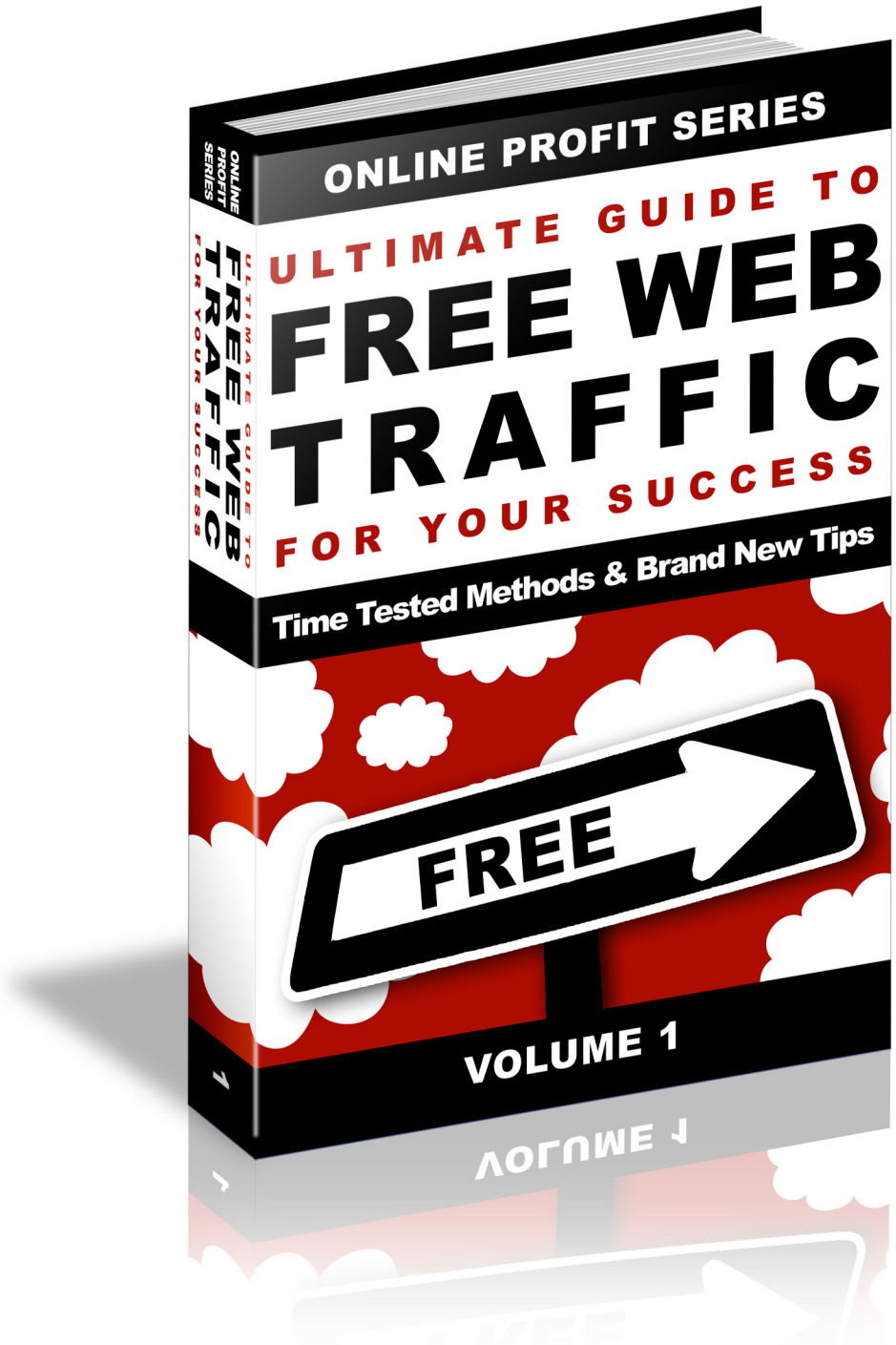
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....4
Introduction to Web Traffic..... 5
Free Traffic vs. Paid Traffic..... 7
BEFORE YOU BEGIN.....9
Understand How Your Traffic Campaigns Perform 10
Monitor Your Server Downtimes..... 12
Keep Traffic by Performing Website Maintenance..... 14
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION.....16
What Is Search Engine Optimization?..... 17
How To Increase Traffic Through On-Page SEO..... 20
Off-Page SEO Methods For Your Website..... 22
Building Links to Build Traffic..... 24
CONTENT IS KING.....26
Get More Traffic By Giving More Information..... 27
Everybody Wins With Article Marketing..... 29
Build A Blog To Build Site Traffic..... 31
VIRAL TRAFFIC.....33
Gain Web Site Traffic through Tell-A-Friend Scripts..... 34
Build Traffic Giving Out Free Reports..... 36
Build Traffic Through Giveaways..... 38
Social Bookmarking To Build Site Traffic..... 40
StumbleUpon Is Social Bookmarking On Steroids..... 42
Use Viral Videos To Build Web Site Traffic..... 44
ONLINE MEDIA.....46
Stop The Presses With These Professional Press Release Tips..... 47
Free Advertising At Free Classified Ad Sites..... 49
Create a Squidoo Lens And See New Traffic..... 51
OTHER METHODS.....53
Build Traffic With A Contest Or Challenge..... 54
Promote Within Your Niche At Forums And News Groups..... 56
Give Your Opinion And Make it Count..... 58
Get New Visitors By Answering Questions..... 60
Maintain An Email List And Maintain Your Site Traffic..... 62
Submit Your Site To Web Directories and Build Targeted Traffic..... 64
Discover If Traffic Exchanges Are For You..... 66
Use An RSS Feed To Build Site Traffic..... 68
Translate Your Website For Global Appeal..... 70
RESOURCES.....72

..:: PART 1 ::..

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1:

Introduction to Web Traffic

There are an enormous number of ways that you can make money online. Whether you are selling advertising space, selling actual merchandise, or selling information, **you determine your success or failure by your ability to get people to visit your site**.

If you started a business and put all of your advertising on the side of dirt road with minimal traffic, then you probably won't see any fruit produced by that effort. In the same way, you want your store to be located in a busy part of town where casual shoppers linger. Your best business may come from people who just dropped in while window-shopping.

The key to succeeding in any internet related business is traffic. You must find ways to lead potential customers to your front page. If you think you can rely solely on the search engines to put you at the top of their lists, then you may be setting yourself up for failure. Search engines use a complicated formula when deciding which pages show up first. Unless yours is the only business of your kind in the world that has a web site, you probably won't get to the top of the list. If for some reason you do, then you probably won't stay there for very long. Corporations buy the rights to search phrases and generally pay big money for the opportunity to be highlighted at the top of the list.

One interesting point to keep in mind is that, the more traffic you have at your site, the more likely you are to slide up in the search engine results. The question then, is **how do you get that initial flow of customers, clients, or readers to make your website a place that they regularly visit?** This is the core question of this book and you'll get plenty of answers to this question during the rest of the book.

For example, as a basic rule, as you plan and design your website, you should be looking at other sites that are in the same genre as yours. Maybe they offer similar or complimentary services. Maybe they provide information about the same topic. Try to build relationships with the operators of these sites. Leave comments on their blogs and participate in forum discussions, leaving a link to your own page in your signature.

You may want to consider adding a blog to your website. Create an RSS feed that notifies subscribers whenever you have updated information. Be diligent about keeping the content on your page fresh and you will find that you begin to get repeat traffic. Others will begin to link to you from their own pages and list you as a valuable source of current information. Just as in any traditional business format, building relationships and networking will be vital pieces of your success.

The important thing, as you are beginning, is that you have a strong understanding of the fact that it takes some work. **The traffic flow at your website won't happen by accident. It takes careful planning and sharp execution to make that hit number go up. In this book, we are going to show you how.**

Chapter 2:

Free Traffic vs. Paid Traffic

Due to the rapid usage of the Internet becoming a norm throughout the globe, various groups of people are now able to market their products and services by setting up a website. However, the best-designed web site will not produce income unless there is traffic directed to it. **There are a couple of options to obtain website traffic.** One is through free traffic and the other one is through paid traffic. Let's examine the differences between the two. You can then decide whether the former or the latter is a suitable choice for your website.

Free traffic, as the name suggests, implies that you traffic to your website free of charge. The most common method of obtaining this involves using Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques. When you optimize your website, search engines view your site as being useful and relevant. This in turn, leads to increase in rankings for your keywords. SEO methods are great for obtaining free traffic in the long term but it might take as long as six months to a year to see full results. Alternatively, you can use strategically written articles and get them published at article directory sites that have high volumes of traffic. This works to bring in organic search engine traffic within a week. However, as your article moves out of the main pages of the article directories, your traffic is likely to taper off in two to three weeks. Writing and publishing articles once a week should keep free traffic to your site from dropping off. Free traffic can also be obtained through various traffic exchanges. Traffic exchanges can quickly bring in a lot of traffic but will most likely be untargeted.

The other option of getting visitors to your website involves **paid traffic**. If you need immediate traffic to your website and have some money to

spend, paid traffic is a very good option. However, careful planning is required to ensure the greatest return on your investment. The most common and immediate method of obtaining paid traffic is through pay-per-click listings with all the major search engines like Yahoo, Google, Miva etc. Depending on the amount you are willing to spend as well as your target keywords, pay-per-click traffic can bring in some of the best results due to precise targeting of visitors to your site. The advantage of paid traffic is that you are not affected by search engine algorithm changes and as long as you have money to spend, you will gain traffic to your website.

The best thing to do would be to use a combination of both paid and free traffic. Optimize your website to bring you traffic over the long term and to position your website really well in the search engines. For the short term, get your traffic through a combination of paid searches and article marketing. In time, you will be able to obtain almost all of your traffic for free and you can slowly phase out of your paid traffic options if you so choose.

However, the aim of this book is to teach you how to get free traffic to your website. If you have a limited budget, targeted free traffic will be the only option for you and that is not a bad thing if you have a good roadmap. **This book will be your roadmap when it comes to free traffic generation because it blends time-tested techniques with the brand-new techniques of 2007.**

..:: PART 2 ::..

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Chapter 3:

Understand How Your Traffic Campaigns Perform

In today's information economy, it can be said **the person with the most information wins**. The same would hold true if you want a successful website; you must have information to analyze if the things you're doing to promote it are effective. But what are the types of website analysis systems are available to you, and which of them will best suit youy needs? Is there an analysis technique that is more accurate than others in helping you decide which promotions are actually getting results? Should you use your web host's default statistics program, or are there other services you should consider? This chapter will give a brief overview of web analytics and their uses in the measurement of your website elements' contribution to your business objectives.

There are basically two types of website analysis in wide use today, log file analysis and page tagging. Log file analysis reads the logs a server records on every transaction, but this might be inaccurate due to the widespread use of page caching. The desire to outsource web analytics and expand the available data has led to page tagging, which basically uses a JavaScript (PHP or ASP in some cases) to count the number of times an image (which may be invisible) is served to a visitor. This JavaScript can also pass along information about a particular page and the visitor.

Many web hosts offer a default statistics program to provide you with basic information. Awstats and Webalizer are most likely the most popular stats engines available today. Keep in mind your web host may update different types of information at different times, so if you want a complete picture of what has been happening at your site you may need to wait for information which is a few days old.

A recent trend has seen a move away from these systems in favor of the more detailed information available through Google Analytics. Google Analytics is located at https://www.google.com/analytics/ and as you have probably guessed, is operated by Google. This system offers a wide array of analysis tools, including reports for Marketing Optimization and Content Optimization. Would you like information to help you understand how your marketing efforts are working, and where there might be a link in your funnel? It's all there, and it's all free.

With any of these services, you will at least consider tracking your referrers. **After all, once you start promoting your site, you'll use different methods and it is important to track which ones work and which ones don't.** With that information in mind, you'll then repeat the steps that lead to success and stop spending time for strategies that don't get results.

Remember, the player with the most information wins!

Chapter 4:

Monitor Your Server Downtimes

It certainly is irritating when your web server is down, because you simply lose visitors and potential customer. But did you realize you might be losing more than visitors and potential customers when your web site can't be accessed? According to Vanessa Fox of Google, "*If the host is down when Googlebot tries to access your pages, then those pages may disappear from the index until Googlebot can crawl them again.*" But how do you know your server is down without constantly checking your sites? This chapter will share a few free services to help you evaluate your downtimes. From there you can decide if it's time to look for another server solution.

Unless you have no life and want to monitor your web site by hand, hitting the refresh button every five or ten minutes, you will probably be interested in a tool to monitor the process for you. Fortunately some great tools exist to do just that, and the best of them are free. These free services can monitor your downtimes 24 hours a day and 7 days a week and they will let you know if there is a problem either by email, RSS or even on your cell phone through SMS.

Here are some of the best free services to monitor your server downtimes, in no particular order:

- http://www.siteuptime.com/
- http://host-tracker.com/
- http://www.mralert.com/
- http://www.montastic.com/

Once you know there has been a downtime issue, you can check in Google's free webmaster tools to see if the Googlebot had tried to index your site while it was down. Google webmaster tools are at http://www.google.com/webmasters/ and provide a variety of other useful services as well. Simply click on the Webmaster Tools link and register your site if you haven't already. Once registered, you can check the "crawl errors" link to see if there have been any problems. You can also check the frequency of visits by the Googlebot to see how long the windows are between crawls; if you site is not being crawled frequently, obviously you won't have to worry about occasional short downtimes.

You don't have to worry too much if the Googlebot does happen to miss your site on a particular crawl because the site was down. Vanessa Fox also stated that Googlebot will give your site a few tries before actually dropping it from the Google search result pages. But even though it isn't a true hit and miss issue, you will still be wise to monitor your server downtimes and make adjustments when necessary.

It is obvious that if your website is down, people will rarely give you another chance. If your website gets down too often, it will be in your best interest to move your website to another host before you start active promotion.

Chapter 5:

Keep Traffic by Performing Website Maintenance

In order to protect your home do you spend time making sure everything is in repair? If you ran a shop would you take extra time making sure all your equipment is operating correctly? Operating a website is no different than maintaining a shop or taking care of your home, except for the fact that you're expecting thousands of important visitors every day. But what makes for a "ship shape" website? Is there some sort of routine maintenance you should perform? **This chapter will cover a few tips to make your site run smoothly and let your visitors feel comfortable enough to stick around.**

One of the common problems site visitors come across is old, broken links. If you have linked to an outside source you might do well to check from time to time and make certain that link is valid. This is especially true if your link is to a particular page or a blog entry as these are famous for getting switched; the site and the entry might still be there, but if something about the link changes your visitors won't be taken where you wanted them to go. Some types of web sites are more likely to come and go, so you'll have to judge from experience how often to check for broken links. Internal links are just as likely to break, especially if you have links to photos or audio files; when you make a change to some element of your web site, think through the links you might have affected.

There are several online tools that can help you to check for broken links. Two of them are free and they provide a great service. You'll find them at http://validator.w3.org/checklink and http://www.dead-links.com/

If you're interested in a free software that works on your desktop, you'll find Xenu's Link Sleuth™ at http://home.snafu.de/tilman/xenulink.html

Another way to maintenance your site is doing what we'll call "fixing leaks in the pipe". It's likely that you have certain things you want your site visitors to do, whether it is to visit an affiliate link, your own product, or sign up for a newsletter. The route from a customer's arrival at your site to the action you want them to perform is often called your "pipeline". Check for leaks in your pipeline since a leaky pipe could provide a place for you to lose potential customers.

Here are a few places your visitors might leak out from and never return to your site:

- ✓ Do each of your subscription forms lead back to your site?
- ✓ Are you using custom "thank you" pages or depending on auto-generated ones? Auto-generated thank you pages might not lead back to your site.
- ✓ Have you customized your error pages with links back to working parts of your site? If a customer finds a missing page and ends up on a default "404 error" page, you may never see them again.
- ✓ Are you giving away your traffic to web rings and link exchanges that don't have easy-to-find links back to your site?

Keep the little maintenance tasks under check so you don't miss any visitors and never underestimate the power of these little tricks. After all, competition is high on any traffic building campaign and it is small details what makes a difference.

..:: PART 3 ::..

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Chapter 6:

What Is Search Engine Optimization?

Search Engine Optimization (**SEO**) is something that many people have heard of but few people really and truly understand. This is very unfortunate because as an internet marketer one of the best things you can do for your business is to thoroughly understand what Search Engine Optimization means and how you can go about becoming an expert at it.

The single biggest way that Search Engine Optimization will help you is in generating targeted traffic for your website. Not just traffic mind you, but targeted traffic. This means that people that visit your website will actually be looking for what it is you have to offer and you can probably understand conceptually how that is going to be much better for you than non-targeted traffic. In addition, if you have a website that is properly optimized for use in the search engines you are going to save money because you will not need to spend as much on other methods of traffic generation like pay per click advertising.

Now that you understand how Search Engine Optimization is going to be useful to you it is time to get into some of the basics of the SEO process. **There are generally two parts to SEO that you want to be aware of, "on-page" optimization factors and "off-page" optimization factors**.

On-page optimization factors are things that you can change on your website in order to make the website more friendly to search engines. These are things like keyword density within paragraphs as well as keyword placement within the title of the webpage, Meta tags and the bolding, underline and italicizing of keywords within the webpage. These are all factors that affect how search engines view your webpage and

getting these just right is one of the keys to proper Search Engine Optimization.

While onpage factors are important, anyone that has done SEO work before will be able to tell you that it is the **off-page optimization** factors that really make the search engines love your page. In terms of off-page optimization, the primary thing I'm talking about is link building. Whenever another website links to your page they are in effect casting a vote in favor of what your page has to offer. The more websites that link to your page, the more votes you get and therefore the more favorably many of the search engines look at your website. There are entire online courses dedicated to the concept of link building as it is truly one of the most important parts of proper Search Engine Optimization and if you get just one part of the whole picture right; make sure it's this part.

Recent trends in Search Engine Optimization have been set in by a lot of search engines in order to combat the "black hat" techniques many dishonest marketers have been using in order to get their websites good rankings. These trends have made it much more difficult to get your site well-ranked in search engines and indeed it can take months before you even get a sniff of the top. One way to combat this is to use blog posts regularly or make entries on web 2.0 sites (Craigslist, Digg etc.) as these posts get indexed on a daily basis by search engines. You can then place links on those posts that point back to your website and get it indexed that way.

SEO in 2007 also looks like it's giving way to SMO (Social Media Optimization). With the growth of social networking sites like MySpace, Facebook etc, it's important to increase the interactivity of your site by offering integration with social networking technologies. This will help your site in search engine rankings as web 2.0 gathers momentum.

There are a number of ways to make Search Engine Optimization work with you and one of the keys in doing so is to be creative. You can never rely on the search engines making it easy for you and for that simple reason you need to be continually thinking of new and innovative ways to get your websites indexed and placed high in search engines. In many different ways it is really you that determines the potential of your site.

Chapter 7:

How To Increase Traffic Through On-Page SEO

The concept of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has been around since 1997 with the rapid adoption of the Internet and its most popular search engines. In the early days of SEO, webmasters inserted keywords in the meta-tags of each HTML page they authored for Internet search engines to index and rank. Over time, webmasters discovered they could artificially increase a page's rank by inserting irrelevant yet popular keywords into the meta-tags. This abuse forced the search engine companies to adopt new ways to index and rank web pages and to reduce the dependency on the meta-tags inserted into the web pages. Most modern search engines now scan, index, and rank web pages automatically using automated crawlers with sophisticated algorithms. The search engine companies do not disclose their algorithms in an attempt to curb artificially high page rankings. In order to rank highly in most popular search engines today, webmasters must develop content that incorporates certain SEO techniques to take advantage of these new methods of page rankings.

Keywords are the single most important aspect of on-page SEO for the Internet. Therefore, before writing a single word of content, it is extremely important to develop a list of keywords that potential readers will be use to find the web page. Keyword lists on a variety of topics are easily found online. However, brainstorming keywords based on the subject of the written content can be just as effective. The importance of picking the right keywords is paramount to producing high-ranking web pages and should not be overlooked. The prominence, order, and density of keywords on the web page are vitally important in how search engines ultimately index and rank web pages. The title of the web page is the most important attribute of the web page and therefore should include

one or more keywords. Next in importance for the use of keywords are any headers or bolded words in the content. Finally, keyword density within the body text should generally be roughly between five to twenty percent depending on the subject matter. Pages that contain keywords that are located close to each other also tend to rank higher.

The next most important factor affecting page rank is the usage of hyper-links within a web page. Links should be relevant to the content and care should be taken to choose relevant keywords to describe the links. The actual length of the hyper-link and filename can also affect the relevancy of the link to the web page. It is obvious that dead links should not be used, but often overlooked is the need to return to web pages after a certain time has passed to ensure the links still point to their original location.

As essential as the use of keywords and links are, there are penalties for use of "bad" keywords and links. Any vile language or ethnic slurs will definitely have a negative effect on page ranking. The practice of 'keyword stuffing" should be avoided as most search engines can detect when keyword density has exceeded a certain threshold for a particular topic. Any links to inappropriate content and excessive use of cross-linking will also severely downgrade page ranking.

When attempting to maximize the amount of traffic to a web page, the importance of a web page's rank within the Internet's top search engines cannot be over-emphasized. While there are many SEO techniques to improve a page ranking, on-page content is certainly the easiest to control. Through the careful choice and placement of keywords and hyper-links when developing content, a Webmaster can create consistently high-ranking web pages. Care must also be taken to avoid the pitfalls of keyword and hyper-link usage to minimize penalties assessed by most modern complex Internet search engine algorithms.

Chapter 8:

Off-Page SEO Methods For Your Website

With thousands of new sites coming online everyday, webmasters are getting more sophisticated in using on-page SEO tactics to rank favorably with search engines. Many also use dubious, "Black-hat" strategies in an attempt to fool search engines into thinking that their sites offer valuable content to human users. In order to combat the abuse of on-page SEO, search engines now give a lot of importance to off page SEO methods.

Off-page SEO refers to all the optimization techniques done off the website. This means search engines will rank your site on the basis of who is linking to your website. Gone are the days when all you had to do was exchange links with a couple hundred sites and your website would sky rocket in rankings. For good off page optimization, you need to plan carefully.

To begin with, try to obtain one way links to your website from respected or authority sites. These sites have a very good page rank factor with search engines. Page rank is a relative rank awarded to websites. A high page rank or PR is very valuable and obtaining one way links from these sites can be the single biggest boost to your off page optimization efforts. Try to find authority sites with a similar theme to your website and try to obtain a one way link to your website. You might have to pay them for this service, but it is well worth it. Try to also exchange links with a few carefully chosen sites that are related to your site in terms of content. It is also important to be linked with a number of sites of varying page rank. This proves to the search engines that your link building goals are based on getting relevant links to your website and are not determined by page rank alone.

Whenever you exchange links with a website or try to obtain one-way links, make sure you vary your linking text. If you use the same text, search engines will assume that you paid to have pages link to your website, or worse, will assume that your site is a Spam site. Getting plenty of content on your websites is also a great idea, as this allows deep linking to your site. Deep linking is when a site links to not just to the index page of your site, but also to several pages within your site.

You can greatly boost your off-page optimization efforts by using article marketing. Well-written articles can provide you one-way links from authority sites in a matter of days. If your articles provide links to inner pages of your website with varying link text, you can also achieve the goal of deep linking and varying link text. In order to get the best results using article marketing, write at least eight different articles, each targeting a different major keyword and each containing varying link text. Distribute these articles to a few major article directories over a period of three to four weeks. This will bring in organic traffic to your website and boost your off page rankings, all at the same time.

Search engines also value the length of time taken to build links. If you get all your links in one day, it signals a red flag with the search engines. Take your time building quality links to your site. Spread your article marketing over a few weeks. Try to get listed with free directories. These directories take several months to approve and post your site, so that helps towards slow link building.

Finally, make use of web 2.0 technologies to get links to your website. There are several sites like Digg, Delicious, Facebook, MySpace and even Craigslist. These sites also provide a lot of human traffic and are great ways to get your website listed for off page optimization as well as gain traffic. Be careful and follow the rules when you post on these sites to avoid your post being deleted. It is well worth the effort.

Chapter 9:

Building Links to Build Traffic

It sounds like the simplest thing in the world. Just find someone with a site that has content similar to your own and strike a deal, "You place a link to me on your web site and I'll place a link to you on mine." There was a time when this could be an effective way to generate traffic to your site as well as improve your search engine ranking. But for the most part, those times are gone. Unscrupulous web masters figured out how to abuse the system by creating link farms and other schemes with absolutely no benefit for the site visitors, and search engines got smart and put an end to the whole thing. So can't we benefit from reciprocal links anymore? Sure we can, but with a few caveats. This chapter will explore how safe linking practices can still help your site gain traffic, and do better in the search engine results pages.

So as you may have already guessed, search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN are skeptical about two-way links. Due in a large extent to manipulation of the system, these search engines have programmed their bots to penalize sites for unethical linking practices, even if there is only the suspicion of wrong doing. Where at one time a site looked popular if it was linked to by many sites, now that is a red flag. The search bots actually follow the links these days, and evaluate whether or not the content on both ends of the links is related. If it is related, everything might be fine. If it isn't related, or the bots aren't able to see the relationship, your search engine placements might be effected.

Basically, if anything you're doing even looks the least bit like you're trying to manipulate your search engine placements, you're likely to get dinged. So do you have to worry that a site links to you if they aren't based on a related topic? Technically that shouldn't be a problem; usually

only the site placing the link will be penalized for an irrelevant link. Otherwise, it would open the door to a whole realm of sabotaging other sites by linking to them.

So if you want to avoid the famous "Google Slap" where you get knocked off the top of the search engine placements for what Google interperets as foul play, what is a safe linking practice? The answer is simple, "think naturally." Set up linking arrangements that appear natural and ask yourself, "Would I place this link if the search engines weren't a factor?" Chances are, if you're only linking to improve your placement then you could be asking for trouble. But if the link is there to truly serve your site visitors, then go for it.

After all, isn't that what it is all about?

..:: PART 4 ::..

CONTENT IS KING

CHAPTER 10:

Get More Traffic By Giving More Information

Everyone has heard the saying, so there is little disagreement that we live in the information age. It's also a well-known fact people look for information online more than ever before. In fact, searching for information on the internet has become so common that the name "Google" has become a verb; when you want to learn about a topic you simply "google" it. Also, people have a fairly open mind about where their information comes from; they're going to be interested in reading articles, blog entries and reports from just about any source, and you can be the source they look to.

"But wait," you say. "I'm not trying to be an encyclopedia. I just want to sell my product."

The truth is if someone wants to buy a product, they're not likely to go surfing the web. They're going to visit Amazon, eBay or one of the other well established online retailers. Unless you have the advertising budget of a small nation, you're not likely to pull too much business from those firmly established sites. So how do you get people to buy from you? Should you throw in the towel and surrender to the big online retailers? Of course not, and this chapter will show you one way to overcome competition from the big boys of the net.

So if people want information, and they're willing to get it from sites just like yours, then by all means give it to them. Give the people articles, give them blog entries and give them news. Tell them everything you know and then look up something more to tell them. Remember what was said, this is the "information age" and not the "product age". Give the people all that information, and while you at it

give them information about how much they need your product. Tell them about designer jeans and let them know you sell designer jeans at rock bottom prices. Tell them about planning a garden and let them know you sell an info product about planting bulbs.

Don't try to "sell" anything, but just let people know you have something to meet their needs. If they don't yet realize they have that particular need, then give them all the information to let them understand their need. If someone wanted to buy, they'd go to one of the major online retailers and look for it. But if someone wants information, they will search the web and if they happen to find you, give the customer what they want.

Search engines love content, and so do your visitors! Fresh content will keep your visitors coming back to your website at their own will and you'll naturally get higher results at search engines. As the saying goes, "Content is king" and it will your best friend when it comes to traffic generation.

Chapter 11:

Everybody Wins With Article Marketing

Who knew writing a few articles and giving them away for free could be one of the best things you could do for your own web site? **This is the precept behind article marketing, and comprises the ultimate in "white hat" or honest and straightforward marketing techniques.** With article marketing you provide what other web sites need, you give a reason for the search engines to send traffic your way, and most of all you give readers the information they seek. This chapter will briefly outline how article marketing works and what it can do for your web site.

There are two primary factors affecting your place on the search engine results pages, how relevant your page seems to a particular search and the number of quality links coming to your page from other sites. It is obvious a search engine wouldn't stay in business long if someone searched for "roses" and was led to a page about "muscle cars", so the more clearly your page can position itself as relative to a particular search term the better. Incoming links to your web page are seen by search engines as popularity votes, so the more you have from related sites the better.

But the key to both of these factors is found in the word "**relevant**". Posting an article on your web site that is optimized for relevance to a particular search term will go a long way in convincing the search engines to include you in the search results for that term. Submitting articles to related web sites with a link back to your own makes you appear popular with the right crowd, the "in" crowd of relevant web sites. Did you notice both of these activities involved the use of articles?

Article marketing is the practice of providing articles you've written (or had written on your behalf) to other web sites, blogs and ezines. These articles are provided for free, and in return you are allowed to insert a short bio and a link back to your web site. This bio is usually at the end of the article. Now if that link back to your web site leads to great content that is related to the article, you've just managed to kill two birds with one stone; you've shown your site is relevant and you've made a link to it from a related site so you've created the impression your site is popular within that niche.

Viola! You are on your way to being recommended by the major search engines and because of that, building traffic.

Article marketing truly creates a win-win situation for everyone involved and if you want to get your share, here are some of the top article directories you will submit your articles to get free traffic and backlinks to your website:

- http://www.ezinearticles.com
- http://www.goarticles.com
- http://www.articlecity.com
- http://www.searchwarp.com
- http://www.articledashboard.com

Chapter 12:

Build A Blog To Build Site Traffic

Not too long ago, the question seemed to be "To blog or not to blog." But now the blog has truly established itself as a formidable web presence and the question has become, "To blog or not to be." But it can be a lonely feeling when you write a blog and nobody is there to read it. How do you create a blog, but more importantly how do you create one people will actually read? This chapter will introduce you to the common everyday blog and show you how it can carry you to uncommon and exceptional heights.

Just in case you haven't heard, the term "blog" is short for "web log" (leave it to a bunch of computer geeks to squeeze a couple of words together and make a new dictionary entry). Originally blogs were similar to an online diary, or a log of places you visited on the web. But today the blog platform has emerged as a content manager, an easy way to create a web site and manage your articles and other posts. A blog is a great way to easily post the latest information, and that is why the search engines love them.

Whenever someone says "search engine" and "loves them" in the same sentence you should pay attention. Yes search engines love blogs because they are a constant source of new and changing information, and that's what search engines seek. I not only recommend that you start your own blog, but I recommend that you start two. Here's why:

Use one blog as a content management system. You can build an entire website on a blog platform like WordPress (http://www.wordpress.org), and if you have a web host with cPanel access and Fantastico, you can create a WordPress blog in a few clicks. If building your own blog from

scratch seems a little overwhelming at first, you can get a free WordPress blog at wordpress.com and you won't even have to host it.

Create second blog and use it as a true web log. Journal all about your online activities and refer to the articles and posts in your first blog. Each time you link to your first blog, you've just helped your search engine results. Build this second blog at http://www.wordpress.com or give http://www.blogger.com a try. Blogger is operated by Google and it is believed that "search engine" really "loves them" (remember what I said about those phrases together?

So as I already said, link between these two blogs often. You can create a little network of related blogs, all linking to each other, and each helping the other with search engine placement. Here's an important tip: use keywords in all your blog names, URL's, post titles, article titles and in all of your links; when the search engine spiders follow your links you don't want there to be any doubt what those links are about!

If you have an existing web site you want to promote, link to it whenever possible in all of your blogs. Talk about new features and offers at your site; the more you can log on your blog, the better.

..:: PART 5 ::..

VIRAL TRAFFIC

Chapter 13:

Gain Web Site Traffic through Tell-A-Friend Scripts

Your website is finally starting to get a little traffic. The results are in and your visitors think your web site it great. You're beaming with pride as you tell them, "Be sure to tell your friends." Certainly a few of your visitors will tell a friend or two, but what about all the other visitors who love your site so much? Have you made it easy for them to share your site with others? Have you provided a real reason for visitors to take a minute from their busy day and tell a friend about your site? **This chapter will share a few tips and techniques for getting site traffic to really snowball by enlisting an army of people to spread the word, an army made up from your current site visitors.**

If you want your site visitors to tell their friends about you, you have to make it easy. Actually you can't just make it easy; you have to make it super easy. Tell-A-Friend scripts are one way to make that happen. These scripts are simple and do not require complicated programming. As a matter of fact you can usually copy and paste a script right onto the intended page. Tell-A-Friend scripts are available in many shapes and sizes, but you will be better off if you locate a script with the ability to subscribe people directly to your opt-in email list. A few other things to look for in a TAF script are the ability for full customization, sending to an unlimited number of target recipients, recognizing and blocking invalid email addresses, and one that provides detailed usage statistics.

If you are looking for a PHP or ASP based Tell-A-Friend script, you'll start your search with http://www.hotscripts.com because this is a great source for both free and paid solutions. This website is very huge though.

To find a reliable PHP based TAF script, you will check:
http://www.hotscripts.com/PHP/Scripts_and_Programs/Site_Recommendation/index.html

If you are looking for an ASP based TAF script, you will check:
http://www.hotscripts.com/ASP/Scripts_and_Components/Site_Recommendation/index.html

Finally, if you are interested in hosted services, You will check:
http://www.hotscripts.com/Remotely_Hosted/Site_Recommendation/index.html

So now that you've got all your ducks in a row and have installed the perfect tell-a-friend script, let me ask you an important question. Why should someone tell their friend about your web site? Maybe the answer is obvious to you, but is it obvious to your site visitors? Will they do it just because you asked them to? It's likely your visitor isn't thinking of the benefits your site might present for their friends, so it's your job to tell them about it. I'm not suggesting you offer people some sort of bribe like a free ebook; you can do that if you want, but it probably isn't necessary and might not attract the kind of traffic you really need. But you could simply say, "Tell your friends about our newsletter about XYZ because it is interesting" or "Tell someone about the ABC newsletter because it will save them time and money".

If you make it easy for your visitors and give them a good reason, you might be surprised how quickly the word spreads about your site.

Chapter 14:

Build Traffic Giving Out Free Reports

Everybody loves to get something for nothing, don't they? **So offering a report or ebook for free on your web site is simply giving people what they want.** Oh sure the technique is as old as the hills, give away an ebook or report in exchange for joining your mailing list. But do you know how to get your free report into the hands of people you might never otherwise be able to contact? Do you know how to make people really want to pass your report to their friends? This chapter will share a few tips and techniques for giving away free reports and ebooks to build an email list of loyal customers.

So you might already understand the basic concept but I'll cover it here briefly. You offer a free ebook on your web site, and all people have to do is add their email address to your list. You post a sign up form to your autoresponder (also called an opt-in form) and setup automatic delivery of the ebook or a download link when someone submits the information. But does it have to stop there? Should you be satisfied with just that one email address? Absolutely not, I say.

Another part of the old technique is you'll include affiliate links within your report. Sure, we all know that; you sign up to be an affiliate for products related to your report, put the link in your report and get paid a commission when people buy those products. This will get you a little further than just a plain old report, but wouldn't you like to kick that process into a higher gear?

What if you give away that same free report with those same affiliate links in it, but make those links customizable? You can use a special software known as "PDF Brander" which will allow someone to change the links you

specify, exchanging their affiliate link with yours. **ViralPDF (http://www.ViralPDF.com/) is one of the most well-known software for that purpose.**

Now you've given that person a real reason to pass your report along, they can make money by doing so. Since that person might not have already been an affiliate of the products you refer to in the report, you could still collect a second-tier commission because they become an affiliate "under" you. Not only that but if you leave a couple of links back to your own web site within the report, you've just gotten your link in front of another potential site visitor.

Chapter 15:

Build Traffic Through Giveaways

If you wouldn't mind indulging me a moment, I'd like you to think about a virus. What does a virus have to do with anything of interest to you? Well, a virus is something that enters the body as a microscopic germ and spreads until it virtually takes things over. Doesn't that sound like the perfect internet marketing campaign? How would an internet germ get through? **You can start a viral marketing germ with a free tool, service, template or report, and if conditions are correct it can spread like wildfire.** This chapter will share a few ideas about how offering a free product can perform wonders for your online business.

It is a well known fact that everyone loves free stuff. If the free stuff is something useful like a tool, template, service or valuable information, then so much the better. But many of us have a large section of our hard drives full of things we've downloaded for free and will never use. The original idea seemed good and we probably exchanged our email addresses for these bits of hard drive clutter, but something about them just didn't pan out. Maybe they weren't what we expected.

So if you're going to give away something free, and your motive is for it to create a viral marketing effect and be passed around the internet, you're more likely to be successful if you give away something that's really useful. What can people within your market really use? If your free giveaway is just some gimmick or even worse just an attempt to sell another product, it isn't going to get passed around.

But even if you do offer a true quality giveaway, what will make it go viral? You could have the greatest free tool which anyone can use, but what is going to make anyone take the time to pass it on to a friend? Can

you simply ask them to? Maybe, but what if you gave a real reason to pass it?

Are there any affiliate links in the product? It may seem like this only applies to an ebook or report, but sometimes a tool will have a link to the author's web site. A free template will usually have a link somewhere around the copyright notice. What if these links were to an affiliate program, and what if the person who passed your free offer on could replace the link with their own affiliate link? Wouldn't it motivate someone to pass on a nice tool or template if they thought they might make a little money from it?

If you want someone to perform an action for you, you've got to show that person what is in it for him/her.

Chapter 16:

Social Bookmarking To Build Site Traffic

Early in the days of Internet browsing, someone got the bright idea of keeping placeholders, or bookmarks for web sites we've visited and enjoyed. It was a great way to keep track of things. Before long, someone else got the brilliant idea there should be a way to share these bookmarks with our friends. Suddenly, a world of social bookmarking came into existence. But how can you, the internet marketer, tap into this social network? Is there a way social bookmarking can build traffic for your site? **This chapter will discuss a few methods of putting social bookmarking to work for you, bringing new visitors to your site.**

Since any web page can be bookmarked, any web page can be shared with friends. This is the premise behind using social bookmarking as a marketing technique. As you may have guessed, the idea is to get people who visit your site to bookmark and share it. Of course your visitors could simply email a link to their friends, but they might not think of that option on their own. It is not only your job then to remind them of this option, but to make it as easy as possible for them to do so.

Fortunately, since the entire blog community has a long and rich history of sharing links, with millions of "check this out" type posts, there have been several tools to help you make it easy for your visitors to share a link to your site. For example, if you happen to build your site on the WordPress blog platform you can find half a dozen excellent programs which provide a "share this" link with every post you make.

Not only will most of these plug-ins allow your visitors to email a link to a friend, they can add your site to the major social bookmarking sites like

Del.icio.us (http://www.del.icio.us), Digg (http://www.digg.com), Technorati (http://www.technorati.com), and StumbleUpon (http://www.stumbleupon.com).

At these social bookmarking sites your visitors can also post reviews and say just what they like about your site, thereby attracting others who find the information.

Now, who is to say that you can't post your own articles, blog posts and web pages to these social bookmarking sites yourself? If you post your entries, you expose it to thousands of visitors at the social bookmarking sites who might be interested in what you have to offer.

If you have an exceptionally interesting post, and place it on a social bookmarking site, you open the door to a viral marketing effect and free exposure you probably could have never otherwise afforded.

Chapter 17:

StumbleUpon Is Social Bookmarking On Steroids

Social bookmarking is the big buzz term among internet marketers these days, but up until now it has been fairly static. You could make recommendations to friends through places like Del.icio.us (http://www.del.icio.us), Digg (http://www.digg.com), Technorati (http://www.technorati.com), and you could search for sites in a particular topic area. But StumbleUpon (http://www.stumbleupon.com) gives you all that and a little bit more; this site actually learns what you like and makes recommendations. What are the implications for web marketers? What do you have to do if you want StumbleUpon to recommend your site? Can this service generate free traffic to your site? All these questions and more will be covered in this chapter.

Just like any social bookmarking site, visitors can connect with friends and share sites. They can meet people with similar interests and check out what other people are discovering. With StumbleUpon you can "channel surf" the best-reviewed sites on the internet. It is a "collaborative surfing tool for finding and sharing great sites." Just add a toolbar to your browser and you can give a review for any site you happen to land upon.

So this is where the internet marketer comes in. As you probably already guessed, it can be beneficial to the health and future of your web site if several people give it good reviews. If one of your visitors already has the StumbleUpon toolbar installed, and finds your site, they could get the ball rolling for you. But if you're like most marketers, you're not going to want to leave all that to chance. Just like what people have already been doing with sites like Digg and Technorati, there is no reason you can't review one of your own web sites. As a matter of fact, why not review them all?

Once your site has been reviewed, StumbleUpon will start to do a little of the work for you. Since the site actually makes recommendations to its members, telling them about sites they might be interested in, StumbleUpon just might recommend your site to a few people. The more popular your site becomes, which it looks like is determined by the number of positive reviews you receive, the more your site will be recommended to others. Before you know it, and with very little extra effort on your part, you could have gained a steady stream of free traffic.

What could be better than free traffic, coming from the recommendations of people you have never contacted in places you've never heard about? All this just because a few people voted for your site and said it was good. Of course, this isn't likely to happen if you don't run a strong web site with excellent content, but that's what you're already doing, isn't it?

Chapter 18:

Use Viral Videos To Build Web Site Traffic

Imagine a world without television. Can you do it? Chances are if you were born in the last 40 years or so, you can't. Everywhere we turn we are bombarded with video images, first on television, but now on everything from desktop computers to cell phones. In fact, videos are so popular online they sometimes are passed around and create a viral marketing effect; that is what makes them interesting to marketers. This chapter will share a few ways you can jump on the band wagon and use these viral video techniques to bring traffic to your site.

A popular way to get into the world of viral video marketing is to build a blog and frequently add videos. Use amusing video clips, interactive Flash games and moving images since these are most likely to catch your visitor's attention and be shared with others. The Dancing Bush 2001 interactive game brought massive attention to what eventually became the largest private entertainment site on the internet. Sunsilk hair products gained attention when a YouTube (http://www.youtube.com) video "Bride Has Massive Hair Wig Out" went viral. Companies the likes of Halo, Blair Witch Project, Xbox 360, The Ring Movie, Sony, Playstation and FX Networks have all benefited from viral videos.

One effective way to make sure your video draws attention to your web site or brand is to include the site name (and URL) within a video as part of the entertainment. The more integrated the inclusion, the less your video is going to look like an advertising ploy. Of course, you might want to refer to your site or brand more than once, but don't go overboard. On the other hand some successful viral campaigns, like Burger King's "Subservient Chicken" didn't mention a web site or brand

anywhere; but people knew where the video came from and it attracted massive attention on the web.

Another way to make sure your viral video drives traffic to your site is to include a link close to the video on YouTube and Google Video. This will allow viewers to easily identify the source of the video and find their way to your site.

So once you have all this traffic on your site, what are you going to do with them? **Well first off, be sure to encourage visitors to pass your video to friends. Then if at all possible add some means for the video to be emailed or added to a social bookmarking site.** If you have built your site on a blog like WordPress, there are plugins to add that functionality to your site for you.

So get out there and start spreading a virus, a video virus that is.

..:: PART 6 ::..

ONLINE MEDIA

Chapter 19:

Stop The Presses With These Professional Press Release Tips

Stop the presses! Or at least put them on hold because you've got something to say and you want the world to hear it. But how do you present your big story to the media without being ignored? A press release is a written or recorded statement to the media for the purpose of proclaiming some newsworthy story, but how should it be formatted and what should it contain? This chapter will walk you though some press-release terminology so you can write press releases that will, as you may have guessed, stop the presses.

The first important thing to realize about a press release is that you're not submitting a finished story. Finished stories are what journalists do, and the job of a press release is to catch a journalist's attention. A press release is an entirely different thing from a news article. While a news article is a grouping of facts, developed by journalists and published in the news media, a press release (also called a news release) is sent to journalists to entice them into developing an article on the subject you've submitted.

So what does that tell you about your press release? It simply has to sell the idea of a story to a journalist. You have to show your story is newsworthy, something that will interest the journalist's audience. As you may have guessed, your press release can't be a sales letter for your newest product or service disguised as a "story". Such a thing might be considered the journalistic equivalent of spam and the media can recognize these veiled sales letters a mile away. You need to show the human interest behind your story, the benefit to the reader, and of course the benefit to the journalist for developing the story into an article.

So now that you've got all that in hand, how do you format your press release? Here is a list of the major elements of a professional press release:

1. Headline: Grabs the attention of journalists and briefly summarizes the news.
2. Dateline: Contains the release date and usually the originating city of the news.
3. Introduction: First paragraph in a press release giving basic answers to the questions: who, what, when, where and why.
4. Body: Further explanation, statistics, background, or other relevant details.
5. Boilerplate: A short "about" section with background on the issuing company, organization, or individual.
6. Media Contact Information: Name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person.

If you include these elements and make your story sound truly newsworthy, your press release will establish you as a professional and help you gain the respect of the media and get more visitors. Without these important elements, your press release is likely become nothing more than wastepaper basket fodder.

Chapter 20:

Free Advertising At Free Classified Ad Sites

Everyone knows how important it is to advertise. It's what sets the chicken apart from the centipede; the centipede lays a thousand eggs in silence while the chicken lays just one but squawks about it. Which one is better known as an egg layer? The chicken is, of course. But unless you have the budget of a small nation, advertising expenses can be an ominous prospect. So where are some places you can advertise for free? What are the advantages, disadvantages and legal issues? This chapter will cover a few places you might consider for free advertising.

Two of the most common places people go for free advertising are CraigsList (http://www.craigslist.com) and USFreeAds (http://www.usfreeads.com).

CraigsList, as you may already know, is a recent phenomenon of the internet world which lets you advertise the sale of just about anything and all for free. **USFreeAds** has actually been around longer than CraigsList, since 1999 in fact, but isn't quite as well known. Both sites allow you to post ads for free, but these sites do have a few limitations and regulations you will have to follow.

CraigsList has the advantage of being totally free, but since it is free it carries one major hurdle to the internet marketer. That hurdle, as you may have anticipated, is that they do no allow affiliate ads. In other words, you can't run an ad with the purpose of linking to an affiliate product. Up until very recently, marketers have found ways to work around this. But CraigsList has become more aggressive about their regulation. Either way, if you're in this business for the long haul it is wise to follow the rules.

USFreeAds does offer a free account, but it carries limited functionality. However they offer two types of paid accounts; the Gold Membership for only $10 a year and the Premium Membership for $9.99 a month. Of course the two levels of paid membership increase the features as you pay more, so you will have to decide which membership will serve your needs. You might be wise to start out with the Gold Membership and do some testing before you dole out for the monthly Premium membership. USFreeAds is generally open to posting affiliate links, but maintains a family-friendly policy and so they will not allow ads leading to Adult content.

General experience with these types of sites is that the general clientele is looking for really good deals, and generally consider the good deals to be something for free. eBay has somewhat of a reputation for this as well, the reputation that its clients want something for nothing, and my experience has been that it holds true even more for free ad sites. Of course this type of client might not be the right fit for everybody, and there will always be exceptions. So in the long run it remains for you to test out these options for yourself and decide if they work for you or not.

But what the heck, as long as it’s free you can’t be out too much more than a little of your time.

Chapter 21:

Create a Squidoo Lens And See New Traffic

A short time ago word started spreading about a brand new site called Squidoo (http://www.squidoo.com/). It sounded like an interesting concept, a little like a blog and a little like an "About Me" page, they asked you to sign up and create something called a "lens". It was certainly a unique idea, and everyone wondered if it would catch on. Now more than a year later the true benefits of making a lens at Squidoo are clear. It is a great place to create a new site about your hobby, passion or business, but even more it is a great place to promote any existing web site you may have. Not only can you tell Squidoo visitors about your site, but a lens gives the search engines another reason to place your site higher on the results pages; a Squidoo lens is a perfect place to build "backlinks" to your blog or web site.

When making a lens at Squidoo you have the option to display RSS feeds from other sites. Place an RSS link on your lens and suddenly the site publishing the feed has a new set of backlinks from a popular and relevant site. That is just what the search engine spiders love to see. What other RSS feeds could you place on Squidoo? Do you submit articles to an article directory, and if so does that directory offer an RSS feed of your articles? If you operate an eBay Store you could post its RSS feed.

Of course an RSS feed isn't the only way to promote your site on Squidoo. You could create static links to specific pages on your site. Write a summary of one of your articles and link to that article. Write some information about an ebook you've written or promote and link from Squidoo. You could also simply place a list of links back to different pages of your website. The possibilities are only limited by the ideas you can

come up with, but one important tip: don't just link to your site's main page, make keyword specific links to particular pages within your site.

The general consensus among internet marketers right now is that Squidoo is slipping a little in the search engine results pages. Squidoo recently made some changes in their templates, and so over the last few weeks it seems to have affected their search engine optimization. Marketers are reporting a definite slip in their SERP (search engine results page) placement. Even so, creating a lens at Squidoo is a profitable way to promote just about site you own.

..:: PART 7 ::..

OTHER METHODS

Chapter 22:

Build Traffic With A Contest Or Challenge

"And the winner is . . . !" **People thrill at that statement, and just about everyone loves to win.** How many times have you given your name, telephone number, and maybe even your email address away just to enter some drawing? Sure you figured someone would probably call and try to sell you something, but you probably took that chance anyway, didn't you? Contests and challenges are a great way to build the contact or email list for your business, as well as a great way to build excitement about your product or service. This chapter will discuss a few ideas about how a contest or challenge could be a great promotional tool for your business.

Obviously, you're going to need some way to contact the winner of your contest. Everyone knows that, so there isn't going to be much of a problem about asking for an email address or phone number. Those who don't want to give out their information simply won't enter your contest. The same applies for a challenge as well; if someone wants the prize for winning the challenge they'll have to be contacted. This makes holding a contest or a challenge a perfect way to build your list, but it doesn't stop there.

Everyone who enters a contest or challenge wants to see who the competition is. Even something as simple as a coloring contest can drive us to size up the competition. "My entry is better than that" or "That entry looks like trouble" are common to the competitive spirit in many people. So why is it a good idea to stir up all the rating and ranking? Some people will visit your site to see the competition and others will visit just to see what was entered. People are likely to tell their friends about the contest, either to check out their own entry or to get their friends to enter too.

But if you want all that traffic to translate into increased sales of your product or service, you're going to want it to be as targeted as possible. Promote your contest or challenge at a site related specifically to your topic. If the contest requires a little talent or expertise in your subject in order to win, then your traffic will be even more targeted. Even if you only have a few entries, there could be many others who want to see the entries.

Are exhibitors the only people who look at entries in the county fair? No, there are many others who just like looking. Holding your own contest will not only bring exhibitors but others as well. Either way, all that looking around translates into traffic for your site.

Chapter 23:

Promote Within Your Niche At Forums And News Groups

It seems like a brilliant idea; join a few forums and newsgroups then just tell them all about your great new product or web site. Everyone will want to know because it is just so new and so hot, or they'll at least admire your self-promotion efforts, right? No, that couldn't be more wrong. Online forums and newsgroups are usually tight communities of like-minded people. You can network, build relationships, learn and grow your business through online communities. But if you spam these loyal and tight knit groups, you had better be ready to run for cover. This chapter will share a few tips about posting on forums and newsgroups without being accused of spam.

Today's online forums and newsgroups are communities centered on a common interest. Most often people come to these web sites to learn and share, or sometimes they just want to hang out. But because these sites feature such a high concentrate of potential customers within a defined niche, they are also the frequent target of spammers. Often of course, these spammers don't see themselves as such.

So we're all on the same page, let's take a minute and review just what spam is. Spam is simply an unsolicited advertisement. You didn't want it, you didn't ask for it and you will probably hit the delete button as soon as possible when you suspect it. In a forum or news group spam is a message that tries to sell something or promote a web site, when nobody asked for such a thing.

But what about all those targeted forums out there serving all those wonderful niche markets, isn't there some way to reach them? Sure you

can reach them, but since these sites form virtual communities you're going to have to be accepted into the community first. That doesn't mean you can just join and post a few times then expect people to do cart wheels when you announce your product or site. You're going to have to be an active participant, establishing your reputation and giving back to the community.

Even then, most forums and news groups have rules about posting links. It is always a good idea to read the site rules before trying to promote anything. Some forums might have a special area where you can announce new sites and products, or even directly solicit your wares. Many sites will allow you to place discrete links in an area called you "signature".

Are these types of sites good places to promote your product or service? You bet they are; you might find some of your most loyal customers in an online forum or news group. But for that to happen you'll have to exercise patience and follow the rules.

Whatever you do, avoid being labeled a "spammer" as much as you would avoid the plague.

Chapter 24:

Give Your Opinion And Make it Count

I have a friend who once told me, "Everyone has a right to my opinion. So who am I to withhold it from them?" Of course he was joking (to some extent) but there is an element of truth for anyone in that statement. If you have had an experience with a product or service online, there might be a thousand other people who are thinking about buying that product or service and would like to know what you thought about it. But did you know you could post reviews on sites like Amazon (http://www.amazon.com), Barnes & Noble (http://www.barnesandnoble.com), and Epinion (http://www.epinion.com) and help yourself while you're helping others? Posting reviews gives you an opportunity to establish yourself as an expert, and it allows you to build links back to your web site. This chapter will cover some ground work about sharing your opinion by writing reviews, and set you on your way to giving everyone what they deserve out of life, your opinion.

So, you may be wondering why you should bother writing reviews. Most likely you've already heard about writing articles to promote your web site or affiliate product. You probably already know how those articles will not only bring direct traffic to your site but will increase the "backlinks" and therefore improve your search engine placements. But product reviews at sites like Amazon don't get listed on Google by themselves, and the only people likely to see them are people who happen to be shopping for that particular product, right? Bingo! You've just hit the nail right on the head; people reading your review on Amazon are looking for that particular product. If your own web site is related to that product, then you might just have found yourself a new site visitor. Not only that, but you've found a site visitor who already knows you are familiar with products just like the ones they are shopping for.

Now that probably doesn't sound too exciting, does it? It may seem like a lot of work for gaining a few new visitors to your site. You're likely to be thinking there must be a more efficient way to build traffic. If that's what you're thinking, you're right. But if you look at the big picture, you may be terribly wrong. In the big picture, yes you're bringing a few visitors to your site but you're also creating backlinks from some of the largest sites with the heaviest traffic on the internet. What does that do for you, you ask? The answer is simple: it makes your site appear relevant. Here is one of the biggest sites on the internet and they're linking to you, and that's the sort of thing which really impresses search engines like Google. Your relevant back link from a major web site will do wonders for your search engine results page placement.

So now are you starting to believe there are more people who should be hearing your opinions?

Chapter 25:

Get New Visitors By Answering Questions

I've heard it said that one of the deepest desires of people today is the desire to feel important. One easy way to make someone feel important is to give them attention and show you care about the things they care about. Be there when that person needs you and help that person when they need help, and you'll be satisfying the deep desire to feel important. Now if you can make your customers feel important, do you think they'll be interested in buying from you again? When you've bought from someone who truly seemed to care about you and think you were important, didn't you feel a certain loyalty? **This chapter will show one way to build a base of loyal customers by answering question**s at places like Yahoo Answers (http://answers.yahoo.com) and Answerbag.com (http://www.answerbag.com) especially if you own a service oriented business.

Sites like Answerbag.com and Yahoo Answers have become very popular. People can ask questions on just about any topic and end up with at least one answer. When users on Answerbag were recently asked why they answered questions, the responses included:

"I have made new friends here at Answerbag, and I like to share my knowledge with them."

"I love sharing views and opinions."

"In helping others, it seems to help me. Feel better about myself."

"I want people to answer my questions, so I will answer theirs."

So what does that have to do with you, an internet marketer? How could that possibly help your online business? Do you notice the words "friends", "sharing", and "helping" in the comments I quoted? These are all relationship words, and creating relationships is the key to building a loyal customer base.

Once you've started to build a releationship with someone on one of these Answer sites, you've started to open the door to doing business with them. If you gave a truly helpful answer, and as I said earlier made someone feel important by helping them, you've created a powerful emotional attachment with that person. Once you have this attachment you can carefully introduce the fact that you have a business related to the topic you helped that person with, and that you may be able to help them even more through your business.

Although most of these Answer sites are limited in how they can allow you to link back to your web site, there is usually some place to put a little description of yourself in a profile. Be sure to mention the fact that you own a web site on a particular topic, and you may create a bit of traffic from your profile. But remember we are talking about a relationship-based type of marketing, and as with any relationship you have to give it time to grow before you can expect someone to jump on board and buy your product. However with a little patience, you can be well on your way to building a loyal base of visitors by making them feel important.

Chapter 26:

Maintain An Email List And Maintain Your Site Traffic

You've probably heard it said, and it is very true, that it is cheaper to keep a customer than to get a new one. But have you considered how that saying still holds water when you're talking about traffic to your site? Once you get someone to visit your site, the expensive part of the transaction is over. But what is next? Once they've visited, how do you keep your visitors coming back? Once they've made a purchase, how do you keep them as regular customers? This chapter will share a few tips on how to keep the traffic you already have by building an email list.

If you want your visitors to come back, take a minute to consider why they came to you in the first place. Was it for your great content? Was it for technical help or some other service? Was it to get something for free? Whatever reason brought your visitor the first time could be the key to getting that all-important repeat visit. But how will your visitors know they can return and get more of what they want? You're going to capture their email addresses so you can tell them so, and you're going to tell them over and over again.

Maintaining an email list of previous site visitors and customers is an integral part of building your online business. Through your email list you can keep these clients informed about new and exciting offers, information, and freebies you've placed on your web site since their last visit. Your email list will be the tool you use to keep your site in the forefront of your clients' minds.

There are two basic types of tools internet marketers use to manage an email list, an autoresponder or a broadcast script. An autoresponder is

just like the name sounds, it automatically sends responses to someone who has subscribed. You can have these responses timed to just about any interval and you can set them up in advance to send out messages for days, weeks, months or years to come. A broadcast script is used to send out emails to your list as you write them; you could use this to send out announcements on a sporadic basis, or you could publish a regular newsletter. Some online autoresponse scripts allow you to perform a combination of these tasks, sending out regular pre-written emails through the autoresponder and adding occasional broadcasts whenever you want.

Hotscripts.com (http://www.hotscripts.com) is a good source if you are looking for PHP or ASP based e-mail list scripts.

Most internet marketing gurus recommend using a hosted service like a hosted solution with it's own mail servers, then you'll consider using Aweber (http://www.aweber.com/) or GetResponse (http://www.getresponse.com/) because these services have an excellent track record of actually delivering emails. With the proliferation of spam filters, it can be difficult to get emails through, even to those who actually want to hear from you.

A free option would be to send out broadcast emails by starting a private Yahoo Group (http://groups.yahoo.com) or Google Group (http://groups.google.com).

Chapter 27:

Submit Your Site To Web Directories and Build Targeted Traffic

Everywhere you turn these days you're hearing about Search Engine Optimization. It's "SEO this and SEO that" until you might start to think there is no other way to get traffic. But did you know there is a whole different world of places people go when they're looking for web sites just like yours? This is the world of web directories, the smaller and more personable cousin of search engines, where your web site is actually viewed and indexed by human eyes and not by search engine spiders. But how do you let the web directories know you exist, and which directories are worth dealing with? This chapter will give a brief overview of the best directories and how you can make certain they know all about your web site.

Although many web directories supplement their listings with search engine feeds from places like Google, the primary method of getting yourself listed with a search directory is by telling them about your site, also called "submitting" your site. You can submit your site to the web directories by hand or there are software solutions to do the work for you.

If you are looking for paid and free directories, you'll check these lists to find suitable web directories for you:

- http://www.strongestlinks.com/directories.php
- http://www.best-web-directories.com/
- http://info.vilesilencer.com/
- http://top.seo-links.org/
- http://www.web-directories.ws/
- http://webseodesign.com/resources/free-directory-listings.htm

- http://ask-dir.com/Directories/
- http://www.seocompany.ca/directory/free-web-directories.html
- http://www.directorycritic.com/

Many of the smaller web directories focus on a particular niche. Just because they're small, don't rule these directories out. If you want targeted traffic who was already looking for a web site or a product just like yours, these smaller web directories are the place to find them.

But on the other end of the spectrum there is an array of large web directories covering almost every topic under the sun. Probably the most well known of these large directories is actually DMOZ (http://www.dmoz.org) which calls itself the "largest on the web" and is constructed and maintained by a "vast, global community of volunteer editors." Yahoo! Directory (http://dir.yahoo.com) is another well known web directory. Although Yahoo! is best known as a search engine, they are also a web directory where you can submit your site for listing.

Chapter 28:

Discover If Traffic Exchanges Are For You

Just imagine, you could have five thousand visitors to your web site in the next 48 hours. Does that sound wonderful or what? And all this just for visiting a few sites yourself and "exchanging" traffic. Sounds like a low cost way to generate some sales, doesn't it? The only investment is your time.

Traffic exchanges are an interesting concept about bringing visitors to your website, but are they effective? You might receive traffic, but will that traffic generate sales? This chapter will explore the basics of traffic exchanges and a few strategies to apply if you think that route is for you.

Basically it's an "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine" concept. Traffic exchanges allow web site marketers to earn credits and have their sites advertised to an entire community consisting of several thousand members of the same exchange. Webmasters earn credits by surfing through other websites within the traffic exchange system. On the surface it sounds wonderful, doesn't it? You can go from being an obscure little web site nobody has ever heard of to having thousands of hits on your page in a very short time.

The question you have to ask yourself, as you should with any traffic generation scheme, is will that traffic bring any new customers? You'll have people clicking into your site, but will they stay long enough to read your great content or hear about your valuable offer? Well, let's look at it another way.

You'll be earning points by visiting the web sites of other traffic exchange members. The more sites you visit, the more points you'll get for

exposure of your own site. So will you be spending much time at each of the sites you visit? Will you be reading all the articles and examining all the special offers you'll come across? Or, will you be clicking on as many web sites as you possibly can so you can earn more and more points and exposure for your own site?

I'm not saying there might not be traffic exchange programs out there which will be good for your web site. What I am saying is you should think through what is being offered. Are there real testimonials you can validate of people who actually made more sales because of a traffic exchange program? Sure, they might have had tons of new visitors, but what is the bottom line? Was it good traffic that spent money?

Is the investment of your time worth the return? Only you can decide.

Chapter 29:

Use An RSS Feed To Build Site Traffic

It wasn't all that long ago you could say the term "RSS" and get blank stares from just about anyone. Okay, so there are still hoards of people who wouldn't know an RSS if it bit them in the face, but with the proliferation of blogs and other sites offering an RSS feed the term is becoming more and more common. But what's the point? Will an RSS feed really do anything to improve your web site traffic, or is it just a fancy feature nobody really cares about? This chapter will bring you up to speed about RSS and help you decide if it might be a good addition to your traffic building strategy.

Although it sounds as intimidating as any techno babble out there, RSS is just an acronym for "Really Simple Syndication". As the name implies, it is a method for syndicating the content of a web site. An RSS file is really just another version of your web page, written in a code meant to be read by a program called a "parser". You could write an RSS file by hand, just like you could write an HTML page, but since the purpose of an RSS file is to provide quick and up-to-date information from your site, most RSS files are built by a website's content management system.

So what are we supposed to do with an RSS file? Read it in an RSS reader, of course. The real beauty publishing an RSS file for your web site is in this; it allows your visitors to read your site in an RSS reader. Don't worry; it is often possible to include your Adsense ads in your RSS feed, so you don't have to give up that revenue source. But the true benefit is that some site visitors are more likely to regularly read your posts if they can read them in an RSS reader. Most of these people will read the feeds from several sites every day, and isn't that the kind of site visitor you want to cultivate?

But while you're at it, there are a few other useful things you can do with your RSS feed. First, you can offer blog updates by email if a person subscribes to your feed through a service like FeedBlitz (http://www.feedblitz.com) or FeedBurner (http://www.feedburner.com). Second, you can send broadcast emails to your mailing list by attaching an RSS feed to your autoresponder. Using this method you can actually publish a newsletter based solely on your blog posts, scheduling a broadcast each time you have a certain number of new entries.

But above all, the key benefit of RSS feeds is convenience. If you make it easy for your site visitors to keep reading your content, and the content is good, you're more likely to keep them around. We all know it is cheaper to keep a customer than to get a new one, and an RSS feed provides an easy way to keep those visitors reading your site.

Chapter 30:

Translate Your Website For Global Appeal

Ethnocentricity isn't only the domain of English-speaking people, but we do have a pretty good hold on it. We sometimes forget that not everyone speaks English, and even if they do it might be nice to browse a web site in their own language. The internet is a global phenomenon, and so recognizing that fact and embracing it can go a long way to boost your presence on the web. But don't you know how to write your content in several languages? Can't you tell the difference between French and Chinese? This chapter will share a few facts about web translation services and how they can benefit your web site.

So as you may have ascertained from my introduction, there are services on the internet which will translate your web site for you. Of course, all of these services are mechanical so you're not going to get the flow you might from hiring a native to that language. How well the translation comes out, even with the top of the line and most expensive commercial translation programs will depend to a large extent on both the source and the target languages. The closer the two languages are to each other in grammatical structure, the better. Also, some ideas might not survive the translation if they are too culturally entrenched; so you will do better with a text that is free from local colloquiums. One of the better translation engines is actually operated by Google, so it is easily available.

And speaking of Google, did you know translating your site into other languages can do wonders for your search engine placement? If you happen to translate you pages into let's say nine languages aside from English, you've just multiplied your content by a factor of nine. What's more, the search engines will see all those new pages as fresh new content; even if you started out with PLR articles it isn't likely all of those

articles will be translated. Even if they are, they won't be translated exactly the same by two different engines, so you won't be dinged for duplicate content. Not to mention, if you happen to have Adsense ads on your site, they're going to be present on all of your new pages as well. Since your articles will have new keywords from other languages, your Adsense ads will be targeted to those non-English speaking audiences.

So as you can easily ascertain, the web is one place you don't want to be ethnocentric. It is a global marketplace, and you'll do well to make certain you run a web site with global appeal.

RESOURCES

This ebook will teach you all the basics and more on traffic. If you want a deeper understanding of how traffic and list building works, we strongly recommend you to check this:

List and Traffic

How to Grow and Profit from Opt-In Lists and Web Site Traffic