Marketing can be scary. Here are some frightful errors thwarting your efforts, plus ways to solve them.

The boogie man answers your online ads.
Do keyword research before creating an online ad campaign to ensure they reach your target market versus some random person. Tools like Google or Bing's Keyword Planner help you find the right terms to draw in your target market, define the budget, and estimate the number of clicks per campaign. iSpionage provides data about your competition, including their keywords, budget, ads, and landing pages. Keywordtool.IO helps you find keywords on search engines, YouTube, Amazon, eBay, and the App Store.

It's all smoke and mirrors.
If you running any kind of campaign – online or offline – there has to be some kind of measurement mechanism built in. For example, if you do an email campaign, split-test the subject (meaning you change the subject line for each email) to determine which people respond to more. On a lead-magnet web page, with a download form, create two of them and change out the same element on each, e.g., a photo, the call to action button, the call to action text, etc. Then market each to similar audiences. In the case of offline efforts, create something that will drive people back to an online location that you're monitoring. For

example, if you have a desk calendar, on each page add a call to action to join your email list, but send them to a unique landing page that only the calendar recipients have rather than to your general email list subscription page.

Trap doors are littered throughout your cool, new campaign, allowing website visitors to find your content without completing required forms.
You have a cool new content piece you know will drive new leads to your firm. However, you don't do a full test on the content to see if people can get it without completing the form. This might happen if you don't use a captcha / verification code, allowing people to put in fake information to get the content. It might also happen if the landing page with the content can also be accessed without completing the form, in which case they can share that page on social media versus the form page. One way to close that door is to send the content to the form's email once it has been completed. That prevents a content page from loading.

There's a spider on your site, causing your SEO ranking to drop to zero.
Sometimes sites get hacked, but in such a small way that you might not even notice. Nothing looks different. Nothing acts differently. However, there are little bugs that hackers can put on a site that can cause the site's search ranking to drop to zero. It can be as small as a single line of code in the header that tells search engines to ignore all the pages on the site. How would you know? Check your website analytics, especially when you are running campaigns, to see if there are any large fluctuations in traffic. If you're using Google Analytics, you can [use an alert](#) to tell you when there is a huge change. This should be done for large increases as well as decreases in site traffic. Another method is using Webmaster tools, which will also alert you if there is something unusual going on. Alerts are not sent from Webmaster tools. You have to login to the Webmaster Search Console to see if anything has happened.

Zombies are stalking your URLs.
Let's say your firm creates a new service line that is worthy of its own website domain name. You decide to buy one. However, before laying down any money, find out if the site existed before by doing a site:search, e.g., site:mynewdomain.com. If there were no results, that means the domain was never crawled or has been [de-indexed](#). If you buy the new domain, but want to capture the SEO you've already acquired for a series of keywords on the existing site, use a 301 redirect for all the old pages pointing them to the new domain. That will keep the search ranking in place. If this step is missed, you're starting the SEO for the new site and previously-successful keywords from scratch.

With these ghost-busting tips in your tool belt, you should be able to attack and beat some pretty scary marketing situations.  Which is the scariest marketing situation for your firm?

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How to set a Google Analytics Custom Alert

Setting an alert on your website traffic is a great way to determine if your site has been hacked. You might see a steep increase or decline. It's also a good way to track marketing campaigns and to determine their effectiveness.

Here's how to do it.

1. Login to your Google Analytics account.
2. Open Reports.
3. Click Customization > Custom Alerts.
4. Click Manage Custom Alerts.
5. Click + New Alert.
6. Name the Alert.
7. Select the reporting view.
   1. The period of time (daily)
   2. Check "Send me an email when this alert triggers." If you want other people to get this, you can add their email address in the "Other email addresses" menu.
   3. Set up your mobile phone if you want notifications there. (optional)
   4. Choose the Alert conditions.
8. Click Save Alert.

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