

Gli articoli che seguono sono tratti da: *The whatUseek Weekly Ezine*

PROACTIVE MARKETING INFORMATION

Turn Your Site Traffic into Profits

Many websites continue to have hard time to keep site visitors coming back and make sales. Turning site visitors into customers has become the biggest challenge for e-commerce websites that run by small business owners.

Several areas should be re-examined before implementing major promotions. It is crucial to understand following guidelines that work for most small business websites.

Improve Your Site Navigation

First of all, you must make sure that your website has a user-friendly navigation structure. The first-time visitor might get lost in your pages. It is very important to enable your visitors to easily find way around your site; In addition to a search engine, a site map should be also helpful. It should contain fewer images so that visitors don't have to wait too long to get through. Text links connecting each page should be underlined. Most site visitors no longer prefer buttons and text links without underline. I highly recommend that you use a detailed structure for your site map. Finally, you should avoid large size photos on your website. Keep in mind that most visitors are still using regular modem, you don't want turn them away.

Display Your Return Policy

Many site owners have asked me the same question: "my website gets a lot of hits, but I'm not making any sales! What am I doing wrong?" So many times, when I visit such sites, it is not difficult to find the problem. Some of websites lack basic details on return policy. It is understandable that visitors will not buy when return policy is not clearly displayed. From time to time, many customers tell me that they are very concerned about ordering merchandises at websites that are run by entrepreneurs or home-based businesses. To boost consumer confidence, you should have a FAQs page on return policy. If you ship merchandise through UPS, then add a link of UPS so that your customers can track their shipments online. There are some e-commerce rating programs you might consider to participate, such as VeriSign.com, Better Business Bureau Online, ePublicEye.com. Sites with their logos have a big impact on consumer confidence.

Communicate with Your Site Visitors

Do you respond your site visitors' inquiry within 24 hours?

If not, you will definitely lose potential customers. It is very important to reply your visitors' emails in a timely manner. A while ago, I found an interesting business newspaper that I had interest in displaying an ad for our Internet marketing service. I sent an email to inquire their advertising rates. After a few days without any response, I sent another inquiry, and no reply was received. I finally gave up because I did not spend my money with a company that does not care about its customers. Many visitors will not become your customers when they initiated inquiries. Keep their emails and send follow-ups on a regular basis and remind them your new services and products.

Implement New Approaches

As a website owner, you must continuously implement different approaches to keep your visitors coming back and attract new visitors. Think creatively. I have advised our clients to offer a free sample or discount coupon with each order that customers place. Online discount coupons are

very popular among consumers. You may consider offering rebate to your customers during holiday season.

Seek a Third Opinion

Ask your family members and friends about how they think about your website. Your web developers are not always telling the truth. Ask your friends to rate your website's design and functionality. Constantly survey your customers about their satisfaction and ask them to rate your website as well as your customer service. An independent opinion will help you conduct your e-business in a more effective way.

In conclusion, when you closely monitor your website and keep asking questions, you will quickly find out why visitors become your loyal customers. Reward your customers with incentives, in return they will bring their friends to your website and turn their purchasing power work for you. To receive more free marketing tricks, please sign up our free B2B Ezine at <http://smartechlab.listbot.com>.

----- *About the Author* -----

Brian Su, President of Marketing, SmarTech Laboratory, Inc. SmarTech Laboratory, Inc. specializes in B2B website design and promotion. For a free consultation and receiving more marketing tips, please visit <http://www.SmarTechLab.com>.

Stalking The Internet Cash Hose

©Dale Armin Miller

Most people using the Internet live in the United States. We have attention spans of ... Hey, you've stopped reading already? And we want what we want when we want it -- which is always yesterday. That makes us world-renowned consumption addicts, and suckers for a great pitch. But if your pitch is a great one, you'd better have a way of getting whatever you're selling to us yesterday. Which is one of the marketing virtues of the web: instant downloads and other kinds of immediate gratification.

But if you're marketing, you want money in return for that download. Up front. And your manner of collecting that money had better be as quick as the download. Or else you are losing money.

Now, if you're promoting someone else's program, they have almost-certainly solved the instant-pay problem for you. But, if you really want to make a killing on the web, you have --or are at least working on-- your own program. And that means *you* have to solve the instant-pay problem: How do you funnel money from other people's bank accounts into your bank account before they forget having ever read your great pitch? How do you get your turn at the Internet cash hose?

In other words, how do you accept check and credit-card payments over the Internet?

I tried selling a reasonably good service on the web. I even started out with a few hundred visitors to my website the first couple weeks. But people had to mail me a check or money order. I never made one sale. (I should also mention that, at the time, despite a few decades of successful marketing experience, I had yet to realize how to adapt that to the Internet.) So I set about trying to arrange accepting credit cards over the Internet.

With hindsight, I should have anticipated the problem. I have been online since 1984, and used the Internet from the beginning. So it seems well-established to me. But it only began to enter public awareness in late 1995, as the world-wide web aspect developed. And, to a banker, that's yesterday. Not to mention that, since there can be no signature received nor is the a card present to be swiped, this would be lumped together with telephone sales -- which bankers have learned to distrust.

I still don't think that gave my banker the right to laugh at me!

Eventually, savvy marketers began to convince a couple bankers that there is an untapped, hungry market. Us! We were --and are-- desperate enough that the banks could charge higher processing fees in return for what they perceive as a higher risk.

And credit-card acceptance began infiltrating the Internet. (Strangely enough, that's about the time advertising began to sweep the Internet. Strangely enough, that's about the time the Internet began to be promoted in the popular media.)

Savvy marketers --the same ones, for the most part--realized that we wanted more than just banks to accept our submissions. We also need a way to collect the card information in the first place. And a way to transmit that information to the bank. So full-service merchant-account providers were born. They arrange bank approval (for "anyone," they claim). And they have software for collecting the credit-card charge submission, securely transmitting it to the bank, transferring the money to your bank, and keeping records of the transactions. The marketers make money by selling or leasing the software to us, usually on their server.

I'm simplifying somewhat. This is more and more what it looks like to us clients. But usually there is a conglomeration of up to six companies needed to make this all work seamlessly. (I am mentioning this for a reason.)

As soon as I became aware of one of these full-service merchant-account providers, I signed up. All my savings as downpayment, all my earnings each month until the year 2175, and my first-born child. (I'm exaggerating: I don't have any children.) I was that convinced it would make a major difference in my online marketing.

(Fortunately, I was correct. On my very next Internet venture, I made \$2,000 the first eight days. Although I like to think that's not entirely due to my ability to accept credit cards and checks.)

Almost as soon as I was approved, however, another full-service merchant-account provider sprang up. And less-expensive! I could have kept my first-born child. Then another that paid commissions. And another cheaper still. And another with more benefits.

At first I got depressed. But I hate being depressed. It depresses me. So I collected the URL's (Internet addresses) of the companies and let my friends know about the various providers. At least *they* would benefit from the lower prices and variety of services.

Lately, people have made available some free (!) Perl code that solves a piece or two of the puzzle. If you know how to knit scripts into your web pages, this can leave a whole company out of the loop ... and save you money.

My list of online e-commerce resources grew past a dozen. Someone said, "Why are you sending that by email? This is the world-wide web. You could just set up a site with that information on it and refer people to that. Plus, everyone would have access. Don't you wish *you* would have had access to something like that?" (Actually, I said it -- but I don't want you to know that I talk to myself.)

So I did.

I set up a free site. It's called GetPaidOnline.com. Naturally, you are cordially invited to stop by and check out the resources for yourself.

I also bought the resale rights to a software program that allows you to take checking-account information given to you by your customers, and print a check right from your printer. Your bank will actually accept it! For the moment, I am *giving* that software away. Just download it at the site. (No catch. No one else to pay. You don't even have to sign up for the newsletter. Just free.)

----- *About the Author* -----

The author is stockpiling Internet-marketing resources, power systems, and guerrilla tactics for small and home businesses at The SUCCESS Arsenal![tm] Drop by just to visit --but no smoking within 500 feet-- or to pick up a free report: <http://SuccessArsenal.com/wow/reprt2891a>

Not All Links Are Created Equal

by Sunil Tanna,

Every wise webmaster knows the more links you have to your site, the more traffic you'll get - so increasing the number of links to your site, really is your number one promotional priority. However a lot of webmasters get so sucked in to building up the number of links to their sites, that they forget all links are not created equal -some links are far more valuable than others.

It is absolutely essential to your success that you not only build up the number of links to your site, but also be fully aware of how to evaluate the worth of each link. This lets you concentrate your efforts on getting the most effective links to your site, and guarantees that you are getting a fair deal in any reciprocal linking arrangements.

Here's a list of factors you should consider when assessing the value of a particular link:

* Permanent. A permanent link to your site is far more valuable than one that is removed after a few days (or even hours, in the case of some automated Free-For-All links pages).

* Placement. A link to your site from the front page (or even one of the internal pages) from a high traffic site, especially one of the top few thousand web sites, is far more valuable than a zillion links from people's personal home pages.

* Relevance. Ideally the link to you should be on a page (or better yet a whole site) devoted to the same or a closely related topic to your own. For example, all things being equal, a link to your golfing store from a golf tips site is much more likely to produce results than from an auto, finance or games site.

* Descriptive. A link that explains your site and entices a person to click, will get far more traffic (and better quality, more interested visitors) than a non-descriptive link. Compare for example: "Joe's Golf Store" versus "Joe's Golf Store" - Tour quality golf clubs at discount prices, complete guide to every golf course in the USA and Canada, and free pro golfing tips"

* Low Competition. A link that is buried among 500 others on the same page will not get many clicks. A listing on a page which also lists 10 or 20 direct competitors (example: other golf stores selling to the same market), is less valuable than being "exclusive" in your particular category (example: being the only golf store on a list of resources for golfers).

* Context. Links usually work better if placed in some kind of related context like an article for example. Be prepared to help out people placing your links in a context that works by providing free articles, which explain your topic (not the same as blatant self-promotional!) or simply being prepared to answer questions.

So the next question is how to build up the number of high quality links to your site - here's a few ideas to get you started:

* Swap links with other sites. Every link swap you set up will eat up a slice of your time - so concentrate on finding sites where it's clear the link will be valuable to you. Be polite, add your link to them before you approach them, and don't be too picky if it's you who is doing the approaching (just don't ask for a link if you're going to make a bunch of rules).

* Evaluate link requests. If you have a links page (and probably if you don't) and a reasonable amount of traffic - you will undoubtedly get link swap requests from other webmasters. Take a moment to look at their site and their links page before deciding if it's a good deal for you.

* Add a "link to us page". Create a page on your site, which includes information on how (detailed instructions), and why, to link to your site. Make it easy, make it valuable to other webmasters (by for example giving them free content), and over time the number of links to you will grow.

* Pay for links. Start your own affiliate program and pay other sites to link to you. You can pay them a percentage of the sales they generate for you, or for each visitor they send. The nice thing about this is if you make your program reasonably flexible and the commissions in line with your goals, then affiliates will figure out ways to send you the kind of traffic you want.

Create your own free downloadable information product (like E-Books or software for example). Make sure it ties in with the main theme of your site - is valuable to users - and then list it at every shareware and freeware directory you can find (there are literally hundreds of these). Most will link directly to the downloadable file - but many will also add a free permanent link to your home page (or your page about the product). It's worth knowing that some shareware and freeware sites like <http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/> and <http://download.cnet.com/> have quite incredible amounts of traffic.

Whichever strategies you use to build up links to your site, always be sure that the time you put into establishing each link is in balance with the value of that link. Keep things in proportion, use your knowledge of "link value" to your advantage, and get linked for mega traffic!

----- *About the Author* -----

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When Was The Last Time You Backed-Up Your Data?

by: Stephen R. Renfrow

Coming from several industries, (Banking, Real Estate, Insurance, Engineering) and having been a Computer Operator in each of them, I became accustomed to back-ups. Back-ups are the copying of your critical and important data files under all of your programs.

You can re-install programs, but not the data files you created while using those programs. Have you heard of anyone having a crash? When was the last time your Service Co. told you, "I'm sorry - that information is currently unavailable ... Our computers are down!".

Well, believe it or not, it happens all the time. In fact, I have just recently been a victim myself. After installing a new hard drive 7 months ago, it failed again. Luckily I had all my critical files backed-up to CD-Rom. After 3 ½ weeks and 5 Operating System Re-Installs, our main system is back online and functioning smoothly. It seems I had to slow down the speed of the motherboard. Go figure!?!?!?

You never know when it will happen to you. Do you have your Data Backed-Up? Don't know how? Here's a few tips . . .

1. Keep a log of backups - Date, files incl., backup name, media.
2. Use MS Backup in order to compress the files and save space.
3. Or use WinZip to compress the files into a reusable single file.
4. Use a different media than your main hard drive – CD-Rom, Floppies, another hard drive just for backups, Zip drive, Tape backup, etc.
5. Use two different alternating sources. Example - use A and B for alternating days or weeks. Reason - if you have a bad backup, or a virus, you'll need to restore the previous backup.
6. Spend the time necessary to create your "backup file". Look in every program directory for your stored data files.
7. Create a backup of your Windows directory for safe keeping. If you have a utilities program that searches for missing or needing to replace corrupted files, you can search this backup to restore it.
8. Make sure you have created a Start-Up disk. This is the only way you will be able to restart your computer if your hard drive crashes or goes bad. Run monthly "Scandisk" and "Defrag".
9. If in doubt as to back-it-up ? ? ? Back-It-Up!
10. DO NOT Restore Windows or Registry files unless you know what you are doing. This is the quickest way to mess up your... comput-a-bility.
11. Final Word: Backups are a MUST - Get used to it. You will love the Peace of Mind it will bring. And if your hard drive is approaching 3 years of age . . . You had better be Prepared!

----- *About the Author* -----

Stephen R. Renfrow - attributes include skills in computing (PC & Mainframe), marketing, sales, customer service, time mgmt., and personnel management. These skills were utilized in the fields of Banking, Insurance, Real Estate, Engineering, and Nursing Home Management. Director of CONSOLIDATED INVESTORS GROUP - a private investment firm.

Creator of the HOME BIZ NETWORK - Always give them more than they expected!
<http://www.homebiznet.nu> Created the "Business On A Disk" CD-ROM - All You Need to Succeed
<http://www.homebiznet.nu/hilites.html> *** Understand and Master Financial Freedom *** Publisher of the "H.B.N. EZINE" - Privy information for the SOHO Professional <http://www.homebiznet.nu/ezine> get your FREE E-Books for subscribing.

THE CORRECT APPROACH TO ONLINE MARKETING

At the risk of sounding sensational, if you understand the concepts introduced in this article it could literally mean the difference between miserable failure and insane online profits for your business. I'm not talking about a magical formula that will guarantee success, but it's something that all online marketers need to understand...

If you spend \$50 on advertising and it generates more than \$50 in net profits, that's a good investment.

Simple right? Well, through the use of proper testing and a "scientific" approach to advertising, there's no reason you can't turn your original \$50 ad into millions of dollars in profits. It's just a matter of developing a system that creates a profit, and then reinvesting your initial profits back into your business in order to further expand your advertising.

Assume that through proper tracking of your website traffic you're able to determine that 1 out of every 100 visitors to your site buys "Product X". Let's also assume that on the sale of every Product X you make a \$50 profit. Do you see that any ad you buy which delivers more than 100 visitors to your site per \$50 spent is a profitable investment?

Promoting a site should be approached with this type of a scientific or mathematical attitude. Any advertising you do is either profitable or not, and you need to know which it is so you don't waste time and money.

Here's a somewhat simplistic strategy that you could use to get started:

1. Use a combination of free or low-cost strategies to promote your web site, generating initial traffic which will serve as a starting point.
2. Through proper tracking of your site, determine the exact "value" of a visitor in terms of dollars and sense. This is absolutely critical.
3. Utilize paid advertising that proves to be profitable according to step 2, based on the value of a visitor and the number of visitors generated.
4. Through ongoing testing, tracking, and tweaking, try to increase the value of a web site visitor as well as response to your advertising.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 as necessary - or forever.

The power of this scientific or mathematical approach to web site promotion is that once you have completed the steps you will have an almost automated advertising campaign that can literally send you all the traffic you need. Rather than spending hours and hours each day promoting your site, you simply buy more advertising.

The bottom line is that there are only 24 hours in a day and there's only so much you can do during that time. Free advertising strategies can be effective, but normally, anything that's "free" is going to "cost" you time.

On the other hand, if you could spend \$1,000 a day on advertising to make \$1,000 a day in profits, without spending hours doing it, why wouldn't you just do that? It's not hard at all. Consider GoTo.com for example, where you can buy clickthroughs for as little as 1-25 cents.

That fits the formula quite nicely. GoTo alone won't send you enough traffic to make you rich, but it's a good example of effectively promoting your site without spending much time doing it. And that's just one example of many!

Give this 5-step scientific approach a try. If you find you just can't seem to make the formula work, there can only be a few reasons for it; either you're not advertising in the right places, your web site isn't doing its job, your profit margins are too low, or your product or service itself is the problem. Figure out which it is and you can't fail.

----- About the Author -----

For More information and "Scientific" techniques, DOWNLOAD Your FREE E-Book on Scientific Marketing at: <http://www.homebiznet.nu/ebooks.html>

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How a Benefit-Rich Headline Can Build Your Web Business

A strong, enticing headline is the single most important element of your Web marketing copy. It is the opening statement and first impression you make.

Because Web pages load from the top down, place your headline right at the top of the page so it can be read while the rest of the elements fall into place. If you have a lot of graphics that need to load, your headline should give your site visitors enough reason to wait.

Imagine your Web page is a blind date for every first-time visitor who comes to your site. Your headline MUST make the right first impression immediately, or new visitors will want nothing more than to click away just as fast as they can. After all, they don't yet know how wonderful you are!

Obviously your headline cannot be all things to all people (and you wouldn't want to date everyone either...), but it can and should speak directly to those people you most want to reach.

Your headline has a single task: to ARREST the attention of your target market.

If your target market is 'doctors', then use the word 'doctors' in your headline. There's a funny saying: "Enough about you... let's hear about me."

That's your site visitor talking. These words tell you everything about how to craft your headline, and the more specific and targeted you make it, the better.

Your headline should serve as an ad for the rest of your Web copy, clearly delivering a 'distilled' version of what they are about to discover in the body of your text.

Did you know that only one out of five people get beyond the headline to read the rest of the Web page? It's true! So spend the time to make your headline work.

Here's how to find the right headline: Tell your target audience the most important benefit you are offering them. That's it.

State a powerful benefit in your headline that clearly enhances THEIR LIVES, using power words such as: 'Discover'; 'Announcing'; 'Breakthrough'; 'Facts'; 'New'; 'Now'; 'Yes'; 'Sale' - all words that are active, grab the attention of prospects, and promise them something. (The two words of most value to your customers are 'You', and 'Free'.)

Finally, keep in mind that your customer is never buying a product or service. They are actually buying a key benefit that makes their lives better.

Studies show the right headline can increase response to an offer exponentially, which is a good reason to test different headlines until you find your 'killer'. Once you've got it, it's the key to your success.

----- *About the Author* -----

article by Scott T. Smith of Web Presence Group <http://www.webpresencegroup.com> DR salesletters & Web copywriting services

Hits, Hits, & More Hits! But, What's Wrong?

You can get all the hits you want, but if it doesn't translate into customers and sales, then you have hits and that's it! The average surfer spends about 26 seconds on your web page. So, how do you turn those hits into customers and sales? 1,2,3,4,Score!

1) First, take a look at your web site. Get a professional opinions. Put function, professionalism, and speed, ahead of flashy slow loading animated, audio, video designs. Sure some are great. Make sure all of your links work, and you don't have any of those red x's. Granted, not everyone's browser is going to be working right all of the time, but you should try to have your site compatible with multiple browsers. At least Netscape and Internet Explorer. All the flash, and fancy styled designs does not mean the customer will stick around and buy. Make sure you have a product or service that is in demand, with good quality, and value. Do the research, find out what your demographics for your site are, and ask yourself, if this is something you would buy. Compile the stats into useful marketing knowledge.

2) Next qualify your customers and target your traffic. After you have done your research, homework, compiled all your stats, and information, then start advertising your site geared toward these prospects. People that need and want your product and services. Use the directories, search engines, ezines, newsletters, banners, classified ads, press releases, and partnerships wisely to reach your target audience. Make sure your meta tags, and title pages are setup properly. Many sites, like bcentral.com allow you to target your demographics, like age groups, locations, gender, certain groups, sub groups, directories, sub directories, financial groups, etc. You will soon see your average site session times increase dramatically.

3) Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up! Learn how to write exceptional, professional sales letters, and emails. Again, ask a pro to critique, tear them apart, help you to make them the best action oriented sales letters. Stay with your customers that inquire, and overcome their objections. Ask if the customer has any questions. Answer the questions, sell your products, or services, use features and benefits. Remember the top four: Gather information(Facts), benefits and features, and closing the sale. Features Tell,....Benefits Sell! Keep in mind, WIIFM - " What's In It For Me?" A benefit clearly spells out WIFFM for the prospect. However, it is possible to overdo the benefits. Do not oversell your potential customer. Focus only on those benefits that will be of interest. Don't forget to ASK FOR THE SALE. you can't overcome objections, if you don't ask for the sale.

4) Finally, Use a personal approach. Online or in the store, customers want individual attention, and are willing to pay for it. Autoresponders, done right, save a ton of time, but you still can take a individual approach. You like knowing your business is highly valued, and so do your customers. The other half of your job is Customer Satisfaction!

So, there you go, 1,2,3,4,Score! Turn your hits into sales, and satisfied customers! Educate, and develop your customer and sales skills. With a great web site, and following the above steps, you really can score! (Financially that is:)

----- About the Author -----

The author, Steve Parke ,CNA, A+, & MCP's and has written many articles on "Succeeding Online With A Home Business". His articles have been reprinted all over the net. You can write to him at author@centurysites.com or subscribe to his and Heather Parke's newsletter Century Sites News Now!

The Growing Net and Your Business!

Statistics show that there will be nearly 350 million Internet users at the end of the year 2000 and over 765 million users by year-end 2005. These are your potential customers.

As Bill Gates once said "If your Business is not on the Web by the year 2000, you won't be in Business". Statistics originated from NUA Internet Surveys, who hold exclusive rights and privileges to the offered data.

Now, How do we reach these people?

Consumers discover/find new web sites via:

- Word-of-mouth (100%),
- links (83%),
- advertising (67%),
- magazine articles (61%),
- newspaper articles (50%)
- and conferences (17%);

And business users discover/find new web sites via:

- Magazine articles (94%),
- links (88%),
- advertising (76%),
- word-of-mouth (71%),
- newspaper articles (53%)
- and conferences (47%).

Advertising your web site is a numbers game, reaching consumers by repetition. The average is seven times, before a customer will take some kind of action. This is true is most types of media. Word of mouth however, is almost instant. So how do we get word of mouth? Originality for one. New exciting ideas, and putting something in front of the consumer that will generate conversation. A great joke can spread so fast, because we love to tell stories, we love to be the one to tell the joke, and get the response.

The same is true of a good business. People will spread the news like wild fire. Look at web sites and businesses that have been successful, and have gotten that great word of mouth. Analyze what the did, what they have, how they did it, what they know.

Giving away a million dollars, will pretty much do the job, but not everyone can do this. We have to deal with what we have, but there is still a lot we can learn from the successful ones.

Make a plan, set your goals, budget your money, analyze your business, do the research, educate yourself, and all who are involved, and put it into action. Believe in yourself and your business, and work toward your goals. You can be successful. Sometimes, with a little luck, you can get some old

fashioned word of mouth, but more than likely, it will come from hard work, and a carefully planned business.

Use the repetition factor. Every where there is the word "free" advertising and marketing, place a ad, use the banner exchanges, link exchanges, press releases, classified ads, form partnerships, submit your site for awards, use the free submission sites to all the search engines, advertise in the free ezines, and newsletters, write and submit articles, and talk about your site to everyone.

Stay on a carefully planned budget, that you use to purchase advertising. Research, and follow up on your advertising campaigns. You will make some mistakes along the way, but if your not tracking your advertising, you won't know when you've make a mistake or not. You can spend a ton of time doing all of these things, but they will be worth it. Every person that loves your site and business will tell a lot of people. The same is true if they don't, only double the people they will tell. Keep working on your site and business to make it better, more professional, taking away what people don't like, and adding what they do. Use all the web's resources, and ask the pros to critique your site.

You will get there. Putting a site up and hoping for the best will not cut it, unless you're really, really lucky, and happen to be at the right place at the right time. Hard work, and all of the above will get you to your goals, along with constant analyzing, thinking, and the willingness to change what need to be changed, and doing what need to be done. Controlled growth is what most companies love. Too much, too fast can kill a company, not enough, the same outcome.

----- *About the Author* -----

The Almanac preditics there will be more millionaires in this industry than any other in history! We can be one of them! You can read previous articles, press, and news at:
<http://www.centurysitesnews2000.homestead.com>

The author Steve Parke ,CNA, A+, & MCP's and has written many articles on "Succeeding Online With A Home Business". His articles have been reprinted all over the net. You can write to him at author@centurysites.com or subscribe to his and Heather Parke's newsletter Century Sites News 2000!

Creative Thinking: How to capture The Big IDEA

Why Creativity?

"Why Creativity?" is a very good question. Why not just wait for a small competitor to break ranks, introduce a new product, and then replicate it?

Creativity is not about inventing products from scratch. Many useful products or services are in use elsewhere or went out of use perhaps because of regulatory considerations.

Always waiting for some other firm to introduce a product first in a game of catch-up may be fine if you are a Microsoft, but short-sighted. So if we agree that we must have more creativity, how best should a firm or individual achieve "Creative Thinking?" Individuals in blue jeans, sneakers and pony tails thinking random thoughts? Committees and working parties scheduling brainstorming sessions? Has anything ever useful been produced by such groups? The only things generated by such bodies are sub-committees and think tanks. So what's the way to "The Big Idea"? It is in the word itself - IDEA.

The Big IDEA - Impossible

Picture a young girl in New England. It is her birthday party. Her father is taking photographs. The girl wants to see the pictures NOW. The father thought: "Well why can't she have the pictures now?" That father was Edward Land, the inventor of the Polaroid camera. So, think like a child. You can have that picture now. Think Impossible.

There was a novel advertisement by a job seeker in the September 1998 issue of UK's Director magazine. "Court Jester. Ageing manager seeks appointment as court jester or fool to chief executive of large public company. Will provide own bladders and fool's cap." Ridiculous? Absolutely not. The idea was that centuries ago Kings who were surrounded by yes-men and sycophants had fools who had license to ridicule policies without fear of losing their heads. Present day Chief Executives are also surrounded by yes-men. They need someone to give them an honest opinion. Someone has to tell the emperors of the board-rooms that they are not wearing any clothes before disasters strike.

The Big IDEA - Disasters

Now let us move to a glue laboratory. The scientist is trying to produce super-glue. But he tried and tried and the glue just did not stick. The product was a complete disaster. Have you ever heard of glue that does not stick? Well you have it in every office in the world. The scientist at 3M had inadvertently invented the PostIt note. Disasters are sometimes opportunities. The PostIt note is everywhere and is the most profitable product at 3M.

And don't forget that whilst Christopher Columbus was right in looking for a Westerly route to India, on landing in America he thought he had actually landed in India. That disaster turned into an opportunity. So disasters do often have silver linings.

The Big IDEA - Everywhere

Let us now move across to a forest in the Jura Mountains in France. It is wartime 1941. A scientist is out hunting with his dog. When he got home, he found that wood-burs had stuck to his woolen jacket and trousers and to his dog's coat.

He decided to examine them. Carefully inspecting the burs under a microscope, he found hundreds of little hooks engaging the loops in the material and fur. The scientist, George de Mestral made a machine to duplicate the hooks and loops in nylon. He called his new product Velcro, from the French words VELours and CROchet.

The rest is history. Today there are thousands of uses for Velcro Fasteners from rucksacks to clothing, all thanks to a man hunting with his dog in the mountains. So, think Everywhere. Think when out walking. Think when in the shower. Think when listening to a boring speaker. Just switch off and think about that problem that has been bugging you.

One of Honda's most original sports-car designs, the NSX supercar, is reputed to have been sketched by Nobuhiko Kawamoto, the President of Honda, whilst doodling during a tedious board meeting. Its author of the Harry Potter series of "children's" books, J. K Rowling, revealed how she came across her ideas. Sometimes they just came like magic and other times she had to sit and think for about a week before she managed to work out how something would develop. The idea for Harry Potter actually came whilst she was traveling on a train between Manchester and London and it just "popped" into her head. It was the most interesting train journey she'd ever taken. By the time she got off at King's Cross many of the characters in the books had already been invented.

I was once attending an extremely tediously presented seminar on Corporation Tax. My mind wandered to solve a problem a corporate customer was having with Currency Exposure. My lack of concentration led to the creation of a new financial product.

So do think everywhere. And, again, don't bother with those contrived brainstorming sessions and working parties! You cannot plan to create on demand. But you can organize your mind to be constantly receptive to new ideas wherever you happen to be.

The Big IDEA - Archive

The problem, however, with thinking everywhere is that thoughts are often forgotten until somebody else thinks of them. It is too late then! So, write it down. Archive that thought. Keep a pen and paper handy in every room of the house especially by your bed and near the shower! What about when you are driving? Forget the pen and paper. Have a dictating machine in the car. Archive those thoughts - NOW.

Many of us have come across situations where we have proposed ideas in brainstorming meetings or around a coffee machine or even directly to the boss, only to find that someone a good deal more senior grabs the credit. In 1993 well before knowledge management became fashionable, I developed an innovation management system for a client, the Delphi Thought Pad. This allowed anyone from receptionist to internal auditor to input thoughts even in their pre-idea stage onto a database and generate a discussion. Some people are good at ideas whilst others excel at implementing. The advantage, furthermore, is that others cannot steal the ideas of the newcomer. At bonus time, reward is given where it is due. Every contributor in the team or even outside the team takes credit as input and dates are recorded.

However full "information-sharing" is not always advisable. In some cultures loyalty can be to university or school alumni rather than to the firm.

The Big IDEA - Delphi's IDEA Kit

So to enhance creativity keep on your desk a simple IDEA Kit. It is no more than a bag with a LEGO block, a PostIt note, a strip of Velcro and a golf pencil. The LEGO block represents Impossible - think like a child and ask stupid foolish innocent questions. Raw recruits to a firm should be encouraged to ask: "Why do we do it this way?" If management does not have a good answer other than "When I want your ideas I'll give them to you" or "We've always done it this way" or something similar then the process must be changed. New fresh viewpoints should be utilized and be encouraged to question everything and report on their findings to senior management.

The PostIt note was a Disaster - the non-sticking super glue! Sometimes the best products arise when solving another problem. A solution that does not work for today's problem may be just what you needed for yesterday's unsolved and shelved problem. The Velcro strip represents the motto: Think Everywhere. Finally, the golf pencil reminds us to Archive those precious thoughts. Note that thought in the gym. In the car, use a Dictaphone.

By Chance

Chance discoveries do not occur by chance. An environment must be nurtured to allow fleeting thoughts, those pre-ideas, to be grasped; then recognized for their potential as ideas; turned into tailor-made solutions and then finally developed into products for other customers. Think across markets. Problem-solving ideas can often be captured from other markets or businesses.

You can't solve a problem by thinking about it too much. Creativity cannot be planned. Inspiration, by its very nature, often comes to you when you are alone. Perhaps in the shower - just when you do not have a notebook at hand. Good ideas just hit you. Recall Archimedes in the bath shouting out "Eureka". Perhaps some can innovate through brainstorming, mind mapping and lateral and objective thinking and all that sort of thing. I just find that the most successful and marketable of ideas are the most obvious ones. There is no better way to hinder innovation than to plan to innovate.

Beware leaks

"Given that genuine new ideas are hard to come by and very difficult to patent, perhaps the quickest way to a new idea is to get it from someone else. Remember to keep your mouth shut and ears open especially in bars. Read a book on the train or the airplane. And don't talk in the back seat of a taxi. Your excited deal-talk may well be broadcast to the taxi-driver's paymasters working for a competitor. The idle sentence may just provide a missing ingredient to a new product.

There is a bank, which will remain nameless, that is permanently interviewing for staff. If a candidate says something useful, his ideas are recorded. But the talkative candidate is discarded as being untrustworthy. Somehow, keeping quietly mysterious does not help the candidate either. There is, of course, no job or offer!

And beware of the boastful. I have come across an amazing number of people who proudly boast about their firm's work. In my experience the most leaky are the most senior. Perhaps the key to successful innovation is skilful ego-massaging?

As an innovation management consultant, it is not always possible to get a client to sign a written confidentiality agreement. Over the course of a year, I hinted at a structure to a long-standing "friend", the treasurer of a bank. He said that he really needed to understand the structure and that I should explain it to him with an oral confidentiality agreement. A week later he advised me that he could not proceed with the advisory contract proposed. I was shocked and felt more than a little naïve a month later when the Financial Times reported that his bank had launched my product.

So make sure all proposals are in writing - and with a watertight confidentiality agreement or not at all. Beware.

And finally

Capturing the big idea is but the first part of innovation. Innovation involves more than creative thinking. Innovation involves the development of ideas into products and services. And those members of a team with creative minds are of ten not those best equipped to develop the thoughts into products. And vice-versa. So develop an ideas management methodology and system that utilizes the best abilities of all in the workplace and win co-operation by giving credit where it is due.

In mid-1998 I heard Peter Hain, a UK minister being interviewed on the BBC. "Do tell me about your new idea, minister" the interviewer asked. The idea may well have been Peter Hain's but somehow I doubt it. Surely a government minister (or a chief executive) should be spending his time evaluating and managing ideas generated by his large team. Mr. Hain should have said: "I'd be delighted to tell you but the idea actually came jointly from my researcher Ms. X and civil servant, Mr. Y."

----- *About the Author* -----

This article is an extract from "Key financial instruments: understanding and innovating in the world of derivatives" by Warren Edwardes Financial Times Prentice Hall ISBN 027363300 7

Warren Edwardes is CEO of London-based financial product innovation and risk management consulting firm, Delphi Risk Management Limited. <http://www.dc3.co.uk> The full article is on <http://www.dc3.co.uk/creative.htm> and Warren can be contacted on we@dc3.co.uk

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The Freeware Alternative

by Mike Smith

How many times have you purchased a software product for your website, only to find that it was so full of bugs, that you felt like you just paid money to become some company's beta tester? How often have you encountered long waits on tech support lines, only to get dumped into the lap of some junior technician? How many of you have tried to take software back, only to discover that the store you bought it from had a "No Returns" policy.

Much of today's software is overpriced and under-supported. Companies knowingly ship software that contains bugs and functions that don't work as intended. Is it any wonder that people, who are otherwise honest, engage in software piracy?

If you are a webmaster on a tight budget, I'm here to tell you that there is an alternative: Freeware.

Some of you are laughing to yourself now. You know that you can download practically any software package you want off a newsgroup, or go over to a friend's house and exchange warez.

What do you get for it? - The same software that you were unwilling to pay for, but with no docs and no tech support, whatsoever.

If it's been a long time since you downloaded any freeware, you owe it to yourself to check out what's available now. Today's freeware has come a long way from the days of the Mortgage Calculator that used to come on IBM PCs.

There are several things that make freeware an attractive alternative:

1. Most freeware comes with documentation.
2. There is no charge for new versions.
3. You skip the hassle of trying to get your money back, if you don't like it.
4. The author who wrote the program often supplies tech support.
5. Your questions, comments, suggestions and feedback normally go straight to the author of the program.
6. You don't pay for features, that you'll never use.
7. You can find software written for special needs, which would be unprofitable for the major software companies to produce.
8. 8. And best of all, you get to use it guilt-free, for as long as you like, at no cost to you!

I invite you to check out the freeware that is available. You may be surprised at what you will find!

Freeware and Stuff is a website specializing in freeware, free services and webmaster resources.

----- *About the Author* -----

<http://www.freewareandstuff.com>

Gain Control Of Your Web Site Using .htaccess To The Max

by Richard Fujimoto

If you have been involved in the web design industry for some time now, I am sure you have heard of the file called "*htaccess*". If not, it doesn't matter just as long as you read and absorb this article.

Many people know of the *.htaccess* file which is in reality a script that can be uploaded to any Apache server. But how many of you know it's full potential?

In this article we will be covering

-Create custom error pages -Enable *.htm*, *.html* pages to be able to handle Server Side Include (as opposed to just **.shml*, and **.shtm*) -Protect your bandwidth so content can only be downloaded by specified domains.

Create Custom Error Pages

We'll start with the most common use for this file. This is relatively simple in comparison to our next steps. Your first step is to design your custom web pages for the errors. They should keep the same template as your site, but should inform the visitor that they experienced an error.

The most common error pages are 404, 401 and 500. You aren't limited to these errors as you could create an error page for each and every error.

So now you have it complete. Great, next thing you need to do is open up an ASCII text editor such as windows notepad.

Starting from the top of your page, write this:

```
ErrorDocument 404 http://www.domain.com/404.html  
ErrorDocument 401 http://www.domain.com/401.html  
ErrorDocument 500 http://www.domain.com/500.html
```

Keep in mind to replace the URL's with the pages you have just uploaded. Now you can try to save it as *.htaccess*, but in my experience, windows does not allow it. Why? Because there is nothing before the first period and only an extension. Remember, this page is for an Apache server, usually run on Linux or Unix. Windows does not understand this at all.

Your solution is to save the file as *htaccess.txt*, then upload it to your server. This file is uploaded into the root of your *public_html* directory. Be sure it is uploaded in ASCII form or it won't work. After doing that, you should use your ftp client and rename the file to it's proper name.

Now any errors that occur will be directed to the appropriate pages.

Enable *.htm*, *.html* pages to be parsed for SSI

If you don't know what SSI is and how it can save you time maintaining your site, feel free to read my tutorial on SSI

I would bet that if you were to ask your host if you could use **.htm* and **.html* pages with SSI, they would probably tell you NO!

I am here to tell you that you can with the use of this file. It will require you to either reopen the *.htaccess* file or create a new one. We'll for the sake of this article will add to the original file.

Open your text editor, then open the file that contains your *.htaccess* commands. Now below the existing lines, or if this is a new file start at the top, write these lines.

AddType text/html .shtml .shtm .html .htm AddHandler server-parsed .shtml .shtm .html .htm

Then save it as .htaccess and upload to the root directory of your public_html in ASCII mode. That's it, now the extensions .html and .htm can be used with SSI.

Protect Your Bandwidth

This is a lot more difficult than the two previous.

There are those individuals out on the Internet who would steal YOUR content and bandwidth. They will link to your downloads and claim that it is theirs. If you have a large amount of downloads or sell electronic books, you should give this a serious thought. Adding these lines to your .htaccess file will stop them dead in their tracks. On top of that, you can redirect them to a page of your choice.

Here's an idea for what you can write on that page. Put a direct link to your e-mail and ask the visitor to tell you where the link originated from. Next, give them a free gift as a way of saying thank you.

Follow the same steps as before and write this:

```
AuthUserFile /dev/null AuthGroupFile /dev/null
RewriteEngine On RewriteCond
%{HTTP_REFERER}!>http://name.com[NC] RewriteCond
%{HTTP_REFERER}!>http://anothername.com[NC] RewriteCond
%{HTTP_REFERER}!>http://255.255.255.255[NC] RewriteRule
/*http://www.domain.com/page.htm[R,L]
```

"RewriteCond %{HTTP_REFERER}!>http://na...[NC]" is the URL or URL's (in the case of the example) that the downloads can occur. If you noticed the numbers 255.255.255.255, this is your IP address for your site. Contact your web host for this information.

"RewriteRule /*http://www.domain.com/page.htm[R,L]" is the page that an unauthorized person is redirected to. Be sure to keep the syntax in place, and only change the URL's to your domain.

This file is to be uploaded again in ASCII mode and only in the folder that contains the downloads you wish to protect.

Word Of Caution...

As this file will stop the download of any files in its directory, you should create a separate folder for your downloads and only keep them there. By placing this file in the root directory, you will be redirecting them to your RewriteRule page.

You now know more about this .htaccess file than most web hosts do. Use this knowledge wisely and your site will benefit immensely.

----- *About the Author* -----

(c)2000 Richard Fujimoto offers the resources needed to help any person with little or no web experiences to design a professional web page for their home business. Visit his web site at <http://www.FujiCreations.com> . Also subscribe to his FREE E-zine called "The Loop" by sending a blank e-mail to: subscribe4free@fujicreations.com

How To Get People To Read Your Ads

By Neil Moran

- Rule One:- The Headline

The headline should summarise the whole offer. It should grab the eye, and make you want to read the subheading.

The headline should intrigue and captivate the reader. It's sole aim is to make the reader continue on to read the body text. You should take great time and trouble over the headline.

Lets say we're selling a book on home security, yes, I know, boring and you might start with something like this:

"CRIME FIGURES UP"

This is very bad, but typical of an amateur. People don't care about 'crime statistics'. That's boring, they only care about their own house or car being broken into. OK, how about this:

IS YOUR HOME AT RISK?

A bit better, but not brilliant. It does personalise it and does play on peoples fear. It's still pretty weak though. What we need is a headline that will grab you by the throat and force you to read on. How about this:

HOW TO BURGLE YOUR OWN HOUSE AND STEAL YOUR OWN CAR

Now that's what I call a 'killer' headline. You've just got to read on, haven't you?

Always think very carefully about your headline. Make it extremely intriguing, interesting or exciting. If you're selling a 'straight' product, then use a slightly different approach, the headline should state what the product is, with a few adjectives in front. Say for a Tea Trolley, your headline would be:

New, Italian, Fold-away TEA TROLLEY

There should also be a picture of the product. The picture and the headline simply act to grab the eye of anyone who is remotely interested in purchasing this type of product.

- Rule Two:- The Subheading

The subheading should expand upon the story hinted in the main heading, and draw the reader inexorably into reading the body text.

Subheadings for straight products should outline the main features and benefits of the product. Again, boring, but this is what works, A subheading for the Tea Trolley would be:

"New from Italy, Lightweight, Fold-away Trolley is available in your choice of three colours."

As I say, boring, but this is what works, so don't try and get clever or 'arty'.

Here's the subheading for the security book:-

"I've nicked hundreds of cars and done over fifty burglaries. Would you like to know what I've got in mind for YOUR place?"

Brilliant, or what?!! You've just got to read into the body text, haven't you?

Remember this is the MAIN function of the heading and subheading. Notice the quotes, it seems as though the guy was talking to YOU, the reader of the advert, but the quotes imply that it is just something that this burglar said, some time ago, to whoever it was he was speaking to.

- Rule Three:- The Copy

Always overstate the product, but within the bounds of truth and reasonableness!

For some reason long copy, sell books. People will actually read an entire page of text if the story is strong enough for straight products, the body of the text really just gives the feature and benefits, together with a slight allusion to an improvement in lifestyle.

A classic piece of rubbish for the security book would be:

"We at ACME security have been leaders in the field of home security for over seventy years, winning the Queens award for industry on at least five occasions."

So what? Who cares? What's that got to do with ME?

Here's an important little technique which can be used to fascinate your readers. it's the 'reverse' technique. In this technique, you take what is considered an obvious and well know fact about your subject, and then state the exact opposite in your advert.

We all know that in order to keep burglars out, we have to lock doors. Right? I mean, that's obvious. OK we're going to take this obvious fact and simply state the exact opposite. like this:

Why leaving doors UNLOCKED can sometimes be better than locking them.

"How can this be?" you ask yourself.

Why fitting a car alarm can sometimes result in car thieves flocking to break into your car.

"What's that?!! surely with an alarm fitted, they'll give your car a miss?" Well it depends. There are several reasons why sometimes (which is all I said) the opposite might be true. For example, if you have a car alarm then that means you have something worth stealing. also car thieves are full of machismo and they like stealing difficult cars, they stay clear of the easy ones because there's not enough danger and excitement. Most car alarms can be bypassed. Get the idea?

----- *About the Author* -----

Free Leads, Autoresponders, FFA's, Power Links, Internet Training & Tools A business in a box concept!
For all your FREE business tools visit: <http://GetMySuccessCenter.andmuchmore.com>

Increase Your Profit Through Effective Entry and Exit Strategies

It is amazing that so much time goes into building great looking websites, promoting them, yet most webmasters pay little attention to how their visitors will actually use them. You could be throwing profits away, if you don't pay attention to entry and exit strategies - that is, looking at how your visitors enter, walk through and leave your site, and how you can steer their course to increase your profits.

Let's look at entry strategies first. Where can visitors enter your site? Check your website statistics for more information (you are doing this anyway, aren't you?). Often, many visitors enter through a "side door" unintentionally left open. By this we mean they enter at a page, which was not designed to be an entry page, and they are left floundering around lost, not knowing where to go next, a bit like wandering into an office building through an open fire escape door!

This often happens because of search engine indexing, where a keyword rich page gets an unintended good ranking. Remember, any page can become an entry page (unless you use the Meta robots tag to avoid indexing), so ensure visitors who appear in the wrong place are efficiently & easily lead to the "front reception".

Once in, what do you want your customers to do? Read content and gain exposure to advertising? Read sales copy and make a purchase? Sign up for a newsletter/ezine? Often, it's a combination, so make sure it's not all screaming for their attention at once. A visitor who becomes overwhelmed, will soon dash out the door!

Lead them through, one thing at a time. I particularly cannot understand websites, which, as soon as you enter, request your email address, via a pop up box, and I suspect many others feel the same. I like to get a feel for a site first, experience their subject matter and see if their expertise fits with what I'm after, before I sign up for a newsletter, or other communication. So, lead them through, reassuring them that you can be of great assistance, becoming their friend, stating the advantages of keeping in touch, before gently requesting their details.

Now to exit strategies - I see many puzzled faces here! Like it or not, every visitor is destined to leave your site. They can do one of two things :

- 1) Stop surfing and go and do something else
- 2) Continue surfing and visit another website.

You can influence them in both instances. By channelling them to a partner site, via a banner or an affiliate link, you can profit. You must do it at a logical point identify the points where customers are likely to leave, and provide an "emergency exit" for them. Analyse your own "surfing" habits, and those of your friends and colleagues.

For instance, if I'm visiting a website which I find is not for me, I always subconsciously scroll down to the bottom of the page before I leave. I don't know why - perhaps it's because I don't want to feel I'm missing out on something they could be giving away \$20 bills at the bottom you never know! One or two attention arousing links to affiliated sites could be placed tastefully there, tempting a "lost" customer to visit and perhaps earn you some commission through an affiliate scheme.

What about purchasers? Where do they leave? Most usually through an order confirmation page, where there's only a link "back to home". Well, let me point out that people usually purchase after they've gleaned all the information they can from your site to make their decision. They've decided what they want and purchased it. Why would they go back immediately? Give them a place to go links to affiliate sites of related interest. Make the links provocative; arouse their curiosity to click through. Text links are usually more effective than banners, particularly when they are in the form of an endorsement or personal recommendations.

In short, analyse where your visitors go and are likely to go. Ensure visitors entering through "side doors", get speedily directed to the reception foyer. Position strategically placed "emergency

exits" which lead to partner sites. Join some affiliate schemes, do some joint venture deals, and get profiting from those "lost" customers that leave your site.

----- *About the Author* -----

Robin Porter CEO RP Associates copyright 2000 : Robin Porter. Discover the tricks, tips & techniques of those who have made their fortunes online, and get two superb free E-books at <http://www.theinternetmarketingwizards.com/index.htm>

Email -VS- The Web

by Lisa Walstad

What Works Best for Selling Online? Email or Web Pages?

Good question right? I always thought so! That is until I went through my little learning curve. I can save you from the same lessons if you have a few moments...

You see, I do a ton of classified advertising on the net. I utilize ezines, AOL, newsgroups (carefully thru my sig), and many web sites. I also use targeted direct email although I'm extremely picky in this area.

So why is it that all everyone talks about is banner ads? Click thrus, CPM, page impressions, etc., . How about the folks like me that can't afford to slam down a few thousand bucks each month to have my banner pop up on Yahoo every time someone types "Internet Marketing".

Now don't get me wrong here, banners are great and I rely on banners to drive traffic to my site too. But the fact is, a large part of my marketing campaign revolves around simple effective classifieds and I am not alone. It's cheap and it works.

That's why I've decided to pass along the results of my "research" as I like to call it. (Learning curve is a little more honest!)

My question was this: Should I be using my URL, or my email address when advertising with classifieds and direct email?

Before my web site existed it was pretty much a no brainer. I used my email address in my classifieds until I smartened up and got some autoresponders. AR's made much more sense for two simple reasons: They allowed me to do MUCH less work and my prospects received my sales letters almost instantly, which always results in more profits.

Then I finally migrated to the World Wide Web and had a URL to use in my classifieds. I immediately "upgraded" my ads to allow people to find my new web site. (Maybe I was a little too proud of it!) I figured why bother with autoresponders any longer when I could show them colour, sound, and graphics.

A valuable lesson learned.

My response dropped and I found out the hard way there are literally millions of people who use email but DO NOT surf the web. Many simply do not care to surf the web and there are a good number of folks who do not have access to it.

My autoresponders immediately went back into my ads and since I was paying for each word or line, I decided to stick with ONLY the AR's. The extra few bucks to add my web site address was probably not worth it, I guessed. Wrong again.

Luckily I had my own email newsletter to do a little more experimenting. I changed my ads so they contained BOTH my autoresponders address AND my URL.

Bingo. The perfect mix. My total inquiries (autoresponder plus page hits) went up by about 20% and remained there as long as my ad contained both contact methods. Along with these increased prospects came increased profits. Another valuable lesson learned.

I know, a lot of you are saying hey, that's not a tough decision. Well to you I say take a look at the classified ads in almost any ezine on the net. Count the number of ads that have both an AR and a URL. You'll find that about one out of every three of them qualify. Point made.

I hope I've managed to shed a little light on YOUR marketing campaign today. If you're not marketing with both AR's *and* a URL, you're missing out on some revenue!

Remember, as many have said before me, marketing is now, and always will be, a numbers game. The more numbers you reach, the more numbers you'll count!

----- *About the Author* -----

Lisa Walstad is the owner of @dPros, Inc. an advertising and marketing firm based in Minnesota and editor of the @dPros newsletter AdPros-subscribe@egroups.com. She started @dPros out of her home with her 4 children playing underfoot. " Where there's a will, there's a way! " Visit her website at www.thepartieshere.com/adpros for your free advertising campaign today!

The Big Bang Publicity Campaign

By Anne Marie Baugh

Famous is as famous does and the famous get known through publicity. Yes, that's right, fame doesn't discover you, you create it through strategic campaigning. What's more, the techniques for increasing your exposure isn't as difficult to attain as you might think. A great publicity campaign starts with courage, then planning, and lastly, it succeeds through persistence. If your not sure why you should seek fame, consider fortune because the two go hand in hand.

Fame will bring your business into the forefront of your target audience faster than any advertising campaign can hope to do. It solidifies you as an expert and creates a deep, abiding confidence in the consumer. It makes you a shining star with infinite possibilities. So what's are the steps you ask? Well paste a gold star to your forehead and let's get started.

1. Press Releases: Increase awareness through a press release. Yes, I know, press releases have become quite the popular little tool around cyberspace with releases being blasted hither and there, but is it working? Probably not. Blasting your press release will bring blasted little results. Instead, thoughtfully put together a very dynamic one page press release and target publications that would be most interested in you and your business. Don't drone out the details, make that press release sing your praises. Then send it to a real live editor and follow up with a phone call. In other words, let the press release be the invitation to your follow up phone call. Begin making connections with the media. Be polite, be excited, and be patient.

2. Create A Press Kit: A Press kit is basically an exaggerated press release turned into a package. It's more complex, tells more about you and your company, and is all pulled together into a nice neat folder. Of all the questions I receive, first is, what is a press kit? Simply, it is a folder of information about you or your business. It should contain:
 - A. An Introduction Letter
 - B. One or Two Press Releases
 - C. A Fact Sheet (This contains the facts about you or your business.)
 - D. Bio Sheet (Which is a biography of you and your accomplishments.)
 - E. Copies of Published Articles
 - F. Company Literature
 - G. A Business Card
3. Send your press kit when an editor, publisher, or producer wants to know more about you.
4. Newsletters Offline. Don't forget that a whole world exists offline. Locate newsletters or smaller print publications offline and submit articles. This can be a very dynamic way to increase your exposure as well as add to your press kit. You can locate newsletters in your subject area by visiting the local university library reference section. Ask for a directory of trade newsletters and do your research. Once you have been published, it's easier to step up to the larger publications. Fame starts small and then snowballs onto itself.
5. Speak Up! Yep, that's right. Start giving speeches on your area of expertise. Start locally at civic clubs and local educational programs. Then find the local talk radio shows and make your case to the producer. It's surprising how many talk radio shows are actively looking for new speakers. Once you have achieved Talk Radio, the opportunities will start coming to you.
6. Publicity Pitches: Put together several dynamic article ideas. Just the ideas, not the actual article. This is called a Publicity Pitch. Take those ideas and then pitch them to editors of targeted publications. This can work very well as it saves Editors time and puts the outline right into their hands. As a past Editor I know how well this works. Editor's love ideas, especially ideas that are completely outlined and correct for their readership. This means don't send pet article ideas to cooking magazines. Send pet articles ideas to pet publications. Seems like a no brainer, huh? But you'd be amazed at what editors see that don't apply to their own publication.

Fame comes from planning and persistence. It has it's rejections, but if you can learn not to take it personally, it will eventually work. Remember, once you start, keep going. Once you stop, you have to start all over.

----- *About the Author* -----

Anne Marie Baugh is a noted publicist for cyber-stars such as Rick Beneteau, John Harricharan, Marty Lund, Rhoberta Shaler and more. <http://www.write-promotion.com> or write to: write@write-promotion.com We look forward to hearing from you!

How To Prevent Your Business From Failing

I have heard many former business owners give many reasons why their business failed. They have said it's because the market was slow, their suppliers raised prices on them, too much competition, etc. It's usually because they didn't have enough entrepreneurial traits.

There are a wide range of entrepreneurial traits you need in order to run a profitable business. I'm not saying you need all of them, but the more you have the greater chance you'll succeed. It could also depend on the type of business you have.

You need to be goal oriented. Making reachable goals for your business is important. The goals will give you something to focus on and lead your business in the right direction. They can also give extra motivation to overcome your business problems and obstacles.

You need to have patience. Many business owners give up way to early. They think you can get rich over- night by starting their own business. You need to have a positive attitude and stick with it.

You need to have the energy. It's important to give yourself the extra time out of your business life to eat healthy and exercise. You will have a healthier mind and body to work the long hours a business requires.

You need to be able to take risks. I'm not saying to take high stakes risks, but take calculated risks. Most entrepreneurs aren't afraid to take risks, because they can visualize the end result.

You need to be organized. When you run a business there is a lot of paper work involved; taxes, record keeping, licenses forms etc. You need to be able to organize your business and marketing plans in order for your business to be successful.

Just because you may not naturally possess some of these entrepreneurial traits doesn't mean you can't learn them. There are a number of books, courses and web sites out there that you can use to develop these traits.

The bottom line is that your future depends on the actions you take right now. By being organized and prepared, you're making your business "failure proof". And this is exactly what's needed online.

----- *About the Author* -----

Written by Jim Davis and Larry Dotson. Comments to: jimdavis@ezine-traffic.com

Jim Davis invites you to secure your financial future right NOW and prevent business failure by joining one of the Internet's GREATEST shopping sites. Cash in on the e-commerce revolution at <http://thecoolest.ws>

Does Your Web Site Stand Up To The Test?

What do you consider to be a key attribute of a successful Internet entrepreneur? Would it be their knowledge of cutting edge technology, their ability to foresee trends? Well important as they may be, I would venture to suggest one attribute may be far more important - the ability to test and analyze the results.

Why is testing so important? Well, if you possessed a poor idea or product, but had the ability to test, you could fairly quickly realize the idea was going nowhere. Then by trial and error, and the process of elimination, you would eventually stumble across something that's going to work

for you, and make you money. You may have a superb idea, but if you put it across in the wrong way and don't know how to test various sales and marketing methods you could be on the way to failure.

Testing online is very similar to oil exploration: you must sink many test holes, many might prove fruitless, but when you find a rich seam, then exploit it to it's full potential. The same is true in Internet business. There are many slight variations that can be done to website design, layout, text etc - one subtle change might turn a "trickle" into a "gushing fountain".

Here are some testing principles:

- 1) You must have a source for accurate information .On the Internet this means having a reliable source of statistics for your website, either through your hosting company or a third party package. Without visitor figures you are wasting your time.
- 2) You must know what you are testing for. Are you attempting to increase sales, make people stay longer, or get their email address? Changing on a whim is useless if you don't know the result you are looking for.
- 3) Test one thing at a time, unless time is really against you. Otherwise you will not get a clear picture of which changes achieved the results.
- 4) Seek feedback from customers, and visitors wherever possible. These can be valuable pointers.
- 5) Record the results and analyze them. What do they prove? They should give a definite answer e.g. change "x" produced "Y" result (even if "Y" result was inconclusive, or neutral, you are at least eliminating it as a possibility to enhance you business)
- 6) Ensure you have as broader sample as possible. If testing to improve your conversion ratios, a test of several thousand visitors is ideal, but a few hundred is a bare minimum. The bigger the test sample, the more accurate the results.

There are many things you can test on your website. Start with the basics, then gradually refine. Never give up testing. OK, there is the saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" but I would venture "if it ain't perfect, it needs improving!". The Internet is constantly changing - what worked last year may not work this year. So if you are fortunate enough to be currently satisfied with your website's performance - I can guarantee one thing – things don't stay the same! Sooner or later you will need to test new ideas.

Consider testing the following on your website:

- 1) Use of images (size, quantity, quality) - do they increase sales or not?
- 2) Changes of design (overall layout, logos, colors) - do they keep people at your site longer?
- 3) Changes to text (words, font, color, background) - do they result in more sales?
- 4) Changes to newsletter subscription box (position, layout) - do you get more subscription requests?
- 5) Changes to the order links (position, style, quantity) - do you get more orders?

There's lot's to test, in many combinations. So get "drilling", find those rich seams, and exploit them to their fullest potential - if you don't someone else may come along and steal your "oil"!

----- *About the Author* -----

Robin Porter CEO RP Associates

Copyright 2000:RP Associates. "Secrets of the Internet Marketing Wizards" (demo version) is now available FREE at

<http://www.theinternetmarketingwizards.com/index.htm?art2706>

Eight Ways To Great Days

If you need a little help on the way to success, try on these eight steps.

Although there is no such thing as instant success, research in peak performance has uncovered working techniques common to any high-achiever. Success is predictable. I'm committed to the belief that you can have more than what you have, because you can be more than what you are. You can be a better you.

The time-honored principles here may seem over simplified because they've been put together in a rhyming and memorable form. But don't misjudge their power. If you choose to use them, you'll reap a harvest of achievement far outweighing your efforts.

1. In a hole? Set a goal. All you've heard about setting goals is true. Goals equal success. Success equals goals. If you are not satisfied with where you are, don't run off in just any direction hoping things will work out for you. Decide what you want. (The Principle of "clear and simple intention" will work for you.) Be specific and write it down. It's easier to get anywhere when you have a map.

2. Who you see is who you'll be. Losers live life from the outside in, while winners live life from the inside out. Everything ever achieved was first seen in someone's mind. Get a clear vision of what you will be like when you have achieved your goal. See the colors and the surroundings in your mind's eye. It has to become vivid on the inside of you before it becomes reality.

3. At the start, play the part. An old adage says, "Play the part and you shall become." Once you see yourself as having already achieved what you want, it should be easy to act as though you already have it. This is not being phony or lying. We're not talking about acting as if you are someone you aren't, rather it is performing at maximum levels. Be what you can be - and you will be.

4. Take choice over the inner-voice. Something in all of us wants to do what's convenient rather than what's necessary, to be negative rather than positive. The voice inside you will tell you why you can't achieve your goal and why you don't deserve it. You must choose to believe what you really want. Have the courage to embrace the greatness for which you were born.

5. Don't debate, find what's great. Don't bother arguing or trying to defend yourself when things don't go right. Look for the silver lining in every cloud. Every adversity contains the seed of at least an equal blessing. This can be tough to remember in the middle of a storm. But if you waste energy trying to stop the rain, you'll completely miss the rainbow, and maybe not even be around to enjoy the flowers.

6. After falling down, go one more round. Resilience – the ability to bounce back - is a good quality to cultivate. Successful people don't talk about failure, but use the words, "setback" or "challenge." If you are not falling down from time to time, you'd better take another look at your goals. You might be living too far within your comfort zone. You might need to reach higher. One definition for success is, "Fall seven times, get up eight!"

7. For super style, live in the NOW. You are working toward your future. But true success is the progressive realization of a worthwhile goal or dream. Don't overlook the joys of today. And

remember, guilt is the gift that keeps on giving. The past is past. Never allow your future to become a prisoner to the tyranny of the past. Wherever you are, be there!

8. Going all out will give you clout. Enthusiasm is a powerful force. Be sure you are moving toward something you really want, love and can be excited about. Whatever you do, do it with all your might. Let your goal put a fire in your belly and a lion in your heart. Live your life with passion.

----- *About the Author* -----

Joe Marino is a corporate educator and Personal Success Coach to high-achievers who want to achieve more without being consumed in the process. He wants you to know, "You can have the courage to do less and earn more." You can visit his Web Site at www.LifeCanBeGood.com, call him by telephone at (904) 247-4065 or Joe@lifecanbegood.com

How To Double Profits In 15 Minutes

If you think that is a fantastic claim, just pay attention for the next few moments. I am going to let you in on a little secret that I've shared with one of my clients that has more than doubled his sales. Very few people have discovered this technique--so you can be one of the first. Best of all it will cost you absolutely nothing to implement this powerful little secret.

Many web site owners, some unintentionally, don't disclose any more information about themselves than their email address. This leaves visitors to their web site feeling wary of buying from them. People like to know who they're dealing with. They like the feeling that if they have a problem they can actually pick up the phone and speak to a real live person 24/7. Already I hear the protests.

"Hey, I've got to get some sleep!"

"I'm not earning enough yet to get an answering service."

There is a solution. Remember that the central idea is not to be available around the clock--but to give your clients the feeling that you are a real live person who is available when needed. They will want to know that you can be trusted. Here's how you can accomplish this goal.

Sit down and create a short, professional looking bio page explaining who you are. You don't have to go into great detail. Write enough to make your visitors feel like they know you a little better, but not so much that they get bored out of their minds and leave. Here's a quick list of things you should remember to include in your bio page...

1. A picture of yourself in your working environment (ie. if you're a gardener, put a picture of yourself working in a garden).
2. List your credentials and past successes.
3. Don't be afraid to write a little bit about your personal life. People will feel like they know you as a person, and not just another guy trying to sell them something.
4. A bio page is another great place to add a few testimonials.

5. Tell them how to contact you. And don't just give them an email address. List your mailing address (preferably not a P.O. BOX) and your phone number as well.

(If you don't feel like giving people your home phone number, you can sign up to get a toll free number at <http://ureach.com/> You'll get your own voice mail box and call forwarding service plus some other really great features. Best of all, it's free.)

If you'd like to see a few example bio pages, check out the links below. They should help give you some ideas if you're having writers block.

<http://www.ablake.net/bio/>
<http://www.dogproblems.com/aboutadam.htm>
<http://www.higherresponse.com/mybio.htm>

This works, folks! One of my clients did exactly what I'm telling you to do now and it doubled his sales. It's that powerful.

So get to it. You can have your very own bio page up and running in no time at all. The important thing is that you actually do it. Too often people will read an article, decide that they will do what it says, and then end up never doing it. Stop just deciding to do things, and do them! This tip alone will help you far more than any how-to article ever could.

----- *About the Author* -----

Ryan Berg is a marketing consultant and webmaster of <http://ultimatemarketingsecrets.com/> To provide you with more tips on building your credibility and other unique ways of exploding your profits, check out the free 14-lesson internet marketing training course featured at... <http://ultimatemarketingsecrets.com/course.html>

10 Website Essentials to Increase Your Sales

By Shelley Lowery

If you are a serious Internet Entrepreneur, your top priority must be your website. Your website is a direct reflection of you and your business. Creating a professional website designed to sell will take a great deal of time and effort, as there is much more to take into consideration than design. You must look at a much broader picture and specifically design your website to sell.

1) You must have a professional looking website. Your website is the most important sales tool you have. Your visitor's first impression will almost instantly determine whether or not you're going to make a sale. A professional website should be pleasing to the eyes, well organized, easy to navigate and load quickly.

2) You must specifically design your website to rank high in the Search Engines. This involves much more than just including META tags. Your KEYWORDS, TITLE, IMAGE ALT tags, Text and overall design, all play an important roll in determining how your website will rank. You can learn more by reading the Optimization tutorial at Web Source. http://www.web-source.net/webpage_optimizing.htm

3) You must use effective sales copy. Your words are the entire foundation of your business. Most business failures are the result of ineffective copy. Whether it is your website, sales letters or advertisements, your words play a major role in determining your success. When writing your website copy, use the following formula:

A -Attention - Use a powerful headline that demands attention
I -Interest - Intrigue interest and create curiosity
D -Detail - Provide details about your product or service
A -Action - Call for action

4) Drive traffic to your site. In order to create a steady stream of traffic to your website, give your visitors a reason to visit and continue to visit in the future. You must provide your visitors with fresh content on a continual basis. Content comes in various forms, such as news, articles, tips, horoscopes, weather, etc. and is freely available on the Internet. Your content should blend in well with the focus of your website and be updated on a regular basis.

The following websites provide free articles for publication:

<http://www.web-source.net/articles/>
<http://www.mega-success.com/>
<http://www.marketing-seek.com/>
<http://www.ideamarketers.com/>
<http://www.infobot.net/>

Syndication services provide free content from a wide variety of sources. You simply place a small line of code within the HTML of your web page and each of the following services provide fresh content for you. The great thing about syndication services is that once you've placed the code, you don't have to worry about updating the content, as it is automatically updated.

Syndicator - Provides free syndicated articles and columns with photographs

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

isyndicate - Provides free headlines for news, articles, comics, weather and more.

<http://www.isyndicate.com/>

Moreover - Provides news headlines from over 1500 sources.

<http://www.moreover.com/>

ScreamingMedia - Provides free headlines from various resources

<http://www.screamingmedia.com/>

5) Provide free instruction. Your website is the storefront for your product or service. You must convince your visitors that they need the product or service you're offering. This can be accomplished by providing your visitors with free helpful advice and instruction in the form of an article, tutorial, free ebook or free autoresponder course.

6) Display your testimonials. You must gain your visitors trust. By displaying customer testimonials, you are boosting your potential customers confidence in you and your product or service. You can either create a web page to display all of your testimonials or use a script to rotate them on your main page. You can find a great random text script here:

<http://willmaster.com/master/merrygoround/>

7) Let your visitors know who you are. Provide complete information in regard to your company including, address, phone number and email addresses to request information and support.

8) Tell your visitors about their privacy. Create a page on your website called, "Privacy Statement," and let your visitors know exactly what you do with the personal information you collect.

9) Provide a sample or trial of your product or service. For example, if you're offering a Search Engine optimization service, provide a free META tag analysis at your website. Not only will this increase your sales, but it will drive more traffic to you site as well.

10) Remove the risk. To further increase your sales, you must remove the risk by providing a guarantee. A guarantee will boost your potential customer's confidence in purchasing your products or services.

A professional website specifically designed to sell is one the most important factors in determining your success. Take your time and make sure you're looking at the complete picture before you begin. If you're not secure in your abilities to create your own website, rather than risk the potential success of your business, consider hiring a professional web designer. Your success depends on it.

----- *About the Author* -----

Shelley Lowery is the Webmistress of Web-Source.net. Your Guide to Professional Web Site Design & Development. Display complete, professionally written articles & photographs on your website that automatically update each week, free. Join The Syndicator. <http://www.web-source.net>

Five Easy Steps To Reclaiming Your Website's Hidden Traffic (yes HIDDEN!!!)

Well, you've designed and redesigned your pages. You've written and re-written your content. Your meta tags are fine tuned and your search engine rankings are great! You are getting traffic, and lots of it.

You have done just about everything you can to get, and keep, visitors on your site.

As all web site creators and promoters know, targeted traffic is the **ALL IMPORTANT** key to success on the net. If you get visitors to your site who want what your site offers you should have it made!

Now then, I'm here to tell you that you might well have a traffic leak you didn't even know about!!

As a sensible webster, you are tracking your traffic. But wait! There is a whole section of traffic you never get to see, and never knew wanted your products or services!

What! I hear you cry. How? The dreaded 404 page, that's how!

There is a way to change all this, and I will show you how to not only keep this traffic from slipping out of your part of the net, but allow you to track them as well. Never loose a customer by redesigning your site again.

I spent the best part of a year reading every article I could find on web site promotion, and came accross this topic only ONCE. Actually the process is very simple, but for some reason is rarely talked about in newsletters and sites. To save you this time, I will now share what I learned with you.

* Step 1:

Create a new blank HTML page in the style of your site, without any content. Save it as '404.HTML'.

* Step 2:

Ensure that you include the following line of code between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> tags...

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex,nofollow">
```

... which will ensure that your new 404 page is not going to be listed in the search engines. This also implies that you don't need the KEYWORDS or DESCRIPTION tags.

* Step 3:

Now add in the page content, something to the effect of - "We recently redesigned our website, replacing many of our pages, updating information and making it more convenient for you to find what you are looking for. It seems that the page you are looking for is one that has been replaced. Please visit our new Home Page, or use the links on this page to find your way around our new website. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused you"

While you are working on the text of the page, don't forget to *** ADD YOUR TRACKER *** to the code too.

* Step 4:

Now your page is complete, create a blank text file and call it '.htaccess.txt' (notice the dot at the beginning of the file name!) Now, add the following text to this file...

```
ErrorDocument 404 /404.HTML ... and save it
```

* Step 5:

Upload both the '404.HTML' and the '.htaccess.txt' file to the root directory of your site.

That's all folks! Simple as that.

From now on if someone tries to access a page that doesn't exist from your site, they will receive a friendly welcome and access to your site through links - not that '404 - Page not found' warning!

You will be able to tell where the misleading links to 'missing' pages are coming from due to your tracker.

Of course, your text could be anything you like, you could even make it a copy of your home page, but the most important thing to remember is that you are inviting people in to your site who are probably feeling a bit perturbed at not finding what they wanted. Make it easy for them to get back on track, and keep this otherwise lost traffic on your web site!

Good luck websters!

----- *About the Author* -----

By Adam King. Adam is Webmaster of <http://www.in-out.dircon.co.uk> InsideOut Home and Garden Improvement Services Send a blank message to IOGeneral-subscribe@listbot.com to subscribe to our newsletter.

ANY PERSON CAN CHOOSE THE WRONG CAREER!

Perhaps you're just leaving school. Maybe you've been with the same company for too long and need a change. Possibly you are simply considering selling a product or service on the internet.

If any of these situations describe YOU, some important, vital decisions need to be made, and not lightly either!

After all, this is your whole life we are talking about. The very pathway of your life's journey is about to change and, in case you need reminding, you only have ONE life to live. This is something that needs to be considered carefully and with an ounce of caution.

Deciding upon a direction for your life is initially a difficult process, but then becomes easier. The hard part is the very first step, which consists of determining WHO you are and WHAT makes you happy.

Until you discover, or rediscover, these fundamental things about yourself, how can you be sure that your life is traveling along the right path ?

Many people in this world never take the time to discover their true selves. They go through their whole life without setting goals, or worse, setting the wrong goals.

Such people allow themselves to drift down the river of life, being buffeted about and carried along by circumstances, rather than sticking their oar in the water and choosing their own destination. Are you one of these people ? If so, maybe it's time for a change.

And what about happiness ? There are a million things that can make a person happy in the SHORT-TERM - a chocolate bar, a sum of money, a good TV show.

But what about the LONG-TERM ? Is it really worth being miserable for 12 hours a day just to get one of those small short-term rewards ? I think not.

Take a step back from your life. Are you REALLY happy with it ? Nobody can make decisions for you. If you don't do something about your life, do you know what will happen ? Nothing. Your life's pathway will become a rut; you will pass birthday after birthday, reaching middle age and wondering where the time went.

By examining the status of your life, perhaps you will identify an area that is blocking your pathway to happiness. It may be something simple and easily fixed. Perhaps you have too many commitments, trying to satisfy a hundred other people while making yourself exhausted.

Try making a change - instead of selling cars, maybe you'd be happier selling motorcycles. Instead of working in the city, try working closer to home (or AT home !). Instead of watching too much TV, maybe you should be out jogging, acting or doing a study course.

You may FEEL trapped in your current life situation, you may FEEL that you are permanently stuck on the wrong pathway, but changing the direction of your life for the better is often easier and less frightening than we are led to believe.

----- *About the Author* -----

FREE E-BOOK ! Darren Robinson is the author of "How To Start Your Own Internet Bookshop (For Under \$100 !)". Download NOW at <http://powerplay.virtualave.net/download-HTSYOIB.htm> For general info send blank email to bookshop@fastfacts.net This article may be freely copied for commercial & private use, provided this paragraph is included. Copyright 2001 Darren Robinson powerplay@cheerful.com

THE STEALTH APPROACH TO MAKING MONEY ON THE INTERNET

I have often received e-mails from visitors to my website, along the lines of "Great site, but what are you selling?" or "Wow - you sure put a lot of effort into your hobby site. You must have a job with short hours and high pay!". Here's my personal favorite (from a French visitor) - "I have been through your whole site, but nowhere did I have the urge to buy anything". I was not sure whether to take that as a compliment or an insult, but it is a fact that people perceive my website as a hobby (for fun) site rather than a commercial (for profit) site. The reality, however, is that my site is very much geared for profit, but in a way that many people are unaware of. I call this the "stealth" approach.

The stealth approach is extremely effective when combined with great content and a small selection of highly relevant products. For example, a travel site might provide a currency converter tool with a small advertisement attached for related products like international calling cards, credit cards or travel insurance. People go to the travel site to read travel articles and find out about weather, hotels, flights etc. They find a nifty little currency converter tool that they can use for free. Little do they realize that everytime they use that tool, the website owner earns a few cents.

A few years ago, most company websites were little more than glorified telephone book listings and most personal homepages were school projects or just for fun. Those few websites that were in business to make money were so obvious about it that people would immediately hit the back button, unless they were really interested in buying that item on the internet (and the number of people who would make a purchase online in 1997 was pretty small).

Today, you will come across many different kinds of websites that have the aim, directly or indirectly, to make money. Apart from the online retailers and the ISP's who are using their websites to directly make money, you will find many personal websites with various moneymaking features, some of them very stealthy. However, most of them do not have sufficient traffic to make more than pocket change. Let's take a look at some of these moneymaking features:

1. Banners

Banners were one of the first ways of making money from your hobby site, however they are not very popular now since most surfers have learnt to "tune them out". In fact, the click-thru rate (the percentage of visitors to your site who actually click on a banner) has steadily dropped, from around 5% 3 years ago to less than 1% now. If you have highly relevant, cleverly designed banners, you can beat the odds. However, you need relatively high traffic to actually make more than pocket change – rates per thousand impressions (that's one thousand appearances of a banner) have dropped to around \$10 to \$30. In fact, most companies prefer to only pay for actual sales (even click throughs are no longer attractive, since many people click through because they are paid to, and not because they intend to buy anything).

2. Searchboxes

Several search engines will pay you a few cents per search made using their search engine from your site. Let's say you have a site dedicated to Anna Kournikova (that hottie tennis player), and you have a search box from one of the search engines on your site, where you say "Want to find

out more about Anna? Search the web!" If you had a few hundred people using your search box, you could earn a few dollars a day - not bad for a few minutes of cut and paste html! Of course, your earnings dropped by half the moment it was announced that Anna K. was getting married- such are the hazards of making money on the internet. But there's always Buffy, or Leonardo (let's not ignore the fact that the ratio of females to males on the web is almost 1 to 1 now).

3. Freebies

This seems to be the most popular way to make money at the moment, although I personally don't use it because I find it much more annoying than banners. Under this category are things such as free lotto tickets and various games such as "lets make a deal" where you can win prizes. Often, these are implemented as pop-ups which the visitor cannot ignore! What most people don't seem to realize is that the payout rates are totally unattractive (for example, if you get 5 numbers right out of 6 in 49, you win something like \$100 - if you bought your \$1 lotto ticket and got that result, you'd win thousands!). In my opinion, it's only a matter of time before the novelty wears off and people learn to kill the popups before they even show.

4. Affiliate links

These are links to various services, many of them free to sign up for. Examples are subscriptions to free newsletters, paid to surf programs and online communities. This is my preferred method of making money with my website, since many visitors don't even realize that I'm "selling" anything. Also, if they click on the links, usually I provide a lot of content so that only people who are really interested would actually sign up. For example, in several places I link to articles written on a site called Epinions. I happen to be an affiliate of Epinions, so every time you read an article there, I get paid a small amount. For my visitors, it's just a normal surfing experience - they read something interesting, but they didn't buy anything and didn't give any of their personal information away - but I still earned a couple of cents!

5. Other tools

Remember the currency converter I mentioned earlier on? Well, there are more and more tools that are being provided for free on normal websites, and they are getting increasingly sophisticated. Up to date news and stock quotes are already passé, the next generation is screen sharing and interactive chat with your visitors. This way, you can actually be a tour guide for your visitor and make your subtle sales pitch in person! If you do this right, you might make some pretty big commissions without your visitors even realizing that it was actually you that they bought from. As far as they're concerned, they got the info from you, but they went and bought it from their normal store-wrong! Your ID is in their cookie and you get the credit! A bit insidious, perhaps - but that's the trend, and if you don't take part you'll just be left behind holding crumbs while your competition make off with the cookies!

So, I hope revealing this does not make you afraid to visit my site - "This sneaky guy, he tricked me into reading his diary so that he can make money, but no more!". You probably won't realize that I'm making money off you (and even if you do, I hope you would find my site so interesting that you don't mind!) Actually, I hope it gives you some ideas about how to make a little extra money so you can go to a fine restaurant once in a while without feeling guilty about it! Bearing in mind, of course, that all this only makes sense if you can get a few hundred people to visit your site everyday- this is the really hard work!

----- *About the Author* -----

Copyright Dominic Lim 2000. Dominic Lim is the person behind the "Diary of a wannabe internet millionaire", the true and continuing story of a guy who believes it actually is possible to make money on the internet despite the spectacular failures of marketing experts with many years of experience in this field. Read about his successes and failures at <http://www.extra-income.com>

Sweepstakes With A New Twist

The sweepstakes is an old marketing tool everybody is using. If you need to introduce a new product, or you need to give your sales a boost, you use the sweepstakes. Usually, you will have a drawing from the pool of your buyers, and each week, or month, you will draw some winners, either by some computer algorithm or hand of some beautiful or famous person.

The problem with the sweepstakes concept is that everybody is using it, so that a particular sweepstakes promo gets indistinguishable, and the participant knows, from previous experience, that his/her chance of winning are slim. Lottery type drawing is impersonal, it has no content, and always leaves the taste of possible fraud with the people who didn't win.

The main object of sweepstakes, which is to bring more buyers, is thus losing its power in web marketing. On the web everybody is talking about content and learning experience, so, for our 10th anniversary we thought of giving the old lady a new look.

Being IT developers, we knew we had to give the participants a better chance to win, while still be in the range of acceptability for us. We understood that the chance for a participant to win should be bigger at the beginning, so that it should nudge him to participate (buy our product) early. In mathematical terms, we should be using such a DISTRIBUTION, which will give the participant a big chance to win early, while still giving a fair chance of winning later on. We decided on prime numbers distribution, mostly because of a catchy name, i.e. we could say that our sweepstakes were "primed". The distribution would be implemented in such a way that every buyer would get an unique, sequential ID number, when he buys. If his ID number is a prime number, he wins the sweepstakes.

The distribution of wins is really appealing to the participant:

54% chance of winning in the first 11 buyers
45% in the first 20
26% in the first 100
16.9% in the first 1000
12.3% in the first 10000

So, for any sales over 100, we would be in the regular range of standard 25% opening discount everybody gives away. On the other hand, even if the participant isn't among first 100 buyers, he stands a fair chance to win because even high numbers like 9923, 9929 and 9931 are primes. More importantly, the participant has a feeling he can control the winning because he can increase his chances if he buys early, which is, of course, the main purpose of the sweepstakes.

We designed a page (<http://www.CarpioHelpdesk.com>) and showed it to some of our friends, and we were surprised to learn that most of them didn't really know what prime numbers were, and felt we were feeding them some kind of "get \$90,000 in 14 hours flat" scheme. We then realized we were on the Net, and that we should add "content" to our sweepstakes, the participants should be able to learn something new, should learn about the importance of prime numbers in computer industry.

So, what's so important about prime numbers?

K.F. GAUSS, one of the fathers of modern mathematics, in his *Disquisitiones Arithmeticae*, Art. 329(1801) says that distinguishing prime numbers from composites (non prime) is one of the most important and useful problems in whole of arithmetics. Donald E. Knuth, one of the fathers of

computer programming, calls the prime numbers "somewhat MYSTERIOUS" and says it will be necessary to develop new mathematical properties to fully understand their distribution.

First of all, what is a prime number?

A prime number is an integer greater than one which can be divided only by one and itself. One, two and three are primes. Four isn't, because it is divisible by two. Five and seven are primes, while six (divisible by two and three), eight (divisible by four and two) and nine (divisible by three) are not.

Prime numbers play an extremely important role in mathematics and are used in numerous calculations (most known are factoring, greatest common divisor, linear equation solving, etc.). But perhaps the most important quality of prime numbers is the simplest one: any number greater than one may be written as a product of prime numbers.

But their real importance for the computer world became evident around 1977, when R.L. Rivest, A. Shamir, and L. Adleman discovered a way to encode messages in such a way that the code would be almost impossible to break even if the method of encoding was public, i.e. known to everybody.

In very simple terms, if you have a secret code (number), and it is written as a product of two prime numbers, then you can make public the method of encoding, and the number (public key), while the factor is kept secret. Sound familiar? Remember PGP? So, how secure would be such an arrangement?

It would be easy to generate a prime number of about 120 digits, as it would take only about 90 comparisons using modern algorithms. Generate another prime number of 130 digits, and you would end up with a key of 250 digits which would be the security code. Prof. Donald E. Knuth in "The Art of Computer Programming" Vol.II page 388 analyzes how long would it take to break such a security code. If we knew of a method to find factors of a 250 digit number in one tenth of a microsecond (which is what the FLOPS term is all about), we would need about 10 to the power of 25 microseconds (that's a big number of microseconds: one followed by twenty five zeroes) to find all the comparisons. As there is only 1,556,952,000,000 microseconds in a year we would need more than 3×10^{11} [300,000,000,000] years of CPU time to find the answer. If there were a government agency which would try to decode the message, and it purchased ten billion computers and set them all to work on such a problem, it would still take them 31 years to crack the security code into factors. So if you published the security code (public key) and also the method of encoding, but kept secret one of the factors you would still be pretty secured.

Understand why all the fuss about PGP (which stands for Pretty good privacy)?

Understand the importance of prime numbers?

So, the old lady is getting a new fresh look. It seems far more interesting than the lottery style sweepstakes. The participant seems to control his chances, and the cost for over 1000 buyers is even less than the regular opening discount everybody gives away. We just added content, i.e. we let the participants learn something new, which is what the web is all about.

I guess the point of this article really is: you shouldn't throw away the old marketing tools that worked well for so many years. You just have to make them content rich, give them a new twist.

----- *About the Author* -----

Dinko Bacun CEO of Tendriks d.o.o. dinko@tendrix.com Carpio HelpDesk fully customizable CRM solution for small business <http://www.CarpioHelpdesk.com> carpio@tendrix.com

The Greatest Principle Of Human Persuasion

If I could gift to you one piece of knowledge about human engineering that would assure your success in your network marketing endeavors. If I could share with you one principle, which when applied correctly while engaging your suspects, prospect, clients, friends and family, would enable you to win more of them over. If I could pass on to you what I believe to be "the rule", the greatest principle of human persuasion that exists, it would be this....

Before I disclose this great principle of human persuasion to you, you should be aware that you do not need to obtain any additional education, training nor instructions. I must emphasize, if there is any thing worth remembering, it is this...."there is no other principle or rule on human persuasion which is even a close second."

What is this great principle of human persuasion? What is this pre-existing ability which you possess, that can improve your network marketing outcome? Which single principle of human persuasion would I share with you if I could reveal but one?

It is this..."People are persuaded more by the depth of your conviction than by the height of your logic, more by your own enthusiasm than any proof you can offer." Put another way, "people are converted not to your way of thinking, they are persuaded more by your way of feeling, your way of believing."

Your conviction, your enthusiasm, your belief in what you are doing is what sells. Your feelings, your emotions, your honest interest in your product and your prospect is what persuades. Your optimism, your assurances, your hope, when combined with knowledge of what you are doing, enjoyment of what you are doing, and faith that you and yours are the very best, creates an unseen force which can not be resisted.

People are turned on by your feelings, not by what you say. The belief is in you, not in what you are selling. They buy because you ask them to, not because they need your product or service.

Do you understand what is being said here? Do you get it?

Your vigorous enthusiasm, your concentrated knowledge, and your stimulating belief in yourself, in your products, in your service and in what you do, makes you practically hypnotic in persuasive powers. The most persuasive person in the world is that individual who has a fanatical belief in their idea, in their product and in their service.

Study the top money earners and leaders in MLM/NWM and you will find this common denominator, "they all have a burning desire to be the very best at what they are do." Their belief is sincere enough and deep enough that they walk in a climate of positive expectancy. They have an obsession that cannot be denied. This is the ultimate in human persuasion.

So how do I create this persuasive power, you are probably asking yourself? How do I infuse my personality so that I become practically hypnotic? What do I do to develop into the ultimate human persuader? It is very simple.

I am going to quote Will Rogers, because he keeps it simple; "You must know what you are doing." "You must love what you are doing." and "You must believe in what you are doing."

These three directives are the answer. They are all that you need to achieve the success that you want. Study them. Internalize them. Have faith in them. Make them a part of your daily practices.

They can lead you to success.

I hear you saying, "but I work on the internet." How do I apply this to my internet marketing practices?

That my friend is grist for our next communication. The hour is late, I am tired and must rest now. Forget not the words that I have shared with you here. Apply them daily. The answer to you last question will follow shortly.

----- *About the Author* -----

GHarold McLEOD, a sales and marketing expert has specialized in direct marketing, business innovations, and sales retention campaigns for over 20 years. He is the editor of The Gerald Herald and Webmaster at eBunching.com: <http://www.ebunching.com> . He can be reached at hm@hawaiian.net

Is Your Site Easy To Scan? Learning Web Design From Print Press

Just last week, I was surfing through a web site that was submitted to the awards program I host on my site. When I visited the home page, I saw a fairly nice splash page and thought, "This one might be good."

Upon entering the web site, I found a body of text that was one long paragraph. Now I am not talking about just 9 or 10 lines, but rather, what looked to me at the very least, 30 to 40 lines. After reading the first couple of lines, I felt a strange feeling in my eyes. My eyes were hurting!

It's not that the colors clashed, or that the text was too small. I was just overwhelmed by the amount of text in one solid body. After I took a little break, I continued on, but I made sure that I didn't read it. Why?

I couldn't! There was too much text and not enough white space. My senses were simply overloaded. I scanned the page, similar to what most people do. I couldn't pull any info from this page.

It's a well known fact that web design has many traits similar to those that are found in print press. Take a look at your local newspaper. All of their columns are written no more than 50 characters per line. All of the information is broken down to make reading the content easy. We, as web designers could learn a lot from them.

So with that in mind, I analyzed the newspaper, magazines and even those brochures to come up with some golden rules for writing content on the web.

- Effective use of white space. Yes, I know this one sounds like a no brainer. There are web sites out there that are beautiful in design, yet they always seem to forget about white space. When using tables, always set a cell padding on the table that contains text. By not doing this, your text will end up touching the borders.

- Write To Be Scanned. It's a well known fact that people who surf the Internet are in a rush. If your text can be scanned easily, you stand a better chance of getting your message across. By breaking up your text into small paragraphs that flow in a logical order, your page's content will be easier on the eye and won't overwhelm your visitor. Bullets are another great feature to help you accomplish this.

- Effective use of bolding and italics. There is a saying that I heard applies to this topic. "Less is more!" It's true, if every other word in a paragraph is bold then the use of the bold text loses its effectiveness. Web designers use bold text to draw attention to something they feel is of importance. By using a minimal amount, your bold text will have a higher effectiveness. The same can be said for italics, but keep in mind that most fonts when italicized end up looking pixelated.

- Bullets! I know I mentioned this earlier, but thought I better reinforce it again. Ever been to an e-commerce web site? Then you noticed they've used bullets quite a bit. Well, the reason behind it is due to the fact that bullets break up text content quite well. Although they can be misused by placing too many bullets, this is a rare occasion. A way to avoid it is by limiting your bullets to a maximum of 6 and never surpassing 10.

- Short sentences. Whatever you are trying to say can be said in less words. Keep your sentences sweet and to the point. I understand that sometimes sentences run on a bit, but never to the point of causing the reader to run out of breath. A good rule for this. Keep your sentences no more than 7 words, followed by a break. What is that break? Well, you could use a period, comma or anything else that allows the reader to breathe.

- Text size is of importance. The size of your text will also help contribute to the readability of your content. By having text that is too small, you are forcing those of us who use high resolution monitors to get within inches of the screen. Many of us won't do that.

- Headers! They are an important part of your text. By using headers, you can let a visitor know what the text below is about. Headers will allow a visitor to scan your page easily. Writing attention grabbing headers is a whole new story. Try to make your headers descriptive and you shouldn't have any problems. Also make sure you differentiate your headers from your text with size and weight.

So these are the rules that I have come up with when writing text. By following these rules you can create web pages that can be scanned easily by those that visit your site.

----- *About the Author* -----

Richard Fujimoto offers the resources needed to help any person with little or no web experiences to design a professional web page for their home business. Visit his web site at <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181982&s=60>

Are you Ready for WAP & WML?

Acronyms make the computer world go round. Things like HTML, DHTML, XHTML; it's enough to make a grown man cry. Well, look out! There's a new player in alphabet-town: "WAP." So what is it and why should you care? WAP stands for "Wireless Application Protocol" and it allows people to access the Net using wireless devices like mobile phones and other gadgets.

It's estimated that by the year 2002 there will be over 800 million wireless users around the world. Eventually all wireless tools will come equipped with WAP as standard issue. That's a lot of possible viewers for your website. The problem is that wireless net-surfers will not be able to access your HTML-driven site. Their devices can only read sites built in (get ready for another acronym!) WML.

WML stands for "Wireless Markup Language." (Are you taking notes here?) So if you presently have a website built in HTML and you want mobile users to be able to view it, you'll need to make another version of it in WML. The good news is that WML is not hard to learn and can be picked up easily. Plus, there are plenty of sites online that will teach you everything you'll ever want to know about this new technology. Some of the better ones are:

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181983&s=60>

Learn what WAP is (and isn't), how to write WAP "cards" (not "pages"), and best of all, you'll find some free software you can download to make your own WAP site. Free.

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181984&s=60>

Contains Wap articles, links, tools and more. Make sure you stop in the developers area for all kinds of webmaster tools for creating your own WAP pages.

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181985&s=60>

A ton of helpful information here: leaning WML, books, where you can host your new WAP sites and more.

<http://www.anywhereyougo.com>

100% wireless application development: archives, news, books, and more. Sign up for their helpful newsletter to keep abreast of what's going on in this new field.

As far as building your WAP site you can download free software or use an online editor available at some websites.

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181987&s=60>

WAPPage 1.0 is an extensive and powerful design tool for WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) Sites.

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181988&s=60>

WAP publishing tool for cellular mobile WAP phones.

Nokia has jumped into the arena by offering "The Nokia WML Studio". A free download that adds on to Dreamweaver to create WML content from within Dreamweaver's interface. Get it at <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181989&s=60>

For hosting your new wireless-enabled site, check out:

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181990&s=60> Offering a variety of free services

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181991&s=60> Build and host your site free

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181992&s=60> The first online WAPsite builder complete with hosting.

Keep in mind that the viewing area on a mobile device is a whole lot smaller than that of a computer monitor. So you need to be short and concise. Plan on about 10 text lines per WAP "card" (instead of "page.") Due to slow transmission speeds typically 14.4 to 19.6 Kbps you need to keep text and graphics down to bare minimum.

Wireless phones use "microbrowsers" to surf the web so you need to make sure the web cards in WML look good on a wireless device. But what if you don't have that kind of luxury? No problem, hop over to <http://www.wapdrive.net> and you'll find something called "The Wapalizer" that will allow you to look at any WAP site using your regular browser. Just type in the URL and a new window opens up that imitates a mobile phones interface. You can browse through the entire site to make sure everything will be viewed correctly by your mobile guests.

So there you have it. WAP and WML, two good things that just naturally go together. If you presently have an HTML site you might want to consider making a version of it in WML as a sidekick, thus opening yourself up to a whole new audience; a mobile one.

After all, we're a society on the move... and you'd better keep up!

----- *About the Author* -----

Merle's Cyber Promotions <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1181993&s=60> "Creating Visibility Online for Small Businesses"

The Art of Writing Effective Web Site Sales Copy

By Shelley Lowery

If you're selling a product or service on the Internet, your words are the most important factor in determining your success. High-tech web sites with fancy images won't make sales however, many Internet entrepreneurs spend much more time designing a professional looking web site than writing effective sales copy. A professional looking web site is a very important part of making sales, but without effective sales copy your web site will be useless.

The art of writing effective sales copy is simply learning how to write persuasive words specifically written for your targeted customer. You must feel your customers needs and write your copy with passion, excitement and benefit.

If you've ever developed a new product then you know that there is a certain time when your emotions are riding high and you're full of excitement and anticipation. This is the best time to your sales copy. Your excitement will flow through your words. Take this time to sit down and write an outline for your sales message.

Creating A Headline

The first part of your outline will be your headline. This is the most important part of your entire sales copy. You must write a headline that demands attention and forces your visitor to read on. Most of your visitors will only read your headline. If it doesn't instantly grab their attention, they'll move on and never return.

Writing an Introduction

Once you've captured your visitor's attention, you'll now need to direct their attention to your introduction. Keep your introduction brief and to the point. Let them know exactly what you have to offer them.

Use Plenty of Subheadings

Your next step in creating your outline is to add subheadings. Subheadings are basically just smaller headlines used to break up your text blocks. They also provide your readers with important highlights of your paragraphs. Use plenty of subheadings throughout your copy, as not all of your visitors will read your copy word for word. They'll simply scan it and only read what catches their attention.

Remove the Risk

You must provide a solid, no risk, money back guarantee. Provide a limited time free trial or download that will completely remove the risk. This will build your potential customers confidence and put their mind at ease. Display your guarantee in bold text and even mention it in your sales message and on your order page.

Call for Action

Ask for the order and provide an easy ordering process. Continue to reassure your potential customer and lead them to your order page.

Use a P.S.

When your visitor scans your sales message, chances are they'll read your headline, subheadlines and your PostScript message. Place your most important benefits within your P.S. message. It will get read.

Writing Your Copy

Now, you're ready to begin filling in the spaces. When you begin writing your paragraphs, get straight to the point, avoid negativity and hype, and write in small sections. Vary the paragraph sizes and limit each paragraph to four or five lines max. If you feel that your paragraph will be longer than four or five lines, try to use bullets to display important points. Write in an everyday language that everyone can understand.

Make sure you use plenty of white space. White space is the empty space between your paragraphs and around your text. You don't want to overwhelm your visitors with a solid page of black text. Nothing will make them click away any faster.

Pack your sales copy with benefits from your headline straight through to your order form. Make sure you don't confuse features with benefits. Features don't sell. Benefits sell. Your visitor wants to know exactly what your product or service can do for them.

Provide Testimonials

Testimonials provide another great way to reassure your visitors. Blend your testimonials in with your sales message. Avoid making your visitors have to click to another page to view your testimonials; chances are, they won't. By blending your testimonials in with your sales message you can ensure they will be read.

Selecting Fonts

Avoid using fancy fonts. Fancy fonts make text difficult to read. In addition, your visitor may not have that font on their computer. Select a font that is easy to read and use black text on a light background.

Long Copy Vs. Short Copy

It is a proven fact that long sales copy out-sells short sales copy, but some visitors do prefer a short sales letter. You can give your visitors both. For those who prefer a short sales letter you can provide opportunities to click through to your order page prior to ending your sales letter.

Try to keep your sales letter all on one page. Your visitor would much rather have to scroll through your letter than click through and load another page. With each additional click, you'll lose a percentage of your potential customers.

Your words should seamlessly flow together from your headline through to your order page. Keep it simple, to the point and pack it with all of the benefits your product has to offer. The simple, well-designed web sites with killer sales copy make the sales.

----- *About the Author* -----

Shelley Lowery is the webmistress of Web-Source.net <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182002&s=61> - Your Guide to Professional Web Site Design and Development. For further information on writing effective sales copy read her review of Make Your Words Sell <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182003&s=61>

Can You Hear Yourself Lead?

By Bob Scheinfeld

Do you find days turning into weeks, which turn into years and suddenly you're not sure where it's all gone? Does it seem like your no longer navigating your own life but your life and your schedule are navigating you instead? Can you hear yourself lead? Can you hear yourself period? If this describes you, stop. Just stop. Stand still, be still, and let yourself remember what the silence feels like.

So often in the world we call business, we go so fast we lose our ability to keep up when, in fact, keeping up is impossible. Simply put, if you're caught up, you're out of business. Business is the competitive pull and push that can kick our navigational system clean out of whack. To get back in control, you have to stop and listen. It's as deceptively easy as that. But wait, not just listen. Listen to yourself.

We are taught to listen to everyone else. That listening is the greater asset. However, we are never taught to listen to ourselves. Creativity dies in the face of too much noise. Without creativity everything in your life suffers, including your business. Sometimes the most important person to listen to is you. Yes, you have something to say but if you never stop to listen you won't ever get back to navigating again.

So here's what you can do to put yourself back in the driver's seat:

1. Start the day by emptying your emotions into a journal. Let all the emotional garbage out on paper. Now, don't read it. Ever. Too hard to do? Rip it up and throw it away. This is just a tool to get the frustrations processed and out of your life so you can move on. So you can hear yourself think again. Sometimes our lives get filled up with everyone else's chatter. This helps us empty that out.
2. Take 15 minutes out of the middle of your day and rest. Just stop everything. Go to a room; take off the phone, the fax, the instant messenger and the ringer on your email. Find a place where you won't be bothered and stop. Take ten deep breaths. Let your mind empty. Try to spend at least five minutes of the fifteen thinking of nothing. Don't laugh, it's really hard to do. Think of nothing. Empty your brain and give your soul a rest.
3. Walk. Walking doesn't just exercise your body, it relaxes your soul. Walk with a friend, or walk alone, but walk. This isn't about exercise, it's about letting your mind breath, outside, in the rain, in the sun, in the snow, in the fresh air. It works!
4. Okay, this is the most important. At the end of the day, spend another 15 minutes writing down all the advice that was given to you today. All those noteworthy, seemingly wise bits of advice that

get hurled at us everyday. It doesn't matter where they came from, a book, a phone call, a radio station - doesn't matter. If you can remember it write it down. Now read them all. Do any of them feel adverse to your own feelings and thoughts? Great, cross them out and forget them. Learn to trust that some things will work for you and some things won't. Once you have learned this principle you will find yourself getting back into the drivers seat of your own life again.

Remember you're important too and you are the only one that lives the results and consequences of your own life. Be gentle with yourself and take the time to take the time. Suddenly hours will screech back to normal speed, life will feel worth the effort, and your goals will be realized again.

----- *About the Author* -----

Robert Scheinfeld has dedicated more than two decades of his adult life to personal growth. He is a pioneer in the field of psychospirituality, which blends the best of psychology and spirituality. Visit his "Invisible Path to Success" web site and enroll in his free 5 lesson class to discover the "missing link" in self-help: <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182004&s=61>

Home-Based Business: A Few Tips

by Mark Gilbert

It has often been said that all you need to start a business on the Internet is some creativity, a telephone, a computer, and a clean spot on your kitchen table. However, to SUCCEED at your Internet business, you may need just a little more than that! By this, I don't mean that you have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars setting up your own corporation -- WHAT I do mean is that you should take the time to think through your options and choose the ones that will maximize the effectiveness and profitability of your home-based business.

Home-based businesses have many advantages, especially in terms of time and cost effectiveness. However, there are also a few obstacles that need to be overcome when you work from home. Fortunately, there are ways to easily fix the problems you encounter. For the person working from their home, there are a few basic "tricks" or tips that you can use to make your business run better. Some of the things I would suggest are:

* Do everything you can to create a professional demeanor. Many home-based businesses encounter problems with credibility. You can overcome this by making your business as professional as possible. For instance, if you can, make any phone calls away from the noises of the typical home: pets, children, the TV. Also, the way you treat your customers will help your credibility -- by quickly and courteously answering emails and other customer inquiries, you will be seen as professional, no matter whether you are working from home or working in a downtown skyscraper.

* Give yourself some business "space." It may be true that you can do your work on a clean corner of a kitchen table, but that will be the most effective way to work. If you can, create a permanent space where you can "work" your business. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to have a home office -- just dedicate a space to where you will do your work.

Creating your own space can help you in several ways. First, it will save time by getting rid of those "clean-up" and "set-up" times that occur if you need to change your space from work to home. Also, if you have a space dedicated to work, it will help you concentrate -- When you are in that space you will feel like you are in "work" mode, which may help your efficiency.

Finally, having a dedicated space for business may help you on your taxes. By having equipment or space that is used purely for business, it will make it much easier for you to deduct them as business expenses.

* Get the help you need. One of the nice things about the Internet is that it has many resources for the home-based business person. You can get help marketing and promoting your business, managing your assets, or even investing your money. Many of these services are very reasonably priced and allow you to benefit from the expertise of others.

Many people dream of having a home-based business, but are afraid of the problems it might present. In fact, you can overcome these obstacles with just a little thought and research. If you take the time to do it right, and make use of the right resources, having a home-based businesses can be both fulfilling AND profitable.

----- *About the Author* -----

Author Mark Gilbert helps his clients create businesses using just their computers and phones. To find out more about these money-making, time-saving tips and services, visit his web site at <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182006&s=61>

Website not selling? Twelve questions you should ask yourself.

So your website is getting visitors, but not enough are buying. A common online problem, unfortunately. Here are twelve common faults found with websites that don't sell. If you answer no to any of them, you need to take action.

1)Does your text focus on emphasizing the benefits and the results the customer will get from purchasing and using it?

Sales copy needs to be focused on the benefits to the end user, not on the features of the product. List the features, and then translate them into benefits the customer will get. Move away from "our Widget does this, this and this.." to "You will soon be doing this .."

2)Does your website convey enough strong benefits?

Brainstorm to come up with a list of benefits. Rank them in order of importance. Then mention them in order throughout the text, best first. Summarizing them with bullet points too also works great.

3)Does you text stimulate the emotions?

People buy with the heart not the head - so try and stimulate emotions - use words to paint a picture of life after they've bought your product " Imagine the freedom of no more back pain..." or "...money worries could soon be a thing of the past, and you could soon be taking those exotic vacations...".

4))Does the headline grab and draw you in?

You've got to try to stop them dead in their tracks with the headline. Use the best benefit of your product, and create interest so they read on. Make it hard hitting, but not unbelievable.

5)Do you have a call to action?

People put off decisions, even if they're 90% sold on your product, they may still decide to "sleep on it". Don't let them have time to forget - give them an incentive to purchase now - discounts, bonuses etc.

6)Does your website load and function ok?

Slow load times may cause people to get impatient and go elsewhere, even though it registers a visit. Do all links work, and more importantly, have you tested your order page by running dummy orders?

7)Do you have any testimonials from satisfied customers?

Testimonials are everywhere online, and people expect them as a matter of course. Ask those who have purchased what they thought -email them a simple customer satisfaction survey, offer a freebie for replying and use the best comments. If your product is free,try a testimonial swap with a seller of a complementary (but not directly competing) product -offer to review his product if he reviews yours.

8)Do you take a credit cards?

I shouldn't really have to ask this now should I? It's a plain fact that you are going to lose a huge amount of customers if you don't accept them.

9)Are you absolutely sure there's a market for it?

Does anyone else sell anything similar -if so, there should be a market for it. If it's a highly unique product, did you do a survey or market research to see if anyone wanted to buy it? If not, canvass opinion from forums and newsgroups.

10)Is your website easy on the eye?

Strong colors can make text difficult to read -it doesn't matter how good your offer is, if someone gets a headache looking at the screen there going to give up.

11)Do you offer a guarantee?

Most people are wary of getting "scammed" online, so remove those doubts - offer a guarantee. Make it as unconditional as you can.

12)Can you compete with your competitors?

Do you have any big competitors who are just cornering the market and "blowing you away"? Are customers just visiting your site to "comparison shop" and returning to your competitor to buy. If this is a possibility, try to devise a unique selling point (USP) which differentiates your product from others - perhaps you can compete on quality, benefits, or price. Emphasise the differences and advantages of your product. Research your market and familiarize yourself with what else is on offer. Then carve out a niche for your product.

Once you can honestly answer "yes" to all the above questions, it's just a matter of constant fine-tuning until you get a decent level of sales. You're never going to sell to everyone who visits your site, but you can do lots to increase the odds in your favor.

----- *About the Author* -----

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At <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182009&s=62> you will find valuable Internet Marketing resources to succeed online, including your FREE copy of "E-Marketing Wizard" software application to "power promote" your website.

Creating Keyword Rich Pages For The Search Engines

Sumantra Roy

Once you have established the keywords for which you should optimize your site for the search engines, it is time to figure out how you can get a high ranking in the search engines for those keywords. Should you create those everybody-hates-it-but- everybody-does-it doorway pages?

Well, yes and no. Doorway pages are great in theory but can be an administrative nightmare. Since each search engine uses a different algorithm to rank pages, you will need to create doorway pages for each keyword and for each search engine. Since the search engines frequently change their rankings, you'll need to constantly change those doorway pages in order to ensure that they continue to obtain top rankings. Furthermore, if you are targeting a reasonably high number of keywords, you can easily bank on creating hundreds of such doorway pages. Can you imagine the sheer administrative difficulty in keeping track of all these pages? You'll soon be spending more time on search engine optimization than on carrying on your normal business activities!

The method that I recommend is two-fold. Initially, don't worry about the differences in the algorithms between the search engines. Just assume that all the search engines use the same algorithm while determining the ranking of pages. At this stage, you should create what I prefer to call "Keyword Rich Pages" (KRPs). Each of these KRPs are optimized for one keyword and are intended to rank highly in all the search engines. Once you have created these KRPs, and once the search engines have spidered these pages, find out which (if any) of the search engines have not given a high rank to these KRPs. If you have created the KRPs properly, there shouldn't be too many such search engines. Once you have determined the search engines which have not ranked the KRPs properly, create doorway pages which are optimized for these individual search engines. This method allows you to get top rankings in all the search engines by minimizing the number of pages that you have to create.

This article is focused on how you should create these KRPs. I am assuming you have a working knowledge of the different HTML tags like the Title tag, the Meta Description tag, the Meta Keywords tag, the Heading tags, the Alt Tag etc. If you don't, just go to the following web site for a good introduction to such HTML tags:

<http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182010&s=62>

Now, let us assume that your company sells packaged tours to Australia, and that you are targeting the keyword: "travel to australia". Here's how you create the KRPs:

The Title Tag:

The first and most important tag to consider is the Title tag. You should always begin the Title tag with the keyword that you are targeting and should weave in the keyword one more time in the middle or the end of the Title tag. However, don't repeat the keyword more than two times in the Title tag and don't repeat the keywords together either - the search engines can penalize you for spamming if you do so. Also remember that the search engines are going to display the Title tag

while they are displaying the results of a search. Hence, you need to make the Title tag attractive to humans as well.

Here is one Title tag that I may have used: "Travel to Australia - Discover how you can travel to Australia for only \$x per day" where "x" is of course the money that a traveler would need to spend per day if they used your services. Have a look at the Title tag - it uses the keyword right at the beginning and also repeats it in the middle. Furthermore, it uses the word "Discover" - a word, which, according to most copy-writing experts, is enough to attract people to your site. Also, note how I mentioned the price that the person needs to pay. Assuming that you are selling a very reasonably priced item, it will create even more interest in your site. (Of course, if you are selling a premium product or service, then mentioning the price isn't too bright an idea).

Another point to note is how I used different cases for the word "travel". The first instance uses "T" in upper case while the second instance uses "t" in lower case. Now, when an user searches using all letters in lower case, the search engines generally become case-insensitive. However, if the user capitalizes even one letter, most search engines will become case sensitive. Hence, in the way I formed the Title tag, it takes care of three of the most likely ways in which someone can search - "travel to australia", "Travel to Australia" and "travel to Australia".

Of course, all Titles need not be like the one I used. The Title that you use depends on the subject matter of your site. For instance, you may not always want to mention the price if you feel that it will drive visitors off your site. Instead of mentioning the price, you can mention a key benefit that your product or service has. However, you should follow all the general rules that I have outlined here.

Meta Description Tag:

The Meta Description tag is used by many search engines to provide a short description of the page that is listed in the search results. Hence, like the Title tag, it is important that the Meta Description tag be keyword rich as well as attractive to humans.

The rules for the Meta Description is more or less the same as those for the Title tag. However, the contents of this tag will generally be longer than that of the Title. Here's what I may have had in the Meta Description tag:

"Travel to Australia - We take care of all the details of your trip so that you can travel to Australia with complete peace of mind."

Note how this description repeats the keywords and also the benefit that it stresses - it says that the customer will be able to travel without having to worry about the intricate details of the trip.

Meta Keywords Tag:

The Meta Keywords tag has become less and less important as far as search engine optimization is concerned. In fact, you can get top rankings without having anything in the Meta Keywords tag at all. However, just to be on the safe side, you would want to include some keywords in the Meta Keywords tag. You should also include some of the common upper/lower case variations of the keyword. The rules for the Meta Keywords tag are pretty simple - don't repeat any keyword in the Meta Keywords tag more than three times and don't repeat any keyword one after the other. Here's what I may have had in the Meta Keywords tag:

"Travel to Australia, tourism, travel to Australia, Down Under, TRAVEL TO AUSTRALIA"

Note how I have introduced "tourism" and "Down Under" just to separate the different instances of the keyword.

Body of the page:

Now we come to the actual body of the page. Begin by getting hold of a nice (but not too large) picture which is applicable for the page that you are creating. In the present case, I might include a picture of the lotus shaped Sydney Opera House. Place this picture at the top of the page. In the Alt tag for the picture, just mention your target keyword once, i.e. the Alt tag would be "Travel to Australia". You can include other words in the Alt tag, but it should start with the keyword you are targeting.

Once you've put up the picture, it is time to create a Heading for your page. Use the H1 tag to do so. Again, in the H1 tag, mention your target keyword once, i.e. like the Alt tag for the picture, the H1 tag could be "Travel to Australia". Again, like the Alt tag, you can include other words in the heading, but the heading should start with the keyword you are targeting.

Now it's time to create the actual text of the page. The way you create the text of your page would depend largely on what you want the visitor to do after reading this page. In some cases, you may simply want the visitor to go to a home page or another specific page in your site after reading this page. In this case, you should write the text in such a way that the visitor is attracted to the page that you are targeting. You would also want to provide links to the home page or the specific page that you are targeting at strategic places in the KRP. Or, you may want the visitor to click on the link to an affiliate program that you are a member of. In this case, you would stress the benefits that the visitor gets by purchasing the product or service that the affiliate program is selling. You would also want to provide links to the affiliate program at strategic places in the page and/or at the end of the page. Whatever it is that you want your page to do, there are some general rules to follow:

- 1) The first thing to remember is that some search engines don't recognize the Meta Description tag. These search engines will often simply take the first few lines of text in the body of your page and display that as the description. Hence, you must ensure that the first few lines of text in your page are attractive to human beings.
- 2) Ensure that each sentence or every other sentence that you use contains your target keyword once. The keyword shouldn't just be placed on an ad hoc basis - the way the keyword is placed in every sentence should actually make grammatical sense. This is not only important from the point of view of ensuring that your readers don't get a bad impression of your site, but also from the point of view of search engine optimization - the search engines may penalize your page for spamming if they find that you have randomly repeated the keyword throughout the page.
- 3) Make sure that your paragraphs are not too long - each paragraph should be no more than 3 or 4 sentences long. This is because people on the web simply don't have the time or the inclination to read long paragraphs.
- 4) Try to ensure that the page contains links to other pages with the keyword being present in the text under the link. This can often lead to a higher ranking for your page.
- 5) If possible, link to other pages which have the keyword in the file names. This can again lead to a higher ranking for your page.
- 6) There is no hard and fast rule regarding the total number of words that should be present in the KRPs. As a rule of thumb, try to ensure that there are between 500-600 words. However, if the number of words falls short of or exceeds this limit, don't worry too much - it's not that important.

Once you have created the page, ensure that the name of the file in which it is saved contains the keyword and that the individual words of the keyword are separated by hyphens. In this case, the name of the file would be travel-to-australia.html. This will get you a higher ranking in the few

search engines (like Northern Light) which give a lot of emphasis on the keyword being present in the URL.

Now that you have created the KRPs, how do you ensure that they are spidered by the search engines? Do you simply upload the KRPs to your server and then submit each of the individual KRPs to the search engines? You can do that, but you may get a higher ranking if you allow the search engines to spider your pages by following links to them, rather than by submitting them manually. Furthermore, the search engines also take a rather dim view of pages which only contain outgoing links to other pages but do not contain any incoming links from other pages. The search engines will often recognize these pages as doorway pages and may penalize such pages.

What you should do is to provide a link to these KRPs from the home page of your site. Now, you don't want people who are seeing the home page to actually follow these links to the KRPs - you only want the search engines to follow these links. However, you can't create links with hidden text (i.e. text with the same color as the background color) in your page since the search engines will almost certainly penalize or even ban you for doing this.

What you should do is to create a small image which has the same background color as the home page. Then, name this image with the same file name as the name of the KRP you have created. Hence, in this case, you should name the image travel-to-australia.gif. Then, add this image to the end of the home page and have it link to the KRP. Also, in the Alt tag of this image, add the keyword that you are targeting once. Furthermore, you should explicitly set the border of the image to 0 (add border = "0" to the img tag of the image). Otherwise, when you get the image to link to the KRP, a border may be visible. In case you don't want to create your own image, I have created a sample image for you with a white background - you can get it from <http://www.1stSearchRanking.com/download.htm>

That's it! When you want to target another keyword, create another KRP for it, make a copy of the image that you created for the first keyword, rename it to the file name of the new KRP, add the image to the home page and then link it to the new KRP. Repeat this process for every keyword that you are targeting. Once you have created all the KRPs and once you have got the home page to link to each of them, submit your site to the search engines. Don't submit any of the individual pages in your site - submit only the URL for the home page of your site. While the search engines may take a long time to spider all the internal pages if you don't submit them individually, I would still recommend not submitting them individually as this may get your KRPs a higher ranking in the search engines.

Follow all the rules that I have outlined in this article and you can soon see your search engine blues disappear for ever!

----- *About the Author* -----

Article by Sumantra Roy. Sumantra is a search engine positioning specialist. For free articles on search engine placement, go to <http://wus0.com/c.go?bc=1182011&s=62>.