The Web Marketing Guide

How to promote your Web Site

Expert knowledge means success

Contents

Introduction

It's a real problem. You've got a Web Site, but it isn't getting the number of visitors you'd like. What can you do to stimulate traffic? How can your Web Site generate more business? How does it integrate with your other marketing efforts?

Earl B Hall of NetPower Publishing[1] has written some excellent advice on this subject and we're delighted to incorporate it into this publication.

Writing Effective Classified Ads

You see it time and time again. Many new online marketers seem to overlook some of the basics of writing an effective classified ad. By following these proven time tested steps, you will dramatically improve your results.

Let's review the basics.

Grab the smelling salts! This ad will knock you out!

The headline is the most important part of your ad!!! You should spend most of your time composing the headline. Then re-write it several times and test them to see which one pulls the best.

Entice them with benefits.

People want you to make life easier or better somehow. Your product/service must make them more money, easier, faster, make them sexier, feel better, happier, etc. Stress the benefits - not features.

Never try to sell the product/service from a classified ad.

Experts will tell you... never mention price in the ad. There is no reason for them to go to your site now. They have all the facts, so they think.

A classified ad is used to generate leads, to follow up with or get them to your site, then sell them.

How do you follow up if you don't capture their email address? The words *"FREE REPORT from our autoresponder"* will give you the ability to follow up with your prospects. The free report is a way of elaborating on the benefits of your product/service, i.e. a strong well-worded sales letter.

You can find out more about the benefits of using autoresponders at:
http://www.powerpub.com/

Top 10 Secrets about Search Engines

Search engines, in most cases, should not be considered the "end all" for advertising and promoting your web site. When done properly it can generate a significant amount of traffic for almost no cost. It will take a little time and effort though. But, the pay off can be multiplied times over.

There are millions of web sites, with more being added daily. Guess what! A great many of them fail to use proper metatags. These are used by search bots to index your site.

Here are a few tips and tricks:

- Use your most common keywords in the title. Most search engines will weigh these heavier in their ranking system.

- Use the plural form of your keyword (example: "books", instead of only "book". When a person looks for either "book" or "books" your web page will be pulled up.)

- Use both upper and lower case spellings of your keywords (example: books, Books, BOOKS). More than 3 common forms of the same word will not help much. Although, common misspellings can help.

- Use combinations of your targeted keywords. People generally search using phrases containing two or more keywords (example: "storage facilities", "STORAGE FACILITIES"). To really target your market, add the words "self, "SELF" and "your

city/state". Lots of visitors that can't buy your product/service aren't of much value.

- You must use meta tags. Many search engines index your site by the meta tags. These go between the <head></head> tags in your html and will not show on your web page. View the source on one of the top ranking web pages for specific examples.
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>your title goes here
</TITLE>
<META NAME="Description" CONTENT="your page description">
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="your keywords go here">
</HEAD>

- Here's an example from one of the NetPower Publishing web pages.
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>A to Z free, low cost internet marketing resources, bulk email software, ezines </TITLE>
<META NAME="DESCRIPTION" content="Grab the latest free and low cost software, tips, tricks and tools. Get more visitors, repeat traffic and create more income from your website!">
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" content="internet marketing, Marketing, free ezines, FREE EZINES, E-zines, bulk email, BULK EMAIL, software, SOFTWARE, web site promotions, home study courses, selling on-line, sales help, advertising,">
</HEAD>

- Use a good combination of your 10 to 20 best keywords. Keyword rich text is often the deciding factor in your ranking. HINT: Try to use your strongest keyword at the start of each paragraph and/or search phrases early in the text if possible.

- Fill the ALT tag in your image links with keywords.

- Every page of your site should be registered with the search engines, not just the title page. HINT: Many of the search engines will re index your site periodically and if there has been no change you could lose positioning, so keep your content fresh.

- Warning! Keyword spamming is a technique that some people have used in the past to gain good ranking. It's done by repeating your keywords over and over. Then, changing the colour of the text to match the background of the page. Many search engines will penalise you if you are caught doing this.

- Create and customise a unique web page for each major keyword. Design it specifically for each major search engine. This will take some time but, once completed can dramatically improve your rankings. HINT: Make sure it contains a link to your index page and a few others as well.

How do you Target Your Market Online?

All marketing gurus will tell you to focus on your target market. Sounds simple, right? But, what if you are not sure who will buy your product/service.

There are several ways to accomplish this daunting task online.

One is to find e-zines and newsletters geared specifically for your market. But who is my target market, you ask!

Most marketers say to post to discussion groups and forums. That is true, but these resources can also be a great help to pin point your type of audience. Ask questions. You don't have to be an expert to participate. Many of these folks are there to help.

Before you attempt to post, or run off to search an e-zine directory, list every characteristic of the type of person that would be interested in your product or service.

Here are a few to get you started. (If you say everyone, you are doomed to fail):

- Age
- Average income
- Gender (male/female)
- Hobbies
- Residence (location/area)
- Average education level (degree - non degree)
- Occupation

The list could go on forever. The more specifically you can describe your buyer, the better you will be able to find them. This works off line as well as on line. This is the hard part about targeting your market. It will take some thought.

Once you have described your buyer. Search the forums and lists suggested below - over 250,000 lists and forums. There is a list for every subject imaginable! Read some of them. If you still can't locate your buyer group, ask these people for help. Two great sources for email discussion lists and forums are at: http://www.liszt.com http://www.forumone.com/

Some well-known e-zine directories are:
www.e-zinez.com
www.ezinesearch.com
www.infobot.org

You are getting very close. Put yourself in the mindset of the buyer. An example would be: You may think the perfect place to advertise for selling custom golf clubs would be in a sports publication (quite possibly). But possibly it could be a publication geared to career planning for up and coming young executives. They are interested in socialising with movers and shakers, making an impression and being the best they can be. Many a deal are closed on the golf course. Are you starting to see that listing as many descriptive characteristics as possible will bring you much closer to targeting your specific market. To catch a fish, you first have to know where it hangs out at, so to speak. And, you have to know what it eats, bait if you will.

Top 10 Requirements for Choosing the Right Web Host

After you've selected a great domain name and you're ready to get started, the next step is choosing the "right" web host for your business needs.

Your web site will be the very foundation of your Internet presence. Selecting the right web hosting service is critical to your success. You must have heard the old saying, "you get what you pay for". This usually rings true on the Internet, as well as in the real world.

Consider your choices:

- Free Websites. A few megabytes of storage space, slow servers, usually no customer support, can't use your own domain name, bogged down with their advertisements, are not indexed by most search engines, and none of the features you'll need to make money.

- Low Cost Web Hosting. Often unreliable, bare essentials, little or no real technical support, lacking in features, not really for a serious online business.

- The Right Choice. Lots of storage space, super fast servers, real people to speak with in case of problems, all the features necessary to make big bucks (your own cgi-bin for interactive features, autoresponders, form mail, secure server, etc.)

If you are serious about your online business success, the choice is obvious. Why not use a web hosting service that allows you to take full advantage of the Internet's capabilities. You will most likely, not be able to compete and will be losing big money as a result. Here are the essential features you should be looking for in a quality web-hosting package:

Fast Servers

Quality hardware and redundant OC3 or T3 connections. How fast your web pages load is directly proportional to your income. Don't let anyone tell you a server can be too fast.

Domain Name Support and Registration Services

Your web host must allow the use of your own domain name. They should offer free registration and work closely with Internic to get things done fast.

No Bandwidth, No Access, or Hit Charges

There is absolutely no reason to use a web host that charges for bandwidth, access, or hit fees. The best hosting services offer unlimited bandwidth with standard packages.

Unlimited CGI Access (FTP/Telenet)

You will need CGI scripts at some time or another. Make sure that you have your own cgi-bin and the ability to upload any scripts you want. Never use a web host that limits you to their scripts only.

Unlimited Technical Support

A good web host should have live humans to speak with on the phone. Insist

on free, unlimited technical support via both email and telephone. You'll be glad you did.

Control Panel or Web Based Administration

Most quality web hosts have some type of interface that allows you to manage your server via the web. This is not necessary, but can be very handy for many who don't consider themselves to be the technical type.

Secure Server

If you plan on selling anything directly from your web site, you'll need secure server capabilities. The best offer low or no additional set-up fees, and a low or no monthly fee for SSL.

Email Services

Your web host should offer full email services. Including, POP mailboxes, unlimited email aliases, and a generous supply autoresponders. Do not pay extra for these features.

No Minimum Contract

Don't ever sign a long-term contract. It's not necessary. If something should happen and you decide to switch hosts, being locked into a long-term contract could be very costly.

Money Back Guarantee

A quality web host offers a 30-day money back guarantee. You should insist on it! It is the sign of a professional company that will stand behind its service.

Don't make the common mistake of sacrificing quality and essential features just to save a couple of dollars. The simple truth is that using an inferior web host will not save you money at all. You will inevitably end up paying a lot more due to down time and lost profits.

Free or Low Cost Ways to Effectively Market Online

Rarely a day goes by that someone isn't asking, "How can I start making money online without spending a fortune. Can it

be done? Of course it can. People that are willing to put in the time and effort to learn are doing it every day. You can't play the game if you don't know the rules!

Can you really market your products or services on the Internet for free? Let's set aside the fact that a computer and Internet access will cost you money. And, the truth be told, no one technique is going to guarantee your success! You must incorporate numerous methods of advertising and promotion.

E-mail Discussion Lists

Available for thousands of different topics. Find a list(s) or forum(s) that focus on topics related to your product/service. Offer helpful information and be sure to include your signature file, which gives links to your product/service. Two great sources for email discussion lists & forums are at:
http://www.liszt.com/and
http://www.forumone.com/

Newsgroup Postings

Post in as many newsgroups as relate to your product/service everyday. This method has lost some favour lately as demographics change, but can still provide a steady stream of visitors and qualified leads to your web site. Try it...it works.

Free Classifieds and Free For All Links

Many sites have free classifieds and free links pages. You can get a huge list when you search by keyword at favourite search engine. Also, check out Linkomatic http://www.linkomatic.com/ They will let you use their service for free and link you to a limited amount of their total list of 500+ FFA Links sites. Will you be flooded by visitors? No. But, you will get some traffic, without much effort. One of the most effective uses of free classifieds and FFA links pages are to offer these services yourself. People love to post free ads. They will come back again and again! If you know a little about installing cgi scripts or are willing to spend some time learning, you can get over 1,000 free scripts at:
http://www.cgi-resources.com/
http://cgi-scripts.com/

Write Articles for Ezines

Many of you receive ezines. E-zine Publishers are always interested in finding insightful content for their publication. Write a short informative article on "how a product or service can help solve a common problem. If you don't make it a blatant advertisement for your site, you will stand a better chance of having it published. Then include a "mailto:" or hyperlink, in the article, where the reader can get a free report with all the details.

Next, submit it to as many targeted ezine publishers as you can find. Make sure the article is full of useful information that provides a benefit to the reader. Take a look at various ezine articles for format ideas. A great ezine directory that is very well targeted is at:
http://www.lifestylespub.com/cgi-bin/ezines.cgi?10029 or get a free list of over 500+ free publications at:
http://www.powerpub.com/

Opt-In Email/Newsletter

From the responses you gather from your efforts, build a database of the qualified leads. They have responded to your initial offer. So, why not regularly email a new offer for your product or service? At no cost! You already know they are interested in what you offer. Perhaps they weren't ready to buy the first time.

"I can't afford a list server", you say. Two very good email programs can be downloaded at:
http://www.tucows.com
http://www.jumbo.com

Apart from Google Mail, Outlook and Apple mail, you can manage and deliver your ezine yourself with other good email program like Eudora or Pegasus Mail. These are available for free at:
http://www.eudora.com
http://www.pmail.com/

Once you have your email program installed, practice mailing by using the BCC (blind carbon copy) feature. It's important to use the BCC field when mailing to a list. This ensures that everyone on the list does not see other email addresses on the list. No one wants their email address publicised all over the net.

Mailloop (which isn't free) is the complete Internet email, bulk email, newsletter server, web form processor, customer database, and autoresponder solution. All the software you need is included and integrated into a single application. To top it all off, using the software is simple. It is all run by pull down menus and a click action button bar. Earl Hall personally uses the software and cannot recommend it higher... it is an essential piece of software for doing business on the Internet. Mailloop has allowed Earl Hall to automate the work of several full-time employees! Get all the details at:
http://www.internetmarketing.com/products/software/

Follow-up

This is where most online marketers fall short. If time is money to you, you may want to consider the benefits of an automated follow-up autoresponder system. Get the facts in the free online report at: http://www.powerpub.com/

What's In A Domain Name?

Read this only if you are serious about being a success on the Internet:

How Much Does it Cost? And How do I do It?

There have been many articles written about having your own Domain Name. If you are still on a "Free Site" or in the process of deciding how to make your Internet Presence be known, this information is a MUST.

Many feel that having their own domain name is an expense that can wait or that it takes more knowledge than you possess. Neither of these is valid. Explanation: First of all the cost of getting a domain name is only $35.00 per year (about £20). That breaks down to less than $2.92 (£2) per month. The first two years are paid in advance which equals but renewal will not have to be done for two years. And it is tax deductible.

Secondly, the process of obtaining your own Domain is extremely simple. The hardest part is deciding what to call yourself. (See "How Do I Choose a Name?" below.) Internic will set you up by just filling out a short form. You can

either pay online or wait to receive their statement. And they give you 30 days to pay.

Why Have my Own Domain?

- The Number One reason is to add credibility to your business. When you have a web site you ARE a business owner. Very few people will ever view your Internet Business as serious without your willingness to take this step to present yourself as a professional. It all boils down to this: "If you are not willing to invest $70 (£40) in your own business, how serious can you really be?"

- Money - Increased Sales: In reality this is merely a result of increased credibility. Your Internet buyer does not know if you are a large corporation or a housewife working out of a closet in flannel pyjamas. What you offer and how it is presented to a buyer IS what makes you successful on the Internet. The buyers perceived impression of your company can ONLY be viewed as professional when you have your Own Domain.

- Control - When you have your Own Domain, YOU are the Master. Should you decide to change web hosts, it's a simple transition. Your URL (Web address will not change). You are no longer required to post someone else's advertising on your site. Search Engines that were not willing to index your Free Page will now accept your listing readily. You can set up e-mail addresses such as webmaster@yourdomain.com, sales@yourdomain.com, or editor@yourdomain.com.

Suddenly your company takes on a more professional and larger appearance.

How Do I Choose a Name?

Your Internet Address (Domain Name) should reflect what you and your web site are all about. This is decidedly the most difficult decision you have to make.

Begin by evaluating what you are marketing on your web site. Secondly create a list of possible URLs. Try to keep it as simple as possible or easy to remember. Even a long name is OK, if it reflects your business or what you are

trying to present. (For example: A name such as learntoreadandwrite.com is a long name but easy to remember and certainly would explain what your site is all about).

The next step is to check on availability. If you think you have come up with the one and only perfect name for your web site, you may find that it has already been taken. Be prepared with several acceptable possibilities then visit: http://www.internic.net/index.html

The database at Internic will give you up to the minute availability of your desired URL. It will also offer slight variations of the name you have chosen as suggestions if it is not available.

From this point, it is just a matter of minutes and you will be able to establish yourself as a Professional Internet Business by using their online registration form. If you are doing the online registration or if you have someone else do it for you, be sure that you are listed as the administrative contact. Doing so will give you the control over your site.

In Summary: The creation of a Professional Image on the Internet can only be accomplished by obtaining your Own Domain. The willingness to invest a mere $70 (£40) in your Internet future can add credibility and the impression of being around for the long haul.

Don't allow the time and effort you have put into your web pages get sucked into the black hole of cyberspace.

How to Avoid Guaranteed Internet Marketing Failure!

There are over 100,000 businesses setting up on the Internet every month. The Wall Street Journal has estimated that within a couple of years, there will be over 1 billion home pages, while USA TODAY simply says, "Every business will have a web site."

What do all of these home pages need? Attention! They need visitors, people to

stop by and see what's there. And hopefully buy.

One of the major keys to success is understanding the Internet. The web is not really a mass-market medium, despite what spammers who send unsolicited email messages to thousands of mailboxes may think. It is really a "global niche market medium". That is to say, it's the perfect way to find a targeted customer niche all over the world.

Let's assume you already have a good product/service offered at a fair price. Now what?

Your job as a small web biz owner is to refine your business strategy and get discovered by the right kind of customers.

What You Need to Know

- How to submit your site to hundreds of places on the Net.
- How to name your site to move it up the list of search engines.
- How to prepare a web page for each of the different search engine "types".
- How to use "keywords", "meta tags", multiple listings, site design changes and other techniques for increasing traffic to your web site.
- How to do press releases.
- How to market your site in Usenet newsgroups.
- How and where to use online classified ads, banner ads and linking strategies.

The most comprehensive "How To Guide" on Internet marketing is at http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/8309/. It started as a one-man operation. It now generates $ millions per year and only has a 5 person staff. Where else will you ever see a so-called "marketing guru" post his bank statements online. Actual proof and not theory. Well worth a visit!

How Do I Get Started

Look at similar sites that are out there. Do a search on some of the major engines like Yahoo, Excite and Alta Vista using "your sites keywords" as your search criteria, and study what others are doing. If they are listed in the top 10, you can safely assume they are getting considerable traffic.

Next, get your visitor to understand exactly why they need your various products/services. Offer them some free information. Educate the visitor!

Many sites have irrelevant articles in the name of giving "free information". Make sure you tie "free information" closely to what is being sold. Ideally, it whets the appetite for the service or product being offered. With the right copy, that gently leads the visitor to understand the benefits of your particular product/service, you will greatly increase your sales per visitor ratio. To see how NetPower offers relevant free articles in a searchable database, go to http://www.powerpub.com/ and browse a little.

Once you're ready to open for business, you can get software programs that will make your site promotion efforts much easier.

Important Note

Automation is truly one of the keys to successfully promoting your online business.

The SoftSpider will submit to over 900 promotion sites in minutes. It allows you to select the type of site, free for all links, free classifieds, search engines and directories, with one click of a button. You can download a free shareware version online at http://www.powerpub.com/

The bulk email program Earl uses to deliver his newsletter is called Mailloop. If you are really serious about your online business, this one is a must.

Guide to Creating and Organising a Successful Homepage

Hardly a day goes by without someone asking Earl Hall to look at their home page and make some recommendations. Here, he has passed on some of the absolutely crucial points to keep in mind when creating your visitor oriented web page.

First of all you must take some time and think about what you are going to write on the web pages. Be perfectly clear about what you are offering your visitor. This sounds simple, but you would be amazed at the sites that are confusing. If you don't state this in the first paragraph.... they may not stay long enough to read the rest of the page!

How do I organise my web site?

A good starting point is to write an outline. This will become the basic structure of your web site. About us, mission statement, products and services, testimonials, ordering info, contact info. If you haven't stopped by NetPower Publishing lately, drop by and get some ideas from their home page
http://www.powerpub.com

When writing your text, you must always stress the benefits of your product or service! People only buy when it improves their life or business somehow. It may save time, make the job easier, make them happy, etc. Usually, saving money is the least important reason. That's why people buy name brand products... perceived value!

As you are stressing the benefits, make sure your message says "you" at least 3 times more than "me" or "I"! For example, "you get" or "you will receive" are powerful motivators. Focus on the visitor and they will most likely become a customer.

Are you making your product or service sound exciting and valuable?

Are you asking for the order? There is nothing wrong with presenting the benefits, asking for the order... then presenting more benefits and asking for the order again! Keep your sentences short, exciting and customer oriented!

Are you asking for your visitors email address?

Without the all important email address, you have no way of following up. Remember, people rarely ever buy the first time around. Ask them to sign your guest book, subscribe to your newsletter, and request info from your autoresponder. Be creative! If you let them know you respect their privacy and WILL NOT sell or share your mailing list with any

outside source, your visitor will be more inclined to volunteer information about themselves!

Remember content is king!

So far, we have stressed the message, but what about the actual design? There is nothing worse than going to a home page and scrolling through banner after banner. You can guarantee that your visitor will not wait! If the banner does not generate income or visitors, then you do not need it. This is a sure sign of a beginner. You can always create a "cool banner page", if you want to add your favourite links.

A clean, crisp logo and a few small images used to emphasise a particular point of interest should work nicely. An attention grabbing headline will go along way! Using words like "discover", "new", "amazing", "truth" or "revolutionary" will more impact than the endless blinking text!

How long is a web page?

A web page can actually be as long as you want it to be. There are some seemingly endless ones. But, remember the outline concept. Try to keep your pages to around 50-60k if possible.

Web surfers are an impatient lot!

Online Marketing Magic

Earl Hall recently had a new client ask him to visit their website and make some recommendations. He discovered some very common errors.

The biggest mistake most people make in marketing is trying to sell a product, service or information that others simply do not want to buy. That sounds silly, but it is true. In fact the majority of entrepreneurs that fail in business do so because they either overlook or completely dismiss the following simple and obvious truth.

Magic of Marketing Success

- Firm belief in product service or information.
- Solves a common problem quickly and easily.
- Easy to implement, order, ship or

deliver digitally.

- Adequate margins.

The Magic explained

Why must you have a firm belief in your product? Think about it, how can you hope to convey excitement, and enthusiasm to your prospects if you don't firmly believe in the benefits your product offers? Without a passion for what you are doing it will be close to impossible to persist day in and day out and maintain the motivated discipline that is required to be a success in any venture.

A common definition of entrepreneur is problem solver. Every successful business, product or service solves a common problem.

The problem can be one of time, money, physical, emotional, motivational, spiritual anything you name it. A result of living in this fast paced networked world is that we all are conditioned to not only want our problems solved but solved quickly. By last week would even be better.

This intense desire for instant and easy gratification is really an online marketers dream come true. Never before has it been possible to reach millions within moments.

As online marketers we also have to make it easy for our prospects to purchase our products. Accepting credit cards is, by far, the quickest way to increase your sales. Did you know that accepting secure online orders can, in some cases, increase

your sales by as much as 400%.

Offer several options for purchasing - such as accepting payment by phone, fax and postal mail. Be sure to explain step by step how to order. If they have to think about it too long.... you may have lost the sale! It's amazing that you can visit a website and not be able to figure out how to order what they are selling, or worse not even know what they are selling. Always be clear, right from the get-go. Let your visitors know what they are going to find there and offer them something of value. Make it exciting and you will be turning those hits into sales before know it!

Having adequate margins or mark-ups is vital to your success. If it costs you $10.00 for a product and you think you're going to sell it for $19.95, you will find it exceedingly difficult to be successful. Earl Hall recommends at least a 4:1 mark-up. If your margins are not sufficient you will not have enough cash flow to cover your expenses.

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

Reference:
[1] © Copyright 1998 and 1999 by Earl B. Hall.
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