

Attraction Website Design presents

Boost Your Website's Profitability:

***200 proven, low-cost techniques you can use **NOW**
to increase traffic and make more sales***



This eBook guides business owners and non-techie website administrators to the most successful internet results for the least amount of time and financial investment.

Step by step instructions and numerous lists of ideas for every aspect of your online campaign! Effective and affordable internet marketing solutions for use throughout your site. These essential tips will generate more traffic and convert visitors to paying customers.

by Ray Christensen
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Introduction: Internet Marketing

The purpose of this book is to help business owners, organizational leadership, internet marketers and webmasters of any site achieve the best possible online results. The more fully you can integrate the web into every aspect of your business or organization, the greater savings of time and money will be experienced.

"Boost Your Website's Profitability" is meant to provide step by step instructions and ideas which you can personalize for your own goals. Real-world examples highlight lists of recommended actions and considerations for promoting your enterprise, which we'll usually refer to as a business (although the information is applicable to any commercial or non-profit entity).

The vast majority of these tips require no technical knowledge. Many relate to the content which you'll add to your site directly or furnish to a web designer. Most of the off-site ideas can be implemented by anyone in your organization.

Here's how different people can benefit from this information:

- **Business owners** (and leaders of non-profits) can play a more active role in earning the best possible results from a website, even if another party is the main administrator. By deciding on the best content, planning strategies to improve Search Engine rank, monitoring feedback from visitors, and analyzing traffic, he/she will more quickly be able to make revisions that improve bottom line results.
- **Webmasters (non-technical)** who are administrators of content and online communications can learn to incorporate simple but powerful techniques to increase traffic and customer satisfaction. If partnering with a professional web designer, they can make suggestions that the designer may not have thought of.
- **Website Designers** can look at a site from more of a business (results-oriented) point of view and incorporate techniques for the site owner to get "the most bang for the buck". Most designers have a background in graphic design or computer programming, but may lack sales, marketing or SEO (Search Engine Optimization) experience. A pretty site doesn't do the job if nobody can find it!
- **Internet Marketers** can experiment with and apply ideas to tweak their sites to achieve optimal performance. Generating sales and leads is more difficult all the time as competition increases to get on the first 3 pages of SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages).
- **Direct Marketers** (MLM, Network Marketing) can actually have prospects come to them by applying these principles. An effective site allows you to be open for business 24/7 and market to people throughout the world, putting you far ahead of those who only use the more traditional "press the flesh" methods of prospecting (family, friends, product 'parties', etc.)

Topics do not necessarily appear in order of importance, however the most valuable tools are discussed in greater detail. You may want to implement one or more of these suggestions on a daily or weekly basis, to prevent the task from seeming too daunting. Feel free to contact the author by phone or email if you have specific questions (see <http://www.AttractWeb.com>).

Why have a website? Reasons to concentrate effort in it

Don't think of your site merely as something you *have to have*. If you're not interested, get interested! In fact, get excited!

The fact that every organization should have an effective site is only the beginning. You should (must!) view your site as an integral part of your enterprise, encompassing every area of the business: sales, marketing, administration, customer service, billing, public relations, etc. Placing appropriate information online saves you time and money. It's like having an entire division of employees working 24/7 (minus the salaries), by providing information, gathering leads, and even selling products and services. Here are some major reasons to be online:

- Generate curiosity and interest in what you sell or espouse
- Describe your service or product, provide comparisons and demonstrations
- Educate your target audience and motivate to take action
- Project professionalism, competence and your own unique image
- Keep customers informed, loyal, and primed for future purchases
- Expedite and simplify communications by offering multiple means of contact
- Demonstrate responsiveness to new issues by detailing your actions

About the Author

With a background including operations and retail management, direct sales and organizational development, former Naval Officer Ray Christensen focuses on getting the job done right! The bottom line is what's important. The idea is to get your visitors' attention and present information clearly and concisely.

A resident of Wilmington, Delaware, Ray is an avid runner. He has completed 14 marathons (26.2 miles each) since 2002, including Boston, New York, Chicago and Paris. Visit his [Marathon Man](#) and [Rebel Runners](#) websites for photos and descriptions of events from Ireland to California to Alaska. Ray is single and when not running, works as a freelance website designer and internet marketer.

www.AttractWeb.com provides a list of Ray's online projects with links to each. Customer testimonials, pricing and contact information, marketing tools, and a list of services can also be found.

Send your comments about this book!

If you find it helpful, email a testimonial for inclusion on the website (you can even include a link to your business or personal website).

If you have a suggestion or comment for inclusion in a future edition, by all means, send it and make yourself famous!

More Resources

There are a number of helpful links included throughout this book. Some are examples to illustrate particular website tips and others are recommended sources of detailed information. For additional resources, visit the [Attraction Website Design website](#).

1. Goals & Strategy: Give your visitors what they want

The main goal of your website is to “sell” your products, services or ideas. An eCommerce (Shopping Cart) site directly earns revenue by taking online orders. Informational sites seek to persuade visitors to travel to a physical location or request further details by phone, email, or signing up for a newsletter or membership. Whatever tactic your site takes, you must study the whole process from the visitor's point of view. Right from the start, your web pages must be engaging and provide what people came there to find.

Keep the people happy

"Content is King!" – this has been the credo of web designers and SEO experts from day one. Incorporate the "keywords" your visitors are searching for throughout the site. Keywords are the words and phrases that people type into search engines. The most popular of these expressions must be included on your pages in various places.

With endless choices for any subject, your site must be customer focused. **Catch the attention of visitors within 3-8 seconds** or they will try one of the other three million related sites, never to return again. First impression is crucial, so choose your home page headlines, text, images and colors carefully. We'll go into more detail later.

Capturing their attention within the first few seconds is most important, but you then have to **make it easy to solve the problem** that initially led them there. The home page needs to concisely explain how you can help them. It needs to have a layout and navigation system where visitors will quickly realize that their answer is just one or two clicks away. Don't irritate them by requiring 4 or 5 clicks or by making it a game to guess which links may have the most pertinent details. Even if they “get lucky”, they may not be able to stumble upon answers in the future.

Web surfers prefer to sell themselves. In the real world, sales and marketing involves convincing prospects in person or via media to try what you've got. It often includes playing to their emotions to close the deal. In the cyber world, there are so many website choices that surfers continue to look for “free stuff” whenever possible. Without seeing each other face-to-face, it's harder to play to the prospect's emotions, so they know that they have the upper hand in that they can decide against you in one click of a key.

Knowing that they control the situation, your site must **offer what they want, not what you think they need**. Design the site from their point of view by providing complete information, answering logical questions, giving written and visual examples, displaying choices (such as colors and other options), displaying testimonials that people can relate to, and providing free samples! When prospects

feel that a website is *tailored to their needs*, they'll bookmark it or take the next step towards becoming a customer.

Know your audience

Other ways to keep visitors comfortable are discussed later, but designing from their perspective automatically achieves that goal. Your site should reflect the values of your potential customers. If they expect instructions or FAQ pages or multiple photos, meet or exceed these expectations. When you really prefer that they contact you for certain information (such as pricing or custom specifications) at least guarantee that the details will be provided without sales pressure. Offering a free or discounted promotional item can also entice them to continue the process.

Build trust

Once visitors realize that you have what they need and that they can navigate your site, you must increase their comfort level. Since you can't physically shake hands and answer questions in person, provide the trust that would be generated through those actions. Information calms fears. The more you provide, the better your visitors will feel. An article at WebProNews noted:

“According to one survey, 76 percent of respondents cited insufficient product information as a reason not to purchase, 79 percent rarely or never purchase with incomplete information, and 72 percent will abandon a site for a competitor or further research, usually finding the product elsewhere.”

To further reduce visitor anxiety on purchasing from you, show proof of your customer support so they'll know that you will always be there to answer questions and solve problems. According to GetElastic.com, an online retailer should strive to answer these customer questions ahead of time to reduce purchase anxiety:

- Quality of the product [or service]
- Quality and reliability of your customer service
- Will the item arrive on time?
- Will the product be as described or as appears on screen? Is it the right color or size?
- Will it fit? Is this item true to size?
- What if the product needs to be returned?
- Is this site secure (privacy, credit card information)?
- Is this really the best price?

Answer these questions and you are providing the best possible solution. People often **want** to make a purchase and are looking for justification to proceed. Information builds trust and trust leads to loyalty.

Adding customer testimonials, a free trial, or a guarantee will further decrease possible skepticism.

Guide readers throughout the process

People are trained to follow instructions, provided there is good reason for them to do so. Direct site visitors toward the next step that they should perform, whether it is submitting information, clicking to the next page, or completing a purchase. Don't be passive and allow confusion to set in. Examples of link text:

- Contact us now
- Buy now / Order now
- Subscribe to our newsletter
- View our products
- Download free report
- Continue / Next page

Keep it simple

Make sure your copy is easy to understand (for your target audience) and as concise as possible. If text blocks or images do not support your goals, remove them. If they offer no value, remove them. Copy should only be as long as it takes to get your point across. A couple superfluous sentences in a row could prompt visitors to click away.

Keep the search engines happy

Website traffic received from people finding you in search engine and directory listings is a beautiful thing. Not only is it cheaper than advertising, you automatically have motivated prospects, assuming the search term they entered is the main topic of the page on your site that they land on. It's many times more difficult to rank on the first three pages of results than it was just a couple years ago, due to the exponential growth of the web. Use every tool at your disposal to shoot for the top!

Generate a list of keywords

Keywords and keyword phrases are the "search terms" entered into Yahoo or Google or any other listing of sites. If your site is built to satisfy human visitors, you're off to a good start with the search engines as well, but a little tweaking can squeeze out a lot more visitors. *Any* word or phrase that someone may use to refer to a subject should be considered as part of the text in the page(s) discussing it. When keywords are part of your text, you have a chance of appearing in search engine results for those keywords. When you don't specifically include them in your text, you'll be out in the cold.

If there are lots of possibilities, the most popular and targeted words or expressions should be incorporated to increase your odds for the most traffic possible. For example, a website for "used cars" should consider various synonyms such as "autos", "automobiles", "sedans", "pre-owned cars", and particular makes and models. Any one page could use several terms interchangeably or distinct pages could be created for each term. As we'll see, your home page will contain more general terms and supporting pages will target more specifics.

Analysis of "key phrases" is a critical step for both SEO and SEM (Search Engine Marketing = Pay Per Click marketing) so it is doubly important. Both entail determining what potential customers type when looking for information and using

those exact words and phrases to increase visibility in the search results for the most relevant terms for your business. Yes, web surfers help you write your text!

Generate a list of your keywords, considering technical terms, common usage, and even slang terms and phrases since different people will search for your product in different ways. Prior to finalizing your text, research, brainstorm, visit other websites, check a thesaurus for synonyms, ask your friends and definitely use tools such as the [Google Keyword Tool](#).

The Google Keyword Tool is the top device for helping you climb the charts, and is free! Enter what you feel is a generic phrase into the [Keyword Variations Tab](#) and your results are the most important terms (when ranked by 'search volume') for that topic which searchers use to describe it. For pay per click advertising, it even shows the terms where there is the greatest and least competition.

[Google Traffic Estimator](#) is also free and uses historical results to predict traffic for selected phrases. [WordTracker](#) is another popular tool for determining keywords. [Abakus Topword Key Phrase Density checker](#) can also assist with creation of "Title" and "META tags". These are important coded instructions that appear in the invisible, or HEAD section of a web page and are used by Search Engines to help "index" the page in appropriate SERPS (Search Engine Results Pages). Finally, [SEObook.com](#) provides a search volume comparison tool.

Search term comparison is a great way to compare popularity of terms and company names, so you can concentrate on including the terms most likely to be searched for. Use the free tool: [Google Trends](#)

Broad (generic) terms vs. Targeted (specific) terms

From Wikipedia.org: "Not all sites have identical goals for search optimization. Some sites are seeking any and all traffic, and may be optimized to rank highly for common search phrases. A [broad search optimization strategy](#) can work for a site that has broad interest, such as a periodical, a directory, or site that displays advertising with a CPM [cost per thousand impressions] revenue model.

In contrast, many businesses try to optimize their sites for large numbers of [highly specific keywords](#) that indicate readiness to buy. Overly broad search optimization can hinder marketing strategy by generating a large volume of low-quality inquiries that cost money to handle, yet result in little business. Focusing on desirable traffic generates better quality sales leads, resulting in more sales. Search engine optimization can be very effective when used as part of a smart niche marketing strategy."

In other words, "drill down" to your particular specialty within your broader category, similar to the structure of directories. Concentrate on these more specific terms:

[Apparel > Footwear > Athletic Shoes > Running Shoes > Nike](#)
[Travel > Vacation Packages > Adventure Trips > Safaris > Kenya Safaris](#)
[Health > Nutrition > Dietitians > Vegan Dietitians > Chicago Vegan Dietitians](#)

SEO vs. SEM

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) includes any web design techniques used to achieve the best possible “natural” or “organic” search engine results. These are the regular (main) listings on each page of results. Some SEO methods are incorporated during site development and some can be added at any time or on an ongoing basis (such as link building). Most methods don't cost a lot of money, but some require a considerable investment of time. The time commitment will prove to be worthwhile as it is amortized over the life of the site at no financial cost.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) basically includes any techniques to produce traffic that cost money. Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising is the best example. These “paid listings” or “sponsored results” appear alongside or on top of organic results for the same terms. PPC terms are often sold through auctions. More general or popular terms (such as “dogs”) are more expensive to bid for than targeted or less popular ones (such as “poodles” or “german shepards”).

Another SEM technique is inclusion in paid directories, either general (such as Yahoo Directory for \$299), regional (state or city-specific) or industry-specific organizations.

SEM is online advertising and requires an ongoing budget. You can start, stop, or make changes to campaigns at any time and improve your results through analysis of traffic and sales. SEO does not produce such instantaneous results. It can take as long as 4-8 weeks to see “natural” effects. To “cover all bases” a combination of SEO and SEM is often employed.

Establish a concise list of objectives

What do you want to accomplish? Sell a product? Sell a service? Gather contact info for emailing or calling? Sign up a new member? Motivate to visit a physical location? Motivate to call? Invite to take a survey? Invite to submit feedback? When you've decided what actions to prompt visitors to take, you can design your site for all pages to work towards that goal or goals.

If you want to drive people to visit your brick and mortar location, be sure that maps and driving directions are prominent. Include photos of the location. Include testimonials of how easy it was for customers to find it and what great service they received there. Make your business hours clear.

[\[http://www.newarkemergencycenter.org/location.php\]](http://www.newarkemergencycenter.org/location.php)

If you have several goals, you may need to decide between having one or more sites. With multiple products or services that are closely related, one site may be sufficient, but if they differ slightly or you'll be marketing them differently, unique sites may be best so that each can achieve it's particular purpose. One larger site can be easier to administer and the combined volume of content could be better for SEO.

Keep your navigation logical and your order process simple. Offer “help” pages or windows when any doubt could arise about what visitors should do next or what

information to enter in forms. This is where “pop-up windows” can be helpful. If someone is interested enough to take out their credit card or submit information, don't lose them by complicating the process. Make it clear what buttons to press and which links to choose for their individual needs.

Identify your target audience

Who exactly are you trying to reach? Are they located in a particular geographic area? How old are they and might they have any technical or physical challenges? What information do they need, and how fast? Will graphics help? What is their typical financial situation? Are they male, female or both? What is their age group and education level? What keywords would they use to describe your product/service? Answering these questions will help improve your conversion rate without wasted effort and cost. The better you understand your customers, the easier to meet their needs.

The above factors could help you determine any of these:

- Language(s) for site to use and/or how formal text should be
- Text size and colors
- Amount of text per page and reading level of terminology used
- Objective of site (online sale or visit location or contact via phone or email)
- Types of images to best reinforce text
- Most appealing images of people (similar age/race/occupational make-up)

2. Build Your Website in 10 Steps

Step 1: Determine the Type of Web Site Needed

The main emphasis of your site will be informational or selling directly. In either case, incorporate as many of the tips in this eBook as possible.

An informational brochure Web site is the easiest to build, combining the roles of brochure, yellow pages ad, and direct mail flyer. Brochure sites drive foot traffic to your physical location or motivate contact via phone or email.

e-Commerce sites sell products directly to customers using software that provides a shopping cart, and allows for credit card payment.

Membership sites serve a targeted community with a shared interest. Examples would be participants of a particular sport, members of a school alumni association or community group, or other formal or informal organizations/clubs.

Step 2: Register a Domain Name

A domain name is your organization's internet address (URL) and standard part of your e-mail. When possible, your domain name should be short, descriptive, memorable, and include important keywords. Businesses should purchase ".com" domains, and non-profits should use ".org". Hosts will often offer a free domain with hosting. Choose the name carefully. Your biggest decision is whether to concentrate on "branding" (using company name) vs. the benefits of including some keywords in the URL.

Use search terms in domain name

When the internet was in its infancy, everyone scrambled for the shortest possible web addresses. This works well when your name is "IBM" but can get tricky if your name is "Peoria Day Nursery and Children's Center Preschool". Abbreviations can work well if they are logical, but for search engine purposes, "PDNCC.org" is not helpful since it doesn't include words that people would search for such as nursery, children, preschool, daycare, etc.

Keywords included in web addresses carry considerable weight with search engines. They figure that if the word "school" is part of a web address, then that site would likely be of interest to a web surfer doing a search including the word "school". So if the name of your organization is "ABC company" and you sell shoes and boots, for SEO purposes, instead of ABC.com you'd be better off with ABCShoes.com or ABCShoesandBoots.com. Adding dashes (-) to separate words does not necessarily help, and it could confuse people.

While it is always proper to use the company name as the domain, if your site has a particular geographic focus, including it can give a significant boost in rank. Using your location as part of the URL helps you show up when visitors key in the city or

state they are interested in. "ABCShoesNewYork.com" tells us your company name, what you sell and where you are.

Many organizations purchase several [domain names](#), to prevent their competition from using similar ones to try to confuse people into visiting the wrong website. At around \$10 per year for each name, purchasing a few could be inexpensive insurance. ABC may go with ABCShoes.com, ABC-Shoes.com, ABCShoesandBoots.com, ABCShoes.net and have each of those domains forward to the official web address so visitors would end up at the same destination regardless of which of the above they punched in.

Branding your company

Examples of firms which opted to use their unique and sexy actual names are Yahoo!, Amazon.com and Google.com. They include no search engine friendly terms, but offer other advantages instead:

- Generate interest for originality or wit
- Make direct search easier with memorable name
- Encourage brand recognition instead of a generic name

Step 3: Host Yourself or Use a Web Hosting Service

Your website files must be stored on a computer that has a reliable, secure connection to the Internet. *Hosting* a Web site means providing the technical resources (server and internet connection) needed to make your Web site available online. You can either host your own Web site or hire a Web hosting company to maintain your files on a dedicated or shared server. The following advantages and disadvantages of each are noted at <http://www.verio.com>:

Hosting Your Own Site

- **Advantages:** You are in complete control. You have unlimited flexibility: you choose your own hardware, operating system, database, and other tools. You do not have to learn another company's Web hosting procedures. You will not pay additional charges for hard disc storage space or bandwidth usage.
- **Disadvantages:** Purchasing and maintaining computer hardware and software can be expensive. Obtaining a reliable, fast connection to the Internet can be very expensive. You will need a high degree of technical knowledge, and if you have any problems, you're on your own.

Working with a Web Hosting Service

- **Advantages:** Reliable and secure computer hardware with a fast connection to the Internet. Low start-up costs and relatively inexpensive monthly fees. You can get your Web site online much faster. Technical support is often free or available at a nominal charge. Purchase only the services you need and add more as your business grows. 24/7 monitoring of servers is standard.

- **Disadvantages:** You are limited to the software and hardware options the hosting service offers. Monthly fees may vary depending on how many customers visit your Web site. Not all hosting services are created equal: it takes some research to find a reputable company that will be a trusted advisor and help you grow your business.

In most cases, if you don't have your own IT department, it's best to use a 3rd party host. You or your web designer can locate one either locally or nationwide. Their proximity to you is less of a factor than the level of their customer service.

Step 4: Design and Develop the Site

You or a web designer must choose the colors, design the layout, create the images, and write the programming code to use along with the actual content (text). It is often best to integrate company logo and the design scheme already used on hard copy marketing materials. See chapter 8 for factors to consider in this decision.

If you expect the website to continue to grow after completion, or if content will be changing regularly, consider installing a content management system (CMS) such as Joomla. Using the existing colors and fonts, a non-techie webmaster can keep pages current using basic word processing functions. But ensure beforehand that the software offers SEO-friendly items such as unique title tags, heading tags and image alt tags! If not, newly added content won't bring the full benefits from search results.

When most of your content stays the same, a designer could incorporate a limited number of database-driven pages that you can easily administer with a simple username/password combination. Then your site can still include fresh information such as news, sales & specials, coming events, and announcements to keep returning visitors interested.

Step 5: Optimize Site for Search Engines and Directories

Utilize as many SEO techniques as practical to generate "free" traffic from search engines. These can be included in initial design or added at any time. Research all conceivable keywords for the topics covered in your site. Incorporating target phrases in the content is the top priority.

Step 6: Test Your Web Site Before Going Live

Once the site is completed, test every aspect before announcing it to the world! Click on every link and be sure that all text, images, and page layouts are correct. Check for spelling errors and typos since they portray you as sloppy and unprofessional. If you have a shopping cart, run some test orders. If there are any problems, find them now before your customers do.

Your website will appear differently to viewers who have customized settings on their own computers. On TV, we all see the same picture, but not on the internet. Check for "browser compatibility" in different browsers such as Explorer, Firefox and Safari.

View it at different screen resolutions (800 x 600, 1024 x 768, 1280 x 720). You can either use the most universal code or offer alternative versions for each resolution. There are many free online testing tools that will help you check your site such as [HTML validator](#) and link checkers.

Step 7: Promote Your Site

Online and offline site promotion is covered in Chapter 9. Use all available means to publicize and introduce your website to customers, prospects and the general public.

Step 8: Analyze Web Site Traffic

Record statistics to measure the effectiveness of your site. Count hits, determine numbers of unique visitors, find out where they are coming from and even how long they are staying on your site through the use of tracking tools. Install software or code on you site such as a free version of <http://StatCounter.com>, or professional software such as Urchin. Your Web host may offer similar functionality.

Step 9: Obtain Feedback from Visitors

You can add customer surveys or visitor forums (message boards) to seek comments or request opinions. Ask for input on your past service or find out what people would like in the future. Besides keeping the site lively, you're providing impressive customer service and gaining valuable data.

Step 10: Keep Content Fresh

Update your site with revised data on a regular basis. Once a visitor sees incorrect or invalid information, they can easily lose confidence in anything you have to say. Revisions can be made on a regular basis or considered whenever other changes are being made to the site, to keep costs down. Even if the information is still correct, a site that looks the same month-after-month becomes stagnant. Frequently change some text, replace a graphic, change your greeting, or add the latest news about your company. An easy way to do this is to maintain a "News" page that can easily be updated by logging in with a username and password.

Register a domain: <http://www.attractweb.com/domains.php>

Find a web host: <http://www.attractweb.com/hosting.php>

3. Plans & Content: Gather materials and organize topics

Once you determine the theme and goals of your site, assemble the information as if you were writing the outline for a speech or college paper. Your resources should include existing and new materials. Anything that helps convey your message is fair game when getting started.

Existing content materials:

Collect current brochures, ad copy, slogans, mission statement, marketing letters, your business plan, correspondence with customers, white papers, product/service descriptions, official photos and even snapshots you may not have considered "professional" enough to utilize for hard copy marketing. Grab a marker and highlight the most compelling text, while crossing out anything that is invalid or doesn't really thrill you.

Adapt hard copy materials to the web

You've already invested lots of time and effort into creating and assembling these materials, so use them again instead of starting your website layout from scratch. Go through everything and consider simple adjustments you could make to incorporate it in your site. If you have one large marketing piece, each of its pages may be the start of an online counterpart, from home page to "About Us" to overview of services.

Take the opportunity to update and improve your message. Your site will be much easier to keep current compared to physical documents, but now those physical pieces can automatically be kept more fresh by simply including your web address, preceded by "Visit our site for the most current information!"

New content materials:

One of the most exciting features of a website is the almost infinite space you have to post text and images. You can go into as much detail as you like and offer as many photos, videos and other media to make your point. As long as it is assembled logically and can be navigated easily, additional information can be useful. Some visitors need just a bit more evidence to help them decide to take action (or just want to be reassured by one more testimonial).

Any of your primary subjects (products, service lines, positions on issues) can have **supporting documentation**. For example, in addition to your general explanation and features list of a particular widget, each feature could link to a page with more detailed explanations, specifications, examples of use, photos, recommendations for best performance, etc. This would be new material to put together.

Choose your words carefully

If you don't already have adequately written material or have a professional writer on your staff, consider hiring a copywriter. This individual can help you get your

message across more effectively. Don't throw money away by spending it on a website that doesn't persuade visitors to act. Working with a copywriter such as you'll find at <http://www.aparcher.com> can help you improve conversion rates right from the start. Besides website copy, this expert can dramatically increase ROI of:

- Sales page of a particular product or campaign
- White Paper to drive traffic to your site
- Newsletters and e-zines to build interest and credibility
- eBooks, Blogs, and any other facet of your website

Besides such basic data and explanation, the internet allows you to include various types of media, so you may want to put together an audio or video presentation to help visitors visualize themselves using your widget. Slideshows, photo galleries, flash movies, Windows Media/Quicktime movies, audio welcome or instructions help them experience your product virtually. Let's examine each of these...

Images reinforce text

Images can include photos, graphics, illustrations, logos of your own or that you create or purchase. Professionally photographed images may be a requirement for glossy brochures, but there are sections of your website which may work well with simple candid photos or basic diagrams. "A picture is worth a thousand words", so use visuals to complement and help explain what you are saying in text form.

Dispose of unnecessary images

Do not include images unless they support the message of that particular section of your site. Don't confuse visitors by adding photos just because they're pretty. If the correlation of images to your text isn't apparent enough, you are not only wasting space, but wasting the time of visitors. If they came to your site to find a solution to a problem, a photo of your family on your Services page may aggravate them since they have to scroll past it to find what they seek. However, that same photo on your "About Us" page may put them more at ease since they appreciate the human touch.

As many images as possible

Insert appropriate photos and graphics, even if they are not the primary subject matter. On the web, you have plenty of room to add them. Convey your message in seconds, saving viewers time and the work of reading those extra thousand words.

- Take the time to gather or photograph images if you don't already have a sufficient quantity. Choose the best so your webmaster doesn't have to guess what to use.
- Several small images may be better than one larger one, since you have more opportunities to show just what the visitor is looking for
- Besides products, people or places, images can be used as metaphors or to illustrate a theme: a clock to signify time savings; a handshake to signify a successful partnership; a lightbulb to signify an idea.

- Include actual photos of your organization rather than stock (clipart) photos. You'll make more of an impact with the real thing!

Crop images

Page space is valuable, so before uploading photos, remove any excess space that is not important and ensure that the subject is centered in the image.

Optimize images

You must *optimize* the photo or graphic to reduce the dimensions and file size to an appropriate degree for internet viewing. Photos out of a digital camera may have dimensions as large as 4000 pixels by 3000 pixels and file size of 3-4 MegaBytes (MB). For the web, these numbers must be much lower, for instance, 300 pixels by 200 pixels and under 80 KiloBytes (KB). Follow these steps, generally:

Open the image in editing software such as Photoshop, Windows Picture and Fax Viewer, or another program that came installed on your PC or came with your digital camera, scanner or printer. Specific procedures are listed below for using **Microsoft Paint**, which comes installed on many PC's. When you complete the following steps, you may want to "Save As" a different name, so that you still have a full size original.

- 1. Crop the image** to get rid of any unimportant parts except for the subject(s) of the photo/picture. Also take the opportunity to adjust brightness and colors. Snapshots often need some brightening for proper display.
- 2. Reduce the width/height, maintaining the proper ratio.** It may start as over 1200px of both and you need it to be at least under 500px for both for a very large display and as little as 150-250px for a large thumbnail size.
- 3. Doing both of these will greatly reduce the "file size".** For a regular size photo on a website, we need it to be under 80kb, unless it will be appearing in a new window as a blown-up size. If the file size is too high, many imaging software programs will allow you to reduce the "image quality" (for example, from maybe 95% to 85% or from 10 to 8 on a scale of ten.)

Using Microsoft Paint image editor

1. Click on the **Start Menu**
2. Select **All Programs**
3. Select **Accessories**
4. Click on **Paint**
5. Click on **File** and then **Open**
6. When the Open Dialog Box appears locate the file you wish to reduce and click the **Open** button
7. With the image displayed in the Paint program click on the **Image** menu option and then click on **Stretch/Skew**

8. The Stretch/Skew window has two options in the Stretch section Horizontal and Vertical
9. Enter a number less than 100 into both the **Horizontal** and **Vertical** fields
10. Be sure to enter the same number into each field. Entering different numbers will change the shape of the image.
11. Repeat steps 7 - 10 until the desired image size (KB) is achieved
12. To save the image Click **File**
13. Click **Save As**
14. Name the file in the File Name field
15. Select JPEG(*.JPG, *.JPEG, *.JPE, *.JFIF) in the Save As Type field
16. Click **Save** button

Image filenames

"Name" of image is something like "joe23.jpg" or "DSC001255.JPG" or "logo1.gif". It is usually case sensitive so joe.JPG is different from joe.jpg. Do not leave spaces in filename. Underscore character is OK to use. To prevent typos, it is usually best to shorten image names.

Image format must be **.jpg** or **.gif**. If it has an extension such as .tif, .bmp, .swf, .png or something else, it must be changed. Since working with images can be time consuming, any of the above that you can do before sending them to a web designer will save you money.

Slideshows

Especially for your home page or another page that you wish to keep clean and compact, a slideshow is a collection of two or more alternating images. You can incorporate effects to transition from one image to the next in a set or random order. Besides showing your story, this is a simple way to add motion to a site to bring it to life. [<http://www.pcvrc.com>]

- Display products – show representative samples of your work
- Show a process - quickly give a visual tour of each stage of your service
- Text statements / quotes – boast of accomplishments, awards, recognition
- Logos of affiliations – flash through logos of your professional affiliations, vendors, partners, customers or any groups that help build credibility

Photo galleries

Dedicate pages or portions of pages to providing enough photos to satisfy visitors and persuade them to get in touch. A slideshow may be best for home page, but details pages can devote more space for all to display together. Make it interactive so visitors can control what they want to view, clicking or mousing over thumbnails of their choice. [<http://www.jmweddingcreations.com/gallery.php>]

- Show a process – include a storyboard from step one through step “x”
- Display choices – show samples of each color, style, or other variation
- Multiple applications - Show samples of different uses of the same product

Video

From a 20 second "Welcome" message to a 30 minute movie, allow the visitor to sit back and relax while you introduce your company or a particular product. You can decide whether to upload a movie viewer to your own server or simply let the visitor open the movie with an application installed on their own machine. The most common client-side pluggins are Windows Movie Viewer and Quicktime.

[<http://www.gndcollects.com>]

- Automatically running welcome message on home or about page
- User controlled video clips collection to allow viewing of any particular clip
- Longer movies should indicate their file size and length so the visitor can decide if they have enough time (or fast enough internet connection)
- Humorous video can entertain while projecting your message
- Include link to download (free) movie player in case visitor does not have one installed. Never make assumptions about your visitors.

A good video can convey your ideas and demonstrate your product much more quickly and thoroughly than lengthy paragraphs of text. Search Engines may reward sites with higher rankings, knowing that you're more likely to please visitors.

An excellent resource for online video marketing tips is <http://www.ReelSEO.com>

Flash presentations

Flash movies can contain a multitude of effects and can integrate video, graphics, still photos and text on a server-side platform, to be independent from the visitor's computer configuration. But costs can be greater to create and to change. Some web designers specialize in these sites or can create an individual flash movie for inclusion on "non-Flash" sites.

Off-site video feed

Display your existing <http://www.YouTube.com> video directly on your website by using the "embed" code furnished by the site. This is the simplest way to add video without needing to host the player. However, it may seem more professional to use your own movie that you would separately upload to a video sharing site.

[<http://www.crazy4carz.com/tv15.php>]

Other video sharing websites include MySpace, Yahoo! Video, and Metcafe.

Audio clips

Music related sites can make excellent use of sound bytes that are easy to create and upload. Any website can show more of a personal touch by including the sound of a human voice! Use MP3's to add audio content. [<http://www.joeclines.com/7.html>]

- Samples of sound tracks for musicians and voice artists.
- Interview clips, including radio spots
- Message from president or spokesperson
- Audio testimonials

Virtual tours

Allow visitors to view a 360 degree panorama of any indoor or outdoor space. A photographer takes several photos and stitches them together with software to create a photo that website viewers can move left and right by simply dragging their mouse cursor. Most popular with real estate websites, it adds some fun interactivity, especially when zooming in and out is added. [<http://www.thebigpicturede.com/tour.php>]

Allow download of documents

Develop text documents and other files that visitors can download to read, print or share in hard copy. Everyone loves getting stuff for free and you don't even have the costs of paper, printing, or postage! Files could include similar or same text that is already on your site, so there may be no additional work involved in putting them together. You can easily convert Word Documents into PDF (software is inexpensive or free), which appears much more professional. Be sure to include a link for visitors to download [Adobe Reader](#), in case they don't already have PDF viewing software installed. Documents can include:

- company marketing brochure
- product/service instructions
- product specifications
- directions to facility
- press kit
- printable version of website pages
- photographs or diagrams
- help or FAQ for current customers
- company directory
- list of partners or affiliates
- marketing campaign material
- third-party reviews
- calendar of coming events
- shipping and privacy policies

Links to supporting information

Besides posting informative text directly on your website, there may be circumstances where it is easier or advantageous to refer to outside resources instead. It could lend credibility to link to a government website which validates your position. It can be reassuring to link to well-know organizations that provide objective data or recommendations. In effect, these third-parties can help sell your products or ideas. If these links open in a new browser window, you don't risk losing visitors who wander too far away.

Include quotes from well known sources

In the same manner as books sometimes open each chapter with a related quote from a historical personality, placing some on your site can help with your own credibility. Or you could paraphrase an expert in your field, signifying that you feel the same way. Better yet, invite a noteworthy individual to write something for your site. These people are known for being knowledgeable and successful. Associate yourself with them!

Analyze websites of the competition

Visit the websites of your major competitors. Then do searches for your top keywords to find the top-ranking sites. You can learn from all of these and use the

best ones as models for aspects of your own site. Don't copy them. Do improve upon them, adding your own personal touch.

- What graphics and layout features grab your attention?
- What headlines, text, or bullet lists say what you want to convey?
- What pages or page names do they employ? How much information do they make available?
- Do they use images and multimedia effectively?
- Do they offer free downloads, samples or newsletter signup?

Form a web site strategy

You'll have many competitors online. To attract visitors and ensure repeat traffic, your site must stand out from the crowd. Knowing your objectives (sell stuff or "capture" contact information of visitors), determine your strengths and weaknesses, relative to the others. Answer these from the visitor's perspective and then focus on them throughout your website to form a theme:

- What do you do better? Why is your product/service superior?
- Do you offer better customer service? Answer phones faster? Longer hours?
- Are you faster in initial response or in completion time?
- Are your prices lower? Is quality higher? Are you more experienced?
- Do you provide better warranty or guarantee on purchases?
- Are you the leader in your industry? Leader in your geographical area?
- Are you more user-friendly? Environmentally conscious?

4. SEO Toolkit: Content

Best use of keywords, images and HTML code

Design your site with both human visitors and search engine robots ('bots' or 'spiders') in mind. Make your site easy for them to understand. This includes both the visible pages of the site and the invisible underlying computer code that powers it. If you are not the actual designer writing the code or using a control panel to generate it, you should advise your designer to incorporate these important items which can bring your site better rank without huge effort. Search engines can be likened to hungry tigers looking for meat (keywords within text).

The top factors used by search engines to rank your site are.

1. The number of websites linking to yours
2. The relevance, quality and page rank of those sites!
3. The keywords in the links on the pages of those sites
4. The words before and after the links in the pages of those sites
5. The page titles of your web pages.
6. Your web address (URL) – hopefully it includes keywords
7. The description META tag
8. The text content of your web page
9. The theme of your site (all contents should be closely related subjects)
10. The date your website was first indexed by that search engine (seniority)

HTML code provides the basic framework for a site, regardless of the use of other programming languages such as PHP, ASP, JavaScript or even Flash. You can see the code for any web page you are viewing by selecting "View Source" or "View Source Code" from the dropdown menu at top of page or from the menu which appears when you right-click on a page.

Unique title tags for each page of website

This is one of the most important items to work on!

The title tag appears in the header section of code, towards the top of the page. Search engines give it considerable weight, so create your page titles carefully.

Officially (from [World Wide Web Consortium](http://www.w3.org) <http://www.w3.org>):

"Authors should use the TITLE element to identify the contents of a document. Since users often consult documents out of context, authors should provide context-rich titles. Thus, instead of a title such as "Introduction", which doesn't provide much contextual background, authors should supply a title such as "Introduction to Medieval Bee-Keeping" instead."

Page titles display at top of the visitor's browser and should be an abbreviated description of that particular page's contents. A title such as "Home" or "About Us" tells nothing about the content of a page, so it is useless to readers and search engine robots. No "Welcome to my website" or other superfluous headings, please! Proper titles should be under 64 characters in length, so 5-7 words is a good

guideline. Include the most relevant keywords.

Avoid “filler” words (the, your, home). Avoid strings of keywords that appear more like “keyword stuffing” than a complete thought (“Web design – hosting – SEO – internet marketing”) Your organization name should be part of your home page title if possible. Here is how the title appears in page code:

```
<head>  
<title>ABC Shoe Company sells shoes and boots</title>  
</head>
```

Giving each page a unique title *with its own keywords* enables visitors to find pages other than your home page when doing searches. For example, the following are titles of 2 pages at Attraction Web Design. If someone is searching for “search engine optimization”, they may find my (more appropriate) SEO page before my home page.

[Home] Website Designer - Hosting - SEO by Attraction Web Design of Delaware
[SEO] Website search engine optimization - SEO and keywords

Your page title will appear in the following places:

- Browser window title bar, and when printed, at the top of the page
- As title for web page listing on the search engine results. This helps to guide interested parties to your site.
- Default entry in favorites (bookmarks) and history lists. This helps repeat traffic come back to the correct site.

Your location is a keyword too! Notice that my home page title (above) includes “Delaware”. Web surfers realize that they have to limit their search to a geographical area if they are looking for someone local to work with, so adding your state, city or town will rank you higher in those cases.

For the home page, I include my complete business name in case someone is aware of the name but not the web address. The other words will give me a better chance of a high result for various combinations of searches, such as “web designer in Delaware”, “Delaware website”, “website design and hosting”, etc.

My business is actually nationwide, although most people find me by including “Delaware” in their search. Especially if you only service a particular area, it is critical to include that state, city, county or locality on your home page and other important pages (both text and title).

META Description tag

Your description “tag” appears near the title in the header area and should be unique to each page. It is meant to be an accurate description of page contents and goals, of course including as many major keywords as possible. 10-20 words are appropriate since total length should be under 170 characters. This will appear in

the results of some Search Engines, so it can't just be a collection of random words and phrases. Here is what the tag looks like:

```
<meta name="description" content="Brief description of the contents of your page.">
```

META Keywords tag

While not as important as Title and Description, the keywords tag should include any search terms that actually appear within the text of the page. The following are advisable: (1) keep your list below 20 unique words or phrases; (2) separate the words or phrases using a comma; (3) put most important word or phrases at the beginning of your list; (4) do not repeat words or phrases.

Invite search engines to map your site

Be nice to the search engine spider robots which are constantly crawling the web looking for new and updated files. Invite them to your picnic! The META tag to include within the header code of each page you want them to find/index would be:

```
<meta name="robots" content="index,follow"/>
```

Upload a robots.txt file

Another invitation for search engine spiders to visit your entire site is by placing a robots.txt file on your server to tell them which pages or sections to crawl and which ones not to crawl or index. For example, you may not want an images directory or javascript file spidered. You may also issue individual indexing instructions to specific search engines.

The file itself is a simple text file, which needs to be saved to the root directory of your site (where your home page or index page is). In other words, you would upload your version of this to your web host along with your HTML pages, images and other files:

```
#The following allows all robots to visit all files because wildcard used  
#But all robots are barred from cgi-bin images and scripts directories  
User-agent: *  
Disallow: /cgi-bin/  
Disallow: /scripts/  
Disallow: /images/
```

Text should be readable by search engines

Most of your page text needs to be typed in a standard font which can be "read" by the search engine bots that regularly scan your site. The font must be available on nearly all computers. If a particular font is not available on someone's computer, they will see it in a more common form (such as arial, Tahoma, Verdana).

Flash movies and images can't be "read", so any text contained in them does not count. This means that a purely Flash site might have horrible rank, making it less likely to draw visitors from organic search results. A site using images to display fancy text would face the same dismal results.

Searchable text must include targeted keywords, with an optimal "density" of 3-4% for each particular word or phrase. This means that if there are 200 words on a page that you want optimized for the phrase "red shoes", you should try to incorporate that phrase 6-8 times. Any more than that and you may actually be penalized for "keyword spamming" by a search engine.

Create distinct pages for each search term so that any individual page might rank highly enough to appear within the first 3 pages of directory or S.E. results, even if it is not the home page. If you have several products or services, give each it's own page where you can highlight the distinct terminology and characteristics. When the differences are slight, consider writing a page or article on one of them where you simply replace one possible keyword for another. For example, you may use the word "car" on one page and "auto" on another page.

Utilize heading tags appropriately

HTML heading tags (h1, h2, etc.) carry more weight than standard text. Try to work keywords into the highest level tag possible. Having headings and sub-headings also makes pages easier to browse by humans! Sample:

```
<h1>Main Heading</h1>
  <p>Paragraph of text describing heading</p>
<h2>Sub Heading (work in some additional or secondary keywords)</h2>
  <p>More text...</p>
```

This is a case where having a human web designer or at least good software is always preferable than most word processing web page generators. That's because the word processor uses it's own code instead of the standard heading tags favored by search engines.

Lots of subheadings, short paragraphs

Keep pages "skimmable" by generous use of subheadings and white space. Make it easy to pick out important terms when visitors are quickly glancing at a page to see if it contains worthwhile material. They can then find sections of text that they'd like to concentrate on. More meat and less filler! You can always link from there to "more details."

Use tables and charts

Present information on easy to understand comparison tables and charts. Help visitors gather information quickly. This takes less effort than extracting details from long sentences or large blocks of text. If a page could use an image for greater visual appeal, that's fine. But realize that you'd be losing the SEO benefits of any keywords within the text, giving the tigers less to drool for. See the charts at <http://www.AttractWeb.com/tips3.php> which use plain text with added background color to create some of the appeal of an actual image, yet still feed the tigers.

Headings must be clearly understood

Wording of headings, subheadings and list names must not cause confusion. If the content doesn't seem to fit, you're losing the trust of viewers. If there's any doubt

about what you mean, eliminate it. Instead of being too “cutesy”, say what you mean to make headlines meaningful.

Use simple language

Explain in terms that the average visitor would understand. Avoid using industry jargon when your target audience is the general population. It's easier to trust you if they understand what you're saying.

Keep text easy to read

Use short sentences. Longer sentences can be more difficult to follow. In most cases, a conversational tone will be more interesting and readable than a scholarly explanation. Don't put too much information on a page. Instead, “continue” on additional pages.

More text = more content

Don't skimp on the total amount of overall text. Think of a search engine as a hungry tiger and your text as meat. Feed the tiger! Give it lots of juicy text to chew on. As long as page length isn't excessive, more applicable words on a page means better results. You can work in many more keywords and keyword phrases in 300 words than you can in 100 words. As long as you break up the text with subheadings, bullet points, and graphics, human visitors will devour it as well. (Please pass the salt!)

Repeat yourself

Drive home important points by explaining yourself in a number of ways or by providing examples to illustrate details.

Put critical information near top of page

Important points and ideas should be visible “above the fold” to human visitors. Help them easily find key content without becoming impatient and having to scroll for it.

Place targeted keywords prominently on page

Keywords that appear towards the top of the page actually count more towards that page's search engine ranking as well. This is logical in that the main theme of any page is expected to be discussed from the very beginning. Think of each page as having its own headline, lead paragraph discussing main points, supplementary or supporting information, and finally a summary (including a call to action). Thus, the first and last paragraphs on any page should emphasize the targeted keywords.

Use bold text for keywords

Where your targeted keywords or keyphrases appear on pages, make them appear in **bold** text at least once or twice to catch the attention of visitors and tigers! Using HTML, these tags are placed around the words: word word

Use the word “Free”

Find a way to work “free” – in bold letters - into your site, especially the home page.

You probably have something that you can give away, even if it is a PDF full of good advice. The internet was built on the premise of "free". In fact, your customers may have typed in "free widget" as a search term!

Use the words "Today" and "Buy now"

Why wait until tomorrow? Order now! Take advantage now! Enjoy our product today! Foster a sense of urgency. Your visitors are looking for reasons to take action. Facilitate the process.

Coupons and web offers

Post coupons, vouchers or special deals on the site --- with expiration dates. Add perceived value and give visitors a sense of good fortune that they found a limited time deal on your site. It could be a printable coupon or just a code to use in person or by phone. This is a great viral technique, since people might tell their friends to check it out before it's too late.

Each page must support the site as a whole

Another marginal consideration is how words on any one page support each other and how keywords used throughout a site will strengthen the rank of the site as a whole. A page which uses the terms "rivers", "streams" and "lakes" can rank higher than one that only discusses "rivers" since those terms are themselves related. A site with specific pages highlighting each may beat out a site that again only talks about "rivers". So keep in mind the relevance of terminology within pages and over a number of pages.

Speaking of rivers, the tone of text should "flow" in the same general direction throughout a site. If different people are responsible for writing different pages, an editor should be appointed to give the site a uniform feel.

Maintain strong customer focus

Build the site and flow of information on each page from the customer's point of view instead of your own. Meet their needs before presenting your credentials and "why to buy from us". People are only interested in you if you can help them. Here's a real world example... When prospects call or visit, instead of first telling them about yourself and your wonderful background, ask what you can do for them!

Photos of real people

Rather than no photos, or even clipart (bought) photos, include images of yourself or staff members. You'll appear more trustworthy and human. Smiling portraits, photos of interaction with clients, or even a humorous group shot can make you stand out from the bland, generic site of a competitor.

Make images more visible with alt tags

Although images don't qualify as content to the same degree as text, you can make them more tasty to that tiger as well. Image "alt" tags should be used to describe

photos and graphics to robots and visually impaired viewers. Insert a text description of one or more words as follows:

```

```

Squeeze in some fine print

Image captions, smaller print notes, and even copyright lines of text allow additional inclusion of keywords. You may not want to clutter a page with too much text or by repeating the same terms over and over, but there are always opportunities to squeeze in some remarks such as below an image. Even generic images could have a short comment under it. Your page about tigers in Africa may include a couple photos. Even if no explanation is necessary, "African tigers" would definitely not be out of place. Or maybe it's an opportunity to inject some humor into a dry subject, pleasing both robots and humans simultaneously.

Keep your code clean

"Clean" underlying page code means that actual text and keyword density are not as diluted as pages with excessive design code. If 2 web pages have the exact same amount of text on them, the one with the shorter page of HTML code is cleaner. This means that keyword density is naturally higher (see comparison below).

A cleaner page of code also equates to a smaller file size, so the page will load more quickly (especially for those who are still using dial-up internet access). Use external CSS and Javascript files (we'll discuss later). Word processor driven "design it yourself" pages often contain more code than content, diminishing the percentage of actual content in the page file.

Clean

```
<p>The quick brown tiger jumped over the lazy dog.</p>
```

Dirty?

```
<div align="left">  
<p style="font-size: 12px; font-weight: normal;  
color: #0000ff;"><b>The quick brown tiger  
jumped over the lazy dog.</b></p>  
</div>
```

Keep your content fresh

Periodic updating and addition of text helps rank by showing that there is "fresh" and current content on individual pages and the site as a whole. If visitors notice incorrect or out of date information, their impression is that your website is untrustworthy. When your "coming events" page lists items from the previous year, you may as well be asking people to leave your site. They might assume you are no longer in business!

A regular schedule of web updates could be monthly, quarterly or even annually, as long as information remains valid. If it costs you money each time a web designer or webmaster makes changes or uploads new material, you may want to set up a couple of pages to update yourself at no added cost. Have your designer create a database and code for you to easily log in with a simple username and password to add, edit or delete information. This works well for an "Announcements" section of your homepage or a "Company News" or "Coming Events" page.

[<http://www.augustinmercante.com/events.php>]

A website built to display a schedule of events (meetings, softball games, concerts, etc.) can include a calendar that is easily maintained by an administrator without the need for technical know-how. When clicked on, any entry can display a page with full details – part of the same database of information.

Use original page text

Do not use similar text on several pages of your site, just to have more content. Do not copy text from another website just because it contains good keywords. Google levies a “duplicate content” penalty which will cause the duplicate pages to be filtered out, making them worthless in search engines. This is done to prevent “mirror sites” from both appearing high in results and usually means that whichever page was first indexed would be regarded as the “valid” source by Google.

Add pages for special occasions

Do you have a brand new idea or service or product line? Are you seeking a new target audience for existing products or services? Add a page to address their needs and concisely show how you can fill those needs. You may want an advertising campaign to lead directly to that page, instead of the home page. After a site is already built, additional pages can be added quickly and inexpensively, since the standard page template merely needs to be filled in with words and pictures.

Endorsements

Expert or celebrity endorsements can carry lots of weight with people. Even if it's not an “A list” person, add some kind of endorsement from someone or some group that can vouch for your product. If it's a very famous person, your home page might be the best place. A brief quote and the name is fine, or you could add a thumbnail photo of them for added impact. Request their permission first!

Focus on your specific niche market

Especially if you're in a large or very competitive industry, a smaller player needs to find and fine-tune factors can be used to your advantage. If you specialize in certain segments of the market or serve a group within the general population, your website must reflect that in text, images, headlines.

Emphasize your specialties and highlight aspects that make you unique. If you're a travel company which specializes in adventure trips to Costa Rica, you may want to mention that on every page to show that you're the best choice for that situation. It's no secret that a company should play up it's strong points. “Travel” is the most searched-for term on the internet. Chances of appearing high in organic search results is remote. Your odds are considerably better for “adventure trips” and greater still for “Costa Rica adventure trips”.

Respond quickly to inquiries

Follow up immediately on phone messages or emails received. You will impress visitors. They may have made similar requests for information elsewhere and the

party to reply first (with a satisfactory answer) will get the business. Personalized replies build trust. Even an Autoresponder message is better than nothing at all. Just be sure to follow up.

Translate into different languages

If you serve a diverse population, make your site available in other languages besides English, to reach the largest possible audience. If not every page, at least the most significant ones.

Seasonal messages

Your webmaster can add code (JavaScript) to automatically display a rotating announcement on different dates. This is an easy way to show that your site *isn't* stagnant and *is* up to date and personalized. The default could be a generalization like "Thanks for visiting our site!" Message ideas to insert at predetermined times:

- Happy Independence Day! (July 4)
- Happy Holidays – Best wishes for the coming year (throughout December)
- Today is National _____ Day. (if related to your site)
- Have a great summer! (education related sites, outdoor activity sites)

Don't make viewers log in

Except in special cases, don't require visitors to register in order to view pages of content. People can understand restricted access to premium "members only" areas, but general information or descriptions of your service should be public. If you want to capture email addresses, offer something special.

Copyright line serves several purposes

Include a copyright line at the bottom of all pages. It can be the same throughout a site, similar to the page header. Smaller "fine print" is OK.

- The word "copyright" along with the standard copyright sign © deter visitors from stealing your content.
- Add your organization's official name and even some keywords or location.
- Good place to link to your "Privacy Policy", "Links" page or webmaster.
- You can combine it with an additional navigation area for text links to main pages of site, especially useful if pages are long and excessive scrolling would be needed to return to links at top of page. Sample:

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Services](#) | [Testimonials](#) | [Contact Us](#)
Copyright (c)2008 Attraction Web Design, Wilmington Delaware - [Privacy Policy](#) || [Links](#)

5. SEO Toolkit: Layout & Navigation

Visual design tips and keeping things organized

Color schemes, font size, layout of pages, and navigation structure must be consistent throughout the site for the benefit of both humans and those search engine 'tigers' that we want to keep well fed at all times!

Functional and uniform layout

Keep navigation consistent and clear. It is the most important concern for good "usability". Visitors are more likely to stay at your site when they realize how quickly they can find their way around. Keep the link names ("anchor text") as simple as possible. Your home page link should be easy to find so people can "start over" if they get lost.

Arrange the pages (navigation) as if you are giving a tour which culminates in a purchase or contact. The hierarchy of the site should flow from most requested information to the least important so that significant areas are easy to find.

Keep site structure logical

Create a list or flowchart of the major content areas and sort individual pages into their relevant categories. It will be easier for visitors to locate the specific information they want if the structure makes sense. If a series of pages is dedicated to a particular purpose, include it as a directory name within your hosting account, giving you additional credit for keywords. For example, a shoe store may categorize items by type and then each type by brand. Great choices of directory and page names for "ABCShoes.com" could be:

Running Shoes

ABCShoes.com/[running/asics.html](#)
ABCShoes.com/[running/brooks.html](#)
ABCShoes.com/[running/nike.html](#)

Tennis Shoes

ABCShoes.com/[tennis/reebok.html](#)
ABCShoes.com/[tennis/brooks.html](#)
ABCShoes.com/[tennis/nike.html](#)

Keep the structure relatively flat, meaning as few layers (directories, sub-directories) as possible. Shorter paths to internal pages result in more credit by search engines.

Organize link menus

Ensure easy access to each page. Large sites may need a Site Map, Search Feature or drop-down menu such as at <http://www.HealthandEndurance.com>. In particular, a horizontal or vertical drop-down menu allows easy categorization of pages, while using a small area of the page. With multiple sub-menus, visitors can jump from one page to another with minimal clicks. New pages can be quickly added at to the appropriate location.

Maintain consistent layout features

All pages must show consistency in terms of backgrounds, colors, navigation, font sizes, etc. If they don't look like they all belong to the same website, you don't look professional. It also invites confusion.

Link logo image to Home page

If a company logo appears at the top of each page, visitors will often expect it to lead them back to the home page if clicked. Don't let them down.

Use contrasting colors for text

Utilize opposing colors such as black and white or simple backgrounds for best possible readability. Don't type more than a few words in ALL CAPS. Don't use a tiny font size. With so many other websites containing similar information, your words won't matter if they are not easily read.

Use standard fonts for text

Avoid utilizing fonts only you have installed on your computer. For those without them, they will be converted into a dull font and ruin the effect you were trying to achieve. Save special fonts for specific headers and convert them to images. The bulk of your site should use standard fonts so that as many browsers as possible will see it in the way you intended. Recommended fonts for greatest compatibility are Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Helvetica and Comic Sans MS.

Make sure your text is large enough to read, especially if your target audience includes seniors!

Do not center align too much text

A large amount of centered text can be difficult to read, so except for headings and maybe subheadings, left-align the majority of text across the site.

Keep width of text blocks down

Wide columns of text are difficult to read, so don't allow them to stretch across the entire screen. Keep the width below five inches if possible

Check for errors

Always check for spelling mistakes, incorrect grammar, and typos because even one error noticed can give the impression that you are uneducated, unprofessional or just not concerned with accuracy. Perfection is expected, so proof-read all pages manually before and after uploading.

Avoid clutter and "busy" backgrounds

"White space" is important so text is easier to read and it is easier to decipher different sections of the page. Make sure that the text color contrasts enough with background colors or graphics to be easily read by your entire audience, especially if that includes visually impaired people. [<http://www.stablerassociatesinc.com/>]

Be concise

Avoid too much text on main pages of site. Your home page may be fine with only a few paragraphs worth of text, as long as you cover the main points of your site. It is better to have more short pages than fewer long pages that can feel like more

work to read through, as long as you keep in mind an approximate minimum of 300 words to keep the tigers from getting too hungry. (each page of this book contains about 350 words) Main pages can direct visitors to more detailed pages.

Make it easy to skim

I repeat: Use lots of subheadings and short paragraphs. Get ideas across quickly. If you are providing more details, put them farther down on page or give them a page of their own for those who are interested.

Bullet lists are very effective

Make your points quickly and save your visitors time. Lists are easy to read and stand out from blocks of text. Each is a nugget that becomes a selling point. Use lists (like this) to show prospects what you can do for them:

- Features of your products
- Different benefits that will receive
- Examples of successful applications of ideas or uses of products
- Various options available.
- Specific addresses, areas served, languages spoken, industries served...

Links must be obvious

Make internal and external links apparent (blue, underlined) and stand out from the rest of the text on page. If links are bold, make them a different color than other bold text. Roll-over effects such as lighting up are very helpful. It's wise to include internal links within page text in addition to those in the navigation menu. It facilitates visitors finding the specific details they seek.

Avoid underlining words that are not links

If links are underlined, don't underline regular text. Visitors may become aggravated when they click on words that aren't active links, since underlining is a conventional way to present them.

Links should include keywords in Anchor Text

Describe what you're linking to, both internally and externally. You'll get more credit by using search terms in the text of links. For example, let's say you're linking to a page about circus animals. "Click Here" doesn't use terms people may search for, but "See circus animals" contains the exact phrase and will help give your circus animals page higher rank.

Text links are more valuable than buttons

Since buttons are basically images, even though they're attractive, they don't quite pull as much weight as standard text links, so if much of your navigation is based on clicking buttons or other images, at least include an additional set of text links (possibly at the bottom of the page). This keeps the tigers well fed and is also helpful to human visitors who find themselves at the bottom of long pages.

Add more internal links

Besides regular navigation links, include links within the text of pages to guide readers toward important (income-producing) areas.

- For long scrolling pages, links within text prevent people from having to go to top or bottom of page to move on.
- Contextual links make it easy for people to continue to the next step of the process as soon as they're sufficiently excited. So you may want to include it in several places. Some people will want to read the whole page, but others will be happy to save time by continuing where they are being directed.

Make sure all links function correctly

Remove dead or "broken" external links and test to be sure that all links function properly. Bad links annoy visitors and penalize you in search engines.

Tell search engine spiders which links to ignore

This is a little technical, but important. All links on a page share the total value of "link juice" that search engines assign. If there's one link, it gets full credit. Three links would mean each gets one third of the credit and so on. More links mean less value per link. If there are certain pages on your site that don't require high search engine position (such as privacy policy or contact forms or other administrative pages), you can tell the spiders to ignore those links, thereby keeping higher credit among the more important internal and external links. We use the "nofollow tag":

```
<a ref="privacy.html" rel="nofollow">Privacy Policy</a>
```

Treat external links the same way. If a third-party website may have helpful information to visitors, add it. But include the "nofollow" tag if their search engine rank is not as important as other external links, such as a second website you may have yourself!

Provide beneficial information

Build trust by actually providing solid information. Free information is good, but high *quality* free info can set you apart from the crowd. Extensive FAQ or self-help sections of websites can start a priceless domino effect of word of mouth publicity. Of course this works best for informational websites that draw revenue from advertisers, but it can improve the reputation and recognition of any organization and help you build a list of warm leads.

Make it easy to contact you

Place contact info, or a link to it, on the top and/or bottom of each page. Make your first choice of contact most conspicuous, such as easy-to-read phone number, possibly with smaller cell, fax, physical mailing address if they are secondary avenues. [<http://www.NewarkDayNursery.org>]

Explain what makes you special

Why should visitors stay at your site for more than 5 seconds? What separates you

from the competition? What is your niche? What valuable items or information are you offering at no or low cost? Answer all of these on your home page and other main pages.

Use the magic words: *Best, Free, Leader, Lowest prices, Most experienced*, etc., then back it up on secondary pages with lists of features, testimonials from happy customers, statistics, side by side comparisons, product reviews from respected sources and instructions for best results.

Say "Thank you"

Thank your visitors for purchasing, completing a questionnaire or just visiting! Look for opportunities to show your appreciation and they will remember your friendliness. Set this page up as confirmation of submitting a contact form.

Keep information current

Consider a "Last Modified" date on time-sensitive material, particularly if there is any question as to if this could be relevant only to a previous date or version of the topic being discussed. Caution: Only use this if your content is clearly valid. If the only date on a page is "copyright 1995", visitors may assume that this page (and possibly others) is old and untrustworthy.

Include PDF's

Offer free information by providing downloadable PDF (Portable Document Format) or Word documents that contain a printable version of the page or possibly greater details. Of course any downloadable documents should contain your contact information. Advantages of PDF's:

- Formatting is consistent. Everyone sees the same layout, colors, fonts.
- Ease of printing. Everything is already in readable format.
- Everyone can access and view (but be sure to include a link for download of the free software for those who may not have it installed)
- Combination of files. One PDF can include several Word documents, databases and spreadsheets.

Avoid distractions

Keep blinking text, scrolling text, animated GIF images, and sound files to a minimum. Use these only if they highlight important sections of text and blend well with the look of the site. Do not place too many of these moving features too close to each other, to avoid a nice page from seeming tacky.

Remind visitors where they stand

Don't rely on the memory of users. If an article extends to a second page, repeat its title, possibly with the word "continued." During each stage of an online purchase, display the key transaction details on each page. Include a "Back" button if they don't wish to continue moving deeper into a particular area. Guide them throughout your website, prompting them to take action when appropriate.

No pop-up windows

Don't annoy visitors with automatic pop-up windows. It is fine to allow new windows to open when links or text or images are moused over or clicked on, but let the viewer control that decision. And provide a "close" button if the window does not disappear by itself.

No spaces in file names

Filenames (including page files and images) should not contain spaces. Some servers do not support spaces. The underscore may be used.

These are good: "bob3.jpg", "about_us.html".

These are not good: "bob 3.jpg", "about us.html".

Images should reinforce text

Balance images with text. Don't add graphics just to make pages pretty. Appropriate graphics (logo, photos, diagrams, etc.) will help convey and reinforce your message. Some people are more visual than others. Images also help to break up large blocks of text, which is why divider lines are popular --- and if backgrounds, lines and bullets support the theme (such as using a small version of logo instead of a bullet dot), they are fulfilling 2 purposes!

Audio must be controlled

Sound files must be used with caution. *If appropriate*, automatic sound bites or background music can add to viewers' experience. Give visitors control to turn on and off. Music can seem very unprofessional for most business sites. Even on more casual websites, it must be remembered that many viewers---particularly at the workplace--- have speakers turned off. Sound files can also cause delays in loading pages if not properly optimized or incorporated. [<http://www.RebelRunners.com>]

Optimize image files

Compress image files which can cause slow page loading. Especially if a viewer is using dial-up, a 25 KB image loads more quickly than a 200 KB one, and a 2 or 4 MB photo (right out of a digital camera) can cause severe delays. Don't make your customers wait!

Once you or your webmaster learns how to crop photos and resize them to proper width and height for the web, adding new photos will be quick and easy. Open the image in editing software such as Photoshop, Windows Picture and Fax Viewer, or another program that came installed on your PC or came with your digital camera, scanner or printer. Specific procedures for using Microsoft Paint are listed at <http://www.AttractWeb.com/images.php>. You should "Save As" a different name, so that you still have the full size original.

Don't overdue multimedia

Beware of excess multimedia – too many cool effects can cause confusion and hurt search engine rank. Multiple blinking or moving images can make your site look like

a circus. Even an expertly created Flash movie can detract from nearby text if it commands too much attention. Keep visual effects as subtle as possible, unless you happen to be a circus, or children's site or rock band.

Avoid "Splash" or entry pages

Stay away from "Splash" pages unless it's vital for you to convey an artsy or glamorous feel and can afford the risk of losing visitors. An entry page is usually the index or main page that directories and search engines would review and refer visitors to. If there is little more than a movie or a handful of words, the search engine tigers will be furious for being given so little content to eat. Visitors who are pressed for time may not be happy to have to click "enter" to get to the meat of the site either.

If at all possible, try to combine your impressive introduction to the website with the general overview of home page material. In that way, your video, Flash movie or slideshow is directly supporting the words of description on the page.

Do not overuse Flash

To make websites more visually appealing and interactive, many designers specialize in using [Adobe \(Macromedia\) Flash](#) software. Flash movies may be integrated into pages or entire websites may be constructed with Flash. The danger is that more Flash means less content as far as Search Engines are concerned. A completely Flash site offers no text for the tigers to feed on since it is all just movies and images on each page. Even the internal links can't be seen, so Search Engine "spiders" fail to see (and index) all of the pages on the site.

Flash is fine if used on pages or websites that visitors are already aware of or directed to from more search engine friendly pages. They can offer video game types of visual experiences that are attention grabbing for artistic or entertainment related themes.

Don't use Frames

By designing a site with "frames", certain sections of a page remain in place while others (usually the main section) can scroll up and down. This is useful for maintaining a navigation area on the screen while reading long pages. But search engines have difficulty indexing pages, so they are not worth the effort.

Strive for cross-browser compatibility

The same web page can appear differently when viewed in different browsers. Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, and others each display code differently, so you must be careful to view pages in each before going live.

Usually, you can find common ground by utilizing code (stylesheets/CSS) that all of the major browsers recognize, but there may be cases that you should create distinct versions of the same page(s). Issues that may arise are the use of features

such as image maps, frames, javascript, java applets, or operating system-specific controls. Test in as many environments as possible!

Layout and design for multiple screen resolutions

As mentioned earlier, another challenge is to make your pages attractive at various screen resolutions. The vast majority of PCs display 1024 x 768 pixels while most laptops are set to 1280 x 1024. There are still a number of surfers using 800 x 600. Setting pages to show a set page width of 800 pixels will display the same on each of these, and if centered, will simply have larger left and right margins to those with greater resolution.

Validate your HTML code

After designing pages, it's a good habit to get into using [HTML Validator](#) software to reduce errors that could cause display problems in some browsers and penalize you in some search engines.

6. SEO Toolkit: Links to success

Link building is a cornerstone of achieving greater page rank in search engines. Along with quality content, search engines view inbound links as proof that your site is valuable to visitors. In other words, if lots of sites link to yours, your site must have worthwhile information, since in affect, they are citing you as an authority or a reference. These other sites are [in a way] recommending you to their visitors.

Free Directory Submissions

Directories are the logical place to start your link building campaign. They are happy to post your site to build their list or relevant results. Submit your site to as many web directories as you can. You can later refresh your information by re-submitting it, especially if content has changed. Free directories can take weeks, or even months to include your site. It is only necessary to submit your home (index) page. Start with [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), [MSN](#) and the [Open Directory](#).

Specialized Directories

In addition to general category directories, you should submit to industry and geographically specific directories. These will help your search engine ranking and they can also drive targeted traffic to your site. If you are a member of an association, the association website may include a list of members. The state or city you live in may have a directory of sites for that particular area. Many will offer a basic listing for free with the option of an enhanced listing for a fee. <http://www.Craigslist.org> allows free advertising as long as you follow their guidelines.

Paid Directory Submissions

Annual subscriptions can be purchased for directories such as Yahoo, [BOTW](#), and <http://www.Business.com>. They will add your profile more quickly than their free counterparts and are more likely to allow you to choose the title of your link. This gives you the opportunity to build your links according to your targeted keywords instead of simply the site name.

For example if your site is "ABC Lawn Co.", a better "title" in a directory or any other website would be "Grass and Lawn Mowing Service" since it directly includes several applicable terms.

Paid directories may also allow deep linking to individual pages of your website so that particular search terms will automatically lead visitors to pertinent information.

Request Links

Find relevant websites with similar or related themes as your own, though not in direct competition, and request a link. Make note of a particularly useful section of your website content and offer the HTML code to provide a link to that page. Even if they don't post your link as specified, they may be willing to exchange links. This achieves the same purpose. All you have to do is ask!

Request referrals

Don't be bashful about asking visitors to recommend your site to friends. Use a "Tell A Friend" script on your site so they can email others about a topic on your website.

Reciprocal Links: friends and associates

Trade links with business associates and anyone else you know with a website. Contact fellow members of associations, your chamber of commerce, social organizations, or any group you're part of. Place links to each others' sites since you already know and trust them. Maybe you'll be allowed a longer description or preferred page placement because of your relationship.

It's more helpful if the site content is related, but even being located in the same geographical area lends a degree of 'relevance'. If people aren't capable of adding links, they should contact [Attraction Web Design](#) for help [nice shameless plug].

Reciprocal Links: the open market

Trading links has always been a popular way to increase the number of inbound links. Exchanging links allows both sites to benefit, so everyone is happy (including the hungry S.E. tiger!!). This can be a time-consuming measure, so there is software that can be bought and there are online services to automate the process. One worthwhile service with both free and fee options is <http://www.LinkPartners.com>.

- Links are more valuable from highly ranked sites with good traffic, so a link from *Microsoft* gives you more credit than one from *Joe's Computers*.
- Avoid FFA Link Farms - A FFA (Free For All) website enables any website owner to place their link on a web page. These are worthless, since search engines despise this practice and won't give you credit.
- Ensure that your link is actually posted on the other site and that it is not just a bogus "Link Farm" itself, meaning there is no site content.
- Fewer links on a page means more "link juice" to be divided among them, so if your link is on a page with over 100 others, it may be virtually worthless.

Post comments on Forums

Another link building method is to join forums and bulletin board sites that relate to your content and post comments. You can demonstrate your authority and customer service while including links to your site. Provide assistance to others and you will stand out from competitors. Include link to your site in your "signature".

Take an opposing view

Stir things up by taking an alternative viewpoint instead of agreeing with everyone else at a forum, bulletin board, or social networking site. It doesn't have to be your deep down feelings, but maybe a hook to get attention. Be controversial and people may link to you or comment back just to say you're wrong. But any publicity is good publicity when it comes to steering viewers to your site.

Social Bookmarking and Web 2.0

Join social media and bookmarking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Digg, MySpace and Del.icio.us, or for more convenience, use a service like <http://www.AddThis.com> to generate interest in your site. Create a list of useful sites including one or two of your own, and then publish them to your profile. Search engines are recognizing the merit of these portals and visitors can "vote" for the popularity of your site.

Blogging: Your Blog

Create a blog within your site or use a free blogging service that links back to it. Present your opinions and recommended solutions for your subject. Add comments regularly (daily, weekly or monthly). Besides building an audience of visitors who appreciate your thoughts or advice, you can constantly add backlinks to help in search results or just send readers to your site.

Blogging: Submit to directories

Add your Blog to directories such as <http://www.Technorati.com> and <http://www.Digg.com> for more exposure. It's free advertising, just like getting listed in search engines.

Blogging: Post on others'

Find existing blogs that suit your purposes and sign up. Most blogs provide the opportunity to link to your site via your name when you add a comment. Pick a name that includes relevant keywords. Post relevant content and you're reaching people who may not have found you otherwise. Add comments and links of value! Don't just say "Come over and visit my Blog". Do not spam these sites or you risk having your site delisted.

Article Writing and Syndication

Writing articles is a great method of building links, if the content is appealing to visitors and to webmasters. One good article could generate many links and significant traffic to your website.

Write articles and submit them to syndication websites such as GoArticles, AcmeArticles and ArticleDashboard.com. You include a brief bio and links to your site with each article submitted. When others are searching for content for their own site, they might use yours, which includes the link to your site. There is no cost and you can often choose your own anchor text (keywords) and pages to link.

You can join several of these article directories and submit the same article to each, simply logging in after you've created your account with each. Post as many as you have time for. Others include <http://.ArticleMarketer.com>, <http://Add-Articles.com>.

Prepare content for other sites

Similar to writing articles, in this case you are directly supplying content to a related website, with your "payment" being links to your site and possibly enhancements

such as “partner” status. Everyone wants good unique content, so others may find it in their interest to publish your material. Approach webmasters or look for announcements on related websites.

Press Releases

Press releases can drive interested traffic to your website and some PR wires allow authors to include website links. Some services charge and others offer free options. If you pay, your releases are made available to a larger market. <http://PRLeap.com> and <http://PRWeb.com> are two popular examples.

Avoid questionable link building strategies

Safety first! If you see a link building opportunity that appears suspicious, ignore it. You could be wasting your time or even risk having your site penalized for significant periods of time. It's up to you to verify legitimacy and value of any agreements.

“White Hat” SEO practices refer to safe, honest and trustworthy methods of obtaining links. “Black Hat” practices are unscrupulous site design or link-building methods with the purpose of cheating or tricking search engines. Examples of the latter are excessive use of keywords on a page or sites designed purely to list links.

Post links everywhere

Include your web address in any online information about yourself. Your fraternal organization, church, college alumni association, civic association, sports or activity club, networking group, support group, may allow you to post a personal profile where you can add a link or even brief advertisement. Ask friends to link from their MySpace page!

Submit yourself to awards sites

Find sites that offer to post your link as a “site of the day” or any other reason. One place to start is <http://CoolSiteoftheDay.com>, which ranks highly in search engines.

Affiliate program to get linked

If you have a product, start your own affiliate program and email related sites who'd like to add another stream of income. Not only might you earn cash yourself, but each affiliate is providing another inbound link to help you climb higher in Google and Yahoo! <http://Clickbank.com> is an easy way to use a system already in place (for digitally delivered products only). Join for \$50 and affiliates post a banner or text link to automatically receive credit for customers who purchase through their links.

Videos

Create a video explaining how to solve a problem and put it on YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and other free sites...with links back to your main website. Include the link and mention site in video itself. You can use a simple digital camera. Just read one of the 3 minute articles you submitted to the directories and add some enticing images. Extra points if you can put a humorous spin on it!

Add alternative keywords

Any text on your site could potentially bring visitors searching for a particular word or phrase. Besides the intended search terms that you expect visitors to use, use any other evenhanded means to attract surfers. Mention celebrities, current events, or high profile events if they relate in some way to your niche. In particular, the names of celebrities are regularly some of the top search terms on the internet. If Angelina Jolie bought a new house and you sell real estate or mortgages, that sounds pertinent to me! If Barach Obama visits your city, he probably said something of interest to the locals. Borrow famous people to help you build traffic!

Publish in other people's newsletters

Offer to write articles for eZines or email newsletters of associates (and even competitors) in your industry. Anyone publishing regular materials needs content, so your "payment" may be a link to your site, along with a one-sentence description.

Encourage Bookmarking

Ask visitors to bookmark your site (add to their "Favorites"). This will greatly increase the likelihood of future visits. Make it easy by including a button which already includes the code for them to do it in a single click. And consider that people are more likely to bookmark or link to pages deemed to have value such as blogs, videos, and web tools for download.

Internal page links

As noted earlier, even internal links (within your site) can help. This includes anchor links within a page to jump from one area to another.

From SEO-guy.com: "Anchors are used to reference specific locations on a page from other locations on that same page. These "on page links" are yet another place to get your main keywords in and boost that "on page" density.

An example is "back to the top" at the end of a page. Except as smart optimizers, we use our keywords instead of phrases like "back to top". Here is an example:

At top of page I place my anchor: a name="seo"

Here I put SEO (instead of "TOP")

I've now created a same page link containing my keyword and thus increased my density as well as received added weight by virtue of it being an anchor."

Relative value of links

As with the entire "Google formula" for calculating rankings, the value of links has it's own complicated formula. Anchor text, relevancy of the other site, page rank of the other site, number of links per page and the other factors play a role. Even the words [or search terms] in text surrounding a link affects it's quality in the "eye of the tiger" [sorry again for continuing with this metaphor]. Just remember that "all links are not created equal"!

More SEO resources

A wealth of information and current opinions on recommended practices can be found at:

- <http://www.SearchEngineGuide.com>
- <http://www.SearchEngineLand.com>
- <http://www.SEObook.com>
- <http://www.SEOmoz.org>

Traffic Generation Tools:

PPC, Autoresponders, Blogging: <http://www.attractweb.com/marketing.php>

Link Exchange guide: <http://www.attractweb.com/linkexchange.php>

Article Marketing: <http://www.attractweb.com/articles.php>

7. Website Pages: Critical components of an effective site

Maximize value of each website page

Every page of your website contains elements that contribute to the overall success of the site. They must complement each other in achieving your goal --- a call to action on the part of visitors. You can personalize the page names or stick with standard ones. We'll use the most common, so here are suggested ingredients for each potential page:

Avoid Splash pages

Some sites start with a "front page" containing merely a brief video or static image, along with an "Enter" link. In most cases, it is not necessary and requires surfers to click again to get to the information they came for. This can be frustrating to people and a page like this contains very little information for the search engine tigers to chew on! Skip this and get to the point right away...

Home (index) page

The home page is by far the most important part of any site. It is the doorway to your organization by which the vast majority of visitors will arrive at. First impression is key to help them decide to view internal pages. You have 3 to 7 seconds to capture attention and convince visitors to stay, so the initial appearance, site title and headline should draw them into reading a brief introduction to your company.

- Company logo – use same colors and design as printed materials
- Website title or company name – state your topic or name of organization
- Headline – grab attention with a question or solution to a problem
- Text – at least one or two paragraphs of introduction and to your company and what you can do for your customers (or members). Squeeze in as many "search terms" as possible without making copy difficult to understand.
- Images – one or more photos or graphics should reinforce the text and be a visual representation of how the site will help visitors
- Slideshow or video – if a picture is worth 1,000 words, moving pictures could be worth a million! Use your very best images to tell your story
- Contact information – all pages should make it easy for visitors to request more information, but it is imperative that a phone number, email address or mailing address be visible to people ready to contact you based on their first glance at your site!
- Current info – update home page regularly with a news item or mention a recent event to prove to visitors that your site is actually current.
- Bullet lists – to avoid overwhelming visitors with lengthy text, use concise lists of features, benefits, samples or reasons for people to delve deeper into the site. [<http://www.AttractWeb.com>]
- Newsletter sign-up – Opt-in area for eBulletin, free gift, or membership to capture contact information for additional marketing opportunities.

All of these features should drive visitors toward a specific "Call to Action". Failure to convert potential customers into sales leads is mostly due to homepages lacking primary and secondary calls to action. It may be a link that states, "Contact us for details" or "Tell us your situation and we will set up a conference call." Guide web users along your sales process to convert more of them into customers.

About Us

This page (aka "About" or "Our Company") may include any kind of background information to make visitors more comfortable with you. Company history, mission statement, introduction of staff members, awards and honors, or explanation of what separates you from the competition are all helpful. On the surface, you may provide similar products or services as others, but certain secondary facts displaying your unique qualities can close the deal. [\[http://www.etiquettedynamics.com/about.php\]](http://www.etiquettedynamics.com/about.php)

- Photos of owners or managers – show that you are human beings and not just "brand X"
- Logos of industry affiliations, chambers of commerce, well-known vendors
- Mission statement, warranty or guarantee, message from President
- Background of the company and certifications earned – use this page to brag about yourself! Include miscellaneous items that don't fit on other pages.

Products / Services Overview

Display a brief summary of each product or service line. Then link to the individual item detail pages. This page can help visitors quickly narrow down exactly what they are looking for while motivating them to learn more.

- Name, photo and brief description of each item.
- Lists of sample uses or top features for each item.
- Links to individual item pages.

Product / Service Details

Each item (or sub-category of items) can have it's own sales page with photos, descriptions and specifications along with a call to action to purchase now, email for more info or call now!

- Start each page with a brief summary of the product/service. When people search for information, they want it immediately
- One or more photos or video demonstration
- Description including any available options or choices.
- Customer reviews specific to the item.
- List of sample uses, actual customers, features or benefits.
- Prices (specific or range), terms of use, warranty information.

Before / After or Case Histories

Besides a sales page for each product or service, you may want a page of real-world

samples of your work for prospects to more easily identify with than generic descriptions and sales copy. [\[http://transformationsbylori.com/portfolio.php\]](http://transformationsbylori.com/portfolio.php)

- Before/after photos or slideshow or video of an example project
- Description of the problem, customer requirements, timeline, difficulties overcome, and final solution.
- Names of satisfied customers along with testimonial.

News

News or "Announcements" pertaining to your products, industry or company can be a great way to show that you are active and conscious of keeping customers informed. Web surfers will often view to check for the latest information. It is another opportunity to tout your accomplishments or show involvement in the community. [\[http://NewarkDayNursery.org/news.php\]](http://NewarkDayNursery.org/news.php)

- Announce new products, product lines or improvements.
- Press releases, new testimonials from customers, related topics
- Sales, special deals, promotional offers
- Honors received, new partnerships formed, new staff members

Events Calendar

Events list or "Upcoming Events" or "Schedule" can provide details of meetings, trade shows, seminars, or any type of events that occur on a regular or periodic basis. You may wish to include a page of past events as well, to possibly include photos and a recap of the activity.

Articles or Newsletter Archive

Provide useful, *free* information that is added to regularly. This will help you build a good reputation and prompt visitors to refer others to your site. If you distribute a newsletter, the work is already done to put the fresh content online as well. Write your own articles, or get permission to put related information online. Certainly include links to opt in to receive the newsletter directly or lead visitors to your sales page of the related item. [\[http://NowSimplyOrganized.com/articles.php\]](http://NowSimplyOrganized.com/articles.php)

Contact Us

Make it easy for people to contact you! If you are not selling items directly online, this is the most important page to drive traffic to. List all possible ways to contact your company, including phone, email, fax, mailing address, physical address and office hours. If you have several departments, provide instructions for contacting each to prevent confusion. [\[http://fitnessbuildshealth.com/contact.php\]](http://fitnessbuildshealth.com/contact.php)

- Email contact form – make it easy for visitors to "fill in the blanks" and select items they are interested in. Include fields for their phone number and required email address.
- Never ask for more information than you need – be careful not to turn off visitors. Once there is a commitment, you can request further details.

- Photo of owner or smiling staff members again shows that you are people who care about your customers.

Location or Directions

Make it easy for people to find you! If you want people to visit your main office or branches, display directions online. [<http://newarkemergencycenter.org/location.php>]

- Driving directions from various points.
- Map showing your location(s). Even an outside source such as [Mapquest](#) is handy to allow changing of a map's scale.
- Photo of the facility so it can be recognized from the road or parking lot.
- Office hours and instructions on any sign-in procedures.

Testimonials

Demonstrate your effectiveness to potential customers by providing positive feedback from current ones. Reinforce the fact that you are trustworthy, reliable, and get the job done correctly. You should include a minimum of four. If you don't already have any, request them from happy customers. Explain that they can benefit by including a link to their own website! [<http://Attractweb.com/testimonials.php>]

Portfolio / Customer List

Offer snapshots (literally and figuratively) of successful projects or the names of client companies. If possible, include a small photo or the logo of each client. Link to client websites and include contact information if they agree. [<http://brandywineaccess.com/portfolio.php>]

Comparison to competitors

Compare your product side by side with one or more competitors to persuade visitors to choose yours. A checklist format works well to lead people to the right conclusion. After a head to head comparison, you can add supplementary information such as product history, applications for use and any relevant statistics. You can even tout your own website as providing better customer support.

Tutorials

Provide tutorials or step-by-step guides to illustrate how the customer can easily use and benefit from your product/service. This information can be more focused than general articles which offer objective advice. Take visitors by the hand and carefully walk them through the steps to use what you're selling. The longer you keep them at your site, the better chance of a sale.

Shopping Cart

eCommerce allows you to sell products or subscriptions online 24/7 to virtually anywhere in the world. Even if selling items directly isn't the primary focus of your site, you could consider marketing related books, software or other items to create an additional stream of income, especially if your primary products or services are restricted to a specific geographical area. [<http://Engiftments.com>]

Boost Your Website's Profitability

- Break down your merchandise into several categories if you have more than 10 items.
- List each category on a page showing small image, brief description, and price of products.
- Allow visitor to click on product name and photo for details on an entire page with large photo, detailed description, possible uses, choices (color, size, etc.)
- Suggest related sales items – if they're buying anyway, add code to display thumbnail images of similar or complementary products.
- Set up shipping/delivery charges based on number of items, weight, value or other parameters you select.
- Offer choices for payment (credit cards, PayPal, check, etc.)

FAQ

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page or section is handy when your services include large amounts of technical information that visitors may not be familiar with. Answer the most common questions and viewers will appreciate the fact that you're willing to educate them. It also reduces the time involved in taking phone calls and answering questions via email! The more information online, the more time you save. Address concerns that could possibly undermine sales.

- **Visitors** will be impressed. You're demonstrating your excellent customer care and concern.
- **Customers** will appreciate easy access to answers. No fears of calling for support and waiting on hold or reaching an unhelpful representative.
- **The bottom line** will be nicer due to cost savings of not fielding unnecessary phone calls. When people do call, you'll have more time to give expert service. Add to your FAQ whenever you realize a situation could be addressed online.

Guarantee

Show proof of your customer focus by offering a money back guarantee or warrantee within a certain time period. This deserves it's own page and can be a huge selling point since it eliminates major customer concerns. 30 days, 90 days, 12 months, lifetime.

Policies

Add one or more pages that outline important policies, terms and conditions.

[\[http://pcvrc.com/privacy.php\]](http://pcvrc.com/privacy.php)

- Privacy Policy – assure visitors that their information is kept confidential
- Terms & Conditions – define your customer agreement as clearly as possible
- Shipping & Handling – state how orders are processed and how delivery is made. Specify any choices your customers have.
- Refund / Returns Policy – make customers comfortable by explaining how they can return goods if necessary

Online Payments

In addition to or instead of a Shopping Cart of items to purchase, you can make it easy for new or existing customers to make payments using your merchant account or even a free PayPal account. [\[http://AttractWeb.com/pay.php\]](http://AttractWeb.com/pay.php)

- Initial deposits – to commence service or make security deposit (even if additional payments are made by check)
- Donations to charities and non-profit organizations
- A secondary product such as eBook, software or promotional item
- Membership in a premium portion of your website

Blog

Your own web journal, typically updated daily or weekly, using software that allows people without a technical background to maintain easily. It could be integrated directly into your site or can be a link to one of the many free or low cost blogging sites. Stay in touch with visitors and position yourself as an expert in your field.

Forum / Bulletin Board / Feedback

Allow visitors to submit questions or review answers to questions that have already been answered about what you do or sell. There are popular free versions such as <http://phpBB.com> which can be installed on your host and configured to serve your purposes. Or you may want to gather comments or customer ratings of products/services with a feedback form. Offer an incentive for filling it out!

Links / Resources

Recommend websites, books or 3rd party products as an additional service to your visitors, especially if you can benefit in return. [\[http://BeverlyStewart.com/resources.html\]](http://BeverlyStewart.com/resources.html)

- Links to websites that complement your own offerings
- Links to high ranking, authoritative sources can help your own ranking
- Links to affiliate websites where you earn a percentage of sales
- Recommended reading - Book titles, including author information
- Industry and trade associations which you belong to
- Other related items of interest

Site Map

A Sitemap page is the table of contents of your website, broken down by sections to help visitors locate what they seek. It's useful to include this link on every page in case people are confused by the regular site navigation. [\[http://FitnessBuildsHealth.com/sitemap.php\]](http://FitnessBuildsHealth.com/sitemap.php)

This should not be confused with a "Google Sitemap" which is an "xml" file that helps Google and other search engines index your website pages efficiently.

Search Feature

In addition to a Sitemap, visitors may appreciate a page (or area on all pages) where

they can input keywords or keyphrases to find the appropriate page on your site. This is especially useful for a large site with many categories and sub-categories. Anything that saves time and aggravation is valuable to prevent visitors from leaving!

Affiliate Program

Set up a program to pay a flat fee or percentage of a sale to websites who advertise for you. Explain how it works, any requirements, and what they will receive. Make text and banner links easily available. By paying 10-50% commission, you'll dramatically increase your exposure to new groups of prospects.

Employment / Careers

Use your site for recruiting purposes and explain why you're a great company to work for. Many job seekers primarily use the internet to search for employment, so provide the info and accept resumes via email. If you advertise through an online careers website, include a link to your own recruiting pages. Include:

- Overview of company structure and history
- Explanation of benefits and the company "culture"
- Positions available, qualifications needed, application instructions
- Contact information and invitation to submit resume

Advertise

In some cases, you may want to add a stream of revenue by advertising for other businesses. Provide a page where you can explain your terms and the types of text or banner ads that you allow. You can proactively direct prospects to this page upon contacting them, or allow them to find it if they find your site themselves (since you've done such a good job of SEO). [<http://www.fitnessbuildshealth.com/advertise.php>]

Community Involvement

Show everyone that you're a good [corporate] citizen and active in the community! Prove that you care not only about your customers, but your neighbors as well. If someone needs just one more reason to become associated with you, this could be it! Dedicate a page on your site to explain how you lend a helping hand:

- Event sponsorships and involvement in community programs
- Charitable donations of money, products, services or time
- Positive media coverage of company or employees

Link Exchange

Invite sites with related content to trade links with you. These pages will not be as prominent in site navigation as your "Recommended Resources" page, since they are primarily to help build your inbound link numbers to increase page rank with Google. Often, sites display a small link at the page bottoms such as "Resources", "Link To Us", or "Link Partners". See <http://TravelUSAandWorld.com/links.php>, where the top area of page includes the link partners and lower area is a form for potential partners to send you their link information after they add your site to theirs.

8. Site Administration: Registration, Hosting, Statistics

Assuming you don't have internal staff and your own servers, when you're ready to start or re-design your website, you'll need a Domain Registrar and Hosting company. Often, the web designer you outsource to will combine the needed services in a package that fits your requirements.

Combine Domain Registration with Hosting

If registering a domain name for the first time, you can save money by doing it through your web host. Registration costs about \$10 per year through companies such as [GoDaddy](#). (There's no need to pay inflated prices like \$25-35 per year that other companies charge.) Avoid this annual fee altogether since many Hosts will include it at no additional cost (for new registrations only).

Point Domain Name to your host

It is a simple, one-step process to connect your domain name to the website files that are uploaded to your host. Set or change the Primary and Secondary DNS (Domain Name Servers) in your Registrar account to those specified by your host. That's it! So if you change hosts (to get better features, price, or service), all you have to do is log in and replace these two existing links with new ones.

Finding a Website Host

Someone will host your website on a server-- your company, your Internet Service Provider or a Web hosting service. Your choice of web host is important because it must allow fast loading of pages, reliable service and all of the features that your site will be using. For as little as \$80-150/year, most good hosts offer packages which include the following applications already built in for easy activation:

- Up to unlimited disk storage
- Up to unlimited data transfer
- Up to unlimited email addresses
- 24/7 technical support
- MySQL database
- Website templates
- Site builder
- Website statistics
- Formmail (contact forms)
- Autoresponders
- Message forum / bulletin board
- Blog / Online Chat
- Photo gallery
- Password protected directories
- Audio/video application support
- And more (as they like to say)

Shared vs. Dedicated Servers

There are two basic types of web hosting. virtual (shared) and dedicated. With a virtual hosting solution your site is hosted on the same directory as other web sites. With dedicated web hosting you use your own physical web site server (machine) and so do not share the bandwidth, the memory or speed of the processor with other sites.

Virtual web hosting solutions are best for small business that don't want the expense of their own dedicated server. Dedicated hosting solutions are ideal for larger

businesses that want to run their own software or need control of web server security. Dedicated Servers may cost ten or more times that of Shared Servers.

Windows vs LINUX/UNIX

An important factor to consider when choosing a host is what platform you need, although that will be the choice of your designer. The major difference between Windows and Linux is the type of applications you can use on each platform.

To host a database on a Windows platform, you would probably use the ASP (Active Server Pages) scripting language. You would require Linux to utilize Perl or PHP scripting languages. The choice is important if you are transferring your web site from one hosting provider to another or if you want to run a web application that requires a specified operating system.

Technical expertise not required

For most of the features included in hosting plans, you don't have to be a techie since they are set up to function right out of the box to incorporate within the HTML code of your site pages.

If no design templates or content management system is included, the next best do-it-yourself option is using WYSIWYG HTML/Web site software like Dreamweaver. These tools enable you to design a Web site with very little technical knowledge, and many include templates.

Hiring a designer

Hiring a designer or programmer will probably cost more than doing it yourself, but save huge amounts of time. Web designers typically charge from \$50-\$100 per hour. Before you hire a designer, make sure you have a clear idea of what you want your site to look like and how you want customers to navigate it.

Talk to the designer and view actual samples of their work to determine their level of expertise in all areas, from graphics and layout to SEO to the amount of assistance they will provide in improving your actual content to help bring results. See if they're knowledgeable of tips contained in this book. [This is too much of an obvious place for a shameless plug!]

The price quoted by a designer should be largely dependent on the number of website pages, functionality required (adding applications or allowing you to easily update certain areas), and number of images/files to upload and edit. If you're afraid to blindly contact a designer for fear of being overcharged, ask someone with a similar size site for recommendations. You have to feel comfortable working with this person or company, since a site can play such a large role in your business.

Upload files to site using FTP

Your hosting account will come with several pre-formatted directories, such as logs, cgi-bin, and public. Most files you upload (HTML pages, PHP pages, images, PDF

files, etc) must be placed inside the public directory, usually called "public_html" or "htdocs" or "www". Often, a built-in control panel is included to transfer the files.

An alternative to using your host's control panel to build a website is to use an FTP program such as [CuteFTP](#) or [WS FTP](#). FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol and can make uploading or downloading multiple files faster.

1. Enter FTP address (usually ftp.yourdomain.com), username and password.
2. Connect to the site.
3. One window will show contents of local computer and another will show contents of the "remote host". Use transfer buttons to transfer between these, rewriting any existing text and image files in the process.

Visitor Statistics

Analyze traffic and your improve site by viewing how many people visit, how long they stay, where they are referred from and other information. A good tool with both free and pay versions is <http://StatCounter.com>. The powerful info you can learn so you can make adjustments for higher traffic and conversion rates:

- Number of page loads, unique visitors, returning visitors (not just 'hits')
- Actual keywords being typed into search engines to find you
- List of which keywords are bringing the most traffic
- Which individual pages are receiving visitors (besides your home page)
- Geographic location of your visitors
- Browsers (IE, Firefox, etc) and screen resolutions being used by visitors
- Which URL visitors came from (where they clicked a link to get to you)

Expand your market

We've discussed targeting your exact audience with your site, but you could take the opposite approach and create a product that's suitable for anyone who visits your online home. For example, you may be a pest control company with a service area limited to Chicago, IL. If people from outside Chicago visit, you can't benefit unless you decide to sell some "natural bug repellent" or a "how to get rid of mice" eBook on your site. Don't forget your primary prospects, but it would be a shame to make no use of perfectly good visitors that stumbled upon your site due to the excellent SEO job by your webmaster!

Generate advertising revenue

It may be worthwhile to consider adding a stream of income by selling advertising space or even displaying Google AdSense (PPC) ads. This is more common for non-commercial sites, but if advertisers are closely related, besides the extra money, it could be a valuable feature. Examples:

- Fitness related site advertising vitamins or exercise equipment
- Travel agency site advertising travel books or posters
- Online dating site advertising flowers, relationships books or perfume

- Church site advertising greeting cards, religious books or funeral planning

Website email

Webmail, or website email is a feature of any hosting account. Utilize it as a more professional looking email address than Bob25@gmail.com. You can set up a number of addresses, even if you're a sole proprietor. For instance, info@ABCshoes.com, Bob@ABCshoes.com and HappyFeet@ABCshoes.com

Your website email can be accessed by either:

- Logging directly into the webmail server with your email address and password (usually at <http://mail.yourdomain.com> (or)
- Forwarding incoming messages to a personal address such as Comcast or Yahoo (or)
- Adding your email address(es) to POP mail software such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Mozilla Thunderbird, Opera Mail, or Pegasus

The last option (POP) can be best for several reasons.

You can receive and send from your business address, which you can't do if you simply forward messages. You can also add anti-SPAM software to reduce junk messages. Prices for those programs range from free to \$50/year. I'm using one called [Cloudmark Anti-SPAM](#) that costs \$40/year, but it does a great job.... Or just search for "anti spam".

If you use Comcast or Verizon or another ISP for email and log in to their website to access it, you can instead add that to Outlook, etc. as your primary account and then add your website email address(es) as well.

These POP email clients also offer formatting of messages with color, html, etc that can't always be done with the basic webmail server and you can use the same address book for all of your email accounts. A disadvantage is that you must have the POP software installed on each computer you would use for your email.

Reduce incoming Spam

Email addresses are collected by spammers in many ways. Robots cruise the internet and can read addresses that are in text form on websites. They can also read simple email links that open email programs. It can also be risky to submit your email address to any website or chain-email that you cannot verify as friendly.

Don't display your email address on your site unless it is in the form of a non-clickable image. It is best to use email forms (Form Mail) that can be better protected than simple email links. PHP code, ASP code or an inexpensive program provides adequate protection. [\[http://www.etiquettedynamics.com/contact.php\]](http://www.etiquettedynamics.com/contact.php)

9. Site Promotion: Online and offline strategies to generate traffic

Along with the SEO and inbound link generation ideas contained in Chapter 6, here are some additional methods to experiment with.

Integrate your website into all marketing efforts

Your website is a valuable tool since it can provide virtually unlimited information to promote your marketing plan. Below is a list of possible places (offline) to include your website address. Even a one-line ad or your business card can lead prospects to everything they'd ever want to know to seek your help.

Include URL here:

- Business cards, letterhead, signage, vehicles
- Flyers, posters and door-hangers
- Business and personal email signatures (along with tag line)
- Email friends, enemies, customers, potential customers to announce site
- Marketing brochures, direct mail pieces
- Press Releases, news stories
- Advertisements, billboards, yellow pages ads
- Employee name tags and uniforms
- Mention site in phone calls and during meetings
- Greeting cards to customers
- Promotional items: pens, magnets, notepads, t-shirts, coffee mugs, etc.
- Autoresponder message to website inquiries
- Shipping cartons and postal mail containers
- Telephone "on-hold" message – to direct to website for answers to questions

Postcard mailings

Target potential customers with postcards to announce a special offer on your site. Postcards still achieve a high rate of readership, at low cost. An even cheaper alternative is to use a service such as <http://MoneyMailer.com>, which combines postcard-size advertisements for several businesses in a single envelope to small or larger geographic areas.

- Put your name and logo in prospects mailbox
- Announce locations, discounts, new services, website utilities
- Offer a free item for signing up for newsletter
- Use an image to show how you help, just like on your site

Place marketing brochures online

Allow download of your sales, marketing and any other materials. This saves printing and mailing costs on newsletters, brochures and reports.

Reviews of other products/services

Submit reviews of hot new products or books within your market at Amazon.com and similar sites that welcome feedback (to boost their own sales). You can position

yourself as an expert and attract surfers who may not have searched for you directly. For example, create an Amazon profile and sign each review with a reference to your URL (your web site). Other site to offer reviews at is <http://Epinions.com>.

Form strategic alliances

Engage in affiliations or partnerships with similar or complementary businesses. Maybe you sell shoes and they sell socks. Or you sell strictly athletic shoes and they sell dress shoes. Refer business to each other offline and online to pool your resources after agreeing on terms. You might pay each other referral fees, adding a stream of income. The relationship can help in many ways:

- Offer greater variety – expand your range of products
- More visibility – in effect, you are increasing the size of your sales force
- Save on operational costs by sharing advertising expenses
- Increase credibility by partnering with reputable company
- Introduce your partner with anything from a banner through a full page on your site, including logo and photos
- Exchange email lists or include regular articles in each others' eBulletins

Banner exchange

Similar to link exchange, parties agree to place advertisements on each other's sites. The difference is that link exchange is mainly for SEO, where banner exchange is for human visitors. You are not paying each other as affiliates, but simply trying to increase traffic to each other's sites with a banner or simple text link. Typical banner sizes (in pixels) are 120 x 60, 125 x 125, 468 x 60, 728 x 90. Make yourself a banner using Photoshop or similar software and save as a jpg or gif.

Use Craig's List

Offer something for free on Craig's List. It is a high traffic site that is well known across the USA. Send people to a page on your site and set it up to ensure that they must sign up for something (like your email newsletter) before receiving the promotional item. You're building traffic and building your list.

Offer your expert advice

Become an answer person at <http://About.com>, <http://eHow.com> or Yahoo Answers. These sites rank well in search engines and their visitors expect solid, unbiased information and solutions to inquiries. Play by the rules, but make sure to include a link back to your site following your answers!

Podcasting

Drive traffic by starting a podcast, using one of the many programs available online. Record easily by phone and syndicate it to various podcast directories.

Email Newsletter or eZine

Start an email newsletter using either plain text or an HTML format such as Constant Contact. This remains one of the best marketing tools online and is most successful

when you target a particular niche of viewers with quality content. As mentioned earlier, you can upload past editions to your site, instantly adding good content to feed the search engine tigers a bit more. Use it to:

- Write articles to display your expertise and trustworthiness
- Include articles from “guest “ experts
- Add recent customer testimonials
- Announce or promote new offerings
- Notify customers of changes, revisions or upgrades to their service
- Spotlight particular employees or customers
- Include a message from the President with company news
- Offer holiday best wishes
- Request referrals or that recipients forward the newsletter to friends

Email announcements

Alternate between sending newsletters with (less frequent) simple messages. Many people find newsletters easy to set aside to “read later” but never find the time. Brief emails have a better chance of being read immediately. Include just a single call to action such as any one of the newsletter items above or just to announce a new page on your site or a promotion that's significant enough to warrant it's own message.

eBay Store

If you market any type of product at all, consider selling on eBay. Even if you don't sell large quantities, it's great exposure on another high traffic site. List your URL for a prime inbound link.

Wikipedia

Along with eBay and Craigslist, Wikipedia is another example of Web 2.0 applications, since it is ever evolving. It's an online encyclopedia which anyone can contribute to in order to improve the material. The readers are also the writers. It's truly “information sharing” at it's best. If you can improve subjects in your area of expertise, do so – and generate a backlink to your site as a reference for details.

Pay Per Click (PPC) puts you on first pages of search results

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) could have it's own chapter in this book, but we've waited until now since there's a direct cost associated with it that falls under advertising. However, SEM has become a larger consideration to many website owners as it grows increasingly difficult to achieve a position on the first page of Google or Yahoo's organic results. A brief overview:

[Search Engine Marketing](#) (SEM) refers to techniques to increase website traffic by paying for services. The most popular methods of SEM include Pay-Per-Click (PPC) using Google AdWords or Yahoo Search Marketing; submitting website to paid directories; enrolling as an advertiser in affiliate commission programs and buying banner ads on related websites. As the Google Adwords home page states:

“You create ads and choose keywords, which are words or phrases related to your business. When people search on Google using one of your keywords, your ad may appear next to the search results. Now you're advertising to an audience that's already interested in you. People can simply click your ad to make a purchase or learn more about you.”

You are bidding for the same keywords as other advertisers, so more popular search terms cost more money. Each time your ad is clicked on, your account is charged anywhere from one cent to several dollars. These are often the same terms used to optimize your page for organic (natural) results.

While you can enroll in these programs yourself and start immediately, many business owners opt to pay a fee to SEM companies who take charge themselves. They research terms, study the competition and form ads based on their experience. In ongoing programs, they analyze results to make adjustments regularly to increase performance of the ads.

PPC produces quick results

There are some huge benefits of PPC. First, you can start receiving results immediately! As soon as you pay a deposit, your ads start to run and you'll be on the first or second pages of Google weeks or months faster than your organic listing appears on the 1st or 10th or 100th page!

PPC results are easily analyzed

As soon as you start generating hits, you can see which terms brought people to your site and which are the most cost-effective. If you create dedicated web pages for ads, you can even see the percentage of people who completed a transaction. All of these statistics help you tweak your campaign and help you decide what changes to make to your website itself.

Favicons add character

“Favicon” is an abbreviation for “favorites icon”. It won't bring people to your site, but once there, it adds a little zest. It is a tiny image located just before the URL in the browser's URL bar, next to the page's title in the title bar, and next to the site's name in lists of your bookmarks.

A Favicon is useful for branding purposes. Through the simple use of a Favicon, you are able to brand your website to improve its recognition. All you have to do is upload a simple 16 x 16 pixel image (such as logo) to the root directory of your hosting account after converting it to “favicon.ico” format using Photoshop or another image manipulation program. [\[http://TravelUSAandWorld.com\]](http://TravelUSAandWorld.com)

Allow reporting of website problems

Include link to Webmaster for visitors to report non-functioning links or other problems on the website. It could appear at the bottom of each page. This simple

addition could allow you to correct problems for future visitors and is a super excuse for interaction with visitors!

Generate return traffic

You've pulled out your hair trying to think of ways to get people to your site. Just a little more effort can keep them coming back! Return visitors are the most valuable kind. You have another chance to sell them or at least reinforce your position to sell them on a future visit.

Some of your pages already encourage prospects to come back for more: News, Upcoming Events, Forums. Investing just a bit more time will seal the deal. First, be sure that you're providing useful information on their first visit. Then give them reasons to come back. Here's a collection of the top techniques to getting "Bookmarked" on PC's everywhere:

Weekly Specials

Offer a real, limited time discount on one item or service for a stated time period. Call it a "Web Special", "Deal of the Week", "Hot Deal" or whatever and feature it on your home page. This way, even casual surfers will notice it right away.

Web Coupons

Offer a discount coupon for 20% off. The only stipulation is that they must email you to receive it. Build your list for future email specials to those on your list.

Sweepstakes or Give-Away

Invite people to "just enter your name and email" to be included in a weekly / monthly raffle for a gift, deep discount, or other promotional item. Your winner should receive something significant and you can even post the winner's name later as proof that it is legitimate: "See our News page for latest winners!" You could have smaller prizes for runners up or for everyone (such as 10% off or a free promotional item). The web contest must be for a limited time to instill a sense of urgency.

First they'll enter and then they'll come back to see if they won. If you have nothing appropriate to give away, you could team up with a supplier. They will appreciate the free publicity and will offer up one of their own products as incentive. Win-win!

Post new articles regularly

Train people to return to your site since they can count on a new article or news item each month. Mark your calendar to add it on time religiously so you can again prove to your visitors that you are reliable.

Tip of the Day

Post an interesting tip each day (or week). If they're really valuable, you may soon have daily visits. It could be a pertinent book recommendation, a suggested website to visit (especially if you're affiliated with it), a new idea, or even a customer suggestion that you've adopted. Put a little box on your home page, clearly labeled

as "Tip of the Day" or just regularly post it as your first "News" page item. People love free advice almost as much as free stuff!

Offer free advice

Solicit questions to be answered "by an expert". Email replies or even post to a separate "Advice" or "Expert Answers" page. Solutions to unique problems show your versatility, problem-solving ability, and can serve to showcase products, all in a very low key sales approach. People may be more comfortable to email than to call you. With a helpful response, you're building a relationship.

Photo of the Week

You could have some fun with this. Everyone likes pictures, and a side benefit is that they usually don't contain sales slogans. People are more at ease and can more easily digest any message conveyed by images.

- Ask visitors to submit related snapshots to be posted online
- Have an attractive woman or man pose with a product or at a location you've serviced or worked at
- Display a photo of a current news item that ties in with your business
- Add humor with staff member photos (at work station, funny hat, playing golf, running a 5K, with his/her child, etc.)

Featured Customer

Show the name or photo of a featured customer or their location. They could submit it, or you could require a visit as a condition. Let them get a kick out of appearing on your site. Maybe you'll ask them to submit a humorous photo. Not only is this amusing, but it's FREE CONTENT. Tie it in with a year-end raffle where each featured customer is automatically entered to win the Grand Prize!!!

[Wow, I can't wait to visit your site myself!]

Featured Staff Member

Instead of just a *silly* picture of an employee (or associate or affiliate) you could put a spotlight on one of these people periodically. A brief page could include their photo(s) and a mini professional and/or personal bio such as their hobbies and activities. Here's a bonus: It can be motivational for employees while showing visitors that your staff includes fun people who share similar interests.

Featured Pet

Why not? If you don't have a lot of employees to feature, place a cute dog or cat next to a product or even at a computer keyboard. Spice up that dry subject matter! Suddenly visitors will be having their friends check out your site to see the adorable puppies. How else would these referred people have located your site?

[Really, send me your URL. I like dogs wearing hats and sunglasses!]

RSS Feed

This brings us back from the edge to a more conventional practice. Subscribe to the

RSS News Feed that provides headlines to news or feature stories related to your topic, industry or specific geographical area. Your site is kept fresh with daily stories of interest. Standard practice is that each of the 1 to 5 headlines will open a new window to read the full article on the feed supplier's site.

[\[http://www.pcvrc.com/runcomments.php\]](http://www.pcvrc.com/runcomments.php)

Caution: The feed should be supportive of your site content. Don't just add a general news or sports feed or people may leave your site and forget to come back!

Create a survey or poll

Put together a 5 question survey, or dedicate a couple square inches on your home page for a one question poll. You can collect email info or choose not to. Change questions as often as you can and keep the subject interesting. Some people are always curious to see if their views are in the majority.

Besides general opinions, you could gain useful data by giving choices and asking which ones people like or don't like about your site or particular products.

Viral marketing

As we've already discussed, viral marketing is really any means of prompting people to refer others to your site due to its merits. Having a 3rd party spread the word is much more powerful than tooting your own horn. Many of the tips in this book can achieve viral success, but you could also take a calculated approach to sow the seeds. Embark on an actual viral marketing campaign!

Induce people to pass on your marketing message by:

- Deep discount or giveaway of a product or service – a deadline is helpful.
- Make it effortless to transfer the message to others (forwarding of emails)
- Make use of existing communications networks – ask recipients to forward the message to friends or to classmates or business associates, depending on target audience
- Identify common motivations that will appeal to a broad audience so people can easily think of others who'd be interested

Webring

A webring is a group of sites with a similar theme, which refer visitors to each other. Most useful for informational and other non-retail sites, joining a webring usually means placing a small graphic on your homepage where visitors can click to find the sites of your associates. There's no cost since other surfers can find your site through the ring. See: <http://webring.org>

Each webring is created and maintained by a person who accepts new sites and validates that they meet the topic of the webring, to ensure targeted traffic.

Get web marketing ideas from experts

Stay current on the latest techniques to attract traffic and loyal customers by

Boost Your Website's Profitability

subscribing to email newsletters. Many of them are sent weekly and are free. Here are a few that I read regularly and recommend:

- <http://www.sitepronews.com/> (subscribe link at top right)
- <http://www.web-source.net/>
- <http://www.ideamarketers.com/>

Keep visitors at your site

Everything we've discussed has the goal of attracting visitors and keeping them on your site long enough to grow comfortable with you. Build relationships with these potential customers. You want people to stay as long as possible to learn, interact and shop. Research shows that the longer visitors remain on your website, the more likely they will take action. Make them comfortable enough to share their personal information and credit card details!

Internet marketing tools: <http://www.attractweb.com/marketing.php>

10. HTML Tutorial: What you really need to know

We must discuss HTML website code at least a bit (or a tiger byte?) since it is the core of every site. Because tutorials are available everywhere on the web, we will just use an example of a simple page to demonstrate the basic framework. If that whets your appetite for more, great! Here is code for the “home” page of our fictitious “ABC Shoe Company”. To open the actual page that the code generates, click <http://www.attractweb.com/ABCsample/index.php>.

You'll see a live sample of HTML in action. Wow!

The underlying code appears below. Some notes to consider:

- Comments appear in **dark red color** in this sample. In this case, I'm explaining various features, but comments are often used by designers to make notes to themselves that are not visible to website visitors. In other words, if you open the link and view the source code in your browser, you will see these “invisible” comments.
- You will notice that most HTML “elements” include an opening tag and a closing tag such as `<p>` and `</p>` or `<h3>` and `</h3>`
- We could have used “includes files” to reduce some of the code. An includes file is a separate php or asp file which is simply any portion of a page. They are useful when the same information is displayed often, such as the header or footer area of pages. Making a change to an includes file is easier than changing code on each individual page!
- External “Stylesheet” CSS file is shown after the home page code below. This allows us to easily retain the same page style throughout the site. Each tag of each website page will obey the rules created in the single stylesheet for each tag, including colors, fonts, sizes, and many other variables. As an example, we added some additional “on page” CSS code.
- Different browsers support CSS to different extents, so it is important to test in the major ones and use code that displays best possible cross-browser compatibility.
- Even when using web design software, you are usually able to switch back and forth between the WYSIWYG editor and HTML, so it can be useful to learn some of the fundamental tags.

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Home page code: (index.php or index.html)

(Reminder: Click the link above bullet list to view page.)

```
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1" />
<meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="en-us" />
<meta name="robots" content="index,follow" />  <!-- Invite search engine spiders with this tag -->

<meta name="description" content="ABC Shoe Company sells athletic and dress shoes in New York
City. Buy shoes for running, tennis, basketball as well as business and casual footwear. Visit store or
purchase online.">

<meta name="keywords" content="athletic shoes, dress shoes, ABC Shoe company, new york city,
tennis, running, casual footwear, basketball, shoe store">

<title>Athletic and dress shoes - ABC Shoe Company</title>
  <!-- All-important page title. Include most important keywords towards beginning of title -->

<link href="style.css" type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" />  <!-- Link to external stylesheet file -->
<style type="text/css">
<!--
b.a { font-family: arial, helvetica; font-size: 13px; color: #800000; }
-->
</style>
</head>

<body>      <!-- Body is the visible area of page -->
<div align="center">  <!-- This centers page on browser screen. Default is align to left. -->

<table width="790" height="100" style="background-color: #cccccc;" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0"><tr>
<td valign="middle" align="center" width="250">
<h1>ABC Shoe Company</h1></td>      <!-- Most important heading text -->
<td align="center" valign="middle">
<h2>Athletic Shoes and Dress Shoes</h2>  <!-- 2nd most important heading text -->
<b class="a">1 Main Street, New York, NY 11111 &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; (212) 555-5555</b></td>
</td></tr>
</table>

<table width="790" style="background-color: #ffffff;"><tr>  <!-- Start of a table and table row -->
<td width="144" align="left" valign="top" style="background-color: #000000; padding: 6px;">
<br><br>      <!-- Each <br> is a line break -->
<a class="a" href="index.php">ABC Shoes Home</a><br><br>  <!-- Page links in navigation area -->
<a class="a" href="dress.php">Dress Shoes</a><br><br>
<a class="a" href="athletic.php">Athletic Shoes</a><br><br>
<a class="a" href="contact.php">Contact Us</a><br><br>
</td>      <!-- End of first table cell (left part of table) -->

<td width="5">&nbsp;</td>  <!-- This table cell was added just to help format (It is 5 pixels wide) -->

<td align="left" valign="top">
  <div align="center">
```


Boost Your Website's Profitability

Stylesheet code: (style.css) sets colors, sizes, fonts, and many more

```
body { background-color: #3366cc; /* background color of page */ }

p { font-family: arial, sans-serif; font-size: 11pt; color: #000000; }

b { font-family: arial, sans-serif; font-size: 11pt; color: #000066; }

i { font-family: arial font-size: 12px; font-style: italic; }

h1 { font-family: tahoma, arial, sans-serif; font-size: 28pt; font-style: italic;
      color: #800000; /* dark red */ }

h2 { font-family: helvetica, verdana, arial; font-size: 16pt; color: #000000; }

h3 { font-family: comic sans ms, arial; font-size: 18pt; color: #000066; }

li { font-family: tahoma, arial; font-size: 12px; color: #333300; }

a:link { color: blue; font-family: arial; }
a:hover { color: red; font-family: arial; }
a:visited { color: #9900cc; font-family: arial; }

a.a:link { color: #ffffcc; font-family: arial; font-size: 10pt;
           font-weight: normal; text-decoration: none; }
a.a:hover { color: #ffff33; font-family: arial; font-size: 10pt;
            font-weight: normal; text-decoration: underline; }
a.a:visited { color: #ffffcc; font-family: arial; font-size: 10pt;
              font-weight: normal; text-decoration: none; }
```

Dynamic Web Pages

DHTML and Javascript can be used to introduce dynamic elements on a page (such as our example above which always displays the current year). Dynamic web pages can allow you to display information that changes regularly, such as the number of members of an organization, the number of subscribers in a newsletter, or the number of widgets available for purchase in an online store.

We are only outlining some terminology here, since you probably have little interest in getting too deep in code. But it can be helpful to know the basic framework of your site. Briefly, two of the top choices for generating dynamic content (especially by using databases) are:

ASP

ASP (Active Server Pages) is a Microsoft developed language which runs on Windows servers. It is not difficult learn the basics of ASP, how to write to / edit / delete from a database, display information from a database, and use ASP to create dynamic content. But leave that to a designer, since it takes time and slight errors in code (such as a missing quotation mark) can cause a whole page not to display.

PHP

PHP is an open source programming language with similar functionality as CGI programs, such as collection of form data, generate dynamic page content, or send and receive cookies, but also supports a wide range of databases. PHP is the natural choice for Linux machines running Apache web server software, but it also runs on any UNIX or Windows platform. Most hosts provide a MySQL database in their package, which you can bring to life using PHP. CGI stands for Common Gateway Interface.

HTML and Coding References

Here are just a couple online sources of free instruction, in case you'd like to learn more about the underlying code on you website's pages:

HTML tutorial: <http://www.html-html.com>

CSS tutorial: <http://www.cssbasics.com>

11. Internet Marketing: Articles and References

Below are some guest articles dealing in more depth with specific items we've discussed.

[Planning Your Business Web Site Strategy](#)

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Getting your business web site set up and ready to make sales is an important part of developing your Internet business. However, it is only half of the battle. There is still a long way to go in developing your overall web site strategy.

It is important that you understand what your web site strategy is before you actually design it. Otherwise, you may find that the design is completely wrong, and you will have to start over from scratch. As you probably know, there are basically two types of business web sites - content sites and mini sites. A content site includes lots of information and resources related to your niche, while also advertising your products or services. A mini site, on the other hand, focuses completely on your product or service.

Both content sites and mini sites can be successful, as long as they look professional, have good sales copy, and a good marketing strategy.

Content Business Web Sites

Let's first look at content sites. A content site may include articles, ebooks, tutorials, videos, or any number of other elements, all designed to inform and educate. People visit these sites because they want to learn more about the topic, and they like to take advantage of the resources that are found on these sites.

Content sites can earn revenue in a number of ways, including selling your own products and services, promoting related affiliate products, and even displaying Google and Kontera ads.

Content sites go a long way toward building trust with your customers and potential customers. It helps to establish you as an expert in your field, and people start turning to you for answers. Once you've established trust and credibility, people are more willing - and more likely - to purchase your products, or products that you recommend. With a content site, you are essentially pre-selling your customers through your content.

Business Mini Sites

Mini sites are the exact opposite of content sites. Content sites are full of content, and mini sites don't generally have what is considered content at all. A mini site may not be much longer than one or two web pages, and the entire focus of the site is on one product or service. A mini site is basically nothing more than a sales letter for the product.

Mini sites are generally designed using standard HTML and very plain, as you want the focus to be on your text. They contain very few graphics, plug-ins, or any other glorified elements that are often used to spice up a content site. In addition, mini sites almost never include any links to other web sites, as outside links will lead the visitors away from the site.

While content sites are often directed toward a wider market - those who want to educate themselves - mini sites are more tightly targeted to people who are ready to make a purchase, and the site just essentially tells them why they should purchase this particular product or service over others.

Designing Your Business Web Site

Regardless of the site that you design, your web site is usually the first impression that your prospects have of you and your business. This is why designing a clean, nice looking site is so essential. You must think of it like a brick and mortar store. If a customer walked into a brick and mortar store that was a huge mess, they would be heading toward the door - without buying anything - fairly quickly. Your web site must be clean and professional, and the site should have one purpose - to make sales.

When it comes to web site design, every part of the site will play a role in your success. The colors, font face, size of the font, graphics, navigation, scanability, ease of ordering, and the sales copy will play a part.

Overall, your business web site should have all of the following:

- * Your own domain name (no sub-domain names)
- * Dependable web hosting
- * Effective sales copy
- * Opt-in form to capture the email addresses of your visitors
- * Directly target your potential customers
- * Offer quality products and services
- * Optimized for the Search Engines
- * Professional, clean appearance
- * Links and scripts should all function properly
- * Well organized
- * Easy to navigate
- * Load quickly

Before you start designing your web site, make sure you take the time to develop your web site strategy. Understand who your target market is, and exactly what it is that you want your visitors to do when they arrive at your site. If you want to capture their email address, your site should focus on getting them to give you their information. If you want them to purchase your product, your site should focus on getting them to make a purchase.

No matter what you want your visitors to do, your entire site should focus on just one thing - getting your visitors to take action.

About the Author:

Shelley Lowery is a successful well-known Internet Marketer and the owner of several successful sites, including <http://www.Web-Source.net>. Would you like an easier way to make money online without having to design your own site? Learn how to easily generate thousands of dollars every month with this secret residual income system on complete autopilot. Visit:

<http://ResidualIncomeOpportunitySecrets.com>

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The Plan - 4 Steps To A Website Brand

by Jerry Bader - *reprinted with permission*

Do you have a plan? Most companies spend a considerable amount of time, energy, and money planning what to do and how to do it.

Let's say you need a website, so you develop a plan, present it to a bunch of website designers, and get quotes or proposals. You're not going to get caught with your pants down like the last time by some nerdy geek, you know the skinny kid with the scraggly beard, whose techno-babble gave you a headache, or the bizarre young lady dressed in gothic chic with the black lipstick and tattoo to match - yikes, no thanks, not this time, this time you got a plan.

Human Motivational Optimization

You read all the blogs on website design, you know all the ins-and-outs of search engine optimization, and Google Adwords. No one is going to pull a fast one on you. You know your business, your market, and your needs. Or do you?

How much do you really know about how real people interact with your website? How much do you really know about what we call Human Motivational Optimization? All the stats, logs, and number crunching analysis that forms the basis of many website development plans does not truly give you the visceral understanding of how to connect to an audience, and isn't that what you want your website to do?

So maybe your plan is the wrong plan; it's like planning a trip to Home Depot to buy a cabbage; it just doesn't make sense. So how about a plan that does make sense, something simple, understandable, easy to implement, that is if you hire the right people to do it. But before we tell you the four steps to creating your very own Website Branding Plan, let's talk about Don LaFontaine.

Every Company Needs A Movie Trailer

Chances are you don't know who the late Don LaFontaine was, but you've heard his voice many, many times. Don was the most famous and influential voice behind thousands of movie and television trailers. He had a distinctive deep, gravely voice, and a writing style that reinvented the entire movie trailer format. But why should you care? Simple. Movie trailers are the ultimate elevator pitch, a short memorable

performance that compels you to action, kind of like what a mission statement is suppose to do, but I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's start at the beginning, or rather, the end.

Branding Starts With Thinking Backwards

Most people like to start a project at the beginning and work their way through until they reach the end. Makes sense, or does it? If you don't start with where you want to end-up, it's unlikely you'll ever get where you want to go. Remember our cabbage? Planning a shopping to trip to Home Depot because they got cool stuff, doesn't help if what you want is a cabbage.

Branding is no different. If you don't start with how you want your audience to think about you, they will probably never think about you at all. So now that we got that straight let's start our plan where it makes sense, the end.

The 4 Step Web-Branding Plan

1 The Slogan

Your slogan, you know the thing that sits underneath your logo, that simple little phrase somebody in your office came up with that makes you sound important, stuff like "the cool air conditioning company." Most small and medium size companies don't think too hard about this little marketing gem, and as a result they either have something really cheesy, or some meaningless platitude that has no memorable meaning at all, like "the best people for the best job."

Just because you're small and don't have millions of dollars to spend on television ads promoting your pithy little motto, doesn't mean you shouldn't have one. That catchphrase is who you are, and how you want people to remember you, short, memorable, and to the point. I remember my sons arguing over some complicated bit of business when one of them in frustration finally said, "Enough already. Give it to me in one word or less!" a demand to articulate what was important without all the peripheral issues; a lesson all businesses should pay attention to.

2 The Story Line (Logline)

To my mind, mission statements are a totally dysfunctional marketing element, misused and abused by a bean-counter attitude, born out of trying to squeeze every last drop of information into a statement that won't offend anybody. A wise man once said, "If what you're saying doesn't offend somebody, maybe you're not saying anything" and most mission statements that are full of meaningless platitudes and toned-down amendments, fall into the category of not saying anything, at least, anything worth hearing.

Okay so let's forget about mission statements, after all this isn't the military, and we're not planning the next Desert Storm. Instead let's think loglines, or what you can think of as your brand story line.

You know those short statements you find in TV Guide, or your weekend television insert, prompting you to watch the next episode of 'House,' or 'Desperate Bimbos.' They are a short form text version of a trailer, intended to get you to watch the movie

or television show. For our purposes, we want people to go to our website, and stay-tuned long enough to get our core marketing message, and not walk out half way through the presentation. So, how do we do that?

The Six Elements of Effective Web Trailers

In order for us to come up with a compelling statement that prompts people to view our website presentation, we need to refer back to our old pal Don LaFontaine. What if Don LaFontaine wrote our website trailer. How would he do it?

Don had a very distinctive style that you've heard a thousand times for a thousand different movies, but they all followed a similar format. Each trailer needs to cover six distinct elements, who, what, where, how, why, and when. All the things businesses should be presenting in their elevator pitch, but with one extra ingredient, personality.

Here's the format used in many movie trailers: "In a **place** (where), **one man** (who) **brings stability to chaos** (what), in an epic tale **that will both amaze and inspire** (why)! **Coming soon** (when) to a theatre near you." Sound familiar?

Let's take our air conditioning example, you remember, "the cool air conditioning company." Let's say our fictitious company is called Kool Air Conditioning, their website trailer might sound something like this:

"In a town where summer heat melts the cool of the coolest homeowners, one air conditioning company comes to the rescue. When the mercury rises to eye-popping, mind numbing numbers, the men from Kool spring into action, bringing relief to the sweltering masses. The Kool Guys will amaze you with their prompt service and installation know-how. The heat is on. It's coming sooner than you think; it's coming this summer to your town, your neighborhood; your house. Kool, the cool air conditioning company."

Over-the-top? Maybe, but we've covered all the bases, we know who (Kool), what (air conditioning), when (this summer), where (your house), why (the heat) and how (prompt service and installation know-how). Now that's a mission statement; one with a little style, panache, and personality; one that will get you remembered and prompt your audience to action.

3 The Personality

Movies like businesses all fall into certain genres or categories. There's the action movie format that's suitable for sports related businesses, the chick flick style that's ideal for cosmetic or fashion industry businesses, and the family comedy format suitable for entertainment and recreation based companies, and of course the kids movie version perfect for any business selling things for children. The point is that every company and website has to have a personality.

Many hardnosed business executives scoff at the idea of spending money on such seemingly trivial marketing concepts as company personality, but ignoring your website persona, is a big mistake. You can either invest a little in developing, creating, managing, and promoting this personality or you can let the marketplace

decide for itself, or worse, find you completely redundant and irrelevant.

4 The Delivery

You may be asking yourself, this sounds good on paper, but can it really be done, and can it be done for my business, on my website? The answer is damn straight it can. Like most things in life, and in business, it's not grasping the concept that so hard, it's implementing it.

With a little investment and a willingness to take some chances, you can be the market leader. But if you thought you could simply take your newly created movie trailer style website elevator pitch and slap it onto your website in text form, you would be mistaken. How you deliver the message is as important, and in many cases more important, than what you say.

Whether you sell lipstick, licorice, or lingerie, you probably have lots of competition, so how you deliver your message is what's going to make the difference.

You want your website presentation to motivate people to email or phone. You want to deliver a compelling performance that is more than a sales pitch, a presentation that uses voice, visuals, words, and music to create a website personality, a lasting impression; one that is going to allow you to stand out from the crowd and give you a competitive advantage.

Nothing will convince better than seeing an actual example, and guess what, we just happen to be able to provide you with one: check out

<http://www.SonicPersonality.com> and see what an effective website presentation sounds like. If nothing else, you may get a chuckle or two.

About the Author

Jerry Bader is Senior Partner at MRPwebmedia, a website design firm that specializes in Web-audio and Web-video. Visit <http://www.mrpwebmedia.com/ads>, <http://www.sonicpersonality.com>, and <http://www.136words.com>. Contact at info@mrpwebmedia.com or telephone (905) 764-1246.

Syndicate Your Headlines Using RSS

by Shelley Lowery - *reprinted with permission*

RSS is quickly becoming the standard choice for delivering syndicated web content. Have you ever wondered how some of the large content sites deliver their headlines? Or, have you ever wanted to display news headlines, but didn't want to display the standard "Content Provided By..." info? Or, have you ever wanted to syndicate your own content? RSS may be the answer you've been looking for.

RSS stands for Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication. It is an XML format specifically designed to share content. Netscape originally developed RSS to drive channels for their Netscape Netcenter. Formerly known as RDF, RSS was developed in 1999 and has quickly evolved into the dominant format for syndicating content. Well-known sites such as, CNET, ZDNet, CNN, Wired and many more

utilize this powerful means of dynamic content delivery.

Distributing your content using RSS will involve creating one file that contains your content. This file will reside on your server to enable other web sites to display your channel. You can update your channel simply by updating your file.

Once you've created your file you can submit it to web sites like Netscape to enable other web sites to subscribe.

Creating an RSS File

Your first step will be to identify your file. To do this, place the following code at the top of your text file.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>  
  
<!DOCTYPE rss PUBLIC "-//Netscape Communications//DTD RSS  
0.91//EN" "http://my.netscape.com/publish/formats/rss-0.91.dtd">  
  
<rss version="0.91">
```

Your next step will be to create your channel header. The "channel" tag indicates that you are beginning a new channel.

```
<channel>  
<title>Web-Source.net Syndication</title>  
<link>http://www.web-source.net</link>  
<description>Web Development article syndication  
feeds!</description>  
<language>en-us</language>
```

The "title" tag indicates the name of your channel. The "link" tag will contain a link to your web site. The "description" tag describes your channel and the "language" tag indicates that you're writing in US English.

In addition to displaying text, you can also display a small logo. The image should be 88 pixels wide and 31 pixels high. Displaying an image is optional. If you're not going to include an image, skip this step.

```
<image>  
<title>Web-Source</title>  
<url>http://www.web-source.net/image.gif</url>  
<link>http://www.web-source.net</link>  
<width>88</width>  
<height>31</height>  
<description>Web Design and Development</description>  
</image>
```

Now, you're ready to create your headlines. Each new "item" tag represents a new topic. The rule of thumb is to include between five and fifteen items. You can include a description, but it isn't required.

```
<item>
```

```
<title>Moving Up From Classified Ads to Display Ad</title>  
<link>http://www.web-source.net/biz\_tips\_feed.htm</link>  
<description>Display ads are the standard advertising tool of print  
media. You can impress your carefully targeted audience with a  
colorful display ad that spreads across the page of your favorite  
magazine, trade bulletin, or newspaper.</description>  
</item>
```

```
<item>  
<title>Creating A Customized Marquee</title>  
<link>http://www.web-source.net/web\_tips\_feed.htm</link>  
<description>Learn how to create a customized marquee for your  
web site</description>  
</item>
```

Your final step will be to close your channel by adding the following tags:

```
</channel>  
</rss>
```

Save your new file with a .rss file extension and upload it to your server.

Your final step will be to validate your RSS. Visit either of the following sites to validate your file:

<http://aggregator.userland.com/>
http://www.ldodds.com/rss_validator/1.0/validator.html

If you'd rather not create your own RSS file, RSS Channel Editor is a free Web based tool that makes it easy to create and maintain RSS files. You can find the script here: <http://www.webreference.com/perl/tools/>

Now, you're ready to share your content. Visit the following web sites to submit your new channel and enable other web sites to display your content:

<http://www.bloglines.com/>
<http://www.syndic8.com/>
http://w.moreover.com/main_site/aboutus/sourcesubmission.html

If you'd like to display RSS content on your web site, you'll need a script to fetch the content. RSS Fetcher (http://www.mimagnet.com/scripts/rss_fetcher.html) is a free script that will fetch content, format it as HTML and store it in a file on your server. The content can then be displayed on your web site.

You can locate RSS files to display on your web site at the following web addresses:

<http://www.webreference.com/services/news/>
<http://w.moreover.com>
<http://www.bloglines.com/>
<http://www.syndic8.com/>

For further information about RSS, read Jonathan Eisenzopf's tutorial entitled, "Using RSS News Feeds." <http://www.webreference.com/perl/tutorial/8/>

If you have content that you regularly update, give RSS a try. Providing free content is an extremely powerful method of increasing your web site traffic.

About the Author:

Shelley Lowery is the author of the acclaimed web design course, Web Design Mastery. <http://www.webdesignmastery.com> And, Ebook Starter - Give Your Ebooks the look and feel of a REAL book. <http://www.ebookstarter.com> Visit Web-Source.net to sign up for a complimentary subscription to Etips and receive a copy of the acclaimed ebook, "Killer Internet Marketing Strategies." <http://www.web-source.net> Copyright © Shelley Lowery

8 Things That Motivate Web-Audience Response

by Jerry Bader - *reprinted with permission*

It's always a good idea to stick to the basics. When businesses stray too far from the fundamentals, problems arise, but sticking to the basics doesn't mean boring people into a state of unconsciousness. If Web-visitors' eyes glaze-over upon entering your site, you've lost them before you've begun. Web success is based on creative implementation of the basics, and that's where your Web-marketing presentation should begin.

1. Web-Audience Response Demands Communication

The Web has a lot in common with television but there are fundamental differences; it is important for Web-entrepreneurs to understand these differences and similarities, and learn from them.

Television and the Web are both communication environments, but television, like magazines and newspapers, are primarily advertising platforms. Of course there are plenty of websites around that follow the advertising financial model, but for the average business website, depending on third party advertising not only dilutes their marketing message and brand, but it also makes for a confusing and cluttered visual presentation.

Just because your website presents information, doesn't mean it's communicating it to your intended audience in any meaningful way. The manner in which you communicate your message is as important as the message itself. The medium is increasingly becoming the message, and even in situations where it isn't, it definitely shapes the message.

2. Web-Audience Response Demands Content

You have repeatedly heard the comment, 'content is king,' but we think, 'communication is king' because without communication your content is

meaningless. But here's the dilemma, your information is basically advertising, after all you're in business, and business is about selling something - a product, a service, an idea, or your know-how. So the real underlying purpose of your website is to make that advertising message worth listening to, and to do that, you need to turn it into content.

To turn advertising into content you have to accept that sales take time. You have to be patient. You can't hurry a sale, you first have to build confidence; stop rushing the close and start thinking of selling as a courtship. You would never ask someone to get married on a first date, so why would you expect to get an order from a potential Web-client on their first visit.

3. Web-Audience Response Demands Courtship

No one is going to make a substantial financial commitment without reaching some level of comfort with who you are and what you do, and that requires some repeated contact: a courtship, or negotiation if you prefer.

Therein lies the similarity and difference between websites and television: the success of a television program is based on habituation. If you get people to tune-in every week on the same night, at the same time to see their favorite program, you will be able to keep delivering your marketing message through the commercials that pay for the content. In the same regard, if you can make your website interesting enough through the compelling presentation of content, you will get visitors to return again and again, each time gaining confidence and respect for what you do and what you sell.

The difference is people accept television commercials as the price they pay for free TV programming, but the same cannot be said for the Web. People want free information on the Web without the irritation and bother of ads; so the challenge for website owners is to turn their marketing message into compelling programming that creates habituation which is just another form of negotiation, or courtship of potential clients.

4. Web-Audience Response Demands Consistency

You hear the word strategy bandied about with little relevance to its precise meaning. In marketing terms, strategy is a big idea, a sustainable concept that you can build a business around.

Successful companies rarely change their strategies, a concept that should not be confused with tactics, which are the various methods used to implement strategy in order to secure the ultimate objectives.

Business has to be resilient and open-minded enough to adapt to an ever-changing business environment by constantly updating tactics, but strategy needs to be a constant, a touchstone or benchmark for implementing action. Staying on course requires confidence in the strategy with a vigilant eye on the big picture.

Websites that are nothing more than brochures or catalogs of product that anyone can purchase at the local mall or box store is a tactic that delivers little relevance to today's Web-savvy consumer. And the same can be said for the blatantly obvious direct marketing sites based on old magazine subscription techniques. The new multimedia communication-based Web requires new presentation tactics in order to successfully implement marketing strategy.

5. Web-Audience Response Demands Expectation

Successful marketing is not just about persuading people that what you have is what they need, it's about creating a series of deliverable expectations.

If you expect a product to be easy to use because that's what the marketing communication states, then that product better be easy to use. Effective marketing presentations not only prompt action but just as importantly they create a set of realistic, deliverable expectations.

Ask yourself, why do people mistrust politicians, car salesmen, and telemarketers? We all know the answer: many will say, and promise, just about anything to get your vote or order, and the result is a disgruntled, cynical voter or customer. Read my lips, no false expectations!

6. Web-Audience Response Demands Trust

When customers' expectations are met, you begin to create trust, and trust is one of the hardest things to achieve on a website that lacks any kind of human connection to the audience.

I can't tell you how many websites I've visited that make no effort to humanize their presentations, and consequently their businesses. When you go to a contact page and all that's there is a form to fill-in, with no contact name or phone number, it says to people, 'I really can't be bothered talking to you.' Hiding behind email tells people not to trust you, and if they don't trust you, they are not going to do business with you.

Business is about connecting to people, whether they are consumers, purchasing agents, or suppliers. If your website doesn't have some kind of human element like a video Web-host, audio message, or even a contact name and phone number, how can you expect to connect and build confidence, and trust in your intent to satisfy their needs?

7. Web-Audience Response Demands Personality

By building trust with your Web-audience you are also building your brand and defining your corporate personality. Here again we have a bit of a dichotomy since personality is a human-based characteristic, so how then can we create a personality and instill human characteristics into an inanimate entity like a business? Corporate personality does not derive from a logo, packaging, or your website's aesthetic qualities. Corporate personality is the sum total of the collective experiences your audience has with your company. In the brick and mortar world,

corporate personality is a result of dealing with people, sales people, receptionists, and telemarketers; in short personality is derived from interaction with real human beings.

Clever, well written website copy can help create personality as long as it is written in a distinctive human voice, but we know that 70% of all website text is never read; people skip to bulleted points and captions. But the same material delivered by a real person either through Web-audio or video, not only delivers the marketing message in the most memorable and compelling fashion, but it also defines the business personality and humanizes the website.

Two caveats: avatars are not people, and unless you can afford to hire the creators of the Simpsons to develop your animation, you best forget it; as well, using yourself or a non-professional as a spokesperson or Web-host is a dangerous practice, and speaks more to ego than it does to effective business development.

8. Web-Audience Response Demands Motivation

Lastly your website must communicate content that excites and motivates people to do business with you. The ability to motivate people isn't about what you're selling; it's about how you present it.

Motivational speakers, whether in the business, entertainment, personal coaching, or sports arenas, all deliver a similar message; but the ones that truly stimulate people to act, are the ones that know how to present their ideas in the most exciting and compelling manner. If you want to motivate your Web-audience to respond, your presentation has to be delivered by a real human being: a professional with charm, charisma, and a distinctive character.

About the Author:

Jerry Bader is Senior Partner at MRPwebmedia, a website design firm that specializes in Web-audio and Web-video. Visit <http://www.mrpwebmedia.com/ads>, <http://www.136words.com>, <http://www.sonicpersonality.com>, and <http://www.CacheClosed.com>. Contact at info@mrpwebmedia.com or telephone (905) 764-1246.

Using Social Networking Sites to Drive Traffic to Your Site

by Shelley Lowery - reprinted with permission

Social networking sites seem to be the biggest thing on the Internet right now, and there are no signs that this will change anytime in the near - or far - future. The fact is that social networking sites, such as [MySpace](#), [FaceBook](#), and others, have given people the opportunity to express themselves, meet new people, and communicate effectively, and nobody is going to give that up.

Social networking on the Internet may seem like a new concept to most people - but it really isn't. The first social network appeared on the Internet as far back as 1995,

with Classmates. Classmates offers people the opportunity to reconnect with old classmates from High School and College, and is still in operation today - and doing quite well.

From there, social networking advanced with the onslaught of Internet dating sites. However, these days, it has advanced to the point where social networking sites often do not have a specific 'theme.' MySpace, which is by far the most popular social networking site in existence, is an example of this. No matter what your interests are, there is room for you on MySpace.

Social Networking Features

Social networking sites often have common elements. Some have more features than others. In all cases, you are able to create your profile. Sites, such as MySpace, actually allow you to fully customize your profile page, so that it is very unique, using layouts that are available all over the Internet. You can also create your own layout.

Other features include messengers, email systems, blogging features, friend's lists, and comments sections. Some social networking sites will allow you to send individual emails to other site members, or to send broadcast emails out to all of the people on your network or friend's list.

Most social networking sites will allow anyone to join, and are typically free to join. However, there are some that require a fee for membership, such as Ryze, and some that require an invitation from another member, such as Pownce.

Connect with Other Like-Minded People

Many people view social networking sites as 'something to do.' However, they are much more than that. Social networking sites allow members to express and develop identities, to build relationships, to garner trust among their peers, and much more. The social networking sites simply provide the means - it is the members who create the content of the site, making these social networking sites user content driven.

Internet Marketers, large corporations, and even television shows make use of social networking sites. For example, many popular reality television shows have profiles on the more popular social networking sites.

This encourages public participation. They use the concept that 'everyone wants to feel like they are a part of something' and it is successful - because social networking sites allow everyone to be a part of something, regardless of who they are, where they are located, their sex, religion, beliefs, careers, backgrounds, or any other consideration that exists. Everyone who has access to a computer with an Internet connection has a 'voice' and they can use it with ease thanks to social networking sites.

Boost Your Website's Profitability

Some of the best known social networking sites include: MySpace, Facebook, hi5, Xanga, LinkedIn, reunion, friendster, bebo, tagged, and classmates.

Signing up is usually very easy, and only requires you to submit your name, your location, a screen name, a password, and of course a valid email address.

Today, it is estimated that there are more than 200 social networking sites in existence. You can get a more complete list of social networking sites, as well as the 'theme' or group of people that each site caters to and the number of members through Wikipedia. Visit the Wikipedia site and search for social networking [websites](#).

Marking Via Social Networking Sites

The popularity of social networking sites stems from the Search Engines. The Search Engines love these sites, as they always contain fresh content. What's more, if you look at the Alexa rankings for some of these sites, such as MySpace, Facebook, etc., you will find that they are among the most popular sites on the Internet.

Although you can't advertise on these sites, you can create a profile and include a link to your web site. This will provide a great way to not only increase your ranking in the Search Engines, but also drive traffic to your web site.

Social Networking Sites also provide you with a great way to spread your content all over the Internet. For example, you can share your articles, news, and post comments.

The key to using these sites successfully is to create a complete profile that contains a link to your site and an RSS feed. Add fresh content on a regular basis to drive a continuous stream of traffic to your web site.

About the Author:

Shelley Lowery is the owner and developer of <http://www.web-source.net> - Your Guide to Professional Web Site Design and Development. Learn how to design and develop a web site with 100's of articles, tutorials, tools, & codes, including HTML, CSS, [JavaScript](#) and more. Copyright © Shelley Lowery

Upgrading Your Company Website

by Jerry Bader - *reprinted with permission*

Dealing with website development issues can be an overwhelming task. There are many things your marketing team must consider, in fact, there are so many things to bear in mind that many of the most important ones never get dealt with, or are buried under competing interests.

To avoid project paralysis you should focus on certain key areas of concern from which all other issues flow. Whether upgrading your existing website or developing a

new web media initiative from scratch, consider these four vital questions that need to be answered:

- What content should be included?
- How should content be delivered?
- How is your website going to be marketed?
- What will visitors remember?

What content should be included?

Content is a function of purpose. Unfortunately many websites don't have a clearly thought-out realistic purpose; and orders alone, is not an adequate website objective. Obviously every company needs sales, that's a given, but sales are a result of all the marketing elements you put in place, and the degree to which your presentation distinguishes you from your competition.

There is a prevailing view that traffic translates into sales; this viewpoint may be valid for websites whose economic model is commodity or advertising-based, but businesses that don't compete on price alone, or are more than an excuse to deliver advertising, must be structured around a purpose that is more meaningful, and far more compelling than 'give me an order or don't bother me.'

An over-emphasis on search engine friendly site design ignores the fact that when someone does a search for what you do, they'll not only find you, they'll also find many of your competitors as well. And even if you appear first in the search, nothing will stop potential clients from clicking on any of the other organic or advertised listings, or even the numerous Adword links on the side of the page.

The biggest website design problem companies have is not the amount of traffic generated from search engines, but rather how visitors react to your content. Are visitors engaged, enlightened, and entertained so that they stay on your site long enough to get your marketing message, and is that message compelling enough for them to remember it?

There are many misconceptions about advertising content, one of the biggest is that people hate it, but the truth is, what people hate is bad ad content; qualified clients actually look forward to good advertising because it presents a relevant problem, and provides a believable solution, in a distinctive memorable presentation. If your content doesn't engage your audience with a persuasive, memorable presentation then you'll never achieve whatever website marketing goals you've set.

How should content be delivered?

We know the vast majority of people don't like to read text on a computer screen, so they scan for relevant information concentrating on bulleted points, captions, and headlines, but does that truncated information really get your message across? Website text is really designed for search engine spiders, which is fine, but how about paying a little attention to people and how they absorb and remember information?

We also know people are impatient and are ready to abandon your website with the click of mouse, often in mid sentence before they ever get to the point you are trying to make. Your clients are sophisticated media consumers raised on video games and television, and are used to making quick decisions on limited information; this kind of leap-of-logic protocol demands a clever focused presentation.

Your audience will be gone in seconds no matter how convincing you think your content is, if it is not presented in a media-savvy manner that holds viewer attention, otherwise your website is nothing more than a glorified Yellow Page ad. Audio and video has the potential to deliver information in a form and format that attracts and holds viewer interest while it makes a memorable impression. But even audio and video will fail if it is badly conceived, poorly written, and amateurishly performed.

How is your website going to be marketed?

Everyone is concerned with traffic and how to drive it to their websites. Search engine optimization is only one marketing technique, and it's one that ignores the impact of content on your audience in favor of attracting the attention of search engine robots. By all means, build search engine friendly elements into your site but don't ignore people-friendly elements as well.

Having text-based articles on your site is an excellent way to provide search friendly information, but presenting that same information as a professionally produced audio option, or a lively video presentation is certainly more memorable.

An entertaining webmedia presentation makes a lasting impression that viewers are more likely to recommend to colleagues, thereby increasing your traffic and reputation. Word-of-mouth is the best way to generate qualified traffic, and the best way to generate interest in your site is to make your site's presentation a rewarding experience.

What will visitors remember?

In a brick-and-mortar environment, visitors are more likely to make a decision to purchase on the spot, simply to avoid driving halfway across town to save a few dollars, but on the Web jumping from New York to California is as easy as the click of a mouse. People are just more likely to shop-around because it's so easy. Of course what people think they want is the lowest price, but providing the lowest price only attracts the least profitable buyers and ignores the biggest obstacle website businesses need to overcome, and that's credibility. Who are you, and can you be trusted? And after visiting ten different websites all selling the same thing, can they even remember who you are?

Your presentation has to be memorable and establish credibility so that when all the searching and browsing is finished, your site is the one they remember and go back to; your site must be the one visitors can trust to deliver what's promised.

How to Hire A Web Video Firm

The ability to produce an effective video or audio presentation requires more than the possession of some cool hardware and software. Owning an expensive camera doesn't make you a producer, and even the technical ability to edit doesn't qualified you as a commercial marketing expert. When the time comes to hire someone to add video and/or audio to your website what should you be looking for? Below are eight things you should consider when hiring someone to create webmedia.

- Can the webmedia provider deliver a turnkey solution from concept to implementation, or do you have to act as your own producer hiring different people with different skills complicating the project and creating both technical and conceptual implementation problems?
- Can the webmedia provider produce everything from scripts to custom music in-house, or do they have to farm-out some of the work increasing costs?
- Does the webmedia provider understand how to use verbal and visual performance to create a convincing, memorable presentation, or do they substitute expensive production techniques for cost-effective psychological persuasion?
- Does the webmedia provider just shoot video, or do they have the ability to analyze your offering and purpose, and focus it into a consistent, meaningful, branded presentation?
- Does the webmedia provider have the ability to think strategically as well as tactically? Can they implement and repurpose your investment into your existing website, create a targeted mini campaign site, and provide alternative versions ready for ad implementation?
- Does the webmedia provider have the ability to create lasting campaigns that can be rolled out and built upon, or are they just interested in making a quick buck from a one-off effort? Are they willing and able to be your ongoing webmedia marketing advisor?
- Does the webmedia provider have the ability to turn advertising into content, and content into an experience, or can they only produce nondescript infomercials?
- Does the webmedia provider understand business, marketing, branding, and what can and can't be achieved so that you have appropriate achievable expectations?

Commercial presentation production requires a multitude of skills and talents. Big companies solve the problem by hiring advertising agencies that drive the cost of production beyond what most businesses can afford. By understanding what's needed to create an effective webmedia presentation, you can look for a firm that possesses all the necessary talents in-house; an approach that keeps costs down,

while producing an exciting Web video campaign that achieves corporate marketing objectives.

About the Author

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2009 Resolution -- Give Your Site a 10-Point Legal Check-Up

by Chip Cooper - *reprinted with permission*

Online businesses are now highly regulated, and there's substantial liability if you site's not legally compliant. In addition, your customers are becoming more Internet savvy, and a site that's not legally compliant is not going to be trusted. So, let's get started.

Use This Checklist If You Already Have The Basic Site Documents In Place

1. Copyright Notice. Check Your Copyright Notice. Your copyright notice consists of the following elements: the word "copyright" or copyright symbol (c in a circle) followed by the year of first publication followed by the name of the copyright owner. It's also a good idea to add "All rights reserved worldwide". Example: Copyright 1996-09 Digital Contracts, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide. Note that if you update your site from time to time, you should add a date range reflecting the fact that the site has been updated each year within the date range. If you haven't updated yet for 2009, do it now.

2. Blogs, etc. Have you recently added a blog or any other functionality that permits visitors to post text or digital files to your site? Or, do you plan to do so as part of your marketing plans for 2009? If so, you need to have a DMCA notice in your Terms of Use and you also need to file a DMCA Registration form with the U.S. Copyright Office. These steps will create a "safe harbor" from strict liability for copyright infringement if a site visitor posts infringing material to your site.

3. Personal Information. Do you collect personal information from site visitors? If so, review your Privacy Policy to make sure that you identify all of the categories of personal information you collect and the way in which you share this personal information. If you've changed these policies since you posted your Privacy Policy, amend it now... without delay.

4. Data Security. Check your data security measures. If you collect personal information, you are required to implement "reasonable and appropriate" data security measures. These measures are essentially moving targets since data security technology evolves at a relatively rapid pace. What may have been "reasonable and appropriate" a couple of years ago may not pass muster today. Update your security procedures, if necessary.

5. Future Sale of Your Business? If your online business is starting to be successful and generate positive revenue, have you ever considered that you might want to sell it for a profit in the future? If so, be sure that your Privacy Policy specifies that personal information collected may be transferred and shared in the event of a sale. If you don't do this prior to collecting personal information, you won't be able to pass it on to your purchaser. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) stipulated in recent settlements that personal information collected prior to posting this notice in your Privacy Policy will not be transferable in the event of a sale. And this personal information (your opt-in lists and customer lists) are the real value of your online business.

6. Service Providers. Do you use service providers to provide hosting, site maintenance, SEO services, or other site functions where they have access to your server? If you don't collect personal information, your answer to this question is immaterial, but if you do (and only an email address will suffice), you need to enter into privacy and security agreements with your service providers. The FTC stipulated in a couple of recent settlements that you would be liable if you don't.

7. Registration Agreement. Does your site require site visitors to register for certain benefits such as a membership or subscription rights? If so, you need an electronic agreement (a so-called "click-wrapped" agreement where the user clicks on "I ACCEPT"). Your agreement should be presented conspicuously in the registration process and it should require an affirmative act (clicking on "I ACCEPT") to complete the registration. You also need to be sure that all of your warranty disclaimers and limitations of liability pass muster.

8. Collect Birth Dates? Do you collect the date of birth as part of your registration process? If so, and if this date indicates that children under 13 are registering, you will be liable for substantial damages under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) if you do not comply with COPPA's stringent requirements. You should either modify your information collection practices or comply with COPPA, or both.

9. Creditor Under FACTA? Do your registered users make periodic payments payable as monthly or quarterly installments, or do you extend credit so that payment is made after receipt of the product or service? If so, you fall within the statutory requirements of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACTA). FACTA requires that you adopt a "Red Flag" Identity Theft Policy before May 1, 2009, or face substantial liability.

10. Sales Intermediaries? Do you use affiliates or resellers? If so, a recent New York case illustrates that you may be liable for their actions if they violate certain laws acting on your behalf. For example, are your affiliates engaged in illegal spamming activities? If they are offering their own end user license agreements, do they properly disclose certain activities such as the use of pop up ads? You should check your affiliate and reseller agreements and modify them, if required.

Use This Checklist If You Don't Have Your Site Documents In Place

You may be just starting your online business, or you may have procrastinated a little with your website legal compliance. If you fall into this group, you should get started without delay.

I've developed a procedure that will help you determine the correct mix of legal compliance documents for your site. Part of it is set out below.

First, if your site does not collect personal information, you should consider these documents:

- * a Legal page for your intellectual property notices; and
- * Terms of Use.
- * And if you allow site visitors to post text or digital files to your site (for example via a blog, forum, or chat room), you'll need a DMCA Registration Form (see No. 2 above).

Second, if your site collects personal information, but does not require registration to open an account or to use or purchase a product or service, you should consider these additional documents:

- * Privacy Policy.
- * And if you have service providers that have possession of your server or have access rights to it, you'll need a privacy-security agreement for these service providers (see No. 6 above).

Third, if your site requires registration to open an account or to use or purchase a product or service, you should consider in addition to the foregoing documents, a customer agreement such as:

- * a software as a service (SaaS) agreement; and/or
- * a Software License Agreement (for software downloads).
- * And if you are regulated by FACTA (see No. 9 above), you'll need a Red Flag Identity Theft Policy -- before the May 1, 2009 deadline.

Conclusion

The checklists provided above are not exhaustive. However, they should point you in the right direction as you give your site a new year's legal compliance check-up. A simple check-up -- and remedial action if necessary -- is one of the best investments you can make in your online business.

About the Author

Chip Cooper is a leading intellectual property, software, and Internet attorney who's advised software and online businesses nationwide for 25+ years. Visit Chip's <http://www.digicontracts.com> site and download his FREE newsletter and Special Reports: "Determine Which Legal Documents Your Website Really Needs", "Draft Your Own Privacy Policy", and "Write Your Own Website Marketing Copy -- Legally".

Autoresponders: Put Your Business On Autopilot

by Shelley Lowery - *reprinted with permission*

Autoresponders are one of the top promotional tools available online today. They are also known as auto-responders, automatic email, email on demand, mailbots and autobots. They were derived from the very popular fax on demand and designed to automatically respond to any email message sent to it with an automatic response.

Their popularity most likely stems from its vast variety of uses as it eliminates the need to manually answer every response. Subsequently saving hours of valuable time. Your information can be available to your prospective customer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Get your best ad copy ready, load it to your autoresponder and your business is set to autopilot. When your prospective customer sends a message to your autoresponder address, your information will be instantly delivered to their email address.

There are many ways of utilizing the power of autoresponders:

- Free course
- Articles available for publication
- Free reports
- Product list
- Price list
- Welcome letters
- Thank you letters
- Order confirmations
- Advertising Rates

Autoresponder Advantages

There are many advantages associated with the use of autoresponders. Not only do they automate the daily task of manually replying to requests for information, but they provide instant gratification for the recipient. They also enable you to track your ad responses and gather the email addresses of potential customers.

A good autoresponder service will automatically send you an email notification informing you each time someone requests your information.

Selecting a quality autoresponder service:

When selecting a autoresponder service, there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration to ensure maximum performance.

- **Personalized responses** - This makes the recipient feel that the letter was sent specifically to them.
- **Automatic follow ups** - Studies have shown it may take up to seven contacts before closing a sale.
- **Unlimited text length** - If you are inhibited by the amount of text your

autoresponder may contain, you may be forced to revise a successful sales letter, ultimately costing you business.

- **Free unlimited updating** - It is imperative to provide your customers with accurate, up to date information on your products and services.
- **Automatic notification** - You must have the ability to track your ad's performance. You should be instantly informed each time someone requests your information.

Autoresponder Advertising Tips

- Include your autoresponder address in your signature file
- Opt in email discussion lists
- Guestbooks
- Business cards
- Letter head
- Your web site

You can obtain autoresponders with all the amenities mentioned above from the following sites:

<http://www.getresponse.com>

www.aweber.com

Autoresponders can assist you in putting a lot of your day to day tasks on autopilot. Use it to your advantage.

About the Author:

Shelley Lowery is the author of the acclaimed web design course, Web Design Mastery. <http://www.webdesignmastery.com> And, Ebook Starter - Give Your Ebooks the look and feel of a REAL book. <http://www.ebookstarter.com> Visit Web-Source.net to sign up for a complimentary subscription to Etips and receive a copy of the acclaimed ebook, "Killer Internet Marketing Strategies."

<http://www.web-source.net>

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Ten Free Ways to Market Your Site the Web 2.0 Way

by Tinu AbayomiPaul - *reprinted with permission*

You really want to understand Web Marketing 2.0, without buying hundreds of guides? Learn how to make connections online. The easiest and fastest way to make that connection as a noted authority is to learn the art of giving.

Most Web 2.0 sites that will help you market your site will Only work if you make a conscious effort to share your resources. Think of it as traditional networking amplified and assisted by web tools. Realize, though, that the technical details of how to maximize social bookmarking, blogging, RSS, collaborative tools and widgets are all useless without the new underlying first rule of the Web.

"What's the new rule, Tinu?"

Well, in order to receive, you'll have to start out by giving. The trick is to go beyond the golden rule of doing unto others as you'd have them do unto you, into an even higher rule of doing to others as they want to be done unto.

And if you can figure out how to anticipate needs, you've got a bigger head-start than any me-centric marketer, no matter how far ahead they may be in experience. Let's look at 10 of the free ways you can use Give Marketing to enhance your entire marketing strategy.

Give Marketing Tip #1- Giving Sincere and Useful Comments on Blogs.

Don't make the mistake of leaving a message just so you can leave your link. Build relationships.

Give Marketing Tip #2- Giving Testimonials.

Send audio and a picture, along with your most sincere praise when you've found a tool you love. Even if the tool was free. Also great as a blog topic.

Give Marketing Tip #3- Giving a Detailed, Helpful Answer in Forums.

Don't forget to fill out the signature panel if the community allows. Even those that don't will allow you a profile.

Give Marketing Tip #4- Giving a Heartfelt Compliment (Anywhere Public).

Testimonials are a type of compliment, but not all compliments are testimonials. You can give a compliment without giving a full review or testimonial. A compliment can be about how a site looks, ease of use, a positive experience with the owner, or the quality of the packaging the product comes in.

Give Marketing Tip #5- Giving a Contact.

Everyone knows someone another person would like to get next to, so make a list of who you know, regardless of industry, and how you could help them by introducing to someone brilliant you've recently met. The gesture is never forgotten, and fortuitous unions often provide additional kickbacks.

Give Marketing Tip #6- Giving up the Digg.

Digg is a social bookmarking system in which the participants vote on a story. If a friend is involved in a good story, submit it at <http://digg.com>.

Give Marketing Tip #7- Giving a BUMP.

Digg's community are centered mostly around World News and several aspects of Technology. BUMPzee is the best of the blogging community tools like MyBlogLog and the social bookmarking of Digg mashed together in a yummy chocolate/vanilla swirl. You don't have to be a blogger to use it either, and if the community that your BUMP goes in doesn't exist, at <http://bumpzee.com> you can create it.

Give Marketing Tip #8- Giving a Plug.

PlugIM is quickly becoming the Internet Marketer's preferred place for marketing tips and news. It has a Digg-like interface, but it's smartly niched for the huge legions of online marketers and the online Business to Business crowd. At <http://www.plugim.com> you can expose news where all the right people can see it in two minutes flat.

Give Marketing Tip #9- Giving Away Your IQ.

Free IQ is a "market place for ideas," where you can share ebooks, video, audio and article content to a captive audience that is currently oriented largely towards the internet marketing and affiliate marketing communities, and could easily expand into every niche on the web. Who says you have to use your Free IQ juice just to promote yourself?

Give away one little secret. It won't hurt, I promise. At <http://freeiq.com/addarticle>, you can add a quick review, ebook or article. Quick tip: after you add your article, do a search for Shawn Casey to get two free recorded training calls about the site.

Give Marketing Tip #10- Giving a Trackback or Link Back

Got a blog? Learn about Trackback, a method by which a remote blog can automatically like back to you when you reference a post of theirs. If you don't, give a link to a site you believe in. Everyone loves link love.

Get to giving. It might even be fun in and of itself.

About the Author:

Tinu writes a daily website traffic column. Come to <http://www.freetraffictip.com> to learn more about all aspects of traffic generation, including blogging, article marketing and get late-breaking search engine news.

A Guide to Publishing a Successful Email Newsletter

by Shelley Lowery - *reprinted with permission*

Are you publishing an email newsletter? If you are then you probably already know all of the great benefits, but for those who aren't, you really should be. If you're serious about your Internet presence, having your own publication will help you build a huge database of targeted customers. Studies have shown, it may take several contacts with a prospective customer before closing a sale. What better way to make those contacts and close those sales than by having a complete list of targeted potential customers ready and waiting. In addition, you can eventually make a nice income selling sponsor advertising.

Developing a Successful Email Newsletter

Provide your readers with the quality content they're looking for. A quality email newsletter should contain at least some original content, but it is also a good idea to have some additional resources available. Before using any articles, make sure you review the author's copyrights and make certain the article may be published. If you're not sure, contact the author and request permission to publish their article. Most articles for publication can be used in your email newsletter free of charge as long as the authors credits or resource box is included.

Free Content

Web-Source.net - http://www.web-source.net/free_articles.htm

GoArticles.com - <http://www.goarticles.com>

EzineArticles.com - <http://www.ezinearticles.com>

Listing Sites

In order to gain new subscribers for your publication, you must continuously promote it. There are many sites on the Internet that will list your ezine free of charge.

BestEzines - <http://www.bestezines.com>

eZINEsearch - <http://www.ezinesearch.com>

ListChannel - <http://www.listchannel.com>

New-List - <http://www.new-list.com>

The Ezine Directory - <http://www.ezine-dir.com>

Ad Trading

Trading Ads with fellow publishers is one of the best ways to build your subscriber base. It's as simple as it sounds. You simply contact the publisher you're interested in exchanging ads with and ask them if they would be interested in an ad exchange. If they're interested, you would then run a classified ad promoting their email newsletter in your publication in exchange for them running your classified ad, all completely free. Here are some great resources to assist you in the process.

Publishers' Business Exchange - <http://www.cashconnection.com/publisherssite.htm>

I-Barter - <http://www.i-barter.com>

Email Newsletter Awards & Reviews

Winning awards is a great way to build your subscription base. Stop by any of the following sites and submit your publication for a possible award.

Best Ezines - <http://www.bestezines.com>

Press Release

Write a press release and tell the world about your publication. If you're not comfortable with writing your own press release, Dr. Kevin Nunley will write it for you at a very reasonable price. <http://www.drnunley.com/>

Visit any of the following sites to send out your press release.

Press Release Network - <http://www.pressreleasenetwork.com>

PRWeb - <http://www.prweb.com>

Offline Promotions

Don't forget about offline promotions. There are still millions of people around the world who aren't online. Place your ads in newspapers, magazines, etc.

Newspapers Online - <http://www.newspapers.com/>

Membership Sites

Although all of the above promotional methods will help you build your email newsletter, the absolute best method I've found is a membership site. Not just any membership site, but a membership site that contains valuable information, software, ebooks, or anything that you feel your potential members will find irresistible. The key to using this strategy effectively is to offer the membership free of charge. However, if your visitors want to become a member, they must agree to subscribe to your publication. This is very powerful.

List Management Scripts

In order to manage your ezine, you may want to use a script you can install on your own web server.

1-2-All Broadcast - <http://www.12all.com>

AutoResponse Plus: - <http://www.web-source.net/cgi-bin/t.cgi?!=autoplus>

List Management Services

If you'd rather not handle your own list management system, you may want to use a list management service: [AWeber](#)

This guide is just a small example of email newsletter publishing and promotion. For a complete email newsletter tutorial with hundreds of resources, visit <http://www.web-source.net/ezines/> to pick up a copy of the acclaimed ebook, "Ezines: A Complete Guide to Publishing for Profit."

For further information on publishing a successful ezine, visit <http://emailuniverse.com/ezine-tips/>

About the Author:

Shelley Lowery is the author of the acclaimed web design course, Web Design Mastery. <http://www.webdesignmastery.com> And, Ebook Starter - Give Your Ebooks the look and feel of a REAL book. <http://www.ebookstarter.com> Visit Web-Source.net to sign up for a complimentary subscription to Etips and receive a copy of the acclaimed ebook, "Killer Internet Marketing Strategies." <http://www.web-source.net> Copyright © Shelley Lowery

5 Fun and Free Ways to Get Leads to Find You in Facebook

by Tinu AbayomiPaul - *reprinted with permission*

I'm so livid that I can still hear his voice in my head. Does that ever happen to you? "You're completely f--ing nuts," he said. "You can't get anything from Facebook but a sheep thrown at you."

"No. YOU can't get anything out of Facebook because you have a time management problem." I hung up the phone, furious. I mean, how can you call yourself a marketer if you can't manage to gain from a site where the leads come to you?

Since he obviously won't listen, I'd like to tell you for free what I wouldn't tell him if he paid me. (No, he'll never read this - don't get me started on That.) What follows are Five Fun and Free Ways to Benefit from Having a Facebook Profile.

1- Import Your Blog Posts, or Social Feeds

Make sure you already have asserted your own copyright and that you read their T's and C's before proceeding. Another thing Jeff Pulver mentioned to me in Facebook is that your audience in Facebook and in the Blogosphere may be different, so this isn't for everyone. There's not enough space to go into it here, but several variations on this can explode your results.

2- Get to Know Clients, Colleagues and Mentors Better

Many people think of LinkedIn when they hear about this tip, another of my favorite sites. (Google "Vincent Wright LinkedIn" and you'll get tons of great, free information.) It's a great site to network at if you have a specific professional purpose in mind. However, if you want to get to know people, with no particular agenda in mind, Facebook is better. It's not an either/or type of thing, they're just different tools. Once you've made some type of connection with someone in Facebook, you can unobtrusively learn about your online pals, and use the little tidbits to make small talk about common interests, which can lead to conversation, which can lead to phone calls and other offline encounters.

The reason this is so powerful is that it mimics the way we get to know people in our offline lives. Familiarity goes a long way to establishing trust. Add in the

transparency that occurs from them seeing your news, and you're doing two things with your clients that your competition is not. Who would you buy from, someone you trust, or a company where you're just another number?

3 -Participate in Groups

The emphasis is on participation. Interact and get to know people. Be more concerned about connecting with others than about gaining site traffic. To get more involved, you can stop by occasionally and contribute content. You'll get the best effect from joining the discussion board conversations.

If you're looking for business related groups to start with, try Mark Joyner's Simpleology, Jeremiah Owyang's Web Strategy Group, Open for Web Business, or Facebook for Business.

Once people start to see your name come up in conversations, on their Facebook home page and in discussion boards, they click on your profile to learn more about you, which often begins interaction. Of course, they can also surf to your site through your profile. You can even start your own group, or a fan page about your business.

4- Upload videos

The kinds that seem to go over best are short, simple videos with just you, a plain or simple background (white wall or you at your desk). If you're a bit too shy for the camera, think about a video capture of your screen as you demonstrate something important (also called a screencast).

They can be up to 15 minutes long, in a variety of formats, and up to 300MB in size. It's free, and it automatically translates from their allowed formats into a format viewable by all browsers.

5- Share Links

When you share a link on your profile, your friends can get a notification of this, and they can also easily share it with their friends. Big deal right? But if you have 100 friends who average about 100 friends, the right link, exposed virally, can spread as if you emailed it link to 10,000 contacts.

As with email, not everyone will pay attention to it, and of those who do, not all of them will act on that information. But for the price of free, without spam? Can't be beat. If that weren't enough, you can share links in Groups now on Facebook. So that means if you are an active participant in 20 groups of over 1000 people, you have added a potential 20K to your audience.

Hint: Link sharing works better when you're being helpful and have a track record of being an open, sharing person, not just constantly posting links from your own site. And there you have it, five fun, free ways to utilize Facebook to enhance your business. The next time someone tells you that Facebook can't help you, tell them to shut the hell up or talk about the things they know.

Okay, I'm kidding. Just ignore them, and join the group of quiet marketers who are learning the laid back ways of social media marketing.

You don't have to spend your day on Web 2.0 sites to promote yourself either. Often, when your profile is properly set up, it can generate leads for you with a minimum of upkeep- free. Not to mention advertising opportunities that are appropriate for some sites. Try it yourself, then decide.

About the Author:

Confused about how to get clients, joint venture partners or more blog traffic from Facebook without violating their terms with traditional online marketing techniques? Go to <http://freetraffictip.com/1-facebook> to learn more about the ins and outs of marketing on Facebook.

Author's Note

I hope this book has given you many ideas for improving your website's results. The more tips you employ, the more of a boost in profitability of your site. But don't be overwhelmed! Complete them one at a time if necessary, in any order. Maybe you'd like to knock out a bunch of the easier ones first.

One of my most important pieces of advice is to seek feedback from associates, your website designer, and especially from your target audience. Prospects will tell you what to change to convert them into customers.

I'll take my own advice and ask you for your feedback. Feel free to let me know what you liked, disliked or felt was missing from this book. My contact information can of course be found at <http://www.AttractWeb.com>

"Best of Luck" would be an entirely inappropriate closing, so I will instead wish you success by using my company slogan...

Attract interest. Attract business.

Ray Christensen