

Getting the Most Out of Yahoo Answers

A “Common Sense Marketing” Report by Sarah Russell

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Why Should You Care About Yahoo Answers?

Why do I love Yahoo Answers? Let me count the ways! No, seriously – let me count them 😊

1. The Ultimate in Targeted Traffic!

Who do you trust more? A friend with a product recommendation or a name-less, face-less marketing website? Okay, so maybe if you're in IM, you actually do trust the marketer more, but for now, let's think about the average consumer. He (or she) has a burning question – maybe even a burning case of athlete's foot! – and needs an answer NOW. He, like many others, turns to Yahoo Answers. It's there that he finds your helpful answer, learns about the product you're promoting and winds up at your site, presold and ready to make the purchase. Just like shooting fish in a barrel 😊

2. Long Term Link Availability

This is another cool thing I figured out once I started using Yahoo Answers as a major weapon in my marketing arsenal – even if your account is closed, the links you post on the questions you answer stay up. These answers are indexed by the search engines and occasionally pop up if another searcher types in a keyword that relates to your answer. They see your answer chosen as the “Best Answer” (we'll get to that in a bit), and you get the same targeted traffic discussed above without any additional effort.

3. Cost

It's free! I'm a sucker for free 😊 And those of you who are shaking your heads right now saying, “But Sarah, it's not free – it takes time and opportunity costs.” So outsource it! Another major benefit of Yahoo Answers is that it's one of the easiest things ever to pass off to someone else.

Clearly, there are some pretty significant benefits to be had from using Yahoo Answers. But unfortunately, lots of marketers abuse this tool with spam bots and barely legible form answers. And maybe this works well too – I don't know – but here at Common Sense Marketing, we're all about adding value to your customer's experience. A happy customer who feels like you've helped them in a significant way is much more likely to be a long-term customer than some one-off push to a landing page.

Instead, let's look at how I use Yahoo Answers...

Getting Started with Yahoo Answers

Yahoo Answers is a very commonly-used marketing method, but I find a lot of people abuse it, instead of using it correctly. What's really cool about the site is that if you answer a question well, you're pretty much guaranteeing targeted traffic to your site.

So how do you go about getting started? First things first –

Set up a New Yahoo Email Account

I use Yahoo as one of my main business accounts, but whenever I'm promoting a new site, I go ahead and set up a new Yahoo email account. Why? Well, two reasons. First, I usually use an email address/username that relates to the product I'm promoting. For example, if I'm promoting a product on "How to Slam Dunk", I might set up an account like "bballsarah1@yahoo.com".

The number at the end there brings me to the second reason I set up a new account for every site I promote. And that's that no matter how good a job you do, someone's eventually going to call BS on you and report you to the Yahoo moderators. If they decide to shut down your account, you don't want to lose your main business email over a single answer on Yahoo. In addition, I number them so that I can keep track of things – if "bballsarah1" is ever shut down, I register "bballsarah2" and move on.

Create an Avatar

Our goal here is to fill the "trusted friend" role in assisting consumers through Yahoo Answers. To look more legit, I always set up my Yahoo Avatar. If there's a picture of a person on the landing page I'm promoting, I'll try to emulate that as much as possible. If not, I'll try to appeal to the demographic. For example, my avatar is going to be a lot different if I'm promoting a diet product than something in the craft or sports niche.

Finding Questions to Answer

Once your account is up and running, it's time to find some questions to answer!

To start, click on the "Advanced Search" link next to the search box on the main Yahoo Answers page. The simple search feature will pull up all the questions in the Yahoo Answers database that match your keyword – including open questions, resolved questions and questions that are in voting for the best answer. All we want to find are the open questions, so that we can actually go in, submit an answer and leave our link. Click the "Open Questions" radio button on the advanced search page, enter your keyword and submit.

This should pull up a number of different questions, depending on how popular your niche/keyword is. If you don't get anything, try rephrasing your search to go wider. If you get too many, try to narrow your search phrase or consider the following tips to help weed through the results.

A few tips for choosing questions to answer:

1. **Only answer questions where the asker can act on your promotion.** When I was working in the diet niche a while back, I saw a lot of questions from young teens, asking whether or not a particular product would work for them. Now, maybe they have access to a parent's credit card, but chances are they aren't going to be able to fill out any CPA offer that requires a card. There are usually enough other questions that it isn't worth putting your effort here.
2. **Try related keywords.** If you're promoting a product in the dating niche, remember that people aren't just entering "How can I get a date?" into the Yahoo Answers search bar. They're also typing things like, "How do I find a woman?" or even "How to get laid" – even though none of these questions will come up with the first search.
3. **Look for questioners that want your answer.** Someone who's asking, "Will this colon cleanse help me lose 20 pounds?" doesn't want to hear that all CPA offers are scams. He or she wants to be told that, yes, the product will help you drop the weight. People who indicate that they want an easy solution are much more likely to be receptive to your promotion.

Answering Questions on Yahoo Answers

I mentioned earlier that my goal when answering questions on Yahoo Answers isn't just to spam my links out with some blurb of horribly misspelled text – I want to actually provide them with helpful information that will lead them to click on my link.

For example, check out my response to this question: [The best weight loss pills and the side effects please?](#) (this is from a CPA weight loss site I was promoting a while ago)

There are a couple of things I'm doing here – first, I always use the asker's name in my response, which makes it much more personal. If the person doesn't have a name listed (or if it's something weird like "cutiepie0423", I'll use a friendly, casual greeting like, "Hey there.") The tone of the response is friendly and upbeat – I want to convey the sense that I'm a trusted friend who's been in the same position before. I also try to stay realistic in my responses. I think people perceive statements like "I lost 43 pounds in 3 months" as sales pitches in this context, and I've found that using those statements gets my accounts banned faster.

You might also notice that the answer is custom written for this post – I'm not copying and pasting the same text that I'd use in every related question I find. For me, the opportunity to speak directly to each prospective buyer and tailor a response to his or her specific situation is one of the major strengths of Yahoo Answers, so I'm not going to waste that space by slapping up an answer that doesn't resonate with the asker.

Another thing I try to do is to speak the asker's language. In the post above, you can see I use things like smiley-face emoticons and colloquial abbreviations like, "lol." If I were answering questions in the sporting niche, I'd alter my language to include that sports references and slang terms. The goal here is to make the asker feel like you've been in the same position, and found a solution you want to recommend. It's a basic, common sense marketing principle, but you'd be amazed how many people just copy and paste stock answers.

A few final notes about answering questions:

1. **Check your link structure.** When adding your link to your answer, be sure to type it out in the full <http://www.sitename.com> format – otherwise, it won't wind up as a clickable link.
2. **Don't put your link on every question you answer.** This is a surefire sign of a spammer and it's one of the things that'll get your account tagged as being in violation of the community guidelines. The longer you can keep your account open, the more likely you are to get one of the coveted "Top Contributor" icons below your avatar – this will boost

your click-throughs tremendously. I usually shoot for a ratio of 3 links for every 5 questions answered and save my links for the questions where I feel the asker is most likely to be responsive.

3. **Don't answer 20+ questions a day.** Again, this is one easy way to get pegged as a scammer. Shoot for a few every day and you'll build up a solid base of links back to the site you're promoting.
4. **Don't give the asker everything.** Especially if you're selling an info product, remember that you want people to have a reason to click through to your site. If you give them all the information they need, they won't convert as well as if you leave them hungry for a little more information.

But don't think you're done yet! We've still got more work to do to take full advantage of the power of Yahoo Answers.

Don't Forget Your Follow Up!

Unfortunately, a lot of people answer questions on Yahoo Answers and leave it at that – but there's one last step I like to do to really get the most value for my efforts.

Every time I log in to Yahoo Answers, I always check the list of questions I've answered to see if any are labeled as "In Voting." For each question that's asked on Yahoo Answers, a best answer is chosen, either by the original asker or by voters at large who view the submitted answers and choose their favorites.

Being chosen as a best answer is a good thing – not only will you earn more points towards that "Top Contributor" badge (you get 2 points for every question you answer, plus an additional 10 for each best answer), you'll also earn more credibility in the eyes of the original asker. In some cases, this will make him or her more likely to click through to the product or site you're promoting.

So, go back to your account and find those "In Voting" questions. I like to go through each question once and vote for my original answer using my active Yahoo Answers account. After voting, you'll see the number of votes each answer has received. If my original vote is the only one, I move on to the next question.

If there's more than one vote, I'll copy down the answer's URL into an Excel spreadsheet. Once I've made it through all of the questions on the first round, I'll log out of my active Yahoo account and log in with others that I own (I have several generic Yahoo accounts for this purpose specifically) and vote. I do this as many times as I need to to ensure that my answer is chosen as the best response.

That's pretty much it for Yahoo Answers – it's all lather, rinse and repeat from here on out. However, if I find a niche that's particularly responsive to this direct customer interaction model, I'll expand it using some of the resources in the next section.

Expand Your Consumer Answer Empire

The following sites also allow for a similar consumer answer model as you find in Yahoo Answers, so they're worth a look if you want to expand this marketing model:

askville.com

yedda.com

iq.lyocos.co.uk

qna.live.com

minti.com

fluther.com

wondir.com

Another way to expand this marketing method is to outsource the actual answering to your VA. Just let your outsourcer know what keywords you'd like to target and how the questions should be answered (heck – just give him or her this report 😊). That way, you can get on with your business while your consumer answer empire grows.

If you'd like to receive more of these “Common Sense Marketing” reports, [click here](#) to join the mailing list.

Or, if you'd like to outsource your Yahoo Answers marketing to experts on the subject, New Arbor Enterprise is offering a **special bonus** to readers of this report –

You get all of the following:

1. 25 responses posted and promoted (voted on as described above) in your niche on Yahoo Answers
2. All accounts created and maintained (new accounts created in the event of a closure)
3. Yahoo Avatar to match your promotional materials created
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