

The BLACK HOLE of Internet Marketing

By Jo McNamara

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You can't wait to get up in the morning to get on the computer. You devour ezines. You can't learn enough in a day. When you're not on the computer, your mind is composing headlines and ad copy; material for articles. Each evening you reluctantly turn off the computer or maybe you're still happily at it until the wee hours of the morning.

Then one day it happens...you get out of bed and the thought of getting near the computer makes your stomach queasy. You begin thinking maybe you should get that root canal your dentist has been bugging you about for the last six months. Gee, wasn't my carpet beige at one time, not gray? Maybe I should clean house; mow the yard; do my 2000 taxes. Anything...anything...but get on the computer.

My friend, you've fallen into the "Black Hole" of Internet marketing. It's a place where you are totally apathetic about online promotion; you just don't want to have anything to do with it.

The first time it happened to me, I had just returned from a tranquil week in the mountains of Tennessee. I thought I would return to my computer with a huge appetite for marketing. To my surprise and dismay, I just didn't want to get back on the computer and my routine of spending 10-12 hours a day doing all the things we do.

I came out of that period realizing that I needed to moderate my time on the computer and to do that; I would need to start working smarter, not harder. So the "Black Hole" episode wasn't a bad thing. I learned from it.

I think anyone who is passionate (obsessive?) about Net marketing goes through this in varying degrees. And everyone deals with it differently. Some are able to "bully" their way through these

episodes. That doesn't work for me because then marketing becomes something I HAVE to do instead of something I WANT to do.

I have fallen into the "Black Hole" a few more times and have no doubt I will again in the future. This is how I have learned to get through it:

1. I subscribe to 125+ ezines. I receive the majority of them in several different HotMail accounts so I don't overload my main email account. I will set my HotMail accounts up not to receive and automatically delete any incoming mail. This prevents bouncebacks and I won't lose my subscriptions. I know I'm going through a temporary phase and when I get through it, I can open my accounts back up.

2. I go to the library and check out a bunch of books. For me, the more Stephen King and John Grisham, the better. I spend my afternoons with my butt firmly planted on the couch (one cat on my chest and one on my legs) with a bag of potato chips within easy reach.

3. I give my house what I call a "5-star" cleaning. Now you have to understand I HATE housework. Hated it when I was a kid and woke up every Saturday to my mother yelling, "Jo Ann, time to get up. We have a lot of cleaning to do." Please, just shoot me now! As I get older, my distaste for housework only increases. But it's one of those things I need to do just so I can shut up that "nag voice" in my head.

4. And speaking of "nag voices," I take care of all those trivial things that I have been putting off doing. I find this is important because it seems to clear my head. Shutting up the "nag voices" is like taking out mental garbage.

Basically, I'm telling myself it's okay to feel the way I'm feeling ...apathetic, disinterested, turned-off, tuned-out.

After a while, I start feeling there's a void in my life. I miss writing; my brain starts to hunger for knowledge again; I'm feeling aimless and bored.

Then I know it's time to ease back into Internet marketing.

I start by opening up a few of my HotMail accounts. Not all of them because I don't want to feel overwhelmed. I allow myself one hour a day to read ezines and study ads. After a while, I'll allow myself one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon to read and study. Gradually, I open all my accounts back up.

Before I know it, I'm getting excited again. Words are flowing; ideas are bumping around in my head.

She's B-A-C-K!!!

For me, I think the "Black Hole" periods are good. I return to Internet marketing refreshed and energized. I'm grateful once again for the return of passion. No longer stale, I can clearly see flaws previously overlooked and come up with fresh ideas.

Sometimes we are so deeply involved with our life within the computer; we lose our sense of perspective. We think we are learning, but we're just reading words. Our brain is overloaded and nothing is sticking. We just do the "same old, same old" and wonder why we're not getting anywhere.

I think the "Black Hole" is our mind's way of saying, "Hey, ease up! Ya know, there's a whole nother world outside of that monitor. I'm going on strike until you give me a break!"

I have come to understand that for me, I live in two worlds; one is CyperSpace and the other is the physical world. I have friends and loved ones in both worlds; I make money in both worlds; I am passionate about both worlds.

I think the key is to try to find the right formula so that the two worlds can co-exist in harmony.

Every time I come out of a "Black Hole," I get a bit closer to finding that formula.

So don't panic when you fall in the "Black Hole." Just listen to that quiet, still voice inside. It will guide you through it. And when you come out to the other side, I think you'll be smarter for the experience. Certainly you'll appreciate the return of renewed passion and excitement.

"This, indeed, is one of the eternal paradoxes of both life and literature--that without passion little gets done; yet, without control of that passion, its effects are largely ill or null." F.L. Lucas

Jo McNamara lives in Orlando, FL with 8 cats and 1 husband. Until Jo can compile them in an e-book (2005?), you can receive all other articles at:

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