners are we hesitant, skeptical, and in denial about the power of online marketing for our business?

When I use the term online marketing, I refer to the process of marketing your homes online. **It is critical to understand that having a website is not the same as online marketing.** Think of

your website like a business card. If you keep all of your business cards in your purse, wallet, or desk drawer, sales will not increase. The act of handing your business card to a prospective customer and conversing about your product or service is active marketing, which will increase your sales.

The same holds true for your website. Online marketing is the process of pulling visitors into your website through search engines, mobile advertising, email marketing, and social media networks like Facebook and Twitter.

**Ask yourself the following questions:**

- How will prospective customers find my website if they don't know my business name or website address?
- More importantly, how is that lack of awareness holding my business back in terms of leads and sales?
- What could my business achieve with a broader audience?
- Am I willing to spend time and money to find out?

When I started Meredith Communications more than fifteen years ago, it was the early days of the internet and my job was to convince home builders they needed to shift from print advertising to online marketing. It was a tough sale. Most builders at that time were completely reliant on print advertising and not open to the digital world.

Through the years, most home builders have adopted digital marketing as a necessity. Today, I spend less time talking about **why** web marketing is important and more time teaching home builders **how** to market effectively online.

However, on occasion, I still have the “why” conversation. If you are unconvinced about the power of online marketing, here are ten serious reasons why you need web marketing to grow your sales. Hopefully, this will convince you to make a commitment to the digital world.

- 1. Location, location, location.** In the physical world, location is everything. The importance of location is a time-tested fact that no one would argue. It's no different in the virtual world. Your customers are online researching and shopping for products to buy. According to a 2015 Pew Internet survey about the demographics of internet users,<sup>2</sup> about 85 percent of men and 84 percent of women report being internet users. It's not just young people online either. About 58 percent of senior citizens use the internet. People living in households earning more than \$75,000 are more likely to use the internet than those households that earn less than \$30,000.

Think of the web like the greatest shopping mall ever built. If you owned a retail store wouldn't you want to open a shop in the most popular, highly trafficked mall in town? You can. Your website acts as your storefront in the mall. Your customers are already online using search engines to research products and services to buy every day.

- 2. Broaden your reach.** If the overwhelming majority of people research or purchase products and services online, then by marketing online you have the opportunity to reach more people. Right now you are restricted to people who drive by your neighborhood sign, view your newspaper or magazine ad, hear your radio commercial, or meet you in person. The beauty of the digital world lies in the availability to reach buyers around the world 24/7/365 on a small marketing budget. Potential customers may not have heard your name before, but with one Google search they are quickly directed to the front door of your virtual store. They

can also *email* your website to a friend, *like* you on Facebook, or *tweet* about you on Twitter. As of October 2015, nearly two-thirds of American adults use social networking sites.<sup>3</sup> This is word-of-mouth marketing on steroids.

3. **Measure and refine.** The magic of web marketing lies in the metrics. Everything from the number of website visits to content viewed is trackable. Tracking user habits allows a company to try new marketing ideas, measure conversion results, and refine marketing tactics. No other marketing tactic allows for such precise tracking and measurement. In future chapters I will dive into website analytics and teach you the most important metrics to track. All you need to know right now is that if it's *clickable*, it's *trackable* and that makes web marketing the best return on investment of all marketing tactics.
4. **Target and qualify.** Since web marketing has advanced tracking abilities, it is easy to spend your marketing dollars wisely. For example, with Facebook ads, you can specify the age range, location, and gender of consumers you want to view your online ads and then track the traffic flow to your website. Essentially, you can run an online campaign specifically targeted to the zip codes you serve, with enough household income to afford your product. Genius. More targeted online marketing results in higher quality traffic to your website, which will result in a higher conversion rate of sales both online and offline. Since everything online is trackable, you will know exactly how well the campaign works.
5. **Reduce your marketing budget.** Yes, you have to spend money on digital marketing to make money. This adage is true about any facet of your business. You have to invest in inventory to have something to sell. You have to pay overhead costs like rent and wages. All of these costs are things you have to do to sell

your homes. Think of marketing like one more required line item. If you don't market the inventory you've invested in, how will you sell it? The good news is that web marketing is far more cost-effective than any other form of marketing. It will also save you a lot of money and produce a greater return on investment.

- 6. Women are online big time.** Women are one of the most overlooked consumer target markets, yet we know women are the primary influencer in the home-buying process. Women directly account for, or influence, 85 percent of all brand<sup>4</sup> purchase decisions today, according to She-conomy.com.<sup>5</sup> This website also found that women account for:

- 91 percent of new homes
- 80 percent of health care
- 93 percent of food
- 65 percent of new cars
- 93 percent of over-the-counter medications

Women are a powerful purchasing group, and the most effective way to reach them is online. In fact, also according to She-conomy.com, 22 percent of women shop online at least once per day. 92 percent of women pass along information about deals or finds to others.<sup>6</sup> Finally, according to an eCommerce report<sup>7</sup>, 26 percent of women first saw their most recent purchase while shopping online. 34 percent of women purchased a product or service from their smartphones. The power of the digital purse cannot be denied. If you want to reach this critical audience, you need digital marketing.

- 7. Flexibility and convenience.** Web marketing is highly flexible if you invest in the right tools and experts. A website is much easier to edit than print marketing. You can run a web or social

media campaign for thirty days and then, based on metrics, stop the campaign and take your marketing strategy in a different direction. Changes can happen in real time and have immediate impact on your business. If a price change occurs at the last minute or if you want to run a quick special promotion, it's easy to make that happen with little additional cost.

8. **Make more sales.** Across industries, one fact remains consistent—you can and will convert new sales as a result of web marketing. The percentage depends on how aggressively you market your inventory. Web marketing will increase your leads through information requests, emails, phone calls, and walk-in visits (if you have a physical office location). These leads are your pipeline for future sales. If you nurture and build a relationship with them, you can convert them into online and/or offline sales. I will cover how to build that relationship in future chapters. After approximately six months of serious online marketing, your sales will steadily grow. Your percentage of online sales out of total sales will depend on your lead follow-up and your level of commitment to on-going, consistent digital marketing.
9. **Look out for the little guy.** Web marketing was once relegated to companies that could afford a corporate website costing several thousand to several hundred thousand dollars. Social media has completely changed that paradigm. Digital marketing is now available for even the smallest business. You can effectively market your business with a FREE Facebook page. You still need a website, but blogging makes building a website super easy and affordable. Even the smallest business can afford web marketing today. If you demonstrate expertise and professionalism, you can appear much larger and more experienced online.
10. **You don't have a choice.** If you want to remain competitive, you must get on board. Google your company right now. Who comes

up in your search results? Do you? Do your competitors? A website with no web marketing is like a billboard in the Everglades. It doesn't exist. (I'm going to say this repeatedly in this book until it sinks in.) If your competitors are online, you have no choice. Get on board now while you still can or be forever left behind. Think about businesses that didn't adapt fast enough and went away, like BlackBerries, phone books, VHS tape manufacturers, and pager companies. Yes, by putting your business online, your competition will know more about you. It's your job to know as much about them and deliver a much better experience to your customers than they can. Deliver a better product. Give better pricing. Offer fantastic customer service. Yes, they may pick up a few things from your website, but they can never replicate the essence of what makes your business the best.

I think what keeps most builders from building an effective online marketing strategy is not why they should do it, but rather how to do it. It's like many things we would like to change both personally and professionally. We know we should lose weight; we know we should stop smoking; we know we should cut up those credit cards or spend more time with our family, but we don't. Why? We don't know how to stop one behavior and replace it with a more productive one. The path is not clear. It seems hard. The risk of failure is too much.

The rest of this book is dedicated to solving the *how* problem you face with online marketing. If you are already sold on why you need digital marketing, then prepare to skyrocket your success and blow past your goals.



## You Can Do This

### If I can do it, anyone can!

By the age of two years old my son could operate my iPhone better than I could. He easily downloads apps on our tablet and knows which one of our eight remote controls turns the DVR on and off. He connects to Hulu, controls the volume of the sound bar, and changes the channels on the TV. If he could already do all this at by two years old, what's next? Stephen-Spielberg-quality video productions with my iPad?

I did not grow up with technology. I know I appear extremely youthful (okay somewhat youthful) in my lovely photo, but the truth is, I know a really great photographer and a killer makeup artist. I may not be as young as you think. My first mobile phone was a *bag* phone for emergencies only. I also remember when fax machines first came out. You had to ask permission before you faxed someone, since using their ink and paper for frivolous reasons was a major offense.

My light bulb moment about technology came while I worked as an HMO sales representative for United Healthcare. It was a tough job selling HMOs to doctors. I needed a new direction and I needed one fast. I heard about a brand new Master's Degree program at a prestigious private college in my town that married technology and communication. My dad told me there was something to that "internet thing" and I should check it out.

I applied and was accepted. On my first day of graduate school at Rollins College, my professor issued me a laptop computer. My employer at the time had a mainframe system with proprietary software and I had never used a personal computer before. I hardly knew how to turn it on. I went home and spent the whole weekend unable to find any of the files I saved on the hard drive of my new laptop.

After watching me struggle—nearly in tears—my husband taped a note to the computer that read: *A = Floppy Disk and C = Hard Drive*. I didn't know the difference between my floppy disk and my hard drive. I enrolled in a \$40,000 technology master's degree program and couldn't operate a basic laptop. All I knew was that I had to take the first step and catch up with the rest of the world. Maybe you are feeling the same way right now. Maybe you don't know exactly how to use social media effectively or design a website. The good news is you've found the right book and the right person to help you, just like the master's degree program helped me.

The very idea that several years later I would be a nationally-regarded expert, professional speaker, and owner of a web marketing company was a foreign concept to me. The master's degree program helped me develop a passion for web marketing. I couldn't learn fast enough. I graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was voted by my peers as the Most Outstanding Graduate Student in the class. I say this not to impress you, but to impress upon you that if you want to learn about technology and web marketing, you can do this. With knowledge and practice you can learn the secrets to success just like I did. You might even find a passion for the subject.

You may not be computer savvy. You may hate Facebook and be completely against the idea of Twitter and tablets in the workplace. That's okay. Trust me. I can help you learn the skills to take your business where you want to go. Just keep reading.

## Sound Familiar?

While conducting a full-day seminar with a group of home builders from around the country (who happen to all be male) on the do's and don'ts of website design, I heard a commotion coming from the audience. After several minutes of giggling and elbowing, someone finally spoke up to tell me what was so funny.

One of the builders in the group—in his haste to develop a web presence for his company—registered his own name as the domain name without thinking through what his initials spelled. His name is Chris O. Jones, so he registered c-o-jones. That's right folks, it spells [www.cojones.com](http://www.cojones.com). If you're not familiar with this term, it's a Spanish reference for part of the male anatomy. Chris was such a good sport that day and gave me permission to share his tale of woe with others.

Chris needed a marketing strategy—a comprehensive system that maps out the components, costs, and timeline resulting in sales. Such a strategy would have saved him a lot of money, time, and potential embarrassment.

If you are already a web marketing believer, you probably relate to these questions:

- How many thousands of dollars have you wasted in marketing tactics that didn't increase traffic to your website?
- How many websites have you launched and had to redo because the site wasn't easy to update, didn't produce results, or changed webmasters?
- How many gurus have you hired and fired because they promised you a #1 ranking on Google but failed to produce results?

- How many social media seminars have you attended and walked away feeling confused?
- How many sales have you lost because you didn't follow-up on your leads?

You've probably learned the hard way by now that winging it on the web does not work. After reading this book, you will have a working knowledge of web marketing. You will be able to hire the right experts and hold them accountable. You will be able to devise a strategy that will save thousands of wasted marketing dollars and result in net new sales for your company.

I want you to feel empowered to take control of your web marketing instead of relying on others who may or may not have your best interests at heart. You don't have to know HTML code to become an effective marketer. You need a conceptual understanding of how digital marketing can help your business grow.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE CASE FOR STRATEGY

MANY MARKETING PROFESSIONALS assume having a website is the same as having a digital marketing strategy. It is not. Just because you develop a website doesn't mean online shoppers can find it and when they do find it, will take action. Building a website is only the first step of an effective digital marketing strategy.

Another challenge professional digital marketers face is the DIY or do-it-yourself mentality. The attitude that anyone can do their own web marketing, or hire a friend who builds and designs websites as a hobby, can be detrimental to your online sales strategy. Blogs, YouTube, and Facebook certainly make web marketing much more accessible and DIY friendly, but developing your online strategy requires experience and expertise. Spend a little extra money to hire a marketing expert. You will recoup the investment in more online leads and sales.

**A complete online marketing strategy begins with the end in mind.**

Think about what you want online visitors to do when they peruse your website? Do you want them to register for more information, follow you on social networks, sign-up for an email newsletter, download a brochure, or visit your model home/sales office? The first step is to identify and prioritize the action(s) you want visitors

to take. Create multiple calls to action per page that invite visitors to engage in those actions.

In my opinion, your number one call-to-action goal is to drive in-person traffic. Websites don't sell homes. Relationships sell homes. Online shoppers buy from people they like and trust. Your website should compel online visitors to take the next step and visit your model home, sales office, or design center in person. The principal purpose of your digital marketing strategy is to align with your overall marketing plan and sales process to move prospects forward through each step.

The key to customizing your online strategy to meet your specific needs is to look at each step of the sales process and determine what tactics work best for your target market, budget, location, and goals.

**The benefits of a strategic digital marketing approach include:**

- Increased Return on Investment (ROI)
- Increased Competitive Edge
- Increased Traffic and Sales

**1. Increase Your Return on Investment (ROI)**

I've already mentioned that the dollars you spend on developing and implementing a comprehensive digital marketing strategy have a high return on investment. When done correctly, web marketing is less expensive than traditional media, accelerates sales momentum, and yields net new sales.

The most difficult obstacle marketers face with web marketing is doing it right the first time. A well-planned strategic approach to web marketing saves precious time and money, increasing return on investment. Many marketers find themselves at the end of a website

project only to discover the website can't be updated easily, was built in an outdated programming language, and won't accommodate future growth. Costly re-designs cause delays and eat away at your marketing budget. Other marketers discover in the months post-launch that the website does not produce information requests or sales. Since web projects take a fair amount of time, effort, and money, starting over is not always possible. You then find yourself stuck with a tool that does not produce results.

Using an effective marketing strategy ensures you build a website as close to perfect as possible at launch, and builds-in the potential for easy updates and maximum flexibility, increasing ROI. Sales momentum is dramatically affected by your web marketing strategy. Updating a website frequently with news and events, sending out email updates, and using blogs are just a few examples of how to create buzz about your product. The buzz translates into website traffic, requests for information, phone calls, and emails, which produces more onsite visits and eventually more sales.

## **2. Increase Your Competitive Edge**

Thousands, millions, and possibly billions of other websites compete for your customers every day. Staying competitive today requires an innovative, multi-prong approach to drive online traffic. You also need a concentrated effort to maximize your website's influence on visit length and return visits. A digital strategy will help you determine, before building your website, how visitors will find you and what features will keep them coming back to learn more about your homes. We will explore several specific web traffic drivers later in this section.

Driving traffic will keep you competitive. The huge competitive advantage lies in the conversion of online lead information requests to sales, via a well-executed lead follow-up process. You have the

opportunity to gain market share, strengthen your brand, capture new sales, and fill a pipeline of future sales all by simply creating a disciplined, systematic, and consistent online lead follow-up program. We will explore this issue in-depth later in the section.

### **3. Increase Traffic and Conversion to Sales**

Not only can a strategic approach save time and money, it can produce “net new” sales. How many net new home sales can you expect from web marketing? It is hard to estimate because most buyers engage with more than one marketing source, so it is nearly impossible to determine the true web-based driven sales. However, online activity from search to social media isn’t slowing down. You can track your internet sales effectively if you use a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) program, and code your website leads and ecommerce sales differently than your phone, print, and referral leads/sales. When one of those leads converts to a sale, you should count that toward your net new online sales. This percentage of sales is the most pure number you have access to in terms of web-driven sales.

Are the sales you risk losing—because your product or service cannot be found online—not worth implementing a digital marketing strategy? Are the leads lost—because your presence does not compel action and/or you don’t follow-up on the online lead request for more information—worth losing? When you consider that internet leads are less expensive to acquire, on average convert more quickly, and are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase, why wouldn’t you want to spend the extra time and money developing a strategic internet marketing plan?



## The Click Power System™

The Click Power System™ is a roadmap to a successful sales and marketing strategy. The system outlines five building blocks for success. You need all five to drive more traffic, online leads, and sales. This is not optional. You can't browse the five building blocks like a midnight buffet on a cruise ship and selectively pick one or two. You need them all.

The heart of this book is the synergy created by the five building blocks. Each one builds upon the next. Skip one and the Click Power System doesn't work. Take a look at Figure 1. Ask yourself which building block(s) you are missing, need to improve, or enhance?

Throughout the course of this book we will delve into each building block so you will learn the secrets of the system to increase your sales. There are plenty of options for you to decide how to execute each building block, but all five are required to achieve success.



Figure 1—The Click Power System™

# **BOOK MEREDITH OLIVER TO SPEAK AT YOUR NEXT EVENT**

Looking for a professional speaker to WOW your audience? Meredith Oliver is the answer!

Inspirational. Fun. Relevant. Meredith Oliver, CSP is a sales and marketing keynote speaker, author and strategist who works with home builders who want to drive more traffic, leads and sales.

She is the founder and president of Meredith Communications, a digital marketing agency located in Raleigh, NC specializing in website development, search engine optimization and social media marketing. Meredith isn't just another self-proclaimed marketing keynote speaker; she has 15 years of experience creating and delivering digital marketing campaigns that increase sales.

Book Meredith for your next event and treat your audience to a dynamic, fun, powerhouse program packed with practical information they can use immediately to drive revenue straight to the bottom line.

Meredith has spoken to audiences from 10 to 2,000 at prominent industry events such as the International Builders Show and National Automobile Dealers Annual Conference and Expo. She holds the prestigious CSP (Certified Speaking Professional®) designation, the highest designation conferred by the National Speakers Association®.

Visit [MeredithSpeaks.com](http://MeredithSpeaks.com) to learn more about Meredith's topics and view a demo video.

*"Your presentation was fabulous! I have had so many compliments from my members and participants about the presentation; so much so, that everyone wants a repeat performance. So look forward to coming back to Kansas City. We want you back!"*

***Dawn Allen, Director of Education, Kansas City Home Builders Association***

*"Meredith is one of the premier professionals in the country regarding internet marketing in the home building industry. She is an excellent speaker whose presentations are both informative and entertaining. Her expertise on how to 'marry' online and on-site residential marketing provides a blueprint for success for builders, developers, and brokers who want to maximize their investment in their websites, social media, and internet marketing. I highly recommend Meredith as a speaker and consultant."*

***Rich Carlson, President, Carlson Communications***

*"I have seen and frequently hired just about every sales/marketing trainer/speaker in the business, and after seeing your presentation tonight I would say you are among the very best."*

***Gib Dickey, Publisher Atlanta Communities Magazine***

# CONNECT WITH MEREDITH

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